## Introduction

The topic of this special issue, "Dominating Speech," was first the topic of a conference held at the University of Connecticut in November 2014 (funded by several departments and institutes at the university). The event was organized by the UConn Injustice League—a trio of faculty: Suzy Killmister, Daniel Silvermint, and myself—and was a great success. I am excited to be able to publish descendants of some of the conference papers here, along with papers by Casey Johnson and Brynn Welch that were submitted later.

Before reading the submissions, I did not imagine the scope of research related to dominating speech within ethics, political philosophy, and the philosophy of language. This issue is filled with questions related to dehumanization, slurs, gossip, extracted confessions, cultural appropriation, slut-shaming, the characters featured in children's literature, and accusations that others are "playing the discrimination card." I want to say something here about how these topics fit into the scope of a special issue on dominating speech.

1. There are some types of speech that are surely instances or indications of domination, but there is disagreement about how to characterize these speech-types and about what we can correctly say that they do to their victims.

Lauren Ashwell considers whether there are common features of racial or ethnic slurs that we have used to analyze slurring, in general, that do not apply to gendered slurs. She thinks that there is such a feature: gendered slurs do not have a neutral correlate. Ashwell argues that this exception forces us to re-think what counts as a slur, and whether the reclamation of slurs is possible or desirable. In his paper, Michael Barnes asks: What sort of background conditions can turn an instance of dominating speech, like a slur used by one rider to another on a subway, into a form of subordination? Barnes responds to and modifies an answer to this question proposed by Ishani Maitra.

There are also ways of using speech to dominate others—by forcing or manipulating those others to speak. Rachel McKinney investigates why and when it is unjust to solicit speech that we plan to use against them, and asks how we can correctly characterize this type of injustice.


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2. Sometimes when we complain about each other's speech, our very complaints are problematic and reinforce dominating trends.

Some accuse members of oppressed groups of overusing or inaccurately using claims of discrimination as a manipulative tactic to get what they want. What are complaints like this doing to exacerbate oppression? Are these complaints themselves a form of dominating speech? David Schraub tackles these questions in his provocative paper. We also often describe people who are sharing experiences and information with each other as "gossiping." In what ways does gossip facilitate oppressed groups in gaining, sharing, and demonstrating important knowledge? On the other hand, in what contexts does gossip simply *become* a form of domination? Casey Johnson answers some of these questions. She runs her analysis with a special eye to Miranda Fricker's moral concept: epistemic injustice.

3. Sometimes it is not spoken words, but the use of symbols, objects, or written words that the powerful use (intentionally or not) in domination.

When a state expresses ideals and attitudes through symbols, there are potential moral hazards; the ideals themselves can be harmful, after all. However, even when the ideals promoted by state symbols are beneficial or innocuous, is there something about the method of promoting them that is problematic? George Tsai argues that what is problematic about state symbols like these has to do with the way they tap into (or circumvent) the reasoning abilities of members of the public.

Sometimes we take objects or ideas from another culture and claim them for our own purposes. Erich Hatala Matthes asks what exactly we do wrong in these cases. He answers this question and explores what the analysis of this wrongdoing entails in terms of cultural essentialism. There are also problems when we *leave out* other cultures, races, or ethnic groups from our lives. In particular, Brynn Welch explains how the narratives that we share with children exclude such groups, and argues for the strong claim that in most cases we do wrong when we incorporate into our children's libraries books that exclude characters of color.

4. What role does dehumanization play in the verbal or physical domination of subordinated groups?

Many believe that domination is only (or usually) made possible by a privileged group dehumanizing its victims. After all, the perpetrators of violent acts and hate speech often treat their victims like animals—that is, they overestimate their victims as threats, and underestimate the value of their lives. Two of our contributors think that this analysis is wrong. Kate Manne argues that the victims of these harms do pose a threat *in virtue of*

their humanity and their claim to equal treatment—they pose a threat to privilege. Alternatively, David Livingstone Smith suggests that dominating groups both recognize their victims' humanity and believe those victims to have less human value than themselves—a tension in their beliefs that causes them a special type of discomfort that spurs them to say and do hateful things.

I am grateful to the contributors of this special issue for this fine set of arguments and inquiries into the topic of dominating speech, and to the many blind reviewers who critically read their papers. Thanks to Suzy Killmister and Daniel Silvermint for their work screening initial abstracts for the conference on this topic, and for the insights and questions raised by the participants of that conference—including its keynote speakers: Ishani Maitra, Jason Stanley, and Richard A. Wilson. I am grateful to the Center for Human Values at Princeton University for a fellowship year (2014-2015) that allowed me to do the extensive reading and re-reading of submissions. Finally, I want to thank *Social Theory and Practice* for the opportunity to guest-edit this issue, and its publication manager, Margaret Dancy, for the many hours of help she provided managing submissions and revisions, soliciting referees, contacting and re-contacting me to ensure that we made progress, and, in general, accommodating my inexperience with editing. Without her efforts, there would be no special issue on "Dominating Speech."

Hallie Liberto
*Department of Philosophy, University of Connecticut*
hallie.liberto@uconn.edu