Journal of the American Philosophical Association (2024) 24–45 © The Author(s), 2023. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the American Philosophical Association. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution and reproduction, provided the original article is properly cited.
DOI:10.1017/apa.2023.10

How to Disrupt a Social Script

ABSTRACT: *Social scripts, like* A gives a compliment, B says 'thank you', *pervade and shape natural language discourse and social interactions. Scripts usually promote cooperation between conversational participants, but not always. For example, if A pays B a 'compliment' like* 'nice legs', *A puts B in a double bind of either abiding by the compliment script by saying 'thank you' and being humiliated, or breaking the script and risking escalation. In this paper, I take a philosophical lens to the notion of a social script. I give a theoretical overview of what it would mean to disrupt a social script and explain why and when it is prudential to do so. Then I give several examples of disruptions of social scripts. This essay makes four key contributions to the philosophical literature on social scripts: (1) it introduces a new distinction between interpersonal and structural scripts; (2) it illuminates how interpersonal social scripts can be pernicious by creating a double bind; (3) it analyzes what it is to* disrupt *a social script; and (4) in doing so, it challenges the orthodoxy about the relationship between cooperation and disruption in political action.*

KEYWORDS: social scripts, disruptions, harassment, interpersonal script, cooperation

Social scripts pervade and shape natural language discourse and social interactions. To take an everyday example: A pays B a compliment, then B usually says 'thank you' and perhaps reciprocates. In this sense, compliments are scripted; when one conversational participant says a particular thing in a certain situation, there is a certain expected response. Some philosophers use the term 'social script' in the way I did above to refer to scripted interpersonal interactions, as in a play or film script (Bicchieri 2005, 2016). Others take social scripts to refer to norms and stereotypes about given social groups, like the script that women act demurely (Appiah 1994, 2000; Oshana 2005; Stoljar 2015). Call the first kind of script *interpersonal* and the second *structural*. These notions are related, but they need to be distinguished if we are to make philosophical progress about the role of scripts in social interaction and oppression. While much philosophical light has been shed on the oppressive nature of structural scripts (Appiah 1994, 2000;

Thanks to Sara Aronowitz, Emma Atherton, David Balcarras, Robin Dembroff, Tom Dougherty, Vera Flocke, Carolina Flores, Rebecca Harrison, Sally Haslanger, Riki Heck, Kathleen Hintikka, Sukaina Hirji, Minji Jang, Justin Khoo, Ari Koslow, Ishani Maitra, Rachel McKinney, Michaela McSweeney, Jennifer Nagel, Haley Schilling, Alvaro Sottil, Robert Stalnaker, Eric Swanson, Adriene Takaoka, Briana Toole, and Philip Yaure for helpful conversation and feedback on earlier versions of this paper. Thanks as well to audiences at Boston University, Brown University, and the University of Michigan. I am grateful to the editors and two anonymous referees at the *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* for thoughtful comments and encouragement.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

Oshana 2005; Stoljar 2015; Butler 1991; Molina 2014; Dembroff 2020), less has been said about the role interpersonal scripts play in oppression.

Interpersonal scripts usually promote cooperation between conversational participants. But not always. For example, if A pays B a compliment like 'nice legs', A puts B in a double bind of either abiding by the compliment script, saying 'thank you' and being humiliated, or 'breaking' the script and risking escalation. Accordingly, one feature of interpersonal social scripts is that they can be taken advantage of to put a person who is (wittingly or not) participating in the script in a double bind: they must either go along with the script or reject it at the risk of some social cost. Ideally, we want a way out of the bind: a way that gets B out of the script and does so in a socially cooperative way, thus avoiding the second prong of the double bind. This essay posits cooperative disruptions as a third way out and provides an analysis of such disruptions. In doing so, it highlights the often overlooked fact that political and social activity can be cooperative and disruptive at the same time.

In section 1, I introduce a new distinction between interpersonal and structural scripts. Section 2 illuminates how interpersonal social scripts can be pernicious by creating a double bind. Section 3 provides an analysis of what it is to disrupt a social script. In Section 4, I argue that the notion of a cooperative disruption challenges the commonly held view that disruptions are inherently disobedient and uncooperative. I argue instead that cooperative disruption can be a way of reconciling critical oppositional activity with deliberative democracy and of expressing autonomy under conditions of oppression. A fifth underlying contribution of the essay is that it highlights the way everyday individual political action is a way of achieving liberatory and emancipatory aims.

1. Social Scripts

In this section, I argue for a novel distinction in the classification of social scripts. I will call these two subtypes structural scripts and interpersonal scripts. This distinction helps us make sense of varying interdisciplinary analyses of social scripts (and how those analyses interact) and will be important for the arguments and analyses in sections 2 and 3.

Structural scripts, as we will see below, encompass the norms, stereotypes, and expectations that pervade a dominant ideology (here I have in mind a value-neutral conception of ideology). Interpersonal scripts, on the other hand, most closely resemble a screenplay: they are tied to patterns of dialogue and model the ways in which one individual responds to another over the course of a given conversation. This paper will focus primarily on the latter kind of script. The motivation for this is twofold: first, interpersonal scripts have received less philosophical attention than structural scripts. Second, my focus on interpersonal scripts aims to make inroads into the question of how individual and interpersonal social relations contribute to social norms, relations, and stereotypes at the structural level and in the public sphere.

The notion of a social script is invoked in, for instance, psychology, cognitive science, disability studies sociology, feminism, and queer studies. There are at least

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

two ways that theorists outside of philosophy invoke the notion of a script (I have limited the scope of inquiry to 'social scripts', 'sexual scripts', and 'cultural scripts'). The first, call this a structural script, is a more cognitive notion of norms, stereotypes, and perceptual expectations (Edwards 1994; Feigenbaum 2007). The other, call it an interpersonal script, is more closely related to something like a scripted scene in a movie or play (Gagnon and Simon 1986): one person says something, the other person says something else, and what the first person says partly scripts what the next person says. These discussions often bear on philosophical issues. For starters, the motivations that these other fields have for investigating and developing the notion of a social script are intrinsically philosophical: in psychology and cognitive science, social scripts are explicated as a tool that human beings use for making sense of and engaging with the world around them (Frith 2007). In disability studies, social scripts have been investigated as a way for children and adults with social and neural atypicalities to cope and function in a society that is not structured around their learning style (Rao, Beidel, and Murray 2008). In sociology and feminist and queer studies, scholars investigate the ways in which social scripts are used to create and reinforce systems of domination and inequality, specifically (but not exclusively) around sexual conduct and misconduct (Feigenbaum 2007; Popovich et al. 1995; Kurth, Spiller, and Travis 2000).

There is a role for all of these concepts (and more) in philosophy. In this article, I am specifically interested in the way social scripts can be disrupted as a route toward liberation and a means of dismantling oppressive systems. In this way, I most closely follow the sociological, feminist, and queer studies approach toward social scripts.

1.1 Interpersonal Scripts

Early characterizations of scripts designate them as perceptual tools to help individuals structure interactions in the world. Cognitive psychologists Schank and Abelson (1977) describe a script as a 'structure that describes appropriate sequences of events in a particular context . . . a predetermined, stereotyped sequence of actions that defines a well-known situation' (Schank and Abelson 1977: 41).

The script in question is interpersonal; its scope is restricted to actions and events (including speech) in a given situation or context. A classic example of this is a greeting script: A says 'Hi, how are you?' to their acquaintance B. B says, 'Fine, thanks, how are you?' in a predetermined, stereotyped, and scripted way. According to social script theory, such interactions pervade a given society. And this is generally a good thing. Scripts allow people to function and interact in a predictable way without exerting an undue amount of cognitive strain. Theriault, Young, and Barrett further hypothesize that when we make our behaviors conform to the expectations of others, this in turn makes their behavior more predictable to us, thus creating something of a positive feedback loop (2021: 129). This is helpful not just for minimizing cognitive strain but also for functioning and surviving in social groups.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

However, as feminist theorists later pointed out, the scripted nature of interpersonal interaction is not always a good thing. Rape and harassment can also be highly scripted in ways that intentionally make it hard for the victim to escape the script and the situation (Marcus 1992; Kurth, Spiller, and Travis 2000; Popovich et al. 1995). Some examples of social scripts that are well-documented in the psychology and social sciences literature are often demeaning and oppressive. For example, many have written about the sexual script that women say 'no' in order to consent to sex, resulting in their inability to successfully communicate a refusal (see Frith 2009; Langton 1993; Marcus 1992, to name just a few).

As is also well-documented, there are racialized and gendered scripts around harassment where the target, often a woman, is supposed to just 'play along'. These expectations are so normatively enshrined that when she does not play along, she is chastised for not doing the 'right' (or expected) thing. (As this shows us, scripts need not track what is morally right; in fact, they often do not, see section 1.2.) For example, in an ethnography on Black women's experiences with street harassment from men, Melinda Mills (2007) notes:

> [When] Susie, a 20-something, middle class, heterosexual black woman, failed to respond in the way he anticipated or hoped for, he informed her, "You just ain't acting right." Because Susie failed to reciprocate the man's interest in her, and instead fell silent in surprise at what she felt were sexually charged and inappropriate remarks, she found herself facing evaluation from this male stranger. (Mills 2007: 61)

The first way to respond to the threat of these kinds of scripts is to understand them as scripted:

> The central notion of script theory, and the one that makes it attractive to many feminists, is the idea that sexuality is *learned* from culturally available messages that define what 'counts' as sex, how to recognize sexual situations, and what to do in sexual encounters . . . these culturally available scripts are adapted by individuals to particular interpersonal contexts, and are also modified and internalized as 'intrapsychic' scripts. (Frith and Kitzinger 2001: 210, original emphasis)

Frith and Kitzinger teach us that it is not just words, but also behaviors that are scripted: for the various features of sexuality, for example, dress, gait, posture, and so on (see Bartky [1997] for many excellent examples of this). Once we talk about scripted behaviors, it makes sense to consider the norms that give rise to them.

1.2 Structural Scripts

The quote above from Frith and Kitzinger gives us one model for understanding how structural scripts inform interpersonal scripts. 'Culturally available messages' are internalized by individuals, who then (somewhat subconsciously) act out

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

interpersonal scripts in accordance with the cultural messaging or dominant ideology. Other disciplines offer other models.

Queer theory gives us resources to talk about the structural heterosexual script that pervades most contemporary societies: cisgender heterosexual men partner monogamously with cisgender heterosexual women, marry, cohabitate, have 2.5 children, co-own property, merge finances, co-parent, and so on (Feigenbaum 2007, among others). This is an example of a structural script. Deviations from this script are socially, financially, and professionally costly. Adhering to the script is rewarded, albeit disproportionately more so for men. (See Miller [2014]; Budig and England [2001]; Correll, Benard, and Paik [2007] on the 'motherhood penalty' and the 'fatherhood bonus', among other inequities.)

Another example of a structural script comes from Natalia Molina (2014), who in *How Race is Made in America* describes the ways in which different ethnic and cultural groups (with a focus on Mexican Americans) in the United States were expected to act and behave in certain negatively stereotyped ways, which then became self-fulfilling (see also Appiah 1994; Stoljar 2015; Hacking 1995).

We have just covered some ways in which interpersonal and structural scripts differ. Structural scripts encode and provide expectations for behavior. Interpersonal scripts are where those expectations play out. For example, the structural script around gender norms prescribes behaviors and traits in accordance with a gender binary. Interpersonal scripts around sex and harassment conform to those structural scripts: men pursue, women demure (Gagnon and Simon, 1986; Popovich et al. 1995; Frith and Kitzinger 2001; the latter discusses the difference between approaches to scripts in cognitive psychology and in sociology). Despite these differences, both interpersonal and structural scripts are social scripts. Here are a few things they have in common:

First, social scripts are meant to be predictable. That is, once known, they make predicable the actions and speech of the people who are deploying them: 'At the individual level, social scripts reduce anxiety by decreasing uncertainty. . . lending [a] sense of predictability as to how the individual should feel and behave as well as what the individual should expect from a partner' (Wiederman 2005: 496–97).

Second, social scripts are normative: 'social scripts can dictate the acceptable perimeters of exchanges' (Feigenbaum, 2007). Scripts are also normative insofar as they are predictable (Wiederman 2005); there is a widespread social expectation that individuals act in accordance with them (Edwards 1994; Bicchieri 2005, 2008; Bicchieri and McNally 2018), lending a moral dimension to some scripts (Edwards 1994). As Bicchieri writes: 'social norms are embedded into scripts, and scripted interactions are perceived as stable, projectable, and "right", our expectations about norm compliance are legitimized by the very existence of the script' (2008: 232). This insight about expectations of norm compliance will play a key role in what makes certain scripts difficult to escape. We will come back to this in section 2.

Finally, social scripts are often cooperative. Scripts can serve as helpful shorthands for communication in various circumstances—'*Hello, how are you?*' '*Fine, and you*?'. They also save us an inordinate amount of time and effort

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

because we do not have to reinvent conversation from the ground up. Think, for example, of an exchange at a coffee shop (Bicchieri 2005; Epstein 2015). Among the appropriate responses when a barista asks, 'How can I help you?' are: indicating what items one wants to purchase or asking for more information about such items. Appropriate responses are not things like 'Can you feed my cat?' and 'Please teach me how to parallel park', as much as help may be needed with those things. Thus, scripts streamline interactions. In this way, they are generally conducive to cooperation. They facilitate communication and coordination. However, as with many things, they can be coopted and manipulated in the service of subjugation and oppression. Because of this, we sometimes have reason to disrupt social scripts.

2. Why to Disrupt a Social Script

This section provides an analysis of pernicious, oppressive, and otherwise harmful interpersonal scripts. I argue that these social scripts present their interlocutors with double binds; they force their interlocutor either to go along with and endure the harmful consequences of the script or to reject the script at a social cost. Once we better understand the mechanism of a pernicious script as a double bind, we will be in a position to argue for its disruption.

Once I have shown that there are cases where individuals would want to reject or escape certain social scripts, I will show that disruption can sometimes be the best option. In arguing for this, I do not mean to suggest that social scripts are inherently or necessarily pernicious, and I do not maintain that we ought to do away with them entirely. I am more interested in how to dismantle successfully the ones that harm.

With many scripts, there is no easy recourse to leave the script from within the script. Accordingly, to counter or reject the script in these cases, it is better to go outside of the script entirely. I call this act disrupting because in addition to rejecting the script, the disruption also dismantles the script (section 3).

Let us call pernicious those scripts that by design harm or disadvantage one of the people in the scripts. Neutral scripts are those where, at least in principle, both people come out the other end unscathed and in some cases, better off for having avoided overthinking the interaction. (Here I focus on interpersonal scripts in one-to-one interactions, but in theory, this could scale up with an added discussion of group dynamics.) I will argue that individuals sometimes have reason to disrupt both kinds of scripts. For example, we have obvious reasons to reject the pernicious sexual script that women say 'no' in order to put on a face-saving pretense of reluctance, rather than mean it to refuse (see Langton [1993] who puts this in terms of silencing rather than scripts). But, as I will show, we sometimes have reason to disrupt a neutral script such as a compliment script (A pays B a compliment; B says 'thank you'). Such a neutral script can be manipulated for oppressive purposes as when one person harasses another by giving a sexualized 'compliment'. For example, a compliment script like the one below has norms that can be taken advantage of by either participant.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

A: I like your ____.
B: Thank you.
A: You're welcome.

I will now argue that it is in the very nature of certain social scripts to make it almost impossible to reject them from within the script. That is, individuals can (and do) use some social scripts to put others in a double bind. Because of the normative feature of scripts, conversational participants must either act in accordance with the script, and so adhere to it, or diverge from the script and face some sort of negative social consequence, such as escalation, shame, awkwardness, or embarrassment (see Pinker 2007; Tannen 1995; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992, among others).

Consider an example that combines the above compliment script with harassment. As we have seen above, a compliment is followed by an expression of gratitude for the compliment. For example, where A and B are colleagues:

A: I like your pants.
B: Thank you.

But consider what happens when instead A says:

A: I like your butt.

B is in a bind. According to the compliment script, B should say something like 'thank you' or 'oh, it's nothing' or 'thanks, yours too'. But there is something offensive and violating about A calling unwanted attention to B's body. We know this. B likely senses this. But it is still very difficult for B to respond in the moment. Her options are to (a) play along with the script, (b) reject it explicitly, or (c) ignore it in an effort to opt out of it. I have used a more extreme example to get the point across. But the general structure of the example holds for more subtle scripts. For example, take the ever-familiar injunction:

A: You have a great smile. You should smile more.

In an example like this one, B has less recourse to 'hey, that's harassment', and as with the above case, B cannot opt out of the script just by ignoring it. In addition to the negative social consequences of deviating from a script, participants on the receiving end of this coopted compliment script also face harms and threats to their physical safety and psychological well-being (see Logan 2015; Nielsen 2004; Mills 2007; Laniya 2005).

None of these options are ideal, to say the least. To play along with the script would be for B to condone or signal appreciation of A's remark. This is the first prong of the double bind. In the case of a malicious or harmful script, going along with the script is bad for the hearer's well-being in many ways. Take, for example, the harassment variant on A and B's exchange in the compliment script. A says 'I like your butt'. Now suppose that B does not want their butt complimented by A, nor do they want to continue engaging in the compliment script. According to the

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

compliment script, there are a number of acceptable responses available to B. These include: thanking A; returning the compliment; giving A a different compliment; or perhaps demurring or acknowledging in some similar way (e.g., false modesty; see Krishnamoorthy 2019). In the case of harassment couched as a compliment, going along with the script can signal appreciation, thus inviting further such comments. It can also be a way of the hearer being untrue to herself, resulting in the kind of false consciousness or cognitive dissonance associated with behaving one way and feeling an entirely different way (Hirji 2021; Frye 2000). Often, this can lead to an alienation from oneself, or *depersonalization*: feeling detached from oneself (Fusé et. al 2007: 269). People who find themselves in these positions, unable to react, have expressed feeling like they were not themselves (Galliano, Puechl, and Travis 1993). Finally, in some cases, going along with an oppressive script can result in an unwilling complicity in one's own oppression. (See Hirji 2021; similarly, Abramson [2014] gives an account of gaslighting that 'leaves its target sensing (rightly so) that she has been turned against herself', thus being complicit in the destruction of her own independent perspective (2014: 16).) Depersonalization, unwilling complicity in one's own oppression, and an inability to act out of fear are all denials of agency as well.

The second prong of the double bind is attempting to reject the script explicitly. To do this, B risks escalation or harm to herself (see Mills 2007 among others). Furthermore, there are tactical difficulties associated with option (b), rejecting the script explicitly. As with the 'no-means-yes' version of the consent case, there is a way in which the more B tries to explicitly reject the script, the deeper she finds herself in it. 'Leave me alone' is met with 'you're too beautiful to be left alone'; 'I'm not interested in talking' is met with 'But I'm not like other guys'; 'I have to go' is responded to with the questions: 'Where?' or 'Can I come?' (see Mills 2007; Bailey 2016, for documentations of this kind of response). Often, merely responding at all is a way of engaging with the script.

I note that ignoring the script could signal tacit consent and at least fails to call out A's inappropriate behavior (see Bailey 2016; Hay 2005). We might call this the third prong of the bind. However, some documentations include ignoring or doing nothing as part of the initial script, so I will choose to subsume this under the first prong (Popovich et al. 1995).

Thus, with certain scripts, there is no recourse to leave the script from inside the script. Other options are to defy the script somehow explicitly, but this can be both unsafe and cognitively difficult. Attempts at calling out harassment often lead to escalation. Caroline Bowman observes: 'Talking back may also backfire. . . It also usually escalates the conflict to a higher level of verbal abuse' (1993: 570). See also Laniya 2005 and Fogg-Davis 2006 for documentation and analyses of the disproportionate risks and harms associated with speaking back as a Black woman. For more recent documentations of the dangers of calling out or otherwise not going along with a harassment script, see Chemaly (2019), Logan (2015), and McDonald (2022): 'Hostile behaviours by cat-callers who do not get their desired response from targets are well documented; in 2014, a woman in Detroit was shot and killed because she refused to give a man her phone number, and in New York, a cat-caller slashed his target's throat when she refused to

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

engage him in conversation' (McDonald 2022: 219). In addition to this, there are both social and cognitive costs associated with 'going against' a script (Theriault, Young, and Feldman Barrett 2021; Frith 2009). In the following section, I argue that in order to counter or reject the script in these cases, it is better to go outside of the script entirely. I call this act *disrupting* a script.

3. How to Disrupt Some Social Scripts

I hope that by now I have shown that both pernicious *and* neutral scripts can be harmful. To recap: pernicious scripts are always harmful. Neutral scripts are harmful when they are coopted for oppressive or manipulative ends. These two are different because there are some pernicious scripts—like bullying scripts, harassment scripts, or rape scripts—that are harmful by design (see Marcus 1992; Frith 2009; Hong and Espelage 2012). A feature that adds to the harm of pernicious scripts is their pervasiveness. In this section, I give an analysis of script disruption. I argue that disruption is a special kind of strategy for countering harmful scripts: one that is both of intrinsic political and philosophical interest and that has practical implications for political action. I consider examples of four types of disruptions: interpersonal verbal, interpersonal nonverbal, structural verbal, and structural nonverbal. In the following section, I motivate the further claim that many of these examples are of *cooperative disruptions* and give theoretical and practical reasons in favor of disrupting cooperatively.

Script Disruption: Typical features of successful script disruption jointly include:

(i) calling attention to the script;
(ii) doing so subliminally or implicitly;
(iii) revealing the script's mechanisms or assumptions;
(iv) the perlocutionary aim of voiding or subverting the script or making the speaker and audience rethink the script.

3.1 Interpersonal Disruptions

The following are three examples of interpersonal script disruption. They aim at conditions (i)–(iv), and show how scripts can be disrupted in a variety of ways.

Woman

A cisgender woman Nora says to her transgender friend Crystal, 'Wow! You can really pass for a woman!'—intending to give a compliment. Crystal pauses for a moment, realizing that this intended compliment is actually hurtful. She turns back to Nora, smiles, and says, 'Thanks! You too'.

Crystal is in a double bind. She knows her friend did not mean to be insulting and transphobic, but she also knows and wants to communicate that it is not a

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

compliment to draw attention to the fact that she looks like who she in fact is. This is a case where the compliment script is at play and contributing to Crystal's double bind. According to the script, the complimented party says 'thank you' or responds with some combination of gratitude and modesty. Thus, if Crystal were to say 'Actually, you've just said something deeply offensive', that would go against the script, and there would be a social cost (see Pinker [2007], among others, for more on face-saving and social cost). She would be in the right to say such a thing, but it would come with a risk to her well-being, to say the least. (This is well-documented in trans and other marginalized communities; significant social and emotional energy and vulnerability accompanies having to correct or 'police' the harm done by well-intentioned but ignorant members of the dominant community [see McKinnon 2017; Ahmed 2021, among others].)

Accordingly, responding in the way she wants to would not be good for Crystal. But accepting the 'compliment' would come at a cost, too; it would be degrading, would allow the behavior to slide by, and maybe even perpetuate her friend's misconception that she was saying something supportive. Crystal's decision, in this case, is to disrupt the script. She responds 'Thanks, you too!'— showing that it is equally inappropriate for Nora to 'compliment' Crystal on looking like a woman as it is for Crystal to 'compliment' Nora (this scenario is taken from 'Women' by Tikva Wolf [2013]). Part of what makes Crystal's response a successful disruption is that it is implicit. We can also analyze this as an instance of 'flipping the script'; see Camp [2017] on similar responses to insults and innuendos. In responding the way she does, Crystal draws attention to Nora's assumption that the 'compliment' she gave was appropriate for transgender but not cisgender women. And in doing so, she allows Nora to see why that script was inappropriate.

There are various ways of doing the unexpected. And there are many kinds of scripts that put people in double binds that can be dissolved by disruption. In **Woman**, we saw disruption as a response to a coopted neutral script. Another way to disrupt an interpersonal script is to 'break the fourth wall' of the script. In the following example, doing so calls attention to the script itself. Specifically, in **Sandwich**, the disruption functions by calling attention to the way the script has hijacked the speaker's initial conversational goal.

Sandwich

Saray Ayala-López (2018, 2020) gives an account of the dialogue that non-native English speakers in the United States often find themselves in whenever they try to have any conversation whatsoever with an Anglo-American stranger. One anecdote in the 2018 presentation centers on a non-native speaker's experience at a food truck in the United States. When they try to buy a sandwich, the vendor asks them where their accent is from. This is a familiar script: S says something, and H responds immediately by asking where S is from. In this version of the example, the speaker finally responds by saying 'What does that have to do with my sandwich?'

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

This is an instance of a 'where are you from?' script: an exchange where one person asks another where they are from, in an attempt to get to know them better. However, in North America, 'Where are you from?' is a question that is often asked of people of color and non-native speakers of English, often as a coded way of asking about that person's race, ethnicity, or ancestry. In these instances of the script, 'Where are you from?' is often followed by 'Where are you *really* from?' (Legal scholar Frank Wu puts it aptly: '"Where are you from?" is a question I like answering. "Where are you *really* from?" is a question I *really* hate answering. . . . For Asian Americans, the questions frequently come paired like that' [Frank Wu 2002, quoted in Cheryan and Monin 2005: 717].) This makes these cases of 'where are you from?' instances of a *racialized* script or, as Ayala-Lopez calls it, a racial microaggression (2020: 147). The question, when asked in this way, confers some kind of outsider status on the recipient or makes the recipient feel like an outsider (Ayala Lopez 2020: 150; Cheryan and Monin 2005).

Responding by asking, 'What does that have to do with my sandwich?' disrupts the script. It does not answer the question, and it uses the same technique of topic-shifting that the script initiator used when he chose to respond to the speaker's accent instead of her request for a meal. It does not explicitly reference the script, but it comes close: asking what the content of the question has to do with the transaction. And that question encourages, or aims at, a rethinking of the script and its appropriateness.

As with a play or film script, social scripts can also be nonverbal. Think of stage directions, emotional cues, and so on. On an interpersonal level, this can take the form of behaviors, actions, mannerisms, and tones. For example, in the following example, the harassment script is disrupted by Em when she asks her interlocutor to hold a watermelon:

Watermelon

Em is walking home from the grocery store carrying two bags and a watermelon. Jay is standing in the street in her path home.

Jay: Hey, where are you going? Do you live in this neighborhood?
Em: . . . home. Yes, somewhere around here.
Jay: How long have you been living here? Do you like it?
Em: A few years. It's fine. [*continues to walk home*]
Jay: [*following Em home*] What part of the city do you live in?
Em: [*stops walking. Turns to Jay, hands him her watermelon*] Can you hold my watermelon for a moment?
Jay: [*holds Em's watermelon*]. . .
Em: Is there anything else I can do for you?
Jay: No. . .
Em: Well, thank you for holding my watermelon. Have a nice day.
Jay: . . .
Em: [*walks away with her watermelon*]

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

In this example, as with the other two, part of what made the disruption effective was the way in which it violated the script-initiator's expectations. No part of Jay's plan involved him standing there holding a watermelon. I hope to have shown that those moments of expectation violations facilitate conditions (i) and (iv) of the script analysis: they call attention to the script, and they result in voiding or subverting the script or making Jay rethink the appropriateness of the script. The examples also illustrate condition (iii): Crystal's response revealed Nora's (false) assumption that the 'compliment' she gave was appropriate for transgender but not cisgender women, and the speaker in **Sandwich** shed light on the vendor's assumption that a foreigner would not mind being interrupted to be asked where they are from. In section 4, I will return to condition (ii): the implicit nature of the disruption. For now, we will say that (ii) is met by virtue of none of the disrupters explicitly referencing the script.

What happens when condition (iv) is not met? In the examples above, Nora reconsiders the best way to support Crystal, and Jay stands there holding the watermelon wondering what has gone wrong. In a sense, these examples have built into them that (iv) occurs. The speakers are rethinking their use of the script. But what if Nora is offended, and Jay walks off thinking misogynistic thoughts about Em? In one sense, the scripts have been disrupted; they are no longer in effect; the recipient of the script has gotten out of the double bind, and the interaction is over. But there is a lack of cooperation and insight. This kind of scenario is a partial disruption of the social script and likely a successful one insofar as it ends the interaction. It fails to be a cooperative disruption insofar as a cooperative disruption needs all parties to be cooperative. Condition (iv) attempts to account for a broad spectrum of cases by specifying rethinking the script as a perlocutionary aim. This means it can be one of many aims; it need not be intentional, and it need not succeed. Yet, when present, it is a crucial feature of the disruption.

3.2 Structural Disruptions

Disruptions need not be exclusively interpersonal. So far, we have been talking about disruption strategies in one-on-one interactions. But it is important to realize that more pervasive social scripts can be disrupted by engaging with them less directly or less synchronically. Slogans, chants, protest discourse, and even decal stickers and T-shirt slogans that riff off dominant scripts are examples of how to disrupt structural scripts.

While this paper focuses on disruptions of interpersonal scripts, it is my hope that getting the phenomenon of interpersonal script disruption on the table will help shed light on the nature of social scripts more generally and lay the groundwork for future work on the relationship between interpersonal and structural scripts. In order to start to do this, let us turn to some contemporary examples of disruption of structural scripts.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

I Love my Mommies

> The baby gear slogan 'I love my mommies' is one recent example of a disruption of a structural script that can be found on onesies, bibs, placemats, mugs, and sippy cups.

The above is an example of a social script disruption being used in the service of ameliorative language (i.e., removing from the general conception of 'mommy' that there can be only one mommy per child; see Haslanger [2005] among others). Previously, it was commonplace to see babies decked out in gear that announced 'I love my mommy'. The 'mommies' version of the shirt takes advantage of the dominant script and then tweaks it ever so slightly so that it still takes advantage of the positive associations with the initial script, but is also disrupting because it is not what many people, conditioned by the dominant script, expect to see on a onesie. Social script disruptions can overlap with ameliorative speech in this way, but they need not.

Climb Like a Girl

> At gyms and in sports advertisements across the United States, the formerly pejorative phrase 'you throw like a girl' is being rebranded, reclaimed, and rescripted (Wachs 2006). Climbing gyms offer lessons to 'climb like a girl'; companies adopting the hashtag #likeagirl sponsor advertisements centering on women performing feats of athleticism.

This repurposing or reclamation of 'climb like a girl' disrupts the structural script that girls cannot play sports or that boys are more athletic than girls. We might also think that something ameliorative is going on with respect to a renegotiation of the term or concept of 'girl', but the disruption does not depend on such a renegotiation. In the next example, the use of lexical innovation—the creation of new terms and using existing terms in new ways—is an attempt to disrupt structural and cultural scripts around pit bulls being aggressive.

Talk Pittie to Me

> In her 2019 article, 'The Pit Bull Gets a Rebrand', Marisa Meltzer notes the rising trend of monikers and euphemisms that have been applied and spread by pit bull enthusiasts over the past few years.
> 'Pibble' sounds like 'pit bull' but also sounds like 'nibble'. . . . You also see them called 'pittie', 'pittopotamous', 'hippo', or 'potato'. It's part of a bigger effort to show them as silly and sweet and gentle. . . . It shows you there's nothing to be afraid of. (Meltzer, 2019)

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

In an effort to undo decades of negative stereotyping and mistreatment, 'pibble' rescuers and advocates have introduced innocuous-sounding nicknames for the breed to create counternarratives to the 'vicious pit bull' myth.

All of the above movements have nonverbal counterparts. Queer visibility has and continues to play an important role in the disruption of heterosexual and heteropatriarchal scripts (see Butler 1991; Gamson 1995; Kurth, Spiller, and Travis 2000; Dembroff 2020 for discussions of nonverbal and embodied disruption). Sports advertisements, movies, and other media feature women performing physical feats. One crowd-sourced movement that parallels the 'pibble' intervention circulates images of pit bulls adorned with flowers (Gamand 2018). There are also numerous historical examples of disruptions: sit-ins at lunch counters, strikes, Salt Marches, to name a few (see Tirrell [2015] on the work of images to counter dehumanization narratives).

Do the examples we have discussed so far suggest that we need counterscripts to disrupt extant scripts? One consideration points to 'yes': As I hope I have shown, it can be extremely difficult, while in the grip of an interpersonal script, to think of a way to respond or behave in a way that does not conform to the script. And this is to be expected, if I am right that scripts are automatic or second nature. In this case, it can behoove us to have readily available scripted responses in scenarios that are oppressive, demeaning, or otherwise threatening. Indeed, there is some evidence that it does behoove us (see Craig, Pepler, and Atlas [2000] for data on the efficacy of scripted responses to bullying among schoolchildren). Others have reported that after seeing Tatyana Fazlalizadeh's street art installations around New York City, depicting images accompanying big block letters saying 'stop telling women to smile', they have felt more able to respond to street harassers by repeating the words in Fazlalizadeh's images (see also Bacharach 2018).[1]

Similarly, theoretically, we might think that if scripts are second nature, then we need something that is equally second nature to disrupt them (see, for example, Saul [2017a] on the efficacy of using generics to counter generics). But one thing that the **Watermelon** and **Women** examples teach us is that disruptions are often improvised. If it is right that one of the mechanisms by which scripts are disrupted is doing the unexpected, and we cannot have scripted responses readily available for every kind of scenario, then something like improvisation is an important and effective means of disrupting a script. Consequently, counterscripts are not a necessary condition of script disruption.

Some caveats are necessary here. These disruptions to structural scripts constitute progress, but they are by no means perfect solutions. Often, they wind up adhering to stereotypes that are part of the scripts they are trying to disrupt: most lesbian couples (fictional and actual) in mainstream media and culture are white, able-bodied, part of a butch/femme couple, monogamous, and so on (McDonald 2018). And we might worry that the onesie disruption suggests that lesbians have to be mommies if society is going to accept them. So, too, the #likeagirl movement plays up the athleticism of women at the cost of reinforcing scripts about athleticism and masculinity; climbing like a girl does not entail focusing on balance over strength or

[1] Thanks to Nick Riggle and Lynn Kaye for conversations on this point.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

the advantages of having smaller hands for gripping smaller holds. Instead, it is presented as climbing like a man, but with a manicure and a ponytail. Dressing up pit bulls in flowers and calling them cute names reinforces scripts and stereotypes around what is 'innocuous'.

This might be an insurmountable problem, and future work should examine the relationship between these disruptions, counterscripts, and dominant narratives. If we are feeling optimistic, I think we can conceive of these disruptions as steps toward kicking away an ideological ladder. They are making inroads into a dominant narrative, disrupting one oppressive social script at a time for the sake of progress, with the aim of ultimately subverting them all. For example, as Carrie Jenkins (2017) writes, one step in expanding societal notions of romantic love is first to reject heteronormativity. From there, maybe we can push back against norms of monogamy and then finally recognize that there are many forms of romantic and intimate relationships, ending with a much more capacious view of love. The idea I am extracting is that when it comes to large-scale change, it is easier to change scripts by going stepwise. This is born out by case studies in Bicchieri and McNally (2018). Thus, while **I Love my Mommies** does reinforce dominant scripts about parenthood, monogamy, and 'respectability politics' about queer relationships, it is a long way from the kinds of dominant scripts that labeled same-sex attraction as a mental disorder (Kite and Whitley [2016]). Also relevant here is Heather Hogan's article [2022] celebrating the cartoon bear Peppa Pig's lesbian mothers. The more these disruptions and counterscripts become mainstream, the more they dismantle old heteronormative scripts—especial in this case, given the influence of the cartoon show and its prekindergarten audience. And I hope we can say that this constitutes some stepwise progress, especially alongside more radical strategies. I recognize that this not an uncontroversial theoretical commitment, and I say more about this in the next section.

4. On Cooperation

We might worry at this point that many of these examples of disruptions are relatively tame. Further, we might think that it is a necessary condition of a disruption that it be more of an overhaul or an obstruction: something more like disobedient disruption. One way to put this distinction is in terms of Young's (2001) dialogue between the deliberative democrat and the activist: deliberation is cooperative and rational, while direct action is disruptive and confrontational. So what exactly am I after by focusing on these quieter, subtler cases? If an agent is being cooperative, how can she be disruptive? What exactly is disruptive about these disruptions?

I focus on these cases to show the possibility and the efficacy of *cooperative* disruption. Recall condition (ii) from the analysis of disruptions in section 2: a disruption calls attention to a script subliminally or implicitly. Part of what implicit or subliminal speech can do is give its users plausible deniability or a safe 'out' for expressing controversial content (see Fakhoury [2020]; this can be, and often is, abused: see Lakoff 1975; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2015; Saul 2017b; Khoo 2017; Camp 2018). Calling implicit attention to a script also allows the disrupter to appear cooperative. I take it that appearing to be cooperative is

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

consistent with both being cooperative and not being cooperative. Many contextual factors will determine which of the two options are most appropriate. For example, in **Woman**, Crystal may actually want to be cooperative to maintain her friendship with Nora. In **Watermelon**, this may be less of a concern to Em, whose primary aim is to disengage from the exchange safely. The cases in section 3 allow the script to end relatively peacefully. I will give three considerations for why we should seriously consider the category of *cooperative disruptions*: (a) they can be safer or less risky for the disrupters; (b) in certain situations they can be more effective than uncooperative disruptions; and (c) they can be manifestations of autonomy.

The first two considerations are mostly descriptive and may be overridden by empirical considerations, but it is worth reviewing some of the evidence in their favor. For one thing, in some situations due to social position, authority dynamics, or any number of other contextually determined factors, it is unsafe to do anything but disrupt cooperatively. In fact, sometimes it is unsafe to do anything but *cooperate*, and disruption is not even an option (Bailey 2016; Galliano, Puechl, and Travis 1993; Fusé et al. 2007).

The second consideration involves seeing cooperative disruption as a strategic alternative to uncooperative disruption, which will also depend on extrinsic factors. This is consistent with a strategy that calls for *both* cooperative and confrontational disruptions. And often, successful social movements do call for both. For example, think of Black Lives Matter protests that shut down traffic working in tandem with people putting up Black Lives Matter yard signs and wearing pins (again, I do not endorse any negative argument against uncooperative disruptions; my claim is there is work to be done here that cannot be done by uncooperative or standard responses).

Finally, cooperative disruption is a manifestation of autonomy. Individuals sometimes operate within constraints and nevertheless contribute to the goal of ultimately extricating themselves from such constraints (see Oshana 2015; Khader 2016, among many others). Thus, on one reading, while Crystal's response of 'Thanks, you too!' to Nora's transphobic 'compliment' comes across as passive, we can also understand it as a kind of empowerment. She is protecting her needs and well-being by avoiding confrontation while at the same time successfully communicating what was wrong about Nora's remark. Another thing Crystal does in her disruption is 'fight fire with fire', so to speak. If the mechanism by which Nora puts Crystal in a double bind is willfully misapplying (or coopting) a neutral script, then disrupting the script by coopting yet another script is a way of playing a similar game. Choosing this strategy is itself a form of subversively conforming to the norms around the script. More specifically: Nora applies a *difference*-version of the compliment script: there is something about you that is different from me and that thing is laudable. Crystal proceeds by responding to the *sameness*-version of the compliment script: one that is more analogous to 'Nice shoes! Thanks, you too!' That is, Crystal was conforming to a script that was not in play, and in doing so she drew attention to the script that Nora was using and to the ways in which it was inappropriate.

To sum up, there are a few ways in which such cooperative disruption is consistent with exercising autonomy: first, the agent involved is protecting her own interests.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

Second, she is intentionally and effectively communicating something in her own defense. Third, she is choosing a particular strategy of extrication. On one view of the relationship between autonomy and double binds, choosing this strategy of extrication via disruption is not only consistent with autonomy, but necessary for it. According to Marilyn Frye, oppressive double binds constrain autonomy by giving the oppressed person a limited range of choices and options, all of which harm the agent by exposing them to 'penalty, censure, or deprivation' (Frye 1983: 2). In the case of many oppressive and pernicious scripts, a script recipient's autonomy is compromised when she has no choice but to respond in particular ways according to the script or otherwise risk social, physical, or psychological harm to herself. On other views of autonomy, like Marina Oshana's (2003), to have autonomy involves having authority over one's own actions and choices. On Carol Hay's (2005) view, sexual harassment constrains women's autonomy by legitimating attitudes that reinforce patriarchal oppression. If we accept that oppression constrains autonomy, then many pernicious scripts that legitimate patriarchal, racial, transphobic, ableist, and other oppressive attitudes also constrain autonomy in this broader sense. Thus, the scripted interaction is effectively imposed on the script recipient by the script initiator, and she is unable to choose for herself how the interaction will go or even how to respond.

The disruption allows her to reclaim her autonomy by refusing this imposition. It rejects the scripted interaction and avoids the censure that comes with such a rejection. If we think of scripts as predetermined programs, by analogy, the disruption is like pressing 'cancel' on running the program. Hirji's (2021) account of double binds construes them not as threats to autonomy, but to agency. On her view, oppressive double binds limit an individual's agency by presenting her with options that contribute to or perpetuate her own oppression. Her autonomy is left intact because she continues to be an autonomous agent, but the limited range of options is a constraint on agency. On this understanding of double binds, disruption is necessary for maintaining the disrupter's agency.

Finally, the script disrupter is contributing to upheavals of larger systems of oppression by disrupting microlevel instances of it. This final point turns on the relationship between interpersonal disruption and large-scale social change. Briefly, there are at least three ways this can happen. First, an individual disruption can spotlight the script at play, thus drawing attention to it (see Langton 2018). Second, following an argument in Hay (2005), individual acts of resistance can aggregate into large-scale social change. Third, participating in disruptions is empowering, and empowerment is a common precondition for social change (Haslanger 2015; Young 2011; Fakhoury 2020).

If cooperative disruption is coherent, effective, and consistent with individual autonomy, then that gives us reason to take it seriously as both a strategy to dismantle oppression and a phenomenon that can teach us about it. One lesson we can draw is that the existence of cooperative disruption challenges the apparent dichotomy between cooperation and disruption. Future work will involve expanding on how such a strategy can bridge activist and deliberative models of civic engagement and participation and investigating instances of cooperative disruption in social and political movements more broadly.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

5. Questions and Conclusions

The notion of a cooperative disruption raises two more questions that I will briefly address here. First, is there something inherently whitewashing or oppressive about focusing on cooperative disruptions when many individuals are not in a position to disrupt scripts in this way? Second, is framing disruption as prudential advice putting its intended recipients in a kind of 'triple bind' whereby they are normatively expected to participate in their own liberation and blameworthy if they do not?

Here are some brief considerations in response. To the first question: maybe. What I hope to have emphasized throughout this essay is that the kind of disruption I am interested in is consistent, theoretically and practically, with other forms of disruption. I do not argue that cooperative disruptions are *better* than noncooperative disruptions; rather, I maintain that they are useful and overlooked. In addition, they interplay with structural scripts in a striking way, one that can lay the groundwork for future work analyzing the interplay of interpersonal and social scripts.

Further, it is not the case that any given individual will be capable of disrupting an interpersonal script, and this is why the answer to the second question is 'no'. It is important to dispel any implication that engaging in such disruptions is mandatory or even just better than not doing so. Myriad factors outside of an individual's control will determine whether or not disruptions are available in the first place. One aim of this essay is to shed light on a potential survival strategy, much in the way that a self-defense class offers helpful tools for self-protection. It is not mandatory, and an individual is not blameworthy for finding herself in situations where such tools are inapplicable or inaccessible (nor should she be blameworthy for not using such a tool in situations where it may be applicable or accessible; see Randall [2010] for more on victim blaming). But the strategy is a resource and can be appealed to in certain situations by certain individuals.

We might think of disruptions as things that that only happen on large scales, but I hope to have shown that on closer inspection, there are daily acts of cooperative disruption that work in tandem with and can even facilitate large-scale change. In its strongest form, this conclusion allows us to see interpersonal cooperative disruptions as necessary parts of a larger project of dismantling oppressive scripts and ideologies. In its weakest, it allows us to affirm that individuals who do not flagrantly defy stereotypes or scripts, either by circumstance, temperament, or choice, can still contribute to social change. They can do so by challenging and disrupting *interpersonal* scripts that reinforce and give rise to dominant social norms, and in doing so they can push back against those structural scripts and ideological norms. And finally, I hope to have given us reason to think that cooperation and disruption are consistent with civic life and participation, even (and maybe especially) under conditions of inequality and oppression.

SAMIA HESNI
BOSTON UNIVERSITY
shesni@bu.edu

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

References

Abramson, Kate. (2014) 'Turning up the Lights on Gaslighting'. *Philosophical Perspectives,* 28, 1–30.

Ahmed, Sara. (2021) *Complaint!* Durham: Duke University Press

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. (1994) 'Identity, Authenticity, Survival: Multicultural Societies and Social Reproduction'. In A. Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 149–64.

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. (2000) 'Stereotypes and the Shaping of Identity'. *California Law Review,* 88, 41–54.

Ayala-López, Saray. (2018) 'Outing Foreigners'. Presentation at the meeting of the American Philosophical Association.

Ayala-López, Saray. (2020) 'Outing Foreigners: Accent and Linguistic Microaggression'. In L. Freeman and J. Weekes Schroer (eds.), *Microaggressions and Philosophy* (New York: Taylor & Francis), 146–62.

Bacharach, Sondra. (2018) 'Finding Your Voice in the Streets: Street Art and Epistemic Injustice'. *The Monist,* 101, 31–43.

Bailey, Benjamin. (2016) 'Street Remarks to Women in Five Countries and Four Languages: Impositions of Engagement and Intimacy'. *Sociolinguistics Studies,* 10, 589–609.

Bartky, Sandra Lee. (1997) 'Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power'. In Elizabeth Hackett and Sally Haslanger (eds.), *Theorizing Feminisms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 61–86.

Bicchieri, Cristina. (2005) *The Grammar of Society: The Nature and Dynamics of Social Norms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bicchieri, Cristina. (2008) 'The Fragility of Fairness: An Experimental Investigation on the Conditional Status of Pro-Social Norms'. *Philosophical Issues,* 18, 229–48.

Bicchieri, Cristina. (2016) *Norms in the Wild: How to Diagnose, Measure, and Change Social Norms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bicchieri, Cristina, and Peter McNally. (2018) 'Shrieking Sirens: Schemata, Scripts, and Social Norms: How Change Occurs'. *Social Philosophy & Policy,* 35, 23–53.

Bowman, Carol. (1993) 'Street Harassment and the Informal Ghettoization of Women'. *Harvard Law Review,* 106, 517–80.

Budig, M.J., and P. England. (2001) 'The Wage Penalty for Motherhood'. *American Sociological Review,* 66, 204–25.

Butler, Judith. (1991) *Gender Trouble*: *Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Camp, Elisabeth. (2017) 'Why Metaphors Make Good Insults: Perspectives, Presupposition, and Pragmatics'. *Philosophical Studies,* 174, 47–64.

Camp, Elisabeth. (2018) 'Insinuation, Common Ground, and the Conversational Record.' In Daniel Fogal, Daniel W. Harris, and Matt Moss (eds.), *New Work on Speech Acts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 40–66.

Chemaly, Soraya. (2019) *Rage Becomes Her: The Power of Women's Anger*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Cheryan, Sapna, and Benoît Monin. (2005) '"Where Are You *Really* From?": Asian Americans and Identity Denial'. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 89, 717–30.

Correll, S. J., S. Benard, and I. Paik. (2007) 'Getting a Job: Is there a Motherhood Penalty?' *American Journal of Sociology,* 112, 1297–1339.

Craig, Wendy, Debra Pepler, and Rona Atlas. (2000) 'Observations of Bullying in the Playground and the Classroom'. *School Psychology International,* 21, 22–36.

Dembroff, Robin. (2020) 'Beyond Binary: Genderqueer as Critical Social Kind'. *Philosophers' Imprint,* 20, 1–23.

Eckert, Penelope, and Sally McConnell-Ginet. (1992) 'Think Practically and Look Locally: Language and Gender as Community-based Practice'. *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 21, 461–90.

Eckert, Penelope, and Sally McConnell-Ginet. (2015) *Language and Gender*. 2d ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

Edwards, Derek. (1994) 'Script Formulations: A Study of Event Descriptions in Conversation.' *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 13, 211–47.
Epstein, Brian. (2015) *The Ant Trap: Rebuilding the Foundations of the Social Sciences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Fakhoury, Tamara. (2020) 'Quiet Resistance: The Value of Personal Defiance'. *The Journal of Ethics*, 25, 403–22.
Feigenbaum, Emily. (2007) 'Heterosexual Privilege'. *Hypatia*, 22, 1–9.
Fogg-Davis, Hawley. (2006) 'Theorizing Black Lesbians within Black Feminism: A Critique of Same-race Street Harassment'. *Politics & Gender*, 2, 57–76.
Frith, Chris. (2007) 'The Social Brain?' *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*. Biological Sciences. http://rstb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/362/1480/671.short.
Frith, Hannah. (2009) 'Sexual Scripts, Sexual Refusals'. In M. Horvath and J. Brown (eds.), *Rape: Challenging Contemporary Thinking* (Cullompton: Wilan Publishing), 99–122.
Frith, Hannah, and Celia Kitzinger. (2001) 'Reformulating Sexual Script Theory: Developing a Discursive Psychology of Sexual Negotiation'. *Theory and Psychology*, 11, 209–32.
Frye, Marilyn. (1983) *The Politics of Reality*. Trumansburg: Crossing Press
Frye, Marilyn. (2000) 'Oppression'. In Anne Minas (ed.), *Gender Basics: Feminist Perspectives on Women and Men*, 2d ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth), 10–16.
Fusé, Tiffany, John Forsyth, Brian Marx, Gordon Gallup, and Scott Weaver. (2007) 'Factor Structure of the Tonic Immobility Scale in Female Sexual Assault Survivors: An Exploratory and Confirmatory Analysis'. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 21, 265–83.
Gagnon, John, and William Simon. (1986) 'Sexual Scripts: Permanence and Change'. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 15, 97–120.
Galliano, Grace, Carol Puechl, and Linda Travis. (1993) 'Victim Reactions during Rape/sexual Assault: A Preliminary Study of the Immobility Response and its Correlates'. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 8, 109–14.
Gamand, Sophie. (2018) *Pit Bull Flower Power*. Lantern Books
Gamson, James. (1995) 'Must Identity Movements Self-destruct? A Queer Dilemma'. *Social Problems*, 42(3), 390-407.
Hacking, Ian. (1995) 'The Looping Effects of Human Kinds'. In D. Sperber, D. Premack, and A. J. Premack (eds.), *Causal Cognition: A Multidisciplinary Debate* (New York: Clarendon Press), 351–94.
Haslanger, Sally. (2005) 'The Semantics and Politics of Social Kinds'. *Hypatia*, 20, 10–26.
Haslanger, Sally. (2015) 'Social Structure, Narrative, and Explanation'. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 45, 1–15.
Hay, Carol. (2005) 'Whether to Ignore Them and Spin: Moral Obligations to Resist Sexual Harassment.' *Hypatia*, 20, 94–108.
Hirji, Sukaina. (2021) 'Oppressive Double Binds'. *Ethics*, 131, 643–69.
Hogan, Heather. (2022) 'Peppa Pig's Lesbian Polar Bear Moms are a Pretty Big Deal, Actually'. *Autostraddle*, September 14, 2022. https://www.autostraddle.com/peppa-pigs-lesbian-polar-bear-moms-are-a-pretty-big-deal-actually/.
Hong, Jun Sun, and Dorothy L. Espelage. (2012) 'A Review of Research on Bullying and Peer Victimization in School: An Ecological Analysis'. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 17, 311–22.
Jenkins, Carrie. (2017) *What Love Is: And What It Could Be*. New York: Basic Books
Khader, Serene. (2016) 'Beyond Autonomy Fetishism: Affiliation with Autonomy in Women's Empowerment'. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 17, 125–39.
Khoo, Justin. (2017) 'Code Words in Political Discourse'. *Philosophical Topics*, 45, 33–64.
Kite, Mary, and Bernard Whitley. (2016) *Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination*. 3d ed. New York: Routledge.
Krishnamoorthy, Priya. (2019) 'How to take a compliment?' https://www.wearetheliving.com/receiving-compliment/.
Kurth, Suzanne, Bethany B. Spiller, and Cheryl Brown Travis. (2000) 'Consent, Power, and Sexual Scripts: Deconstructing Sexual Harassment'. In C. B. Travis and J. W. White (eds.), *Sexuality, Society, and Feminism* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association), 323–54.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

Lakoff, Robin Tolmach. (1975) *Language and Woman's Place: Text and Commentaries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Langton, Rae. (1993) 'Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts'. *Philosophy & Public Affairs,* 22, 293–330.
Langton, Rae. (2018) 'Blocking as Counterspeech'. In D. Fogal, D. Harris, M. Moss (eds.), *New Work on Speech Acts*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 144–64.
Laniya, Olatokunbo Olukemi. (2005) 'Street Smut: Gender, Media, and the Legal Power Dynamics of Street Harassment, or "Hey Sexy" and other Ejaculations'. *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law,* 14, 91–130.
Logan, Laura. (2015) 'Street Harassment: Current and Promising Avenues for Researchers and Activists'. *Sociology Compass,* 9, 196–211.
Marcus, Sharon. (1992) 'Fighting Bodies, Fighting Words: A Theory and Politics of Rape Prevention'. In J. Butler and J. Scott (eds.), *Feminists Theorize the Political* (New York: Routledge), 385–403.
McDonald, Jordan. (2018) 'Nova, Nola, and Annalise: Queer Black Women and the Arc of Representation'. *Bitch Media*. January 3, 2018.
McDonald, Lucy. (2022) 'Cat-calls, Compliments, and Coercion'. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 103, 208–30
McKinnon, Rachel. (2017) 'Allies Behaving Badly: Gaslighting as Epistemic Injustice'. In Ian James Kidd, Jose Medina, and Walter Dill (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice* (New York: Routledge), 167–74.
Meltzer, Marisa. (2019) 'The Pit Bull Gets a Rebrand'. *New York Times*, January 4, 2019.
Miller, Claire Cain. (2014) 'The Motherhood Penalty and the Fatherhood Bonus'. *New York Times*, September 6, 2014.
Mills, Melinda. (2007) '"*You Talking To Me?" Considering Black Women's Racialized and Gendered Experiences with and Responses or Reactions to Street Harassment from Men*'. Master's thesis, Georgia State University, Institute for Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.
Molina, Natalia. (2014) *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Nielsen, Laura Beth. (2004) *License to Harass: Law, Hierarchy, and Offensive Public Speech*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Oshana, Marina. (2003) 'How Much Should We Value Autonomy?' *Social Philosophy and Policy,* 20, 99–126.
Oshana, Marina. (2005) 'Autonomy and Self-identity'. In J. Christmas and J. Anderson (eds.), *Autonomy and the Challenges to Liberalism: New Essays* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 77–97.
Oshana, Marina. (2015) *Personal Autonomy and Social Oppression: Philosophical Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
Pinker, Steven. (2007) 'The Evolutionary Social Psychology of Off-record Indirect Speech Acts'. *Intercultural Pragmatics,* 4, 437–61.
Popovich, Paula, Jeffrey A. Jolton, Paul M. Mastrangelo, Wendi J. Everton, Jill M. Somers, and DeeAnn N. Gehlauf. (1995) 'Sexual Harassment Scripts: A Means to Understanding a Phenomenon'. *Sex Roles,* 32, 315–35.
Randall, Melanie. (2010) 'Sexual Assault Law, Credibility, and "Ideal Victims": Consent, Resistance, and Victim Blaming'. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law,* 22, 397–433.
Rao, Patricia A., Deborah C. Beidel, and Michael J. Murray. (2008) 'Social Skills Interventions for Children with Asperger's Syndrome or High-Functioning Autism: A Review and Recommendations'. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders,* 38, 353–61.
Saul, Jennifer. (2017a) 'Are Generics Especially Pernicious?' *Inquiry*, 1–18.
Saul, Jennifer. (2017b) 'Racial Figleaves, the Shifting Boundaries of the Permissible, and the Rise of Donald Trump.' *Philosophical Topics*, 45(2), 97-116.
Schank, Roger, and Robert Abelson. (1977) *Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding: An Inquiry Into Human Knowledge Structures*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
Stoljar, Natalie. (2015) 'Living Constantly at Tiptoe Stance: Social Scripts, Psychological Freedom, and Autonomy'. In M. Oshana (ed.), *Personal Autonomy and Social Oppression* (New York: Routledge), 105–23.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.

Tannen, Deborah. (1995) 'The Power of Talk: Who Gets Heard and Why'. *Harvard Business Review*.
Theriault, Jordan, Liane Young, and Lisa Feldman Barrett. (2021) 'The Sense of Should: A Biologically-based Framework for Modeling Social Pressure'. *Physics of Life Reviews,* 36, 100–36.
Tirrell, Lynne. (2015) '"Listen to What you Say": Rwanda's Postgenocide Language Policies'. *New England Journal of Public Policy,* 27, 1–24.
Wachs, Faye Linda. (2006) '"Throw Like a Girl" Doesn't Mean What it Used to: Research on Gender, Language, and Power'. In Linda K. Fuller (ed.), *Sport, Rhetoric, and Gender: Historical Perspectives and Media Representations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 43–52.
Wiederman, Michael W. (2005) 'The Gendered Nature of Sexual Scripts'. *Family Journal,* 13, 496–502.
Wolf, Tikva. (2013) 'Women'. *Kimchicuddles*. http://kimchicuddles.com/post/57702478654/women.
Wu, Frank. (2002) *Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White*. New York: Basic Books
Young, Iris Marion. (2001) 'Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy'. *Political Theory,* 29, 670–90.
Young, Iris Marion. (2011) *Responsibility for Justice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. 14 Sep 2026 at 04:53:56, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use.