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Language

Power Plays in Communication

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> LANGUAGE is indisputably the more immediate province of the fair sex: there they shine, there they excel. The torrents of their eloquence, especially in the vituperative way, stun all opposition, and bear away in one promiscuous heap, nouns, pronouns, verbs, moods and tenses. If words are wanting (which indeed happens but seldom) indignation instantly makes new ones . . . Nor is the tender part of our language less obliged to that soft and amiable sex; their love being at least as productive as their indignation . . . I remember many very expressive words coined in that fair mint. I assisted at the birth of that most significant word, FLIRTATION, which dropped from the most beautiful mouth in the world . . . Some inattentive and undiscerning people have, I know, taken it to be a term synonymous with coquetry; but I lay hold of this opportunity to undeceive them . . . that FLIRTATION is short of coquetry, and intimates only the first hints of approximation, which subsequent coquetry may . . . end in a definitive treaty.[1]

Words are used to do many things: to describe, plan and promise, invite and command. They are also used words to wound—to demean, insult, and exclude. In this 1754 letter in the British magazine *The World*, the statesman Lord Philip Stanhope apparently undertakes to praise women for their verbal aptitude, especially for linguistic innovation in the service of insults and subtle indirection in the service of courtship. But in so doing, he himself deftly deploys eloquence, expressive words, and indirection to mock these

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very same "female" ways of speaking, and to cast women in general as silly creatures obsessed with petty passions about social trifles.

The fact that words can have such potent, pernicious effects is puzzling, because they are, after all, just words. As the schoolyard chant goes, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me." Words do hurt though—not only our feelings, but our social status, even our basic dignity as human beings. How can sounds and shapes do all that? Many philosophers have thought of language as a kind of game. Both games and language are complex, abstract structures that we deploy strategically to achieve serious goals, as well as for fun. Thinking through some of these similarities can illuminate how something so intangible can have such powerful effects. And seeing how people wield that power for malicious ends can reveal how to turn the tables and fight back.

12.1 Power Plays and Weapon Words

Like basketball, language involves arbitrary rules. Where basketball's conventions specify how to use the ball, linguistic conventions specify default ways of using words. Many of these conventions are fairly straightforward: naming objects ("apple") and properties ("red"), and combining them into sentences to express propositions that represent the world and communicate information that is true or false. However, words can also conventionally perform other functions: they can express feelings ("Hooray!"), evaluations ("good"), and recommendations ("should"). They can also work to manage social status. Thus, titles like "Sir" honor their applicants, while epithets like "Boy" diminish them. We sometimes use diminutive epithets to build intimacy ("You go, girl!"). But they are often used to enforce power differences. In 1967, psychiatrist Alvin Poussaint recalled an experience in his hometown of Jackson, Mississippi:

> As I was leaving my office . . . a white policeman yelled, "Hey, boy! Come here!" Somewhat bothered, I retorted: "I'm no boy!" He then rushed at me, inflamed, and stood towering over me, snorting, "What d'ja say, boy?" Quickly he frisked me and demanded, "What's your name, boy?" Frightened, I replied, "Dr. Poussaint. I'm a physician." He angrily chuckled and hissed, "What's your first name, boy?" . . . As my heart palpitated, I muttered in profound humiliation, "Alvin." . . . "Alvin, the next

> time I call you, you come right away, you hear? . . . You hear me, boy?" My voice trembling with helplessness, but following my instincts of self-preservation, I murmured, "Yes, sir." This had occurred on a public street for all the local black people to witness, reminding them that *no* black man was as good as *any* white man. All of us—doctor, lawyer, postman, field hand and shoeshine boy—had been psychologically "put in our place."[2]

The use of "boy" as a put-down may seem to belong to a bygone era (though note that the US Supreme Court ruled in 2006 that it may constitute evidence of racism). Nonetheless, other verbal tools for putting people in their place are very much alive and well.

In particular, slurs—that is, derogatory terms for categories defined by ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, etc.—are powerful tools for social oppression, particularly when hurled as epithets ("You *S*!"). Even if we would never use the word ourselves, and even if we reject the aptness of its applicability to the person at whom it's aimed, the very fact that we recognize its meaning achieves some of its intended effect, because its currency demonstrates that enough other people do buy into its associated perspective for it to achieve that public status. In 1940, Langston Hughes described the social force marshaled by what is now typically called "the N-word" (though note that Hughes himself actually mentioned the word, in order to dramatize its visceral effect):

> The word *n***r*, you see, sums up for us who are colored all the bitter years of insult and struggle in America: the slave-beatings of yesterday, the lynchings of today, the Jim Crow cars . . . the restaurants where you may not eat, the jobs you may not have, the unions you cannot join. The word *n***r* in the mouths of little white boys at school, the word *n***r* in the mouth of the foreman at the job, the word *n***r* across the whole face of America! *N***r! N***r!*[3]

As with "boy," we may hope that this slur is less prevalent now than in 1940. And today as then, this particular slur is especially incendiary, because of the uniquely institutionalized racial oppression of African Americans. All slurs, however, have palpable power because they demonstrate to the target, and those around them, that "people" think that members of the targeted group deserve low status, that social mechanisms exist to enforce that status, and

that the speaker is prepared to invoke those mechanisms to push the target into their "proper place."[4]

12.2 Frames and Stereotypes

Not all utterances containing slurs are "fighting words," or weapons hurled directly at their targets. Some, like "That's where the *S*s all hang out," primarily inform a hearer of some (supposed) fact, leaving the slur's perspective off to the side as color commentary. These informational uses are still jarring, though, given slurs' status as taboo words. But taboo is not necessary for enforcing social norms: "polite" terms can also have this as an aspect of their conventional function. Thus, nouns like "prude," "tease," and "spinster" encode assumptions about proper expressions of female sexuality. By using them, speakers do not just express their own personal feelings; they demean the women to whom they are applied for having violated public norms of female sexuality, and enforce those norms as regulative for everyone else. Other terms, like "demure" or "jailbait," enforce the same sorts of norms through a kind of praise. While the praise may make them feel better in the short run, it still locates their targets in a "place" that has been deemed appropriate for them, and disparages those who do not conform. Words can even function regularly to enforce norms for a group without being conventionally restricted to that group. Thus, in principle terms like "bossy," "abrasive," "strident," "aggressive," "emotional," and "irrational" can apply to anyone, regardless of gender. In practice though, they are overwhelmingly applied to women: a 2014 analysis in *Fortune* of 248 performance reviews from 28 companies found that "all of these words show up at least twice in the women's [performance] review[s] . . . *Abrasive* alone is used 17 times to describe 13 different women. Among these words, only *aggressive* shows up in men's reviews at all. It shows up three times, twice with an exhortation to be more of it."[5]

Two features of "thick" terms like these, or words that combine description and evaluation, make them especially conversationally powerful. First, they *presuppose* social norms, presenting them as being accepted by "everyone" as uncontroversial. As we have seen, the word's very public currency already supports this assumption. But presenting those norms as already established rather than new information also makes them harder to challenge within the conversation. If someone says "The bank is closed," we can deny

that claim just by saying "No it's not." By contrast, denying a presupposition requires refocusing the conversation, saying something like "Hey wait a minute! When you call Jane a spinster, you're assuming that women are defined by their marital status! That's not true!" Often, it is easier to go along with the conversational flow, especially if the word's descriptive conditions (say, being unmarried) are satisfied.

Second, even if one is prepared to derail the conversation, it is hard to identify precisely what the thick term's objectionable presupposition *is*. If I say "George managed to solve the problem," I presuppose that the problem took some effort for George. This proposition might be false, but it is at least something one can identify and disagree with. Slurs and thick terms are not like that. Instead, what they presuppose is a complex, open-ended bundle of thoughts, images, emotions, and evaluations—a *perspective*. For any particular assumption to which we might point, the speaker can plausibly deny having meant *that*, without undermining the perspective as a whole. Further, because images and feeling cannot be true, they cannot be straightforwardly rejected as false but have to be dislodged as inappropriate in some other way.

The perspectival quality of thick terms' presuppositions makes them powerful cognitively as well as conversationally. By evoking stereotypes soaked in images, feelings, and evaluations, they frame their subjects at a deep intuitive level, guiding what we notice and remember about them, how we explain what they do, and what we expect from them in the future. As Claude Steele puts it, such stereotypes are "a threat in the air."[6] Worse, this threat is self-fulfilling, because it can cause us to act in ways that conform to the stereotype—say, to underperform on math tests. The effects are most dramatic, and most directly damaging, for members of the targeted group. But by framing the thinking of everyone within a conversation, thick terms make even sympathetic "allies" unwitting collaborators in enacting the demeaning perspectives they evoke.

Finally, even words with purely descriptive meanings can function as frames in certain types of sentences. Thus, by itself "girl" doesn't encode a rich gender stereotype: we can say "There are seven girls and five boys in my class" without committing to anything about how girls are or should behave. (It is more controversial how the ascription of gender relates to biological sex.) But sentences like "Girls are bad at math" or ""Boys will be boys," in which "girl" and "boy" are used as *generic* terms, frame girls and boys as a group in terms of an intuitive stereotype, with the same threat-inducing effects as a thick term would have. Sentences that use generic structure

are especially powerful because they encode generalizations in a way that tolerates exceptions, making them relatively impervious to counterevidence. Especially in application to social kinds, this seems to be because generics impute *essences*: unobservable properties that make a thing be what it is and generate dispositions to behave in certain ways. The intuitive pull of essentialist thinking has been shown to lead us to overestimate statistical correlations and impute nonexistent causal connections, and to treat certain attributes as natural, normal, and "fitting" for members of the group, even when there is no scientific basis for such a connection.[7]

12.3 Saying and Un-Saying

So far, I have focused on language as similar to games in being built out of conventional rules that invest arbitrary actions with social significance, and especially on how those conventions enforce norms regulating social roles. A second strand of analogy focuses on turn-taking. As in chess, conversations involve sequences of alternating moves. As in baseball, conversations involve different types of moves, with different moves being possible depending on the stage of the conversation, with the effects of any one move depending both on general conventions and on the conversation up to that point. And as in poker, participants may play strategically; but it is not legitimate to break the rules, for instance by lying or saying something totally off-topic.

Further, in both games and language, participants can exploit the assumption that they are following the rules in order to accomplish something other than the conventional meaning of their move. Thus, just as a bridge player might lead with a low heart to signal to her partner that she is thin in the suit and that her partner should take control, so might a teenager answer the question "Where is your brother?" with "Out," to communicate that they do not know, or will not say, anything more informative. In such cases, the speaker constructs her move by assuming that the hearer will assume that the speaker is indeed following the rules, and so will reinterpret an apparently illegitimate or irrational move in such a way that it makes sense after all.

This sounds complicated, but it is something we do all the time, often without noticing it. If you ask me to go to a concert on Thursday night and I say I have an exam Friday, my response does not itself answer your question, but if you add in the assumptions that I have to study for the exam and that this means I am busy, then you can figure out that I am declining

your invitation. Philosophers call this meant-but-not-said meaning an *implicature*. But why would we communicate indirectly, without saying what we mean? As the example of the declined concert invitation illustrates, one reason is that it is more efficient to bundle several moves together. Another is that leaving our meaning unstated can be more polite, softening the blow of explicit rejection or criticism. In some contexts, like a conversation between friends, this is an act of kindness. In others, like a salary negotiation, it may enable the speaker to get away with a move that would be impermissible given the participants' respective social roles.

If a speaker constructs her utterance carefully, leaving her main point unsaid can also afford her *deniability* about what she meant. If the hearer, or someone else, challenges her, asking something like "Hey wait a minute! Are you suggesting that you should get a raise when John and Alice, who've worked here longer, shouldn't?" the speaker can respond with a demurral like "No, I was just pointing out that I've been putting in a lot of hours. I know everyone here works hard." Such a denial allows the speaker to avoid being held to account for her meaning—even when it is obvious to everybody that she really did mean it. (As we might put it, "plausible deniability" is often not very plausible.) Alternatively, the speaker can shift interpretive responsibility onto the hearer: "You said it, not me."

Deniability is especially useful when a conversational move is socially risky, involving high stakes or uncertainty about how it will be received. Navigating the tricky power dynamics of romantic and professional relationships is one common motivation for communicating through deniable insinuation. Threats are another. For instance, in 1926 *The Ludington (MI) Daily News* ran the headline "Detroit Bandits Use Psychology in Bank Robbery. Pick Cashier Up on Street and Bring Him to Verge of Hysteria with Questions," where the questions were superficially innocent inquiries like "How are your children now? You think a lot of them, don't you? You have a nice little family, haven't you? Wouldn't it be a pity if anything happened to break it up?"

Finally, as Lord Stanhope's opening disquisition on female eloquence both literally says and indirectly shows, we often prefer to frame insults in veiled terms. Paul Grice illustrates the core idea of implicature with a letter of recommendation stating in its entirety "Mr. X's command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials has been regular. Yours, etc."[8] In effect, the writer of such a letter weaponizes the grandmotherly adage "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." More explicitly, since the writer is the candidate's teacher, they must know more than the letter actually says;

and since the purpose of such a letter is to provide as much relevant information as possible, the writer must be refusing to say anything more informative because whatever they would say would be negative. By assuming that their readers are clued into the normal expectations for such letters, the writer can communicate "Don't hire this guy!" without saying it.

Alexander Pope recommended this same technique of insinuation via conspicuously mild compliment back in 1734:

> Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
> And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
> Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
> Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike.[9]

Pope's strategy goes beyond Grice's general technique for imparting risky information, to advocate "sneering" in particular Because implicatures are implicit, they are especially apt for sneering by framing their targets under the amorphous, open-ended denigration that can be accomplished using perspectives. Consider, for instance, a speaker who utters "Barack Obama's middle name is Hussein. Just saying," On the surface, they merely state a fact. But indirectly, they present it as a "telling detail": as the surface symptom of a cloud of unspecified, sinister attributes purportedly associated with people named Hussein. Like thick terms, then, framing insinuations enable a speaker to inject objectionable unarticulated assumptions into the conversation, where the very fact that the hearer can identify those assumptions lends them credibility, making them seem like something "out there" that "everyone knows."

In insinuation, speakers craft their conversational move so they can insist (disingenuously) that they only meant the innocent thing they actually said. Typical cases of sarcasm, like "What a cool outfit! It's so . . . vivid" or "That's . . . different" push this strategy further, presupposing an unstated social norm and insinuating that the target violates it, without undertaking any commitment to what is said. Similarly, the (bad) joke, "Why can't Helen Keller drive? Because she's a woman," presents it as common knowledge that women are terrible drivers, so much so that being female is a worse impediment than blindness. With both sarcasm and jokes, a speaker can deflect criticism from their utterance on the ground that they were "just kidding," and accuse the objector of being humorlessly literalistic, while the very fact that the objector "gets it" again demonstrates that there's *something* apt about the utterance and adds further pressure on the hearer to "play along."

In all these varieties of implicit speech, all parties to the conversation recognize what the speaker really meant, even if they deny it or cannot articulate exactly what "it" was. Insinuation, sarcasm, and jokes can also speak to multiple audiences, appearing sincere and literal to one while communicating deniable hidden messages to another. For example, at one point in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Mary Bennett has been singing wretchedly, oblivious to eye-rolling and mocking by the Bingley sisters. After a beseeching look from Mary's sister Elizabeth, their father intervenes, saying, "That will do extremely well, child. You have delighted us long enough. Let the other young ladies have time to exhibit." He intends for Mary to take his utterance sincerely, but also for Elizabeth, and perhaps the Bingleys, to hear "delight" as meaning something closer to its opposite, torture.

A similar effect can be achieved in public contexts through "dogwhistles," in which speakers articulate their real message so as to restrict it to "those who have ears to hear." For example, on its face George W. Bush's invocation in his 2003 State of the Union address of the "power, wonder-working power, in the goodness and idealism and faith of the American people" offers an inclusive testimony to American resilience. But by employing a fundamentalist Christian trope, Bush at least signals his affiliation with that group, and perhaps promises to institute Christ-centered values in his government.[10]

12.4 Fighting Fire with Fire

In explaining the various conventional and conversational mechanisms language offers for enacting power plays and enforcing social norms, I have emphasized how those mechanisms exploit presupposition and perspectival framing in ways that make it difficult for hearers to resist. This situation can make it seem that hearers are passive victims at the mercy of manipulative speakers. But this obviously cannot be the whole story, not least because conversations typically involve taking turns speaking. More importantly, the same techniques that lend speakers power also create conversational vulnerabilities, which hearers can exploit to fight back. In effect, an insinuating, sarcastic, or joking speaker attempts to avoid conversational accountability by engaging in a kind of communicative bluff that shifts interpretive responsibility onto the hearer. As a result, successfully implementing Pope's advice to "just hint a fault" when one is "afraid to strike" a more open blow requires treading a delicate line: making one's meaning obvious enough

that the hearer recognizes it as what was meant, but not so obvious that it undermines deniability.

More specifically, if an insinuating speaker manages to be subtle enough to avoid the peril of overobviousness, she risks miscommunicating by undersignaling in one of two different ways. On the one hand, her utterance might be taken as just a sincere statement of its surface meaning. On the other, it might be assigned a different meaning than she intended, one that relies on an alternative set of implicit assumptions. Both sorts of miscommunication can occur simply because the hearer is flat-footedly oblivious. But just as speakers can pretend not to have meant something that they really did mean, so too can hearers pretend not to grasp a meaning that they really do get. For instance, the rejected concert inviter might respond to the addressee's statement that they have an exam Friday by saying, "Great! The concert doesn't start till 10, so you'll have plenty of time to study. How about I come by at 9:30?"—even though they fully realize that the addressee intended their statement as a (polite) refusal. Alternatively, hearers can not just ignore, but willfully reinterpret the speaker's meaning. Thus, the salary negotiator might respond to the boss's implicit accusation of selfishness by saying "Actually, I was hoping that you could find a way to offer all three of us an increase." Both willful obliviousness and willful reinterpretation shift the interpretive pressure back onto the speaker: obliviousness by refusing to acknowledge the speaker's implicit meaning, and reinterpretation by twisting it to the hearer's own ends.

Conventional means for enacting power plays, such as thick terms and generics, leave less room for strategic speaker denial and hearer reinterpretation, precisely because they rely on conventional meaning, which all parties acknowledge as part of their competence with the language. But hearers can still use these same basic techniques to challenge speakers' attempts to sneak in objectionable assumptions. Thus, a hearer can use willful incomprehension, along the lines of "Hey wait a minute! I don't understand. What do you mean when you call her a slut/prude/shrill?" in order to deny uncontroversial status to the speaker's attempted presuppositions, thereby forcing her to either articulate and defend them explicitly or else to abandon them as governing the conversation.

Alternatively, a hearer may be able to twist the speaker's literal words by imposing an alternative perspectival frame on them. The most dramatic cases of this involve appropriated slurs like "queer." Members of the targeted group have combatted the slur's demeaning status by embracing its associated

stereotype as a badge of honor rather than shame, as in this 1979 letter from the editors of *Lesbian Tide*:

> What men have meant when they call us dykes is true: we ARE uncompromising (where loving women is concerned), we ARE ugly (when beauty is measured in rigid stereotypes or in passivity), we ARE frightening (to those who fear independent women), we ARE unpleasant (when silence and smiles are pleasing).[11]

However, re-appropriation is also risky. First, the strategy cannot be undertaken by a single individual: it must be waged politically, and requires widespread cultural acceptance for success. Second, success itself is dangerous, because it risks reinforcing the slur's underlying essentialist thinking. Part of what makes thick terms like "slut" and "prude" problematic is that they focus attention on a category that does not warrant any distinctive social status, high or low. Appropriation doubles down on the underlying category, merely shifting its associated cognitive and social valuation.

In this chapter, I've surveyed a range of ways in which speakers can use language to enact power dynamics and enforce social norms, either wittingly and unwittingly, and a range of ways in which hearers are pressured to comply, but can also resist. Given the risks of denigration and manipulation, how should sincere, well-meaning speakers and hearers proceed? Philosophers especially might think the solution is to avoid appeals to murky implicit assumptions, by saying exactly what we mean and meaning all that we say. However, our discussion shows that this is not a viable option. For one thing, we could never finish talking if we had to state everything explicitly. Every conversation must start somewhere, and we need ways to bundle many moves together. For another, sometimes inexplicitness really is beneficial, for speaker or hearer or both, by protecting against hurt feelings and social backlash. Further, even total explicitness cannot guarantee successful uptake. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennett repeatedly rejects Mr. Collins's proposal of marriage, but is summarily dismissed each time: since he believes that "it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favour; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second, or even a third time," he is "therefore by no means discouraged by what [she has] just said, and shall hope to lead [her] to the altar ere long." When Elizabeth finally pleads, "Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an

elegant female, intending to plague you, but as a rational creature, speaking the truth from her heart," Mr. Collins simply responds, "You are uniformly charming! . . . And I am persuaded that when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents, my proposals will not fail of being acceptable." Any degree of literal clarity and direct speech on Elizabeth's part merely serves as further grist for Mr. Collins's self-confirming interpretive mill. And while, as with slurs and "Boy," we might hope that such exchanges belong to a bygone era, #MeToo and "No means No" demonstrate that such cases of "silencing" are still quite common.

The most important reason not to "go literal," though, is that it is not viable given how human minds actually work. The intuitive perspectives associated with thick terms, insinuations, and jokes are pervasive in our thinking, and they can be triggered both intentionally and accidentally by a wide range of cues including literal speech and nonverbal situational features. Once evoked, they do not just guide the conversation, but persist in our minds, affecting our judgments and actions in ways we do not fully recognize until they are dislodged.

Given this, the best strategy is often to deploy frames (and presupposition, and implicature) ourselves, but in a critical, flexible way. We should be on the lookout for framing speech, especially smuggled in at the edges of conversation. Silent accommodation of objectionable presuppositions is tantamount to acquiescence, and we have an epistemic and moral obligation to rebut presupposed frames that we think distort and demean. Explicit, literal articulation and critical interrogation are important tools for doing this, although they risk lending those presuppositions undeserved legitimacy. However, "pure reason" is unlikely to convince our antagonists, or to carry the day with neutral parties. Worse, given existing stereotypes, it can make us appear shrill and humorless. Instead, successful parrying of accountability-avoiding meaning often depends at least as much on wit and social dynamics as on logic and justice. We need to enter into our interlocutors' perspectives enough to grasp what they will be able to hear. We need to marshal intuitive images and tropes to make them recognize the legitimacy of our operative assumptions and norms. And we need to muster allies who will stand with us in embracing and enforcing those assumptions and norms. Finally, rather than falling into the trap of dogmatically assuming that our own norms are natural and therefore right, we need to cultivate imagination and epistemic humility—without abandoning our moral compass.[12]

Notes

1. Fitz-Adam (1754, 606).
2. Poussaint (1967); quoted in McConnell-Ginet (2020).
3. Hughes (1940, 268–269); quoted in McConnell-Ginet (2020).
4. Lynne Tirrell (1999, 2012) analyzes the social effects of slurs and other derogatory expressions in terms of inferential language games. Mary Kate McGowan (2019) explains a wide variety of forms of harming speech as exercises of linguistic and conversational power to enact social norms. Rae Langton (2017) treats hate speech as a tool for exercising social authority through presupposition accommodation. Sally McConnell-Ginet (forthcoming) offers a compendious and accessible, empirically informed overview of power dynamics in language.
5. Snyder (2014).
6. Steele (1997).
7. Susan Gelman (2005) argues that essentialist thinking is deeply embedded in human thought, originating early in childhood. Claude Steele (2011) argues that "stereotype threat" can be triggered in many ways, and affects our behavior in many situations. Sarah Jane Leslie (2017) argues that judgments about generics are driven by and reinforce intuitive, affectively loaded stereotypes. Cordelia Fine (2010) analyzes ways in which scientific findings are commonly interpreted by journalists, laypeople, and scientists as supporting biological essentialism about gender.
8. Grice (1975).
9. Pope (1926 [1734]).
10. I discuss insinuation as a form of Gricean speaker's meaning that exploits presuppositions which are not acknowledged in the common ground in an article (Camp 2019). Jennifer Saul (2019) analyzes coded political speech, including the quote from Bush, as dog whistles.
11. "Dyke" (1979); quoted in Tirrell (1999).
12. Thanks to Ernie Lepore, Jonna Perrillo, Gregory Ward, Nancy Yousef, and especially to Mary Kate McGowan and Sally McConnell-Ginet for discussion. Thanks to audiences at Arkansas University, the Chapel Hill Colloquium, Colgate University, Columbia University, Southern Methodist University, Vassar College, and the Yale Humanities Program for useful and enjoyable discussion.

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