

45. The Age of Subjectivity

(The play begins with a podium, stage left, and a chair, stage right. In the transition, the SPEAKER stands next to the table, and TRUMP stands next to the chair, wearing the presidential coat.)

SPEAKER. I was chosen to perform this play because I am comfortable saying the words it contains. This was important to the author because it was not an easy play to write and she suspected it would not be easy to perform.

(During the next line, TRUMP sits in the chair and begins live tweeting. This should be someone who feels comfortable in the role, can think/respond quickly and/or improvise easily, and has familiarity with Twitter. Ideally, the actor playing TRUMP will tweet from the theatre's account and should tweet in character the whole time - not worrying about being distracting or interrupting the speaker. If it's not possible to tweet from the theatre's Twitter account, the theatre or show should be tagged at the start of the thread. We see the tweets projected, in real time, upon the screen onstage. This continues throughout the spoken text.)

SPEAKER. [Name of ACTOR] was chosen to perform TRUMP in this play because [actual reason that person was chosen for the role]. They get to “say” whatever they want.

Opinion: Trump’s entire presidential journey has been norm-breaking. Some feel this has revived a flagging democracy; others feel it has created a real-life, dystopian nightmare.

Fact: Like John Quincy Adams, Hayes, Ben Harrison, and Bush, Jr. before him, Trump won his election; however, he lost the popular vote by the greatest numerical margin.

Opinion: That fact is muddled by his likely collusion with Russia to influence the election. Which happened so long ago, followed by so many norm-breaking and controversial actions, that it seems tiny in comparison to where we are at this moment.

Fact: On December 18, 2019, President Donald J. Trump was impeached by the House of Representatives for Abuse of Power and Obstruction of Congress. This was the third time, since the founding of the country, that a sitting president had been impeached.

Opinion: Oddly enough, the suspected collusion with Russia was not the thrust of this case. Instead he was...

Fact: ...charged with [direct quote light on] high crimes and misdemeanors [direct quote light off] due to recorded evidence that he pressured the President of Ukraine to provide damaging information about his political opponent, Joe Biden...

Opinion: ... and then lied about it and refused to cooperate with any investigation or due process—with absolutely no shame. If this reminds you of Nixon, it should. But it also shouldn't.

What makes this situation unique is we now live in an age where the idea of truth or fact is subjective, and people can lie with very little consequence.

Fact: According to The Washington Post, *[direct quote light on]* President Trump has made over 20,000 false or misleading claims *[direct quote light off]* since his inauguration.

Opinion: But now we have media outlets with clear political agendas, propaganda campaigns on social media, and foreign bots and trolls that exist to stir up dissent. So there is always going to be someone online, or at work, or in your family who will vehemently dispute your facts.

Fact: On February 3, 2020, the Senate voted to acquit Trump. On February 6, the first U.S. death due to coronavirus occurred, according to recent autopsies. The author of this play has given us space to share what we think about that.

Opinion: *[please insert a brief statement that reflects the sentiments of those involved in the production; if you have people who disagree, please include that; keep it about the length of the other Opinion sections].*

Fact: Ta-Nehisi Coates wrote in *The Atlantic*: *[direct quote light on]* "It is often said that Trump has no real ideology, which is not true—his ideology is white supremacy, in all its truculent and sanctimonious power." *[direct quote light off]*.

Which is, of course, an opinion, but the Southern Poverty Law Center reported a 30% increase in active hate groups that coincides with Trump's campaign and presidency, the majority of which are aligned with white supremacist ideology. And in this case, the timing is a fact, but the correlation could be argued as an opinion.

Opinion: Maybe you believe your sense of personhood, quality of life, and safety hasn't been impacted by this administration. For many of us, it has.

Fact: The 2020 election is *[insert accurate number]* days away.

****NOTE:** Verification for the number of falsehoods can be found here:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/07/13/president-trump-has-made-more-than-200-false-or-misleading-claims/>