2016

#NotIntendedToBeAFactualStatement: On Truth and Lies in an Affective Sense

Christopher J. Gilbert
Assumption College, c.gilbert@assumption.edu

Recommended Citation

Chapter Six

#NotIntendedToBeAFactualStatement

On Truth and Lies in an Affective Sense

Christopher J. Gilbert

Truth is nonsense. At least, in April 2011, this is what one might have been led to believe. On the Senate floor, then Republican Minority Whip Jon Kyl delivered a speech that situated the Planned Parenthood Federation of America at the crux of budget disputes that were precipitating a government shutdown. Kyl and others in his party were calling for an end to federal funding for the program, which in 2011 received $363 million. Said Kyl: "Everybody goes to clinics, to hospitals, to doctors, and so on. Some people go to Planned Parenthood. But you don't have to go [there] to get your cholesterol or your blood pressure checked. If you want an abortion, you go to Planned Parenthood, and that's well over 90 percent of what Planned Parenthood does."[1] Within hours, Politifact checked the veracity of this statement, and so did CNN, only to discover that abortions comprised approximately 3 percent of Planned Parenthood's procedures, which also include cancer screening and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, and general women's health services. Politifact pronounced the statement false using its online "Truth-O-Meter." CNN later announced the official word from Kyl's spokespeople: his claim "was not intended to be a factual statement."[2]

That was April 8. On April 9, a cavalcade of reports and editorials betrayed the senator's proverbial pants on fire. Op-ed columnist Gail Collins dubbed Kyl's remark "the most memorable . . . to come out of politics since Newt Gingrich told the world that he was driven to commit serial adultery by excessive patriotism."[3] Steve Benen mockingly lauded Kyl's disclaimer as "an amazing way to justify all bogus claims—just make stuff up, and if anyone notices that you're not telling the truth, simply explain that your nonsense was 'not intended to be a factual statement.'"[4] Such nonsense

constitutes a logic of falsehood that would have undoubtedly amused sardonic fabulist Ambrose Bierce, with its fabrication of "truth to which the facts are loosely adjusted to an imperfect conformity."[5] And, perhaps most significantly, political comedians Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert adopted Kyl's logic as fodder for ridicule. I say most significantly not simply because Colbert and Stewart were so famed for their own politics of *reductio ad absurdum*, but rather because Colbert in particular, even more than Kyl, became *the* story.

During his April 11 episode of *The Colbert Report*, Colbert joked that Kyl could not be considered "wrong" if he never meant to be "right."[6] This mock defense was dovetailed by a clip displaying pundits on Fox News attempting to apologize for Kyl and his absurd claim. On April 12, Colbert kept up the charade, announcing that he had been "tweeting round-the-clock non-facts"[7] about the senator (such as "For the past ten years, Jon Kyl has been two children in a very convincing Jon Kyl suit"[8]) complete with the hashtag, #NotIntendedToBeAFactualStatement. He also noted that members of the Twitter community had been posting their own nonsensical untruths at a rate of 46.2 per minute—which, according to Colbert, "is the rate at which Jon Kyl catapults puppies into the sea."[9] Countless news outlets captured the magnitude of the trend. In fact, conduct a Twitter search today and you are sure to find the meme alive and well, especially since it has circulated beyond the confines of its senatorial context and become a commonplace for commenting on the use of lies as bases for public policy, the ethics of political officials, the weakness of public journalism, the hypocrisies in moral or ideological outrage, or the banality of everyday dissemblance. Each tweet, in Colbert's terms, points to a politics of expressing what "*feels* true" (which is to say that Kyl's remark probably revealed his "true" *feelings*), and each reiteration of the hashtag that does not require reference to Colbert underscores the pervasiveness of truthiness as a cultural lexicon unto itself.[10] Each rendition also engenders the hashtag event's exemplarity within a larger conjuncture: the so-called era of "post-truth politics."

Declarations that politics is somehow "post-truth," or that we have all witnessed the "death" of facts,[11] hardly carry the same rhetorical weight as, say, Friedrich Nietzsche's declaration of the death of God. Instead, they might signal that truth is dead as a political "god-term,"[12] which indicates a wide-ranging anxiety about the circulation of journalistic misinformation, the ubiquity of pseudo-journalists in the blogosphere, the corporatization of news media, and the emerging idea of a need for "truth vigilantes."[13] As David Roberts of *Grist* asserts, the "key feature of the post-truth political landscape is that there are no longer universally recognized arbiters or referees of fact."[14] There are, of course, plenty who are ready and willing to call foul (consider the recent fetishization of fact-checking).[15] But truth-tellers today belie a crucial problematic that has less to do with truthfulness in

content than with "the fragility of the *forms* that carry truth"[16] (emphasis added). In other words, the matter lies in conditions of truth, which the rhetorical force of Colbert's comic expressions help to reveal.

Odd as it may seem, Colbert helped crystallize a sense of these conditions when he coined the neologism "truthiness" in the 2005 inaugural episode of his political comedy show, *The Colbert Report*. "Truthiness" has since become a cultural cliché for conveying the particularly affective investments that individuals or groups stake in a truth claim, rather than to the proof of its truthfulness as such. If, following Raymond Williams, we take keywords like "truthiness" seriously, we might therefore engage the problem of "post-truth" politics as more than the troubles of damned lies. Keywords are contact points for considering "certain activities and their interpretation" in public culture.[17] Importantly, words like "truth" embody "connections of meaning" that quaver when they are "offered, *felt* for, tested, confirmed, asserted, qualified, *changed.*"[18] So conceived, Colbert's quip about "truthiness" as a mode of "felt" politics, or a means of "feeling" truth, is not so nonsensical. Or maybe it is. Regardless, "truthiness" exemplifies the significance of (non)sense as a rhetorical affectation of truth and lies.

This chapter unfolds with an analysis of the cultural purchase (and politics) of the word "truthiness," which, like other "problem-laden words," entails clues "to changing political, social, and economic situations and needs" along with the "struggle[s] in their *use* . . . to give expression to new experiences of reality."[19] I would add that, given the revival of professional protestations for reformed checks and balances within what Lawrence Grossberg might call "economies of truth production," there is a sense in which certain keywords are vital because of their (de)legitimation in institutions and discourse. "Truthiness" is a marker for the perverted "fact" that lying both can and cannot work as a political principle, even as it functions as a foil for "making sense." What is more, the so-called "Age of Truthiness" names a moment in which many people do not seem to care about truth as such, which is to say that it might be misguided to assume that truth is either sought after or desired by a wide swathe of individuals.

Consequently, if "truth . . . is in the making,"[20] it is worthwhile to ground an examination of the cultural values of truth production in a *lexis*, or "a measure of shared experience."[21] Gilles Deleuze serves as my foundation for reimagining truth not *in* propositions but rather *between* propositions and things—that is, *expressed* in a vocabulary, or *lexis*, for "states of affairs." Building on philosophers from the Stoics through Baruch Spinoza to Nietzsche, Deleuze provides a compelling case for understanding truth as a problematic through which we structure public feelings. He also enables a view of nonsense as a creative animus for the construction of "falsehoods" that nevertheless *feel* true. While many scholars have studied affect as *affectus*—an emotional state, physical condition, embodied influence, feeling, and so

on—I also look at affect as an affectation: a display, pretense, or false impression that shows itself in the rhetorical effects of truth and lies on public conduct. Hence the critical import of the aforementioned hashtag and its illustration of a certain threshold in the broader discourse of "post-truth" politics, and the controversy over Kyl as an occasion to gesture toward other instances in which lie detection signals the potential consequences of political distortion. Colbert's lampoon of Kyl remains a key moment in which illogical or nonsensical expressions reflect a public and its problems with truth. Ultimately, this essay troubles digital technologies like Twitter in particular, but also (new) media in general, as a medium for wit, whim, and the "affective production" of truth.[22] It also takes on the rhetorical force of "truthiness" to consider how certain comic forms might recalibrate how we understand the politico-cultural *conditions* of truth and its consequences.

TRUTHINESS

One weekend in March 2012, an assemblage of journalists, legal scholars, pundits, hackers, whistleblowers, and advocacy organizations converged onto Cambridge for a conference, entitled Truthiness in Digital Media. The event was co-sponsored by Harvard University's Berkman Center for Internet and Society and the MIT Center for Civic Media, and professed to interrogate the twenty-first-century problematics of misrepresentation, information overload, partisanship, bias, and codes of ethics, not to mention the role of humor in trans-media environments. In short, the symposium sought to recover the Lippmannesque credo of The Society of Professional Journalists: "To Seek Truth and Report It."

Parodic neo-conservative and faux pundit Stephen Colbert coined the term "truthiness" in 2005 to identify the emotional and selfish quality of perceived realities, which are derived from passionate preferences rather than scientific, logical, or even journalistic certainties—or, in Brian Massumi's words, a logic of "gut feelings" and "affectively legitimated fact(s)."[23] The American Dialect Society named "truthiness" the word of the year (Merriam-Webster followed suit in 2006),[24] and the neologism was soon legitimated in numerous dictionaries as "the quality of preferring concepts or facts one wishes or believes to be true, rather than . . . [those] known to be true."[25] Despite its soft façade, "truthiness" represents a hard line between belief and knowledge. It also recalls an Orwellian paranoia about doublethink (which seems to align with groupthink in the new media environment), and thereby a confused field of truth claims that alternates between false impressions and willful trades of complicated truths for constructed lies. Furthermore, "felt" truths have given way to so-called "Internet truth" (in contradistinction to "journalistic truth"), more information but less fidelity, and what Eric Alter-

man, Ralph Keyes, and others now call an arena of "post-truth politics." In tandem is a sort of rational emotivism and, contra Frederic Jameson, a waxing of affect. Though some have traced the etymology of "truthiness" through the *Oxford English Dictionary* and to the 1800s (a time when it actually indicated truthfulness), the term emerged largely out of Colbert's rampant castigation of the George W. Bush administration.[26] It also came with a cluster of other terms, including "factinista," "wordinista" (or "word police"), and "no fact zone," each one reinforcing and even reifying the other. In 2005, truthiness formed the premise of *The Colbert Report*. By 2008, vast cohorts, from pundits to social commentators to psychologists, were adducing truthiness as endemic to twenty-first-century US public culture, *erga omnes*.

Some, for instance, speak of "red" facts and "blue" facts (in a sort of Dr. Seuss burlesque). The year 2012 saw a rise of "Romnesia," the outcome of what the *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman called the "post-truth campaign,"[27] or what others have called the "caricature campaign"[28] carried out by Republicans Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan. In fact, Ryan's speech at the 2012 Republican National Convention led many commentators to pronounce "the end of political truth."[29] James Fallows of the *Atlantic* held journalists just as responsible: "When significant political players are willing to say things that flat-out are not true—and when they're not slowed down by demonstrations of their claims' falseness—then reporters who stick to he-said, she-said become accessories to deception."[30] Fallows's indictment of so-called "post-truth journalism" bespeaks what Jeremy Holden has deemed a problem of "the entire news media,"[31] which has all but repudiated its accountability to public opinion. It also highlights a more salient politics of falsification that Neil Newhouse, a lead pollster for the Romney-Ryan campaign, summed up when he refused to let "the campaign be dictated by fact-checkers."[32] One consequence has been an all-out media war over false equivalences.

But lest we forget an important aspect of Colbert's neologism: the suffix *–iness*. Stanford University linguist Arnold Zwicky calls it "the Colbert suffix,"[33] pointing to its role as a ridiculous qualifier that nonetheless resonates with the condition of truth that it simultaneously purports to measure. It is telling that with the 2012 campaign came the institutional fetish with fact-checking, which has evolved into an unadulterated giddiness for things like "falsehood face-offs."[34] Burdens of facticity lie at the root of classical conceptions of truth as correspondence between information and actualities. But so do impressions. As Colbert told Charlie Rose in December 2006, truthiness gets at the idea of "gut feelings" as measures of certainty, as catalysts of in-formation. Information constitutes patterns—bits of knowledge, for instance, *in* form—that organize experience. Affectively, public knowledge is as much a matter of expression as it is a collection of facts. Truth is not

facticity. It is feeling, or the "sharing of *form* [that] comprises information" in "the organization or communication of relationships."[35] Truthiness organizes affect, shaping judgments based on a pervasive sense that "all unwanted facts [are] political, uncertain, and equally debatable."[36] As such, truthiness is not only a felt quality but also a state(ment) or expression of affairs. It is a measure, by which the important suffix–*iness* describes as a stasis and, in a rhetorical sense, an instability that disrupts even as it underlines the status quo. So it begs a question about what to do with the proverbial truism that we believe what we want to believe. If we *know* to be true what we *want* or *feel* to be true, then this question is particularly troubling when we imagine that the logic of nonsense, or of nonsensical truth, is an affective sense of reasoning insofar as it relies on the formal and even fervid ways of conveying thoughts and feelings—and, yes, even facts.

One such mode of affectation is crowdsourcing. Participants at the Truth in Digital Media conference tentatively celebrated the power of crowds for "recognizing and rejecting patterns of deception."[37] Nonsense expresses or exposes such patterns insofar as it displays the limits of ordinary speech.[38] Then again, the very idea that nonsense (or deception) can be simply detected and described follows the well-worn path of American pragmatism to affix truth "to our experiences of that thing and to our conversation about and collective understanding of it."[39] Such pragmatism begets optimism, perhaps expressed most extremely by James Surowiecki in *The Wisdom of Crowds*, even as it ignores the element of trust in everyday communication. However, ascriptions in the digital media conference to a collective will of the Web were tempered by the pessimism of industry executives and intellectuals who "described a media landscape where roving bots produce near-human conversation on Twitter, where citizens cluster in right- or left-wing echo chambers, and where measured, carefully presented debunking may only reinforce a falsehood because of quirks of human psychology."[40] A central concern was that publics are formed by processual (re)productions of presumed truth, which depend upon the manner in which people are "in-formed." The crisis of truth(iness) thrives, then, on predispositions toward distortion in the first instance even if objectivity is coveted "as the dominant ideal that legitimates knowledge and authority."[41] Put differently, the matter of truthiness has to do with the affective force of truth effects.

GUT-CHECKING TRUTH

Deep as affective truth may be ("Trust your gut," says Colbert),[42] it is expressed at the surface. The surface, according to Gilles Deleuze, is the space of discourse, and thus the plane of serial constructions of meaning. This surface is both conditioned and conditioning; and to the extent that it relies

upon both propositions and sensations about events, it is (re)productive of what we might call surface affects. But from whence truth? To answer this question, a biography of the word is in order.

Truth comes from the Old English *triewþ*, meaning reliability, and the Old Norse, *tryggð*, connoting faith or confidence. Together, *triewþ* and *tryggð* yield a sense of "truth" as a correspondence between "facts" and "reality," and something akin to "religious" belief. That modern understandings of truth entail "true-to-life" appeals (or what Karl Popper might deem the least false verisimilitudes) and functional "truth-claims" to actuality (à la William James) is a layover from the ancients.[43] In the Platonic tradition, a fixation on the "accuracy of representations," the fixity of "established principles," and the feigned attempts to report something as it "really" is drives the desire for an Idea or Ideal. Immanuel Kant further establishes the requirement for a sense of correspondence of knowledge and things (or subjects) known, namely by affixing to them the *diktat* of moral judgments (i.e., the "universability test"). Moreover, the Western tradition by and large trusts logical structures of understanding, and accepts that truth production is a cognitive, if not deliberative, project. And it follows John Milton in his sense, expressed in *Areopagitica*, that truth and falsehood will forever grapple.

Deleuze rejects the Platonic notion that truth is either beyond the phenomenal world or outside the realm of language per se (even as he demands that neither reason nor facts cannot be the ultimate arbiter or auditor of Truth). Every truth can also be a falsehood, depending on what is or is not "(un)concealed."[44] Or, following Deleuze, "Truth is a matter of production, not adequation," and "truth and falsehood [are] primarily affect problems."[45] The consequence here is at least twofold: first, truths are not only constructed but performed; and second, truth cannot in itself be a sort of Cartesian solution (i.e., a telos). In Nietzsche's terms, truth is "something that must be created and that gives a name to a process."[46] The constructed and processual nature of truth is inconsistent with a simple logic of representation insofar as it concerns the ends to which truths and lies are touched, tried, and told. Deleuze provides an outline for these ideas most explicitly in *The Logic of Sense*, to which I now turn.

At the center of *The Logic of Sense* is a tradition that conjoins Deleuze and thinkers from Baruch Spinoza through Nietzsche to Foucault (not to mention Henri Bergson and Jacques Derrida): Stoicism. The theory of Stoicism is predicated upon a "rigorous materialism that claims that only bodies exist."[47] This is not to say that there is no mind; instead, it is a rebuttal to the transcendentalism that runs through so many Western philosophies of reason, rationality, and logic. These philosophies tend to elide a politics of consciousness that might implicate the affective quality of truth in embodied experiences. A body is a force, in Deleuze's sense. It is not a fact of being.

Similarly, a body of truths is a rhetorical force, not a sieve of facticity. Foucault argues similarly when he asserts that truth "is a thing of this world,"[48] as unstable as the bodies, gestures, discourses, and more that comprise its effects. This means that facts matter less than forces inasmuch as the truth or falsity of judgments express indices of a (collective) will. Spinoza came earlier in codifying this idea when he posited truth as "the standard of itself and of the false."[49] Additionally, says Foucault, every body politic has "its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements."[50] The flipside of this should be patent: if there is a "politics of truth" that combines a Stoic sense of truth *as sense* with the corporeality of lived experience, there is also a politics of falsehood that is driven by a human capacity for *non*-sense. This is precisely what motivates Deleuze's logic of sense.

Sense, in Deleuzian terms, has a complex relationship with truth. For example, Deleuze upholds "common sense" (generally, shared knowledge that is presumably known by all) and "good sense" (prudence predicated on wisdom and rational judgment) as two expressions signifying felt truths that are patent in both the bodies that perform them and the networks, technologies, institutions, and discourses through which they are mediated. As "conditions of truth," these senses name relations between language and events (i.e., ways of being, or surface affects) via the expressible (the *lekton*, in Stoicism). These relations rely upon propositional circles that involve denotations, significations, and expressions, which combine to "[turn] brute fact into individuated significance, shared meaning into a singular effect, and manifestation . . . into a process of becoming."[51] Yet, when "brute facts" replace the "rawness" of felt experience with raw data, and when "common/good sense" supplants meaning (*sens*) as a medium for re-conditioning truth and lies, a naturalistic rationality emerges alongside moral goodness to produce repetition *without* difference. Deleuze argues that this is the very substance of cultural penchants to forestall alternative senses. So it is that he turns to nonsense as a site for imagining truth and falsity away from a "concern [for] simple designation[s], rendered possible by a sense which remains indifferent to it," and toward a notion that any "relation between a proposition and what it designates must be established within sense itself."[52]

Nonsense is the creative animus for establishing a revitalized intimacy with events and expressions. To borrow from Colbert, it expresses a capacity to "feel" truth rather than "know" it in any pure, rational way. Colbert cites truthiness and its encouragement of gut reactions as a public bad. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which Colbert himself perpetuates truthiness as an imaginative enterprise, recasting political circumstances in paradoxical, often ridiculous terms—especially given that the condition of truth he critiques involves not only one who *feels* something to be true but also *one* who feels it

to be true. It is the singularity to which Colbert stands opposed, and the selfish affectations that get attached to it. More and more, "truth" is something to be manipulated according to particular, even personalized, interests. "Rather than simply banning certain words or opinions outright," says Eli Pariser, truth will "increasingly revolve around second-order censorship—the manipulation of curation, context, and the flow of information and attention."[53] Events and expressions might therefore increasingly contradict common/good sense.

This is revealing when compared to Deleuze's opposition to the absence of sense, which is to stay his own resistance to cultural processes that stultify difference within a repetitive—or what Massumi might call an "iterative"—series. Nonsense is, *prima facie*, meaningless. However, consider that a nonsensical word like "frumious" is what Deleuze dubs a "portmanteau word" that carries the denotative form of "fuming" and "furious." To be sure, "the entire word says its own sense," but because of the relationship it maintains with "the sense of the other," it is, *ipso facto*, nonsense.[54] Sense, in other words, is a condition of, and conditioned by, non-sense in that meaning (*sens*) requires a conceptual ground (*fond*) in order to, well, make sense. Nonsense is the disruption of this ground, and also its reason for being. Following Deleuze, it is both regressive (because it enacts a return, or a re-presentation, of conditions) and disjunctive (because it expresses the aporias in so-called logical sense). This is why Deleuze ends up defining "truth" in terms of a "falsity appropriate to the non-sense that it implies."[55] In this sense, "we always have as much truth as we deserve in accordance with the sense of what we say."[56] This is not to reduce truth to language or representation alone. Rather, it is to orient us toward what Delezue calls "the power of the false":[57] the artistic and rhetorical force of re-establishing a co-presence of constructed truths and their lived consequences.

Given this conception of truth (and lies), is "truthiness" not something of a portmanteau word, conjoining conditions of truth with allusions to its affective apparatuses? And are words in Colbert's broader cluster such as "factinista," which nonsensically expresses facticity itself as a principle to be followed alongside the institutionalized settings of its production, not similarly expressive? Colbert expresses the surface considerations of our affective investments in truth as part and parcel of a sense of what matters. Additionally, he points implicitly to a Deleuzian notion of truth as that which "vivifies and alters a situation."[58] After all, the excess of affect is a symptom of its antithesis to fixed mindsets, stubborn predispositions, and oppositions to the very idea that a particular view might make no sense. Truth emerges out of trans-formation, which interrupts and even irrupts in sense. It facilitates "a suspension of affect-reaction circuits,"[59] altering-by-falsifying a state(ment) of affairs. This is strikingly similar to what Raymond Williams refers to as the fabrication of "imaginative truths."[60] It also bespeaks a sense

that "the deliberate denial of factual truth—the ability to lie—and the capacity to change facts—the ability to act—are interconnected; they owe their existence to the same source: imagination."[61] True: politics take place at the deep surfaces of collective constructions of "false" images, of fantasies. And, pragmatically speaking, such images are most constructively political when recognized for the extent to which truth collapses into the fantastical,[62] and when the lines between affective contents and contests over graspable textures of truthiness become blurry at best.

POSTING LIES AND POSING AS TRUTH

Deleuze describes humor as "the art of the surface."[63] He also characterizes it as "the co-extensiveness of sense with nonsense."[64] Considering that his primary concern in *The Logic of Sense* involves the effect of events that are themselves affected by alterations of perspective, the work of Lewis Carroll is more than apt as his central case study. Carroll, after all, is famous for using pseudo words (think of the poem "Jabberwocky"), crafting witty verses, as well as developing narratives that disrupt delimitations of surface and depth (e.g., *Alice in Wonderland* or *Through the Looking Glass*). Interestingly, just as Alice intones to herself, "what dreadful nonsense"[65] as she observes the words and deeds of others, one might also imagine the nonfactual world created by Colbert following the Planned Parenthood blunder carried out by Jon Kyl on April 8, 2011.

Colbert is no stranger to wordplay, especially when engaging "artificially maintained controversies."[66] In January 2012, for instance, he mocked Fox News pundits and Conservative radio hosts for accusing the Obama administration of covering up a 2009 Alice in Wonderland-themed Halloween party. Colbert framed the "scandal" as "Malice in Blunderland,"[67] then relayed how the cover-up was not, in fact, a cover-up, since the administration invited the White House press corps to the event and posted photos and videos on the government website. To "make sense" of the controversy, Colbert cited "Jabberwocky":

> 'Twas bryllyg, and ye slythy toves
> Did gyre and gymble in ye wabe:
> All mimsy were ye borogroves;
> And ye mome raths outgrabe.

Colbert's nonsensical logic, on the one hand, gets closer to claims to political truths. On the other, it posits a ridiculous attitude as a realist one. Nine months prior, Colbert catalyzed "the power of the false" in a manner that circulated the rhetorical force means for "making sense" of "affective facticity,"[68] or a predispositional feeling for truth as correspondent with certain

emotive judgments about what Bruno Latour calls "matters of concern,"[69] like faux political cover-ups.

Aside from CNN's report immediately following his statement and *Time* magazine's eventual celebration of the senator's lie about the extent to which Planned Parenthood subsidizes abortion, few news agencies attended very closely to Kyl's remarks. Fewer still discussed the official disclaimer, in which Kyl expressed that his comment "was not intended to be a factual statement," that is, until it was picked up by Colbert (and, in all fairness, fellow political comedian Jon Stewart). As Ellen Scolnic of *Philly.com* put it: "*The Colbert Report* and *The Daily Show* were the only programs covering the story."[70] This was after Scholnic reported finding her fifteen-year-old son, Andy, playing games on his computer when he had indicated that he would be doing his homework. When she pushed him for an explanation of his claim, he replied with: "That was not intended to be a factual statement." On April 13, 2011, *Politico* announced that Colbert was "keep[ing] Twitter heat on Kyl."[71] The same day John Tomasic of *The Colorado Independent* converted what others called Colbert's "Twitter campaign" into a "Twitter war" predicated upon "intentionally not factual politics."[72] And countless other news agencies, columnists, pundits, and bloggers marked Colbert's Twitter madness. Indeed, Colbert enacted what it might mean to "feel" the news and so his nonsense (and not Kyl's lie) became the story—and this despite the sense in which Kyl's non-factual statement was expressive of a seemingly rare instance of political honesty.

Reflecting on Kyl's truthiness, CNN Contributor John P. Avlon described "emotional truth as more important than literal truth. It creates a political tower of Babel."[73] The biblical reference is apposite given the sense that misinformation can posit confusion as clarity, and processes of expressing falsehoods as inadvisable trips down so many rabbit holes. It is even more fitting in the context of Colbert's Twitter posts, which began to crop up from @StephenAtHome on April 12, demonstrating truth as an adoptive stance, or a pretended perspective, and thus as a series of "states, moments, or periods of more or less vague or muted feeling, informed by and reflecting cultural values, institutions, and social hierarchies."[74] Colbert, for instance, tweeted the following:[75]

> Jon Kyl sponsored S.410, which would ban happiness.
> Jon Kyl let a game-winning ground ball roll through his legs in Game 6 of the '86 World Series.
> Jon Kyl's torso is covered in superfluous nipples.
> Jon Kyl is the only person who can sneeze with his penis. He calls it a "sneesis."
> Jon Kyl once ate a badger he hit with his car.
> Jon Kyl thinks no one can see him when he puts a paper bag on his head.
> Jon Kyl can unhinge his jaw like a python to swallow small rodents whole.

Jon Kyl has a shrine to Scooter from the Muppet Show.

The list could go on—and on. Each tweet garnered multiple hundreds of retweets, and on April 14, *Comedy Central*'s *Indecision* declared the tweets an Internet meme, citing inspired mimicries from a Twitter community that used Colbert as a catalyst for performing a more proximate relationship to (the falsity of) truth claims. For example, in a Twitter post on April 14, 2011, @SherrieGG wrote "Jon Kyl inherited all of J. Edgar Hoover's dresses," while on the same day, @dryfoo claimed that "Sen Jon Kyl spams me daily with offers for discount trepanations." Others suggested that "Jon Kyl has a velcro fetish" or that "Jon Kyl doesn't see the irony in egging abortion protesters."[76] Each tweet, either from Colbert or others, contained the hashtag #NotIntendedToBeAFactualStatement. Some Democratic senators were also reiterating the sentiment, as when New York senator Kirsten Gillibrand assured her colleagues that her own remark about federal funding for abortions *was* a factual statement.[77] Today, a Twitter search reveals a rampant proliferation of the hashtag well beyond references to Kyl, who retired from the Senate in 2012. Surely there was, and perhaps still is, fun to be had in constituting a community through the distribution of nonsense. But it is worthwhile to consider whether Colbert's ruse poses more than a sense of truth as the repetition of lies.

The "truth" about Kyl—and the "truthiness" in his expressions—became through Colbert's tweets the truth-be-told of the very systems and schemes of commensuration that sanction sociopolitical values as outcomes of disputes over facticity. The question, for Colbert, is not whether "truth" gets distorted, but rather *how* it gets distorted, and *why*. It is about "the [affective and rhetorical] forces of untruth"[78] that make strong feelings as sources of cultural standards for perspectives, judgments, and truth-values themselves. As such, Colbert's stories are neither true nor false; they are affectations that cannot exist irrespective of (mis)perceptions, (mis)information, or altered states of affairs. Truth, in this sense, is the denuded report, the discrepancy, the incongruity—the distortion. Or better, truth itself is a falsification (of other, "established" accounts), a lie of lies.

At least one ethical implication here has to do with the ways in which politically motivated truth claims are circulated through a body politic. Colbert seems to affect a sense in which certain truths are willed into or out of public existence in accordance with crude, if not stubborn, allegiances. Colbert earned his notoriety for lambasting the press corps and political officials without remorse, sometimes coarsely propagating "fake" news and embodying the ostensibly institutionalized practice of lying by telling the truthiness. Truth is not illusion, in the Nietzschean sense; it is delusion. And with every lie, Colbert recasts the cultural truth-telling code of ethics as a truthy "misrecognition of the political logics . . . organizing the world,"[79] and so, a

mischaracterization of the *conditions* of truth. Truth, following this logic, is both embedded in and exceeds value systems and actualities, the openings and closures of access to feelings about facts, and the content controls that work to process, store, transmit, and represent "reality."

As such, Colbert's truthiness attaches many a true word not only to jest but also to authority, to received systems of its production, and thus to the limits of a bare necessity for the "truth" and nothing but, so help us. So, too, does he instigate processes of making sense through nonsensical engagements with rhetorical artifacts of political culture. These instigations rupture the organization of affect as a production of the "meaningful," the "knowable," and the "livable."[80] They also demonstrate the extent to which nonsense creates the grounds of sense—of meaning, of claims to truth or falsity, and thus to lived experiences. By injecting himself into the system and therefore outside of his own political box,[81] as it were, Colbert over and again reenacts the potential for public consequences that exceed the confines of a particular media apparatus. Nonsense, as truthiness, thereby reveals *relations*, and here are some of their affectations: governmentality is a neoliberal art of gobbledygook; audiences of Big Media are fact-checkers of fools in the low courts of public opinion; and the art of lying underscores a puerile politics of truth that calls hokum a problem only when the hoodwinker is caught.

Nonsense can therefore alter both perceptions and states of affairs through wild distortions. Consider Colbert's commonplace affectations that emerge out of his assumption of a "false," pretentious character; the dizzying videographic intros that comprised the opening credits of *The Colbert Report*; the outrageous references and assemblages of words, images, and ideas that Colbert introduced in any given episode; his "real world" exploits (e.g., his 2010 testimony before Congress, his Super PAC ads, his campaign for president of South Carolina, and more); and the overarching madcap approach that he takes to political commentary. Then there are his writings—such as 2007's *I Am America (And So Can You!)* and 2012's *America Again: Re-Becoming the Greatness We Never Weren't*—which, with vast and varied expressions of political delirium, envelop readers in disorientations so characteristic of Carroll's work. The point: nonsense deals in expressions of how and why truths and lies run through systems, institutions, discourses, political bodies, and bodies politic. It is a comic affectation of the dispositions associated with words and ideas, and their sociopolitical disorganization.

CONCLUSION: THE TEXTURE OF TRUTH

Colbert's Twitter campaign against Kyl, and his wider nonsensical antics besides, expresses a sense in which many of "the old arbiters" of truth are

unfit in the "increasingly disaggregated media ecosystem."[82] A so-called "post-truth" era, then, does much less to inaugurate a condition of *un*truth than it does to name—as did the neologism "truthiness"—a changing set of relations in the organization of truth and lies. Additionally, with these relationalities there has emerged an odd dynamic of communication, circulation, and regulation as protocols of truth production.[83] This is not to say that "old" arbitrations cease to exist.[84] However, it is to say that cultural expressions of truth and lies are immanent to institutional machineries, both of which affect and are affected by one another. It is therefore less the case that mechanisms for determining truth are absent referees than it is that they are sublimated within deeper cultural practices of, in this case, circulating public sentiment. In this light, I conclude with a brief reflection on the "vitality of language" as it is emergent in the "different formations and distributions of energy and interest"[85] relative to the textures—or the feelings and structures—of truth that seem to betray a need for more and more nonsense, and more and more affectations of its surfaces, or its truthiness.

I begin with Donald Trump. From the outset of his 2016 presidential bid, the real estate tycoon was widely recognized for his cavalier relationship with truth. This relationship even earned him the reputation as a walking, talking prototype of truthiness.[86] It also won him the position as GOP front-runner, and this despite what many called his vicious, bigoted, and hateful rhetoric.[87] In fact, there is a strong case to be made that Trump—not unlike Colbert—gained popularity *because* of the "topsy-turvy, truthy" political milieu he exhibited.[88] Belief over accuracy, egomaniacal insults over honest ideas, politics as resolute anti-politics: these are but some of the tenets of the Age of Truthiness. Unfortunately, these are the very tenets that underlie a mass shooting that took place at a Planned Parenthood clinic on November 27, 2015, in Colorado Springs, which countless citizens, commentators, and public officials alike attributed to the "hateful rhetoric" of ireful pro-lifers. Trump dismissed the notion that incendiary or inflammatory language can incite violence, no doubt because his own brand of truthiness is akin to the same moral enmity that contributes to a cultural politics of truth and consequences, of false accounts and harsh punishments. The hook here is not that truth and feeling are somehow separate but rather that they are as interlocked as they are in tension with one another. In this sense, affective leanings toward things like anguish, disgust, resentment, and other ill feelings can be the *sources*, and not simply the outcomes, of so many grapples between truth and lies.

There is thus a problem with the prevailing delusion that truthiness is comparable to facticity. As Edward Schiappa notes, truth has never been a matter of correspondences between, say, rhetoric and reality; instead, it has been constituted by a shared sense that expressions of "interrelated beliefs, values, and concepts" are somehow appropriate given the political, cultural,

and other orders of the day.[89] Put differently, what matters is how truths are used and expressed, not what they "really" are. The paradox is that one can lie and still be honest, showing forth a truth deeper and more complex than that caught in the ostensive conflict between fact and fiction. This truth is an affectation of felt verity, and it does more to display the textures of truth and lies (i.e., the feel of their appearance in public communication, their basis in political structures, their grating characteristics, their fabrication) than any test of reality as such. What is more, while this form of affective truth might indicate unethical or even ignorant bluster at best and, at worst, what Foucault might call a "crisis of democratic institutions" (or "bad politics"), it also serves as a vital reminder that correspondence itself can be a clever deception. As even Jürgen Habermas admits, truth is only as good as it is an organ of publicity.[90]

At stake here is a sense that there is no such thing as unforced truth. Following Deleuze, truth is deeply embedded in the rhetorical forces of public life, and thus the manner in which certain conditions of truth take hold (or not). But to get at the textures of "deep truths" is not to dwell on discursive frameworks at the expense of a profound appreciation for the depths of feeling.[91] Instead, it is to see truth as felt, not as framed. It is to see facticity as fabulated, not as tested. What truthiness exposes is that the biggest lie we can tell ourselves has to do with the idea that truths are somehow at a remove from either expressions or experiences. In this sense, #NotIntendedToBeAFactualStatement is actually an intensely textured statement about how truth and lies exist in the relations that sustain cultural politics or tear them asunder. To bring the rhetorical force of feeling (over facticity) to the fore, in other words, is to bring the real matters of concern—that is, the common sets of perceptions and values, and the forms of *fore*knowledge and predispositions, however (non)sensical they might be—to the surface.

Here is where the twain of sense and nonsense meet: in the particular logic to truthiness. Of course, its own truth lies in the fact that truthy affectations are, *in situ*, pathologies, which is to say expressions of experiences or feelings. Truthiness, at base, provides a site for considering the organs of provisional truths, and I mean provisional in the rhetorical sense such that affect is the proviso and affectations are the *logia* of how and why truths are touched, touching, and, ultimately, tampered with. In these ways, while many theorists and thinkers have pointed to concepts of postmodernism and anti-essentialism as fodder for the love of lies, they have also advanced a misrecognition of the loss of Truth for its reconfiguration. Figures like Derrida, Foucault, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and others provide a complex logic for abandoning notions of truth that rely upon accurate representations. And figures like Richard Rorty advocate for abandoning notions of truth altogether. But within the express politics behind claims to Truth's impurity is a historical transition that "has to do with a change not so much in *what* we

believe as in *how* we believe."[92] For my part, the proclaimed transition to "post-truth politics" is not about moving beyond Truth, but rather delving deeper into its political expression.

To push on Deleuze's own logic, recent pursuits of truth are not only (perhaps more than ever) caught up in the paradigm of mapping statements onto claims to fact and reality, but they are also striking at the branches of a social problem that has nonsensical roots. From a "logical" perspective, political truth has less to do with what the truth "is" than how it is made so. It is a matter of why lies matter within particular "regimes of political truth"[93] and "structures of reputation and/or credibility."[94] Some might conceive as nonsensical the very idea that certain machinations could determine truth or control which truths are made accessible (or not). Once they become co-determinant and thereby co-extensive, though, there is perhaps new meaning ascribed to a notion of truth by design. Such a truth seems to belie a politics of saving face. This is not to say that dissemblance and deception are goods in themselves. It is to say, though, that there are potential social and political dangers that come with "naked accountability" across the board.[95] Colbert denudes the pretense of pure and simple truth; then again, he also sheds the notion of a pure and simple lie. In so doing, he demonstrates nonsense as an effect of false appearances, and yet an affectively organized cause of particular modes of understanding.

To be fair, some turns to the wisdom of crowds indicate that the boundaries between truth as authored and truth as authorized (or even authenticated) are unstable at best. Colbert reveals the crowd as it is affected by political distortion. There is a difference, in other words, between the commercially interested deployment of truth claims and the collective consequences embedded in conditions of truth production. The difference with Colbert's nonsense and, say, much of the twaddle of political talk is that the former restores an anti-common sense to the surface of political speech in the form of humor. Colbert lies all the time. Yet, as evidenced in the proliferation of #NotIntendedToBeAFactualStatement, his lies affect truth while putting on display the effects that organized lies have as material impressions. In a popular sense, Colbert contributes to the reorganization of public relations to truth and lies by subjecting content controls to nonsensical twists. He creates, a la Alice, a world of nonsense, and in so doing troubles the technologies for managing perceptions, perspectives, and interpretations. Tellingly, though Deleuze viewed humor as an artful means of bringing matters of affect to the surface, he also saw it as a simultaneous way to return them to their depths. Truthiness is therefore diabolical because it posits truth as the emptiest of signifiers, waiting not for discursive content but rather for feeling.

REFERENCES

"2006 Word of the Year: Merriam-Webster Announces 'Truthiness' as 2006 Word of the Year." *Merriam-Webster*. Accessed May 18, 2016. http://www.merriam-webster.com/press-release/2006-word-of-the-year.

Anderson, Walter Truett. "What's Going On Here?" In *The Truth about the Truth: De-Confusing and Re-Constructing the Postmodern World*, edited by Walter Truett Anderson, 1–11. New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 1995.

Arendt, Hannah. "Lying in Politics." In *Crisis of the Republic*, 1–48. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1972.

Avlon, John P. "Colbert vs. Kyl and Spread of 'Misinformation.'" *CNN*, April 15, 2011. http://www.cnn.com/2011/OPINION/04/15/avlon.kyl.truth/.

Banning, Marlia Elisabeth. "When Poststructural Theory and Contemporary Politics Collide—The Vexed Case of Global Warming." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 6, no. 3 (2009): 285–304. doi:10.1080/14791420903049736.

Benen, Steve. "Not Intended to be a Factual Statement." *Washington Monthly*, April 9, 2011. http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/archives/individual/2011_04/028869.php.

Bennet, James. "We're Not Going to Let Our Campaign Be Dictated by Fact-Checkers." *Atlantic*, August 28, 2012. http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/08/were-not-going-to-let-our-campaign-be-dictated-by-fact-checkers/261674/.

Bennett, Tony, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris, eds. "Introduction." In *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, xvii–xxvi. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

Bierce, Ambrose. *The Unabridged Devil's Dictionary*. David E. Schultz and S. T. Joshi, eds. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000.

Brisbane, Arthur S. "Should the Times Be a Truth Vigilante?" *New York Times*, January 12, 2012. http://publiceditor.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/12/should-the-times-be-a-truth-vigilante/.

Brown, Wendy. *Politics Out of History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Boston: Lothrop Publishing Company, 1898.

Clarke, Lynn. "The Public and Its Affective Problems." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 45, no. 4. (2012): 376–405. doi:10.5325/philrhet.45.4.0376.

"CNN: 'Not Intended to Be a Factual Statement.'" Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, April 8, 2011. https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-southern-new-england/newsroom/press-releases/cnn-not-intended-be-factual-statement.

Colbert, Stephen. "Jon Kyl Tweets Not Intended to Be Factual Statements," *The Colbert Report*, April 12, 2011. http://www.cc.com/video-clips/ez4az7/the-colbert-report-jon-kyl-tweets-not-intended-to-be-factual-statements.

———. "Malice in Blunderland." *The Colbert Report*, January 10, 2012. http://www.cc.com/video-clips/wwvi39/the-colbert-report-malice-in-blunderland.

———. "Pap Smears at Walgreens," *The Colbert Report*, April 1, 2011. http://www.cc.com/video-clips/wueypc/the-colbert-report-pap-smears-at-walgreens.

Collins, Gail. "Behind the Abortion War." *New York Times*, April 13, 2011. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/14/opinion/14collins.html?_r=0.

Cooper, Michael. "Campaigns Play Loose With Truth in a Fact-Check Age." *New York Times*, August 31, 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/01/us/politics/fact-checkers-howl-but-both-sides-cling-to-false-ads.html.

Corn, David. "Campaign 2012: The End of Political Truth?" *Mother Jones*, November 5, 2012. http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/11/mitt-romney-barack-obama-end-political-truth.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema II: The Time-Image*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. London and New York: Continuum, 2005.

———. *Difference and Repetition*. London: Continuum, 1997.

———. *The Logic of Sense*. Edited by Constantin V. Boundas. Translated by Mark Lester. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

Domke, Todd. "Commentary: The Topsy-Turvy, Truthy, Trumpy New World of Politics." *WBUR*, November 25, 2015. https://www.wbur.org/2015/11/25/the-donald-trump-era.

Drobnic Holan, Angie. "All Politicians Lie. Some Lie More than Others." *New York Times*, December 11, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/13/opinion/campaign-stops/all-politicians-lie-some-lie-more-than-others.html?_r=0.

Epstein, Jennifer, and Karin Tanabe. "Colbert Keeps Twitter Heat on Kyl." *Politico*, April 13, 2011. http://www.politico.com/click/stories/1104/colbert_keeps_twitter_heat_on_kyl.html.

Fallows, James. "Bit by Bit It Takes Shape: Media Evolution for the 'Post-Truth' Age." *The Atlantic*, August 29, 2012. http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/08/bit-by-bit-it-takes-shape-media-evolution-for-the-post-truth-age/261741/.

Foucault, Michel. "Truth and Power." In *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow, 51–75. New York: Random House, 1984.

Galloway, Alexander R. *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004.

Gibbs, Anna. "After Affect: Sympathy, Synchrony, and Mimetic Communication." In *The Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, 186–205. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

Gleick, James. *The Information: A History, a Theory, a Flood.* New York: Random House, 2012.

Greenfield, Adam. *Everyware: The Dawning Age of Ubiquitous Computing.* Berkeley, CA: New Riders, 2006.

Grossberg, Lawrence. *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

Grossberg, Lawrence, ed. *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture.* New York: Routledge, 2013.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society.* Translated by Thomas Burger, with assistance from Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991.

Hall Jamieson, Kathleen. "Recognizing and Rejecting Patterns of Deception." *Democracy Fun*, April 18, 2013. http://www.democracyfund.org/blog/entry/recognizing-and-rejecting-patterns-of-deception.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time.* Translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962. First published in 1927.

Holden, Jeremy. "The *Washington Post* and the Emergence of Post-Truth Journalism." *MediaMatters*, September 28, 2012. http://mediamatters.org/blog/2012/09/28/the-washington-post-and-the-emergence-of-post-t/190197.

Huppke, Rex. "Facts, 360 B.C.–A.D. 2012." *Chicago Tribune*, April 19, 2012. http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-04-19/news/ct-talk-huppke-obit-facts-20120419_1_facts-philosopher-opinion.

Jacobson, Louis. "Jon Kyl Says Abortion Services Are 'Well Over 90 Percent of What Planned Parenthood Does.'" *Politifact*, April 8, 2011. http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2011/apr/08/jon-kyl/jon-kyl-says-abortion-services-are-well-over-90-pe/.

Jones, Jeffrey P., Geoffrey Baym, and Amber Day. "Mr. Stewart and Mr. Colbert Go to Washington: Television Satirists Outside the Box." *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (2012): 33–60. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/528051/pdf.

Kinsley, Michael. "Obama, Romney Running a Caricature Campaign." *Telegraph*, September 24, 2012. http://www.nashuatelegraph.com/opinion/perspectives/976579-465/kinsley-obama-romney-running-a-caricature-campaign.html.

Krugman, Paul. "The Post-Truth Campaign." *New York Times*, December 22, 2011. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/23/opinion/krugman-the-post-truth-campaign.html?_r=0.

Lakoff, George. "Why It Matters How We Frame the Environment." *Environmental Communication* 4, no. 1 (2010): 70–81. doi:10.1080/17524030903529749.

Latour, Bruno. "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern." *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 2 (2004): 225–48. doi:10.1086/421123.

Lecercle, Jean-Jacques. *Philosophy of Nonsense: The Intuitions of Victorian Nonsense Literature.* London: Routledge, 1994.

Lessig, Lawrence. *Code: Version 2.0.* New York: Basic Books, 2006.

Linkins, Jason. "Kirsten Gillibrand Takes Shot at Jon Kyl With 'Factual Statements.'" *The Huffington Post*, April 14, 2011. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/04/14/gillibrand-takes-shot-at-_n_849253.html.

Massumi, Brian. "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact: The Political Ontology of Threat." In *The Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, 52–70. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

————. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002.

————. *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will to Power.* Translated by William Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Random House, 1967.

Obeidallah, Dean. "Donald Trump's Pants Are on Fire; Does Anyone Care?" *CNN*, November 30, 2015. http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/30/opinions/obeidallah-trump-pants-on-fire/.

Pariser, Eli. *The Filter Bubble: How the New Personalized Web Is Changing What We Read and How We Think.* New York: Penguin Books, 2011.

Peters, John Durham. *Courting the Abyss: Free Speech and the Liberal Tradition.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Roberts, David. "As Romney and Ryan Lie with Abandon, How Should Journalists Navigate Post-Truth Politics?" *Grist*, August 31, 2012. http://grist.org/politics/as-romney-and-ryan-lie-with-abandon-how-should-journalists-navigate-post-truth-politics/.

Sahlins, Marshall. "Artificially Maintained Controversies: Global Warming and Fijian Cannibalism." *Anthropology Today* 19, no. 3. (2003): 3-5. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3695286.

Schiappa, Edward. *Defining Reality: Definitions and the Politics of Meaning.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003.

Schorow, Stephanie. "Sorting Reality from 'Truthiness.'" *Harvard Gazette*, March 8, 2012. http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2012/03/truth_symposium/.

Schudson, Michael. *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers.* New York: Basic Books, 1978.

Scolnic, Ellen. "If More People Practiced Truthiness." *Philly.com*, May 22, 2011. http://articles.philly.com/2011-05-22/news/29571437_1_jon-kyl-statement-leftover-meatloaf.

Sedgwick, Eve, and Michèle Aina Barale. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.

Sellars, John. *Stoicism.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

Spinoza, Baruch. *Ethics.* Ware, UK: Wordsworth Editions, 2001.

"Stephen Colbert Rips on Jon Kyl with #NotIntendedToBeAFactualStatement hashtag." *Examiner.com*, April 12, 2011. http://www.examiner.com/article/stephen-colbert-rips-on-jon-kyl-with-notintendedtobeafactualstatement-hashtag.

Sullivan, Andrew. "Thingyness." *The Daily Dish*, October 15, 2007. http://www.theatlantic.com/daily-dish/archive/2007/10/-thingyness/224530/.

Tomasic, John. "Colbert Wages Twitter War on Kyl-Style Intentionally Not Factual Politics." *The Colorado Independent*, April 13, 2011. http://www.coloradoindependent.com/83961/colbert-rages-twitter-war-on-kyl-style-intentionally-not-factual-politics.

"Truthiness Voted 2005 Word of the Year." *American Dialect Society*, January 6, 2006. http://www.americandialect.org/truthiness_voted_2005_word_of_the_year.

Tweetsfromabyss. "John Kyl: #Notintendedtobeafactualstatement statements." *Funny or Die*, October 12, 2011. http://www.funnyordie.com/lists/32410db4c0/john-kyl-notintendedtobea-factualstatement-statements?_cc=__d___&_ccid=b5191f3c-81c6-4660-959c-2ac10cc93298.

Vaidhyanathan, Siva. *The Googlization of Everything (And Why We Should Worry).* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.

Vivian, Bradford. "Freedom, Naming, Nobility: The Convergence of Rhetorical and Political Theory in Nietzsche's Philosophy." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 40, no. 4 (2007): 372–93. doi:10.1353/par.2007.0033.

Waldenfels, Bernhard. "Dialogue and Discourses." In *Writing the Politics of Difference*, edited by Hugh J. Silverman, 165–76. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991.

Williams, James. "Community Beyond Instrumental Reason: The Idea of Donation in Deleuze and Lyotard." In *Critical Communities and Aesthetic Practices: Dialogues with Tony O'Connor on Society, Art, and Friendship*, edited by Francis Halsall, Julia Jansen, and Sinéad Murphy, 99–110. London: Springer, 2012.

———. "Truth." In *Deleuze Dictionary*, edited by Adrian Parr, 292–94. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.

Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.

———. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Zamberlin, Mary F. "Between Gilles Deleuze and William James: Rhizomatics and Pragmatics." In *Rhizosphere: Gilles Deleuze and the "Minor" American Writing of William James, W. E. B. Du Bois, Gertrude Stein, Jean Toomer, and William Faulkner*, 1–28. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Zelizer, Barbie. "When Facts, Truth, and Reality Are God-Terms: On Journalism's Uneasy Place in Cultural Studies." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 1 (2004): 100–119. doi:10.1080/1479142042000180953.

Zimmer, Ben. "Truthiness." *New York Times Magazine*, October 13, 2010. http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/17/magazine/17FOB-onlanguage-t.html?_r=0.

NOTES

1. Jacobson, "Jon Kyl Says Abortion Services Are 'Well Over 90 Percent of What Planned Parenthood Does.'" This would be in the congressional record from April 8, 2011, but as I discuss below, his comment has been expunged.

2. "CNN: 'Not Intended to Be a Factual Statement.'"

3. Collins, "Behind the Abortion War," para 3.

4. Benen, "Not Intended to be a Factual Statement," para. 6.

5. Bierce, *The Unabridged Devil's Dictionary*, 77.

6. Colbert, "Pap Smears at Walgreens," 2:53–2:56.

7. Colbert, "Jon Kyl Tweets," 2:02–2:04.

8. Ibid., 2:07–2:11.

9. Ibid., 2:43–2:47.

10. Following Mark Peters, author of *Bullshit: A Lexicon*, "The uses that don't mention Colbert are the best indicators of [truthiness'] success": "Truthiness: BS Gets a Colbert Bump," *Slate*, November 6, 2015, http://www.slate.com/blogs/lexicon_valley/2015/11/06/mark_peters_bullshit_word_of_the_day_truthiness_gets_a_colbert_bump.html.

11. Huppke, "Facts, 360 B.C.–A.D. 2012."

12. Zelizer, "When Facts, Truth, and Reality Are God-Terms."

13. Brisbane, "Should the Times Be a Truth Vigilante?"

14. Roberts, "As Romney and Ryan Lie with Abandon," para. 13.

15. The story here extends from the forecasts of political elections created by sabermetrician, Nate Silver to the *Washington Post*'s "Truth Teller" application that combines video and audio extraction technologies with speech-to-text capabilities to check facts in real time. And lurking within these types of programs for uncovering truth are impulses to embed standards thereof in technologies of algorithmic judgment, simultaneously enabling cultural industries to capitalize on sense-making protocols that modulate (truth) values according to axioms no better than supply and demand. At least one potential result is a false equivalence of thoughts, bodies, knowledge, and action that simply reaffirms the need for absentee referees "disguised" as systems of authentication. Truth, then, is not de-valued but rather over-valued, with the emphasis on its *expenditure* or *surplus* in an act of consumption as opposed to its *creation* in an expressive constitution of publics and publicity.

16. Peters, *Courting the Abyss*, 251.

17. Williams, *Keywords*, 15.

18. Ibid., 12.

19. Bennett, Grossberg, and Morris, "Introduction," xvii.

20. Massumi, *Semblance and Event*, 37.

21. Gleick, *The Information*, 76.

22. See Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of This*, 69–88; and Grossberg, *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense*, 169–226.

23. Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact," 55, 54.

24. "2006 Word of the Year," *Merriam-Webster*.

25. "Truthiness Voted 2005 Word of the Year," para. 1.

26. For a vernacular etymology, see Zimmer, "Truthiness."

27. Krugman, "The Post-Truth Campaign."

28. Kinsley, "Obama, Romney Running a Caricature Campaign."

29. Corn, "Campaign 2012"; see also the work of Andrew Beaujon of *Poynter*, http://www.poynter.org/author/abeaujon/, and David Corn of *Mother Jones*, http://www.motherjones.com/authors/david-corn.

30. Fallows, "Bit by Bit It Takes Shape," para. 2.

31. Holden, "The *Washington Post* and the Emergence of Post-Truth Journalism," para. 4.

32. Bennet, "We're Not Going to Let Our Campaign Be Dictated."

33. Sullivan, "Thingyness," para. 1.

34. Drobnic Holan, "All Politicians Lie," para. 10.

35. Gibbs, "After Affect: Sympathy, Synchrony, and Mimetic Communication," 194.

36. Banning, "When Poststructural Theory and Contemporary Politics Collide," 293.

37. Hall Jamieson, "Recognizing and Rejecting Patterns of Deception."

38. Lecercle, *Philosophy of Nonsense.*

39. Vaidhyanathan, *The Googlization of Everything*, 61.

40. Schorow, "Sorting Reality from 'Truthiness,'" para. 5.

41. Schudson, *Discovering the News*, 10.

42. This was one of Colbert's catchphrases. He said it frequently on his show, as well as at the 2006 White House Correspondents' Association Dinner, April 29, 2006.

43. Plato and Aristotle grounded a concept of truthful judgment in the conformity of words and reality. Saint Thomas Aquinas later interpreted this to mean "the equation of things and intellect"—an interpretation that filtered into rationalistic thinking, logical positivism, and, in time, journalistic codes of ethics.

44. Martin Heidegger defined truth as "unconcealment," borrowing from the ancient Greek word of *aletheia* to suggest that what is true is what is disclosed. There is much more to his definition than this, and those interested should see *Being and Time* (1927). My purpose in noting the expositive notion of Heidegerrian truth is to highlight that fact that while Deleuze is also interested in disclosure, the expressivity in his sense of truth is not so much revelatory as it is *generative*. Put differently, truth for Deleuze is about the reproduction of procreant affects and effects, not simply their revelation. Ideas are therefore problems, and not just bases for political, cultural, or other forms of being, which means that a truth predicated upon the dynamic of sense and nonsense is oriented toward an axiology, or even a pathology, rather than an ontology.

45. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 200.

46. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 552.

47. Sellars, *Stoicism*, 155.

48. Foucault, "Truth and Power," 73.

49. Spinoza, *Ethics*, 82.

50. Foucault, "Truth," 73.

51. Williams, "Community Beyond Instrumental Reason," 107.

52. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 192.

53. Pariser, *The Filter Bubble*, 141.

54. Deleuze, *Logic*, 67.

55. Deleuze, *Difference*, 193.

56. Ibid.

57. Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, chapter 6.

58. Williams, "Truth," 289.
59. Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, 28.
60. Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 50.
61. Arendt, "Lying in Politics," 5.
62. Zamberlin, "Between Gilles Deleuze and William James," 25.
63. Deleuze, *Logic*, 9.
64. Ibid., 141.
65. Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 194.
66. Sahlins, "Artificially Maintained Controversies."
67. Colbert, "Malice in Blunderland."
68. Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact."
69. Latour, "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?"
70. Scolnic, "If More People Practiced Truthiness," para 5.
71. Epstein and Tanabe, "Colbert Keeps Twitter Heat on Kyl."
72. Tomasic, "Colbert Wages Twitter War on Kyl-Style Intentionally Not Factual Politics."
73. Avlon, "Colbert vs. Kyl and Spread of 'Misinformation,'" para 9.
74. Clarke, "The Public and Its Affective Problems," 382.
75. "Stephen Colbert Rips on Jon Kyl with #NotIntendedToBeAFactualStatement hashtag."
76. Tweetsfromabyss, "John Kyl."
77. Linkins, "Kirsten Gillibrand Takes Shot at Jon Kyl."
78. Waldenfels, "Dialogue and Discourses," 166.
79. Brown, *Politics Out of History*, 29.
80. I borrow these terms from Lawrence Grossberg.
81. Jones, Baym, and Day, "Mr. Stewart and Mr. Colbert Go to Washington."
82. Cooper, "Campaigns Play Loose With Truth in a Fact-Check Age," para. 7.
83. Galloway, *Protocol*.
84. Consider for instance that by April 15, 2011, just one week after Kyl's senatorial speech, the figure that was "not intended to be factual" was expunged from the congressional record.
85. Williams, *Keywords*, 21, 11. For a discussion of texture and affect, see also Sedgwick and Barale, *Touching Feeling*.
86. Obeidallah, "Donald Trump's Pants Are on Fire."
87. A small sampling will yield remarks involving Trump's call for a ban on Muslims entering the United States, his insults of female public figures, his condemnations of Mexican immigrants as criminals and rapists, and more.
88. Domke, "Commentary."
89. Schiappa, *Defining Reality*, 43.
90. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, 177–180.
91. Lakoff, "Why It Matters."
92. Anderson, "What's Going On Here?" 2.
93. Vivian, "Freedom, Naming, Nobility," 390.
94. Lessig, *Code*, 242.
95. Greenfield, *Everyware*, 240.