

# Post-Truth and Valuing the Truth

## Abstract

Cultural commentators claim that citizens no longer *value* the truth enough, and that this lies behind the tendencies that characterize our “post-truth” era. Once we describe these tendencies in more detail, and supply a standard picture of what valuing the truth looks like, this claim does not look especially plausible. I suggest, however, that there is a better picture of what valuing the truth involves, which renders the commentators’ claim true after all.

## 1 Post-Truth

In recent years, there has been much public discussion of truth, characterized by the Oxford Dictionary’s 2016 Word of the Year, “post-truth,” and by the use of the dramatic metaphors suggesting that truth has lost its *power* and/or is in *danger*.<sup>1</sup> But what actual change—in truth itself, or more likely, in our relationship to it—is such figurative talk describing? What is new? This question is taken up by a series of books by cultural commentators, which typically start by cataloguing some striking instances of public figures making manifestly false claims, or of ordinary citizens failing *en masse* to believe true things.<sup>2</sup>

As these commentators realize, such occurrences do not help much to identify anything new. The untrustworthiness of politicians and the ignorance of citizens have been the cornerstones of concerns about democracy since Tocqueville

---

<sup>1</sup>In their 2018 “Person of the Year” issue, for example, Time Magazine talks of a “War on Truth”, and gives its honour to truth’s “Guardians”: journalists jailed or killed for their work. The use of “post-truth” to indicate a general decline in the status of truth is somewhat different from its original Oxford definition, according to which it specifically applies to “circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.”

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, Kakutani 2018, McIntyre 2018, D’Ancona 2017, and the Introduction to Blackburn 2018. Examples include Donald Trump’s false claims about the size of the crowd at his inauguration and citizens disbelieving truths about climate change that are uncontroversial among experts.

and Plato. Commentators suggest, however, that what is new is what *explains* these recent occurrences in particular, or some of their features. Simon Blackburn, a representative example, claims that some recent lying by public figures is explained by the way that citizens have become less disposed to “punish [lying public figures] for having lied” by, for example, withdrawing their support from them: “if someone has nothing to lose when caught out lying, they are that much more likely to lie”.<sup>3</sup> In turn, recent failures among citizens to believe truths are said to be explained by the way that citizens have become more disposed to have their beliefs influenced by their desires: more disposed toward “believing whatever they would like to be true.”<sup>4</sup> The commentators’ claim, then, is that recent lies from public figures and failures to believe the truth are explained by new (or newly strengthened) tendencies not to punish even obvious liars and to have our beliefs influenced by our desires. Let us call these “the post-truth tendencies.”

In addition to identifying these two post-truth tendencies, commentators—though not Blackburn—often suggest a unified account of them in terms of *value*: both tendencies are seen as connected to the fact that citizens no longer *value* or *care about* the truth enough. This leads to the suggestion that we could combat or counteract the post-truth tendencies if we could increase the degree to which people value the truth.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup>Blackburn 2018, 8. As D’Ancona 2017 puts it, “What is new is not the mendacity of politicians but the public’s response to it. Lying is regarded as the norm, even in democracies.” McIntyre 2018 (14) claims that now, “Politicians can challenge the facts and pay no political price whatsoever.”

<sup>4</sup>Blackburn 2018, 8. McIntyre 2018 (10) claims that the trouble is that the relevant people “only want to accept those facts that justify their ideology.” In Chapter Four, Kakutani 2018 speaks of reaching a new point along a trajectory identified by Daniel Boorstin: people becoming “less interested in whether something was a fact than in whether it was ‘convenient that it should be believed’.”

<sup>5</sup>According to McIntyre 2018, the “post-truth relationship to facts occurs only when we are seeking to assert something that is more important to us than the truth itself.” (Chapter One.) D’Ancona 2017 (Introduction and Chapter One) takes his task to be that of “exploring the declining value of truth...[The] crash in the value of truth...Lies not only proliferate but also seem to matter less.” The theme of Kakutani 2018 is how recent trends “are diminishing the very value of truth.” (Introduction.) A journalist interviewing Blackburn takes the especially salient questions to be: “Why should people care about truth in the first place?...[And] how do we encourage people to care about the truth...?” (Illing 2018). Blackburn has little to say in response to this question, and valuing the truth is absent from the relevant parts of his book. His discussion focusses instead on a weirder idea that one occasionally encounters in today’s discussion: that the post-truth tendencies involve people no longer using the *concept* of truth. Against this idea, he marshals familiar reasons why the concept of truth is indispensable. Blackburn has, I believe, fallen victim to the “misunderstanding” warned about by Williams 2002: attempting to respond to worries about *valuing* the truth with “reminders from...philosophy...particularly in the ‘analytic’ mode” of how “the notion of truth is fundamental.” (5-7). Williams’ twenty-year-old discussion, I think, is still the best introduction to the relevant issues, and anticipates the urgent tone of today’s commentators. (e.g.: “[We] need to take seriously the idea that to the extent that we lose a sense of the value of truth, we shall certainly

I will not try to address the historical question whether the post-truth tendencies have really become stronger in recent years. I instead want to consider the closely related question what these tendencies involve, and how they relate to “caring about” or “valuing” the truth. Does failing to value the truth really have anything to do with not punishing liars, or with the way our desires affect our beliefs? And if so, would increasing the degree to which we value the truth be a good way to counteract these post-truth tendencies? Though works of cultural criticism make these claims, they do little to help us understand what they mean or how they could be true.

Here is the plan. First, I describe the post-truth tendencies in more detail. Next, I explain why *valuing the truth more*, as it is usually described, seems like it would *not* be a reliable way of counteracting those tendencies. I argue, however, that this account of what it is to value the truth is not especially plausible, and suggest an alternative account of what valuing the truth involves: one on which it *does* help to counteract those tendencies. Moreover, getting people to care more about the truth might even be an overall good way to combat these tendencies today.<sup>6</sup>

## 2 The Post-Truth Tendencies

In order to ask what effect valuing the truth might have on the post-truth tendencies, we first need to have a clearer grasp of what these tendencies are.

One tendency is for desire to influence belief. Though familiar, the phenomenon is somewhat puzzling. After all, when we deliberate about what to believe, belief seems to result *only* if we encounter something that strikes us as good evidence; and a lack of belief, only if we fail to come across such a thing.<sup>7</sup> Some simple examples, then, are helpful for understanding how desire can influence belief.

1. Suppose Beth, who strongly desires it to be true that her late father loved

---

lose something and may well lose everything.” (7).)

<sup>6</sup>This addresses a problem with the discussion in Williams 2002, which is primarily concerned with whether and why we should value the truth. Since Williams does not provide a clear enough picture of how the post-truth tendencies operate, he does not notice the concern of section 3 below about whether valuing the truth more, will actually help to counteract them.

<sup>7</sup>Among psychologists, Kunda 1990 puts it this way: “People do not seem to be at liberty to conclude whatever they want to conclude...They draw [a] conclusion only if they can muster up the evidence necessary to support it.” (482-483) Among philosophers, Price 1954 puts it this way: one cannot “make oneself believe something, or make oneself go on believing it, just by an effort of will...It just is not in your power to avoid assenting to the proposition which the evidence (your evidence) favours, or to assent instead when the evidence (your evidence) is manifestly unfavourable to it.” (15-16) (Price approvingly refers to the Appendix to Hume 1738-1740 on this point.)

her the most of all her siblings, has spent the afternoon perusing family photo albums. Strong desires make it pleasant or painful for us to attend to what seems to us like evidence which bears on whether what we desire is so. Beth, then, finds it pleasant to attend to photographs that seem to provide evidence that her father loved her most and painful to attend to those that suggest he didn't. But we tend to seek pleasure and avoid pain. So Beth tends to selectively attend to the photographs which seem to provide evidence that she was the most loved. But attention affects what will be remembered and strike us as salient. If Beth later comes to consider, then, whether or not her father really loved her most, her experience with the photo albums will make her more likely to believe that he did and less likely to believe he didn't than she would have been, had she looked through the albums without her strong desire.<sup>8</sup>

2. Suppose that, for whatever reason, Beth ends up attending carefully to a photo of her father beaming affectionately at another sibling while Beth herself looks on in the background. It strikes her, painfully, as strong evidence against what she wants. But when apparent evidence is made painful by desire in this way, we tend to double-check whether the evidence is as strong as it seems, and look for other ways to interpret it.<sup>9</sup> Beth might note that the photograph only establishes that her father's *gaze* was directed at another sibling *while* he was smiling, which tells against his loving Beth best only if his expression is explained by his affectionately contemplating that sibling. An alternative possibility is that his mind was on something else entirely. Though at first a mere possibility, when Beth re-examines the photograph with it in mind, her father's expression might strike her as supporting the hypothesis that his mind is elsewhere, so that she comes to see the photograph as ultimately not providing strong support for either possibility. (Phenomena like the "confirmation bias" ensure that under such circumstances, those who look at a piece of ambiguous evidence with an eye to seeing whether it supports a particular hypothesis are more likely to

---

<sup>8</sup>This example and its key features are from Mele 2001, 27-28. (E.g.: "owing to her desire that her father loved her most, Beth finds it pleasant to attend to photographs...featuring her as the object of her father's affection and painful to attend to photographs...that put others in the place she prizes...People tend to seek pleasure and to avoid pain...Selectively attending to evidence for p can increase the probability that one will acquire a belief that p," etc.) See Mele's chapter for defence of the relevant empirical claims.

<sup>9</sup>See, e.g., the discussion of "Biased Research Evaluation" in Kunda 1990, 489-490. Though Kunda mostly focusses simply on the effects of desire without mentioning a role for pain, she presents evidence that some kind of "physiological arousal" or "discomfort" is a necessary condition for some effects of desire on beliefs. (492-493.)

conclude that it does.)<sup>10</sup>

These, then, are some ordinary ways in which desires can lead us to believe or fail to believe something, even though belief is controlled by how the evidence strikes us. By such processes, our own desires will often lead us to *wrongly* believe or suspend belief, so let us call them “self-deceptive processes.”<sup>11</sup> And given the similarity of paradigm cases of evaluating evidence about politically relevant issues to cases like these, we should expect the same effects to take place.<sup>12</sup> Such self-deceptive processes, then, are at least part of the post-truth tendency to “believe what we want to believe.”

The other post-truth tendency, the unwillingness to punish obvious liars, is easier to understand: people simply do not stop supporting obviously lying public figures. We can, however, usefully divide such cases into two groups. The first group continues to support liars, even while appreciating the extent to which they are liars. The second group fails to recognize the liars as such, even though it is obvious. Many cases of the latter, presumably, will be explained by self-deception; the fact that we do not *want* the figure we support to have lied plays a role in making us miss what is obvious.

With this grasp on the post-truth tendencies, let us return to the commentators’ claim that *valuing* the truth more would counteract them.

---

<sup>10</sup>Kunda 1990 suggests this kind of role for the confirmation bias: “[If] the [desire]...leads people to ask themselves whether the conclusion that they desire is true...Standard hypothesis-testing processes, which have little to do with motivation, then take over and lead to the accessing of hypothesis-confirming information and thereby to the arrival at conclusions that are biased toward hypothesis confirmation and, inadvertently, toward goal satisfaction.” The effect has been studied in connection with facial expressions in particular. As Trope, Gervy, and Liberman 1997 (115) describe: “subjects who tested the hypothesis that a person was angry interpreted that person’s facial expression as conveying anger, whereas subjects who tested the hypothesis that the person was happy interpreted the same facial expression as conveying happiness.”

<sup>11</sup>This use of this term fits with Johnston 1995: “To be deceived is sometimes just to be *misled*...The self-deceiver is a self-misleader. As a result of his own activity [i.e., in our cases, how one pays attention, which hypotheses one considers, etc.] he gets into a state in which he is misled.” (65) Whether this is a good name or not does not matter here, but there might be good reasons to insist that real self-*deception* requires that one form a false belief (rather than missing the truth through withholding a belief that one otherwise would have formed) or that one in some sense *know* what is true and *intentionally* mislead oneself about it, etc. (The first is required by (Mele 2001 (51); the second by the account in Chapter Two of Part One of Sartre 1943). I prefer “self-deception” to Kunda 1990’s “motivated reasoning,” because many cases do not involve anything we would normally call “reasoning”; Kunda uses this term because she glosses “reasoning” in an unusually broad way, to include “forming impressions, determining one’s beliefs and attitudes, evaluating evidence, and making decisions.” (480)

<sup>12</sup>See Bermúdez 2018 for more detailed argument that these processes, in connection with desires one has as part of identifying with a particular group, can explain group polarization of the sort discussed in Chapter VI of Kakutani 2018.

### 3 Why Valuing the Truth Seems Not to Help

Would valuing the truth, or valuing it more, help counteract the post-truth tendencies? On one picture, such valuing involves having a very strong *desire*: the desire, say, that I and many others often *believe* the truth about important matters. The more I value the truth, the stronger this desire is. Might a strong desire like this help with the post-truth tendencies?

It is natural to think that it would. Here is one familiar way in which desire leads to action. When we desire something, we tend to do what it takes to bring it about. Of course, we cannot *directly* bring about many things we desire, including that many people believe the truth about important matters. But when no direct action is possible, practical reasoning guides us to actions that at least make it more likely that our desire will be satisfied: to take the means to our ends. The above desire is less likely to be satisfied if public figures lie a lot; so, recognizing this, I might take steps to increase the chance that lying ones are removed from their positions, by voting or campaigning against them. This would constitute the relevant sort of punishment for lying public figures, thus directly counteracting one post-truth tendency—at least for that group of people who support a lying public figure while recognizing that he or she lies a lot. And similarly, the desire that I myself believe the truth about important matters can be expected to lead me to actions that will make it likely that I believe the truth about such matters, which would counterbalance the distorting effect of self-deceptive processes. (Some writers on self-deception, accordingly, suggest that such a desire would help with these processes.<sup>13</sup>)

But there are serious problems with this idea.

1. The actions that constitute punishment for lying public figures—such as removing our support from them—are not very effective means to the satisfaction of the above desire. There is probably *nothing* I can do to make it significantly more likely that most people believe the truth about important things. In particular, I know that actions like voting against liars will make barely any difference at all to the chance that my desire be satisfied, since one ordinary citizen's support has a vanishingly small chance of making a difference in, say, elections involving large numbers of people. Sound practical reasoning from that desire, then, will not lead to my taking the

---

<sup>13</sup>e.g., Forrester 2002, 42: "To overcome or avoid self-deception the person must first of all value knowing what is true...he must have some desire to know the truth." Williams 2002, 6.2: "They should actually want to find out the truth...this is equivalent to his wanting to get into the following condition: if P, to believe that P, and if not P, to believe that not P."

relevant steps.<sup>14</sup>

2. Moreover, it does not seem that a strong desire to believe the truth will actually help to counteract self-deceptive processes. If an ordinary person desires to believe the truth often about important matters, the natural next move is simply for her to *try to figure out the truth about various important matters*—say, by looking up evidence that bears on important matters. But this desire will simply put her into the very circumstances in which self-deceptive processes have their effects, when she comes to evaluate that evidence. Her desires will still render her more likely to reach the conclusion that fits with what she wants, and she will then not only be pleased to conclude that her other desires are satisfied, but she will additionally be pleased to conclude that her desire that she believe the truth about important matters is also satisfied. In fact, she may be even worse off in her evaluation of evidence, since she will do so under the effects of a new strong desire, which can be expected to engage with the same self-deceptive processes. (Intuitively, self-deception brought about by an intense desire to be right looks to be a reasonable account of what goes on with some conspiracy theorists, who are notoriously bad at believing important truths, despite at least professing very strong desires to get to the truth about them.)<sup>15</sup>

Of course, there may be other ways in which the relevant desire might counteract the post-truth tendencies. But it is not easy to find any that look very promising.

## 4 Why Valuing The Truth Might Help After All

One might be tempted at this point to abandon the commentators' idea that valuing the truth more would help, and look to a different proposal. It may, then, be

---

<sup>14</sup>On standard accounts, the reason to take a means to an end is proportional to the probability that the means will lead to the end. (See, e.g. Kolodny 2018, my italics: "If there is reason for one to E, and there is positive probability, conditional on one's M-ing, that one's M-ing, or some part of one's M-ing, helps to bring it about that one Es in a nonsuperfluous way, then there is reason for one to M, whose strength depends on the reason for one to E and on the probability.")

<sup>15</sup>Kunda 1990 reviews evidence that makes two points along these lines. Research shows that people who strongly desire to get the truth "expend more cognitive effort on issue-related reasoning." But if this reasoning is unreliable—perhaps as a result of distortion from other desires—this will just make things worse: "If people erroneously believe faulty reasoning procedures to be best...accuracy goals [lead] to more complex processing, which in turn [leads] to less rational judgment." Moreover, "it seems possible that accuracy goals...will often enhance rather than reduce bias. This is because the more extensive processing caused by accuracy goals may facilitate the construction of justifications for desired conclusions."

worth noting that the obvious alternatives do not seem very promising either.

1. One might suppose if we had *both* the desire to believe the truth, *plus* some training into how to effectively reach the truth, including an awareness of self-deceptive processes, this would counteract those processes. But there is evidence that such knowledge tends to be co-opted by self-deceptive processes and pressed into service in order to more effectively explain away unwelcome evidence: for example, we explain why others disagree with us in terms of the self-deceptive processes to which they are subject.<sup>16</sup>
2. Since strong desires are what produce the self-deceptive processes, one might suggest we take steps to remove strong desires about the relevant matters.<sup>17</sup> I acknowledge that this would help with the self-deceptive processes, and therefore with both post-truth tendencies. But recall that we are interested in what would counteract those tendencies partly because we want to think about ways we might want to actually counteract them in ourselves and our community, and this possibility is not very interesting on that score. To see politically relevant events unfold without desiring very strongly that things be one way rather than another would require a detachment that is positively inhuman: something probably impossible for most of us, and not desirable overall, since it would presumably interfere with useful political action.

In any case: it is too early to give up on the commentators' suggestion.

To understand "my valuing the truth" just in terms of a desire that I (or most people) *believe* important truths is actually quite a strange idea. It is like understanding "my valuing tennis" in terms of a desire that I (or, impossibly, most people) win important tennis games. Valuing tennis might sometimes involve desires about winning, but it also involves many other desires: to play tennis a lot, to make good shots, to play against skilled players, to watch others play well, to introduce the game to new players, and so on. And more importantly, valuing tennis is not primarily about desire at all: affective and other sorts of responses

---

<sup>16</sup>See Bermúdez 2018 (98-99, footnote 24) for evidence that cognitive ability and science literacy actually *increase* the tendency to arrive at our desired conclusion.

<sup>17</sup>Writers on self-deception like Forrester 2002 recommend techniques for "decreasing [one's] desire for [the relevant thing]," such as to "develop a plan to avert or minimize the consequences of [it], or to live with [it]," (e.g.: "the graduate student who suspects that he is not an outstanding mathematician" might start "considering other careers.") (43.) Noting that the strong desires that lead to self-deception can derive strength from the way our *identities* are bound up with the relevant things being true, so that we will be at risk of self-deception "as long as dissonant evidence appears to be a threat to our social identity," Bermúdez 2018 recommends that we stop having social identities that generate such desires, to make evidence assessment "less existentially threatening."



are even more central.<sup>18</sup> Most obviously, this includes enjoying playing it and/or watching others do so: a pleasure that can lead enthusiasts to continue to play or watch even when it is painful, “outweighing” the pains of fatigue, bad weather, etc.

Once we recognize that valuing can involve much more than desire, one might wonder if a defender of the commentator’s claim could just look for the different things that *would* counteract the post-truth tendencies, and then say that valuing the truth involves *those*, and in this way guarantee that they are right. But as we saw in considering whether we could counteract post-truth tendencies by no longer having strong desires, we are not just interested in something that would counteract these tendencies, but something that is possible for us. We should look, then, at some *standard* pictures of what valuing the truth involves, which are meant to apply to familiar cases. In fact, such pictures *do* involve aspects that directly counteract the post-truth tendencies. I will focus, in particular, on the way that they counteract self-deceptive processes, since they play an important role in *both* post-truth tendencies.<sup>19</sup>

On standard pictures, valuing the truth involves finding great enjoyment in the discovery of surprising evidence—even when it is evidence for an unwelcome conclusion. And on those same pictures, this pleasure “outweighs” the pain of having things turn out otherwise than the way we desire, helping us keep our attention on that evidence and not explain it away. Consider two famous descriptions of what valuing the truth is like from the history of philosophy:

1. According to Bertrand Russell, Gottlob Frege is his intellectual hero for the “dedication to truth” he exhibited when Russell drew his attention to a contradiction in his logical system. Frege’s dedication was shown in the way

---

<sup>18</sup>As Elizabeth Anderson puts it, “to value something is to have a complex of positive attitudes toward it, governed by distinct standards for perception, emotion, deliberation, desire, and conduct.” (See Anderson 1993, Chapter 1.) Scanlon 1998, similarly, takes it that “To value something is to take oneself to have reasons for holding certain positive attitudes toward it and for acting in certain ways in regard to it.” (95-100.)

<sup>19</sup>It may be worth suggesting, in a more speculative way, how valuing the truth could more directly address the other post-truth tendency, by affecting voting behaviour. Suppose that valuing the truth led to a strong antipathy toward public figures who lie and an affinity and sense of shared identity with others concerned for the truth: somewhat in the way valuing something sacred does. Expressing these sorts of antipathies and identities is what, on one widely held theory, brings people to the polls. Many theorists hold, with Clark and Lee 2018, that “expressive motivations [are] the overwhelming, indeed sole, impetus for going to the polls in which many millions are expected to turn out.” (While the expressive theory of voting provides a route by which desire can lead to voting—after all, it could be that one votes in order to express the desire that most people believe the truth about important things—there is no obvious connection between the *strength* of a desire and the importance to one of expressing it. By contrast, aspects of our identities are precisely the sort of thing typically seen as relevant.)

he “responded with intellectual pleasure” sufficient for “submerging any feelings of personal disappointment.” This enabled Frege to evaluate the evidence correctly.<sup>20</sup>

2. Central to Nietzsche’s account of valuing the truth is the idea that “the unconditional will to truth, is faith in the ascetic ideal”—an ideal in which “pleasure is felt and sought in...pain...voluntary deprivation, self-mortification,” etc. He thinks people with such a will find morbid pleasure precisely in the pain of having their hopes dashed and their illusions shattered by what seems like evidence against what they want.<sup>21</sup> Such pleasure counter-balances the pain of such discoveries, enabling them to discover the truth.

On these descriptions valuing the truth involves reactions that plausibly directly counteract the self-deceptive processes an intelligible way. We have, then, come to understand the post-truth tendencies and see why valuing the truth, on standard conceptions that are meant to apply to familiar cases, would counteract it. Let me close by pointing to the most important questions that remain.

It is relatively easy to see why we should desire that most people believe the truth about important things: most people recognize that in a democracy, this is important for avoiding catastrophe, and there seem to be few costs involved in strongly wanting something like that (especially because it does not lead to much action, since we cannot do much about it).<sup>22</sup> But it is less easy to see why we should, or whether most of us could, value the truth in the way that would counteract the post-truth tendencies. (Nietzsche, for example, was famously suspicious that doing so might be bad.) Moreover, even if it is possible and desirable when it comes to certain truths—the sorts of deep truths about logic that Russell and Nietzsche had in mind—it may not be defensible for the sorts of truths that matter to politics. And finally, even if this way of valuing the truth proves ultimately defensible, it may be that valuing the truth in this way is only available to

---

<sup>20</sup>Quoted in van Heijenoort 1967, 127. It is interesting that Frege himself does not ever *say* that he felt pleasure, and the tone of his next letter to Russell is as serious as ever. Russell, I think, *infers* it from the fact that Frege’s disappointment *didn’t* lead him to self-deception, and from his own experiences. I conjecture that when Russell writes this about Frege, he is contrasting Frege’s response with his *own* reaction when a central problem with his theory of knowledge was pointed out by Wittgenstein. Russell describes himself as having “failed of honesty” in his work—that is, being self-deceived—and as a result, being unable to focus his attention on what Wittgenstein is saying: “I couldn’t understand [Wittgenstein’s] objection...[though it] has rather destroyed the pleasure in my writing.” (See Russell 1913.)

<sup>21</sup>See Nietzsche 1886, Essay 3.

<sup>22</sup>i.e., McIntyre 2018, 10: “When an individual is misinformed or mistaken, he or she will likely pay the price...But when our leaders—or a plurality of our society—are in denial over basic facts, the consequences can be world shattering.”

certain people: those who happen to, for one reason or another, have the sort of interest in how things are that tends to characterize a scholar (or a nerd).

These are serious questions, which must be left for another time.<sup>23</sup>

## References

- Anderson, Elizabeth (1993). *Value in Ethics and Economics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bermúdez, Juan Pablo (2018). “The Post-Truth Temperament: What Makes Belief Stray From Evidence? And What Can Bring Them Back Together?” In: *America’s Post-Truth Phenomenon*. Ed. by C.G. Prado. Santa Barbara: Praeger, pp. 87–109.
- Blackburn, Simon (2018). *On Truth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brennan, Geoffrey and Loren Lomasky (1993). *Democracy and Decision: The Pure Theory of Electoral Preference*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clark, J.R. and Dwight R. Lee (2018). “The Brennan–Lomasky Test of Expressive Voting: When Impressive Probability Differences Are Meaningless”. In: *Economies* 6, pp. 1–6.
- D’Ancona, Matthew (2017). *Post-Truth: The New War on Truth and How to Fight Back*. London: Ebury Publishing.
- Fischer, A.J. (1996). “A further experimental study of expressive voting”. In: *Public Choice* 88, pp. 171–184.
- Forrester, Mary (2002). “Self-Deception and Valuing Truth”. In: *American Philosophical Quarterly* 39, pp. 31–47.
- Hume, David (1738-1740). *Treatise of Human Nature*. London: John Noon and Thomas Longman.
- Illing, Sean (2018). *A philosopher explains America’s ‘post-truth’ problem*. URL: <https://www.vox.com/2018/8/14/17661430/trump-post-truth-politics-philosophy-simon-blackburn> (visited on 10/03/2019).
- Johnston, Mark (1995). “Self-Deception and the Nature of the Mind”. In: *Philosophy of Psychology: Debates on Psychological Explanation*. Ed. by MacDonald. Cambridge: Blackwell, pp. 63–91.
- Kakutani, Michiko (2018). *The Death of Truth: Notes on Falsehood in the Age of Trump*. New York: Tim Duggan Books.
- Kolodny, Niko (2018). “Instrumental Reasons”. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Reasons and Normativity*. Ed. by Star. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 731–763.

---

<sup>23</sup>At this point, I know of no better place to start than chapters 5 and 6 of Williams 2002.

- Kunda, Ziva (1990). "The Case for Motivated Reasoning". In: *Psychological Bulletin* 108, pp. 480–498.
- McIntyre, Lee (2018). *Post-Truth*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Mele, Alfred (2001). *Self-Deception Unmasked*. Princeton: Princeton.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1886). *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*. Leipzig: Naumann.
- Price, H.H. (1954). "The Inaugural Address: Belief and Will". In: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 28, pp. 1–26.
- Russell, Bertrand (1913). "Letter to Ottoline Morrell, 27 May 1913". In: *The Selected Letters of Bertrand Russell: The Private Years, 1884-1914*. Ed. by Griffin. 2002. London: Routledge.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul (1943). *L'être et le néant*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard.
- Scanlon, T.M. (1998). *What We Owe To Each Other*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Trope, Y., B. Gervy, and N. Liberman (1997). "Wishful Thinking from a Pragmatic Hypothesis-Testing Perspective". In: *The Mythomaniacs: The Nature of Deception and Self-Deception*. Ed. by Myslobodsky. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 105–131.
- van Heijenoort, Jean, ed. (1967). *From Frege to Gödel*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Williams, Bernard (2002). *Truth and Truthfulness: an essay in genealogy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.