

# 11

## DISRUPTIVE JOY

### #BlackOutDay's Affirmative Resonances

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If you were on Twitter or Tumblr on March 6, 2015, you might have noticed something unusual. Scores and scores of black Twitter and Tumblr users were taking, uploading, and circulating selfies, intentionally flooding the system with black faces. According to one report, by noon there were over 58,000 tweets with the hashtag #BlackOutDay (Tan, 2015). In my own experience, given the queer-of-color networks I am involved in on Tumblr, the saturation was much higher; some selfies that came across my dashboard eventually received over 250,000 notes each.<sup>1</sup>

I had been participating in queer-of-color Tumblr networks for five years at this point as a user-ethnographer and I hadn't seen anything like this—this massive, this guttural, and this affirmative. Many people read the selfie as the consummate act of vanity, and the “millennial” generation has been dismissively referred to as the “selfie generation” (Blow, 2014). However, this practice, on this day, had a different tilt. According to one widely read Tumblr, TheBlackout.org, the original impetus for #BlackOutDay was:

In a show of community and solidarity, for those 24 hours, we are exclusively posting and reblogging pics, gifs, videos, selfies, etc. of Black people. We want to show that Black History is happening today, right now. That we are all Black History.

*(#TheBlackout, 2017)*

This practice was also proposed as an exercise in affirmation, a flooding of blackness in what is normally a popular cultural understanding of beauty being equated with only white bodies. A person widely credited to be one of the inventors of #BlackOutDay, Tumblr user T'von, wrote this after the fact:

I got inspired to propose Blackout day after thinking “Damn, I’m not seeing enough Black people on my dash.” Of course I see a constant amount

of Black celebrities but what about the regular people? Where is their shine? When I proposed it, I thought people would think it was a good idea, but not actually go through with implementing it. Luckily people wanted to get behind the idea, and @recklessthottie created the #Black-out tag . . . I'm really sick and tired of seeing the "European standard of beauty" prevail. It's past time for the beauty of Black people to be showcased. I love all people of color, but this here is for *us*.

*(Twitter users celebrate, 2015)*

#BlackOutDay got major media attention, including stories by ABC News (Tan, 2015) and *Washington Post* (Izadi, 2015). But more than that: #Black-OutDay was *intense*. I don't think people were expecting it to be as emotional as it was. I remember seeing posts pop up on my Tumblr feed a few minutes before midnight on March 5; people couldn't wait. As it happened—as it really started to materialize before your eyes—it became an emotional thing. Emotional because there were really so many beautiful people out there, emotional because we all knew how white-dominated our image regimes are, but it was still jarring and freeing to see, for once, an alternative. It was emotional for the sheer intensity and amount of participation that happened, emotional to see the range of blackness that came through, and to realize how flattened "black" is allowed to be when it does emerge in mainstream representations. It was emotional because, as many people on Tumblr pointed out, we are often only presented with black bodies in mainstream media as corpses.

People were excited. People couldn't contain themselves. People posted a few minutes before midnight, calling what they posted "pre-BlackOutDay" selfies. There were #BlackOutDay parties. Many people on my feed wrote that they were moved to tears. I think people half expected it wasn't going to happen. Then the power of the collective began to overwhelm them.

The goal of this chapter is threefold. First, it is to try to honor and document the spirit of the moment, as much as it is possible for a non-black observer to do. As a user and researcher of Tumblr, as a critical race theorist interested in the politics of feeling, and as an activist academic and queer multiracial person, I felt that there was something very important happening right before my eyes. I initially did not want to write about it because I have white-passing privilege in the United States, and that was the whole point. Yet as the years went by I grew anxious, as I did not see academic literature on it, and I did not want to see its traces erased from official record, as ephemeral as Tumblr is, as it is bought and sold by corporation after corporation. It should go without saying, but I welcome any black-identified writer, or anyone else for that matter, to flatten or refine everything I assert here; it is only my take.

Second, this chapter attempts to argue for the radical potential of collective affirmation, theorizing a middle way in the face of a recent critical literature that is (rightly) dubious of dutiful "happiness" or other good feelings. Third, this

chapter calls upon an interpretation of affect theory that advocates for close attention to the play of emergence and variation of the event-in-motion as an analytic heuristic to try to understand the viscerally powerful—and indeed, radical—heft of a collective act such as this one. In other words, #BlackOutDay would be easy to dismiss as an ephemeral millennial “clicktivist” moment (White, n.d.), lacking conventional badges of political significance, centered around the most mundane and self-serving act of digital participation (the selfie). This chapter argues that these reasons are precisely why it mattered.

Ultimately, holding these three lines of comment together, this chapter explores the “networked self”—one in which users marshal the tools at their disposal on social network sites to perform selfhood in a way that both echoes and updates long-standing theories of identity performance to include multiple simultaneous and collapsed contexts, accelerated network connections especially involving weak ties, and “a variety of multimedia tools that enable the possibility for more controlled and imaginative performances of identity online” (Papacharissi, 2011, p. 307). The selfie, here, is one of those tools, and this chapter pays close attention to the “patterns of sociality that emerge” (ibid., p. 309) via the agentic taking and circulating of the selfie over the network. It also hints at pushing “the networked self” even further: that perhaps, in this oddly collective moment of affective networked sharing, the feeling of “self” itself ceases to be pure singularity, that the networked self can, for a brief moment, retain a real political bodily specificity while at the same time transcend strict Cartesian bounds of individual subjectivity via a sense-in-common.

## Selfie Politics

Can the act of taking and/or circulating selfies ever be a political, or even counter-hegemonic, one? This is a tricky question, especially since the selfie is perceived by the legacy press and other commentators as an eye-rollingly trite act of self-indulgent millennial vanity. There is, however, academic research that points to the fact that the answer is “yes,” especially when selfies are part of a network or collective. Theresa Senft and Nancy Baym tackled this question (in addition to many others) in editing a substantial collection of original scholarship on selfies in a special section of the *International Journal of Communication* in 2015 (Senft & Baym, 2015).

One of the special section’s articles, an examination of the power of the taking and circulation of the selfie in the context of Brazilian slums, concludes:

[F]or marginalized users who are suffering in a relatively severe living environment, selfies are not a shallow way to show narcissism, fashion, and self-promotion and seek attention; selfies, rather, empower the users to exercise free speech, practice self-reflection, express spiritual purity, improve literacy skills, and form strong interpersonal connections.

(Nemer & Freeman, 2015)

Elsewhere, Katrin Tiidenberg, in an examination of Tumblr users who exchange NSFW (“not safe for work”) selfies, explains that her interview participants “have reclaimed the body-aesthetic from the regime of shame (Koskela, 2004) of the body-normative consumer society, thus redefining, what sexy or beautiful is” (Tiidenberg, 2014). Tiidenberg argues that her interviewees have successfully used the agentic potential of participatory media (in this case, Tumblr), to challenge hegemonic regimes of beauty and shame.

If critical selfie scholarship has disrupted any simple read of selfies as throw-away “narcissism,” it has also disrupted the idea that a selfie is an isolated, solipsistic act at all. Aaron Hess (2015) asks us to think of the selfie as an always-in-flux component of a Deleuze and Guattari-inspired assemblage—or perhaps multiple assemblages—on a number of simultaneous registers. He writes, “While the easy explanation is that selfies exist as emblems of a narcissistic contemporary culture, a deeper reading of selfies instead provides insight into the relationships between technology, the self, materiality, and networks” (Hess, 2015, p. 1630), expanding, “Selfies are, on face, about the self, yet they long for—require, even—sharing to be considered ‘true’ selfies” (p. 1631). For Hess, the selfie always implicates not just the picture-taker, but also the physical space, the device, and the network upon which it is shared (p. 1632), including its viewers, real, or, I’ll add, anticipated. This observation undergirds a crucial point in my argument to follow: one must look at the play of the selfie across the network, in this case, the specifically timed emergence of visible blackness in a digital space otherwise dominated by ex-nominated white beauty ideals, as an agentic and hegemonically resistant act.

In one powerful #BlackOutDay selfie, which received over 12,500 notes by the time I saw it (my timestamp indicates it was early am on March 7, 2015, just over twenty-four hours after #BlackOutDay started), a smiling father who appears to be in his late twenties poses with his young son, also smiling broadly at the camera. The post reads:

My 4 year old son asked me this afternoon why God made us black. He didn’t understand why he was black when all the other kids in his pre-school class are white. It was amazing I could get on tumblr today and show him all the black people who were proud of their dark skin and how black people come in different shades, sizes, and backgrounds. I love my black skin and I will make damn sure he loves his too.<sup>2</sup>

As of this writing, the post has over 32,000 notes. In another widely circulated selfie, a young man has tears in his eyes, arms outstretched, mouth slightly open in a hint of a smile. He writes:

Sorry I’m crying. As someone in my position; Bisexual, disabled (hearing impaired), not confident in my appearance, and struggling. I tend to avoid posting pictures for a movement. Even if it is one meant to motivate,

inspire, and more. However, after seeing some pictures of other African-Americans in similar positions as myself . . . after some thought I built up the courage. Thanks you all so much for #blackout.

This post and selfie were also featured in an article on BuzzFeed (Adewunmi, 2015); by that point, at 11:52 am on March 6, it had garnered over 285,000 notes. Lest there be any doubt that this flooding and sharing of black selfies was political, one user succinctly literalized one of #BlackOutDay's ongoing emotional undercurrents:

These aren't just selfies, they should remind you that #BlackLivesMatter.

The testimony kept going. Scrolling after scrolling. One text post read:

Man I am seriously about to cry right now this is the most beautiful I've ever really felt to be honest with you guys. Our BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL THROUGH OUT THE NATION.

One Tumblr user I follow reblogged an image of multiple Tumblr text posts compiled from different black Tumblr users:

I'm honestly getting so emotional going through my dash. Thinking about how I used to hate my skin and how I wanted to be white cause I thought then maybe I could be loved. I even got fooled into being hateful towards my own people.

Another:

But honestly I feel so beautiful right now. I'm not the most confident person in the world but today I've gained so much confidence. Like to see so many people with my complexion stand in solidarity and positivity is so beautiful. It's so dope that we came together and shared our beauty and to hear people's stories about how they weren't confident either brought tears to my eyes. Like please you guys are so beautiful don't let anyone tell you any different. I don't know I'm just so happy and emotional lol.

And another:

Blackout is such an amazing thing. Seeing my lil sis confident in her hair, nose, curves, makes me want to cry.

It is hard to capture the strange rawness of feeling that people on my dash were literalizing as #BlackOutDay started in its early hours. It was a flood, a

rush. So many pictures of faces you never see. People literally crying. Smiling. Partying. Over the years, I have learned to actively avoid following gay Tumblrs that post what one might call normatively “sexy” images of scruffy artsy/hunky hipster white guys in service of my own self-esteem in the face of a racialized hegemonic mirroring in which I am erased or distorted, and it was still a flood for me, too.

True to Tumblr’s tradition of critical discourse, #BlackOutDay had its own correctives. Some Tumblr users observed that, even within the critical mass of black selfies flooding social media, there were rhythms of old-time stratifications: colorism, ableism, certain types of normalized hair styles. According to one Tumblr user, “We still need to be critical about it and DO BETTER. . . . Some people didn’t feel safe or attractive enough to even take selfies because they were triggered by the huge number of ‘tumblr aesthetic’ light skinned/loose 3a curls/neurotypical kinds of people reaching thousands of notes on their selfies.”

But this was part of the whole energy of the thing, the multiple lines of variation in perspective and discourse that shot out of the moment, all underpinned by a wildly resonant affective energetics located squarely in the affirmative. Hess’s assertion that, paradoxically, selfies depend on circulation and only have meaning in community—the selfie as a communal moment—is quite appropriate here, and was the genesis of, I argue, something full of radical potential.

## Happiness and the Affirmative

It is very hard to argue *for* happiness in the critical left tradition of cultural studies. A wave of critical (un)happiness studies has sprung up in recent years (Berlant, 2011; Ahmed, 2010; Cvetkovich, 2012), and genealogically-related key works in queer theory are very preoccupied with feeling bad (Edelman, 2004; Love, 2009; Halperin & Traub, 2010; Halberstam, 2011). I want to recognize that this work is valuable in highlighting the lived experience of oppression and how our emotional orientations are themselves structured by rigid, internalized schemes of colony and family; I wrote about the radical potential of bad feelings, borrowing Heather Love’s phrase “stubborn negativity” to describe other kinds of queerly felt dynamics on Tumblr (Cho, 2015). Yet I think there is more nuance to be teased in this area.

What about the tendrils of potential reaching out from a moment of cathartic joy under a weight of systemic oppression? What about the shock of being moved to smiling tears? What about the power of an event that is not an appeal for distant utopia, not a productive duty toward blithe and dumb happiness, but rather a realization of a resistant solidarity engendered by unexpected feelings of kinship (Eng, 2010)? In other words, #BlackOutDay: can we skeptically regard late capital’s machinic operation, massaging our feelings for profit across the network, and at the same time understand that these messages can be radical—and can be radically *felt*?

Tumblr was surely happy that #BlackOutDay happened; it drove people to post and participate on its platform and it generated major press coverage. It would be easy to levy a simple political-economic critique here and claim that it was all in the service of profit at the end; roll credits. After all, social media companies are hungrily churning out new tactics to capture and monetize feelings (McNeal, 2014; Machkovech, 2017). But, as an observer of the moment, it is difficult for me to ignore the radical charge of the affirmative. In addition to the rightful political-economic critique, I also view this as a moment of resistant politics—in this case, a politics that accumulates from a shared affective register, an affirmation that is highly charged, a disruption of psychic structures that are so ingrained that we don't even realize how it can affect something as fundamental as attraction, or how we regard beauty. We all *know* there is a white standard of beauty, and we all *know better* than that. But when do we ever get the chance to *feel* better than that? We know that #BlackLivesMatter matters, at least in terms of shifting discourse and making it newsworthy to talk about the systematic state murder of black people. I view #BlackOutDay as an emotionally chiral companion.

Lauren Berlant's *Cruel Optimism* (2011) is a signpost here, suggesting that our current neoliberal situation is defined by retreating opportunity and increasing fantasy for the "good life." Is our happiness, or striving for it, a ruse, a carrot, a cruel sleight of hand? Berlant describes cruel optimism as the relation that exists "when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing" (p. 1). Berlant cautions us to not get too attached to optimism as object or guiding orientation; she even warns us not to get too attached to normative political attachments at all (pp. 2, 224). But, as we will see later, she offers a way out in terms of noise and silence—a register on which #BlackOutDay seems much more resonant than that of "normative speech" (p. 230).

Likewise, Sara Ahmed interrogates positive psychology's fascination with "happiness"—especially happiness as "what you reach at the end of an 'unmarked path,'" quoting Darrin McMahon (2010, p. 199). Ultimately, Ahmed argues for breathing room outside of dutiful happiness, its own powerful tautology, for an exit from its totalizing ethics, and to regard happiness simply "as a possibility that does not exhaust what is possible" (p. 219). She adds, "We can value happiness for its precariousness, as something that comes and goes, as life does. When I think of what makes happiness 'happy,' I think of moments . . . a sense of lightness in possibility" (p. 219). This is precisely how I would describe the affective mechanics of #BlackOutDay: a moment, a lightness. I'd also wager that many of the participants in #BlackOutDay are very much aware of the precariousness of happiness and the corollary coming-and-going of life, especially in terms of state-sanctioned murder.

So I ask: Is #BlackOutDay a moment of terrible fantasy of the good life? Is #BlackOutDay simply "slow death" with a smile? Is it a directive toward dutiful happiness? I think it is very tempting to say yes, to write it off in a flourish of critical-academic bravado. But, there is something there that won't let me do it.

I don't want to throw the affirmative out the window. Affirmation and even joy are not the same as happiness or optimism. I would like to train my ear toward a more sympathetic understanding of "affirmation." Again, Ahmed takes pains to clarify these terms: "[Not] calling for an affirmative approach to life, or calling for affirmation as an ethics" (p. 222), but rather an affirmative that is simply an opening up of other possibilities, instantiations, ones that are not over-determined, small events, precarities, and even, using the language we've often seen used to describe selfies: "all those forms of happiness which are deemed superficial" (p. 222).

Deborah Gould's work on the political potential of the feel-good, affirmative erotics of the ACT UP movement at the height of the Western AIDS crisis also opens up the possibilities made possible by affirmation (2009). Quoting one former ACT UP member, Gould writes: "Ferd Eggan described ACT UP meetings as filled with 'a lot of sexual feeling and validation'" (p. 192). The ACT UP meeting: a legendarily precarious, erotic, affirmative, contentious, charged affective sociality in the midst of death (Hilderbrand, 2006). Greg Bordowitz, quoted in Gould's account, invokes the radical possibility of joy in the political atmosphere of ACT UP: "'I had heard about revolutionary joy . . . I just loved it . . . It was life-saving'" (2009, p. 184). "Revolutionary joy." A life-saving act taught to us by those inhabiting dying bodies. The utter opposite of the blithe happiness duty. How can we further nuance *that*?

## A Dynamic Unity

It was actually happening. Even before midnight, it was actually happening. People were doing it. It was real.

It would be a disservice to the affective energies of #BlackOutDay to speak about it in shards and pieces, absent the vector of time (as I have done thus far). This is hard to escape, since the critical apparatus of much humanistic or social-scientific scholarly analysis is largely predicated on isolating discrete pieces of static evidence, pinning them to the page, and dissecting. Our instruments are built to interpret the static; they are clumsy at best, and crumple at worst, when dealing with the fluid or processes in motion.<sup>3</sup> Yet, I want to spend some time here thinking about the event as it existed in motion because I believe that this was part of what made #BlackOutDay so *moving*. We may even be able to extrapolate from here to think about how the affective dynamics of the event can be harnessed for a radical politics in other arenas. Brian Masumi (2002) offers a challenging but compelling humanistic vocabulary to think about the affective properties of the event-in-process. In general, he implores a "fluidifying" (p. 7) of our usually static ways of dissecting, arguing for attention to processes of "passing into" and "emergence" as vital zones of activity that are usually glossed in critical study and that perish under our knee-jerk tendency toward binary thinking: "The kinds of distinction suggested here



pertain to continuities under qualitative transformation. They are directly processual . . . They can only be approached by a logic that is abstract enough to grasp the self-disjunctive coincidence of a thing's immediacy to its own variation" (p. 8).

As I understand it, Massumi is advocating for an "abstract logic" that is capacious enough to reject binarisms—or, rather, hold them together—in favor of an appreciation of the thing and its potential to transform in-motion as a "dynamic unity" (p. 8). It is neither here nor there, but becoming.<sup>4</sup>

The thing in motion, a dynamic unity, holding together its immediacy and variation—to me, this is a far more satisfactory way of thinking about #BlackOutDay as it gathered and played out in the early hours of March 6 than filing it away in stasis. I argue that part of the reason why #BlackOutDay was so powerful, why it moved participants and onlookers to tears, why it cut through the usual layers of Tumblr and other short-form internet snark to something bare and visceral was that, in addition to the ideological register of its content (positive and multiple representations of blackness), its *form* was affective incipience, birthed of collectivity, honed by suspense. I want to add a spin to Massumi's own words: the thing, the event and its variances, was a processual dynamic unity indeed—but it also gave us the visceral resonance of what it felt like to be part of a dynamic unity of users. Users simply didn't know what to expect; perhaps no one really thought it was going to happen, and at the stroke of midnight, as the incipience held forth as immanence, its variances unfolding in front of us like a gorgeous peony in time-lapse, as it moved, so we were moved.

As time progressed, variations calcified. In the early hours, it was "#BlackOut" or even "#TheBlackOut"; as it garnered more major media coverage and discourse amplified, users and the press seemed to home in on #BlackOutDay as the tag-of-record. There was critical discourse on what to do as a non-black Tumblr user, and the general consensus among the people I follow and interact with on Tumblr was that this was a great opportunity for non-black Tumblr users to excuse themselves in a show of support, to purposefully abstain from posting any selfies for the next twenty-four hours in an act of silent allegiance. There were detractors as well. A selfie of a young bearded white man holding up a small bottle of Wite-Out to the camera with the headline "Race and Nationality Transcend Skin Color You Pretentious Fucks" appeared on my feed with a short caption vilifying the "SJWs of Tumblr who think they can claim a tag or own the right to free speech. MLK is rolling in his grave."<sup>5</sup> It appeared on my feed because a black user I follow reblogged it, imploring that the original poster "do us all a favor and drink that bottle of your blood." It only had 595 notes by the time I saw it twenty-four hours after #BlackOutDay had officially started; it seems that #BlackOutDay participants mostly stuck to the affirmative energetics of the moment. Another rhythm of the event: people seemed to sway back and forth between boosting everyone who appeared on their dash and, as the corrective mentions above, people who appeared to be hegemonically "hot." Was

this turning into a notes accumulation and sexiness popularity contest before our eyes? Some posts I saw expressed dismay at this trend, the fact that one could post a selfie on #BlackOutDay and receive barely any notes and therefore feel doubly rejected; these bloggers pledged to reblog every single black selfie that they came across, regardless of number of notes or perceived sexiness.

As I interpret Massumi, these variations and encrustings of the event's affective energy are to be expected, they are the flow of the affective dynamics as played out over the vector of time and through the tidal spillage of the affective charge into discourse, into management, into territory, and back again. They fold and shift and appear and disappear as part of the fluidity of the event, the "immanence" of the thing as well as its "indeterminate variation" (2002, p. 9). The thing, the event, as it moves in weird and coiled ways, is a whole unto itself, while simultaneously filled with potential.

## Disruptive Joy

The journalist who wrote about #BlackOutDay for ABC News kept calling it a "campaign": "A highlight of the diverse faces of people from the social media campaign #BlackOutDay . . . [I]s a social media campaign today celebrating Black beauty and fighting against negative images and stereotypes perpetuated in the media" (Tan, 2015). Yet, "campaign" seems like the wrong word. "Campaign" rings false, like it's propaganda or advertising, masterminded in a small executive conference room and deployed from the top down, with a defined lifespan and quantifiable objectives. That doesn't capture the feeling of #BlackOutDay.

If it wasn't a "campaign," what was it? We are at a loss for words to understand and describe these passionate acts of connection across social media. Not quite a "movement," not a "campaign," and not quite a "subculture," it was something more organic and amorphous, something that came into being, or emerged, folding outward exponentially, by process of refrain. Was it a meme? Something viral? Both of those terms could apply, but seem to hint at something, an artifact, that is distributed or replicated. "Meme" also seems like a huge disservice, a flattening of the affective heft catalyzed in #BlackOutDay's political project.

As *Cruel Optimism* closes, Berlant offers us sonic metaphors, of noise and its companion, silence—an affective training toward the political that can possibly be levied to interfere with, and not reproduce, normative political speech acts. In her words, "noise" is equal to affect (2011, p. 230); she refers to Charles Hirschkind's understanding of noise as "the social circulation of affective building" (p. 224). To be clear, Berlant is dubious, observing that most political attachment is made of noise, only. But, also, noise and silence are adjudicated in and through movement (p. 230); silence and noise are companions and interrupt intelligible speech, "Noise interferes, makes interference. Interference made loud within political communication makes time for adjustment and counter-thought" (p. 232).

I would call #BlackOutDay a highly visible moment of sensuous participation, a synchronizing of networks of passion. If Tumblr, as I've argued elsewhere, can operate on "queer reverb," then #BlackOutDay was an alignment, a harmonic resonance that registered off the charts. I choose to understand these resonant affirmations as produced by the overwhelming multiplication of black faces across Tumblr emphatically *not* as a pining for the "good life." Rather, I want to ultimately be quiet, observe, and absorb the resonant quality of affirmation across the network, reblogged hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of times, flooding the system. I want to disentangle affirmation in this sense from its connotation as a superficial platitude and understand that, on a register of visual, collective interference, it can be joyous, disruptive, and militant. Berlant finds a noisy bed-fellow in Massumi on this topic, writing on intensity's non-linearity, doing a bit of wordplay with the term "static." Rather than a linear progression, "intensity is qualifiable as an emotional state, and that state is static—temporal and narrative noise. It is a state of suspense, potentially of disruption" (2002, p. 26).

#BlackOutDay was intense, affective noise on an affirmative register—a register of joy that also welcomed in bittersweetness and ache—clogging out, for a moment, more "normative speech" acts such as discursive argument. In this sense, it was an example of Massumi's potential to disrupt: of the privileging of normative speech, of the profound reality that normative speech itself is usually crafted by and in service of whiteness, of the guttural settler colonies of desire and beauty we all carry around with us, and of simply feeling angry or ugly all the time. Tracking this affective noise over the vector of time—the intensity of suspense—is another way of putting the goal of this chapter, and Berlant's suggestion that this sort of noise "makes time for adjustment and counter-thought" (2011, p. 232) within a regime of normative political speech can be pushed further: I'd suggest "*counter-feel*" as well. In other words, as Albert-László Barabási states in the introduction to the volume *A Networked Self* (2011), "Networks exist for a reason. They spread ideas; they spread knowledge; they spread influence" (p. 12). I want to add: they spread *affective, guttural sense-knowledge*, and when this gut-in-common hits a resonance, they spread the boundaries of the networked "self," too.

## Notes

- 1 On Tumblr, a "note" is something akin to a registered interaction with a post: "notes" are generated if someone "likes" or "reblogs" a post to their own Tumblr. The actual number of simple views of a post may be much higher.
- 2 Though this post is widely shared and publicly viewable to anyone on the Internet and has been circulated tens of thousands of times, I have altered several minor words in this quotation. This is in keeping with Markham's entreaty for internet researchers to adopt, where appropriate, "ethical fabrication" (2012) of internet artifacts to make them un-searchable in order to preserve the original poster's privacy and image. As it appears here, it is no longer searchable on Google or Tumblr. This same method has been used in various quotations of high-profile public Tumblr posts in this chapter.

- 3 Massumi elaborates: “The concept of field, to mention but one, is a useful logical tool for expressing continuity of self-relation and heterogeneity in the same breath. Embarrassingly for the humanities, the handiest concepts in this connection are almost without exception products of mathematics and the sciences” (2002, p. 8). Elsewhere, Kathleen Stewart explains, “Affect studies forms part of a renewed search for modes of ethnographic theory and critique divested from the distanced, sheerly evaluative plane of academic conversation based on the stability of academic terms” (2017).
- 4 This use of “becoming” is my own invocation of Deleuze and Guattari (1987). To be very clear, Massumi does not use this term in his explanation and I do not want to imply that he does, lest I force a misread of his careful argument and his highly specific choice of words.
- 5 “SJW” is Tumblr slang for “social justice warrior,” a pejorative term used to indicate outspoken advocates of social justice, often used by Tumblr’s more conservative elements to imply a frustration with what they consider an unthinking adherence to “political correctness.”

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