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NO TRUE PERSUASIVE DEFINITION MARGINALIZES?

abstract

In the following paper we relate to the terms such as 'true' and 'real' in conjecture with dual character concepts such as 'scientist' and 'artist'. They are often integrated into phrases broadly viewed as persuasive definitions. We argue that persuasive definitions are usually intended to marginalize individuals, sub-groups, and even objects, within a group. They may also be employed to elevate or preserve the status of a group by disassociating it with its marginal members, their actions, and characteristics. For example, 'true' art may be stipulatively defined as having certain features to persuade us to accept the marginalization of those objects of art that lack them, and to elevate the social status of the authors of the objects that have them. 'No true Scotsman is cruel' is uttered to distance the normative Scots from those who run afoul, so that they can maintain untarnished reputation and positive identity.

keywords

no-true Scotsman move, dual character concepts, deontic, emotive meaning, fallibility

1. Introduction Natural languages are messy. Despite the best conscious efforts of philosophers to clarify the different meanings of vague and ambiguous terms, these meanings tend to tangle up in different contexts. Moreover, people may prefer to send out vague messages, either intentionally or unintentionally. There is no going around the fact that vagueness is often effective in persuasion while valid arguments fall on deaf ears. Thus, it is incumbent upon philosophers not only to clarify terms but also to expose the various ways in which certain terms may be obscured on purpose.

Ironically, among the natural language terms that are most resistant to clarification and are most likely to be used to send duplicitous messages, are the terms ‘true’ and ‘real.’ The term ‘true’ is complex enough even when isolated in the sterile context of formal languages (Tarski, 1935), and it presents a true Gordian knot in the natural languages. Specifically, ‘true’ as a predicate may relate not only to sentences, as in “Sentence A is true,” but also to things, as in “This is a true masterpiece,” or to social roles and identities, as in “She is a true scientist.” Philosophers have offered several common solutions to the question of “true” qualities. One may distinguish between the *descriptive* and the *evaluative* or *prescriptive* meanings of the term ‘true.’ ‘A is a true X’ may be interpreted through a *deontic logic* family of paradigms (Conte, 1991) as a type of an “ought-phrase” instead of an “is-phrase” (Schiappa, 2003). For example, ‘Alex is a true scientist’ should be interpreted as “Alex ought to be considered an exemplary scientist,” rather than “It is true that Alex is a member of a scientific community.” It is more of a statement about the values that Alex embodies rather than about the fact of Alex’s membership in a certain social group (Macango and Walton, 2010).

Knobe et al. (2013) and others (Leslie, 2015; Reuter, 2019) have argued that phrases like ‘John is a true scientist’ are ambiguous because of the dual meaning of such concepts as ‘scientist’, ‘rocker’, or ‘man’. These terms have both factual and evaluative meaning. The term ‘bus-driver,’ on the other hand, has only one, factual, meaning, as being a bus-driver is a value-neutral activity. Thus, they shift the blame for the ambiguity of the above-mentioned phrases from adjectives like ‘true’ or ‘real’ to a particular set of socially significant nouns. We note that it is the combination of these nouns with adjectives such as ‘true’ and ‘real’ that usually lends itself to ambiguity or dual interpretations.

One must reckon with the fact that phrases like ‘A is a true X’ are often used in bad faith. Such phrases may be interpreted as *persuasive definitions* (PDs) (Stevenson, 1944; Govier, 2010). The point of certain definitions is not to clarify, but to persuade: to make someone change their beliefs and attitudes and to cause one to act in a certain way. The present research focuses on

the rhetorical uses of such terms as ‘true,’ ‘real,’ etc. These uses do not exhaust all the possible uses of such terms. Nevertheless, such terms, in combination with ‘dual-meaning’ concepts, are often intended to change attitudes without providing proper material ground for doing so. These combinations form phrases that may constitute PDs. Employing PD rhetoric can be effective in changing our attitudes towards social facts, groups, and individuals, even despite our ability to see through invalid arguments. We note that PDs may rely on social stereotypes instead of objective facts. Thus, a ‘real’ woman refers to a stereotypical woman in such rhetoric, aimed against women who do not conform to stereotypes. Thus, conformity may triumph over logic.

The following article is an exercise in rhetorical analysis. According to Schiappa (2003, p. 4), rhetorical analysis typically focuses on persuasion conducted through symbolic means. Rhetorical analysis is not at odds with philosophical analysis. In fact, rhetorical analysis is an important part of what has been described as a return to “practical philosophy” (*ibid.*). Thus, in our research we distinguish between the validity of the arguments based on persuasive definitions and their effectiveness.

We argue that PDs are usually intended to either marginalize or de-marginalize an individual, a social group or a sub-group, or even objects or sets of objects imbued with social significance. Associating objects, groups and individuals with certain significant characteristics either serves to lower or to elevate their status. Implying “guilt by association” is a bad or fallacious argumentative tactic (Kolb, 2019), yet it may succeed in tarnishing one’s reputation, nevertheless.

Particularly disingenuous uses of persuasive definition are exemplified by the ‘*No-true Scotsman Move*’ (NTSM) (Flew, 1971), where a descriptive term ‘Scotsman’ is subtly replaced by an evaluative term ‘true Scotsman’. Disassociating a certain rotten Scotsman from other Scotsmen may serve to clean up the image of Scotsmen in general even if we see through the flimsiness of such dissociation. We will argue that two wrongs do not make a right: although the action of one person should not tarnish the reputation of his entire ethnic group, denying that person’s membership within this group is false. Nevertheless, investigating such rhetorics is worthwhile.

As a part of her comprehensive study of what arguments are and what they are not, Govier (2010) covers the subject of definitions.

2. Persuasive Definitions

A stipulative definition is one in which someone specifies what the usage of a word is to be. In stipulating a definition, the person who puts it forward seeks to set out a specific usage for some purpose. He or she does not seek to describe ordinary usage, as in a reportive or lexical definition. Rather, the person sets out a meaning for a term (p. 76).

A persuasive definition is defined by Govier as a “stipulative definition disguised as a claim or as a reportive definition.” In other words, using a persuasive definition commonly involves a *quid pro quo*, passing one’s chosen meaning for a regular, literal meaning of a term. It involves “an attempt to change attitudes by keeping the emotional connotations of a word while altering its application.”

Persuasive definitions are not typically used as stand-alone phrases. They are usually integrated into arguments, which, in turn, may be embedded into broader rhetorical tactics and strategies. Following Burgess-Jackson’s (1995, p. 419n) clarification that the term ‘persuasive definition’ is used to refer to both an activity (‘You’re engaged in persuasive definition’) and the product of that activity (‘That’s a persuasive definition’), we will also use the abbreviation ‘PD’ to refer to both, leaving it to the context to indicate which is intended.

PDs are not always explicit. On the contrary, they are often presented as implicit premises within arguments. According to Govier:

Terms such as real, true, authentic, and genuine are often elements of persuasive definitions. If someone claims that modern abstract art is not true art because true art must depict objects realistically, he is using a premise based on a persuasive definition of “art.” If a work is not realistic in character, this person will not give it the name art. His implicit definition, stating that true art must depict objects realistically, invites others to share his conception of art. But he offers no reasons to support that conception. Instead of reasons, he offers a disguised definition (2010, p. 77).

Govier recognizes the social significance of using PDs. PDs are used to manipulate the perceived statuses of objects and persons to induce social actions upon them:

Often, when persuasive definitions are used, important issues are at stake. The term art, for example, implies some status for a created work. To deny that modern abstract works can count as art on the grounds that they are not representational is to imply that such works have no proper place in art museums (*ibid.*).

Stevenson (1944, p. 139), the originator of the concept of PD, views ethical arguments as disagreements in attitude, resolved either through changing one’s beliefs or without changing anyone’s beliefs. In the first case, such arguments are rational, while in the other case they are purely persuasive, which is echoed in Govier (*ibid.*) where she says, “Persuasive definitions attempt to alter our attitudes and beliefs by redefining terms instead of stating reasons and arguments.” Stevenson adds (*ibid.*) that persuasiveness of arguments depends on “sheer, direct emotional impact of words – on emotive meaning....” He qualifies though: “Any ethical judgment, of course, is itself a persuasive instrument, but in the use of persuasive “methods” the effects of initial judgment are intensified by *further* persuasion.” In this paper we do not view all ethical arguments as merely persuasive, of course. Our only focus is persuasion which relies on manipulation of definitions.

Stevenson views persuasion as an explicitly nonrational, rather than irrational activity. Persuasion does not usually rely on logical miscalculation or trickery, as it simply does not rely on logic. Persuasion may involve “sleeping metaphors” or ambiguities, as in a case when a word ‘man’ in “Our leader is a man,” is used both in the literate sense of “male,” and in the suggestive sense of “one who has strength of character” (p. 143). We would say that this phrase relies on stereotypes rather than the empirical study of social reality. Relying on social stereotypes may turn out to be effective in persuasion, regardless of whether they are true or untrue. Their empirical validity is simply irrelevant from the rhetorical aspect.

3. The Different Meanings of Vagueness

Stevenson argues that vagueness, in a particular sense, is an essential element of persuasion. “Ethical terms, as used in everyday life, are vague: with no sharp distinction between their strict descriptive meaning and what it suggests” (Stevenson, p. 206). According to him, this vagueness is often intentional. Unlike in science, the function of definitions in ethics is not to “clarify common notions or make convenient abbreviations.” Ethical definitions conjoin the descriptive and emotive meanings, they do not separate or delimit them, as the term definition would suggest. They serve purposes. “To choose a definition is to plead a case, so long as the term defined is strongly emotive” (*ibid.*, p. 210).

Stevenson labels the concepts that we refer to as dual character “semi-ethical.” He uses a question of whether Alexander Pope is a poet to show how such definitions may enter

arguments. Of course, this question is a matter of “mere” definition, but this is precisely the point: using a suitable definition of what it means to be a “real poet” to influence someone’s attitude towards Pope, perhaps to legitimize disregarding him altogether.

Stevenson notes that persuasive definitions are often recognizable from the words “real” or “true” employed in a metaphorical way (p. 213). He quotes from Aldous Huxley’s exploration into completely reversing the meanings of terms by adding a qualifier ‘true’ to them:

But if you want to be free, you’ve got to be a prisoner. It’s the condition of freedom – true freedom. “True freedom!” Anthony repeated in the parody of a clerical voice. “I always love that kind of argument. The contrary of a thing isn’t the contrary; oh, dear me, no! It’s the thing itself, but as it truly is. Ask any die-hard what conservatism is; he’ll tell you it’s true socialism. And the brewer’s trade papers they’re full of articles about the beauty of true temperance. Ordinary temperance is just gross refusal to drink; but true temperance, true temperance is something much more refined. True temperance is a bottle of claret with each meal and three double whiskies after dinner....” “What’s in a name?” Anthony went on. “The answer is, practically everything, if the name’s a good one. Freedom’s a marvelous name. That’s why you’re so anxious to make use of it. You think that, if you call imprisonment true freedom, people will be attracted to the prison. And the worst of it is, you’re quite right” (pp. 214-215; Govier, 2010, pp. 77-78).

Stevenson, we must note, uses a very specific, that is to say, stipulative definition of the term ‘vague.’ Typically, ‘vague’ means the opposite of ‘precise’ (Hospers, 1967, p. 67).

The simplest form of vagueness occurs when there is *no precise cutoff point* between the applicability and non-applicability of a word; in some situations the word is clearly applicable, in other situations it is clearly not applicable, but between these there is a no-man’s-land of meaning in which one cannot say whether the word is applicable or not (*ibid.*).

While Hospers assumes that when PDs are involved, the appropriate meaning of ‘vagueness’ is the one stipulated by Stevenson, others, like Burgess-Jackson (1995) and Aberdein (1997), apply the more typical sense of the term in their analyses of rape. Thus, when they argue that extending application of a term to include the borderline case does not constitute an objectionable use of PD, they do not consider the intentions of those who stretch definitions. Burgess-Jackson (1995, pp. 434-436) presents twenty-four ambiguous cases ranging between rape and consensual sex, and asks the reader to determine, which cases constitute, and which do not constitute rape. Since the reader cannot perform the task, most of the cases are argued to be borderline. But the dichotomy between rape and consensual sex is false. This line of argumentation ignores the terminology that applies to various degrees of sexual assault and repugnant behavior. The fact that an average reader is not familiar with the legal vernacular does not prove that a legal expert will not be able to discern between the different cases and categorize them appropriately.

The disingenuous aspects of PDs are often hidden in plain sight. We are tricked by their obviousness. The term ‘murder’ may be vague, in the sense that a layperson may not be able to distinguish it from manslaughter. The phrase ‘meat is murder,’ however, implies a PD of ‘murder’ which is problematic not because we cannot establish whether it properly applies to slaughtering of animals, but because it clearly intends to make us as enraged about eating meat as we are about executing innocent people despite our awareness of the distinction. We

are aware of the distinction between people and animals, yet our emotions are not governed by logic. Thus, we may be persuaded by obvious overstretching of boundaries. This is a point that requires further clarification: how do PDs work if they do not exactly fool us?

4. No-true Scotsman Moves

Anthony Flew (1971) relates to a type of persuasive defining that he coins as NTSM: a “move” – a disingenuous rhetorical device. NTSM is nothing but a crude and intentional mix-up of categories that we ought to know are better kept separate. Flew associates NTSM with Humean dichotomies: not only between descriptive and prescriptive utterances, but also between “relations of ideas” and “matters of fact.”

For people everywhere – being too human – constantly fail to be and to make clear which sort of claim they are supposed to be urging. Worth still, having started with an assertion of the one sort we then illicitly – and often unwittingly – reinterpret it in the other way. Let us pillory this particular form of intellectual delinquency by dubbing it, *The No-true Scotsman Move*. Someone says: ‘No Scotsman would beat his wife to a shapeless pulp with a blunt instrument.’ He is confronted with a falsifying instance: ‘Mister Angus McSporrán did just that.’ Instead of withdrawing, or at least qualifying, the too rash original claim our patriot insists: ‘Well, no true Scotsman would do such a thing!’ By this evasive essay in persuasive definition, what started as a contention about a supposed matter of fact is shiftily transmogrified into the expression of a factious necessary truth (p. 388).

The difference between matters of fact and necessary truths is that the former are fallible, while the latter are infallible. Such categories or kinds as ‘Scottish,’ and ‘scientist’ are fallible: potentially, there are ways to check whether McSporrán is of Celtic ancestry and whether Alex holds a diploma. By adding ‘true’ to the above categories, we cannot question the locutor’s meaning of such new categories, though it is implied that the locutor merely qualifies the original, fallible ones.

In no uncertain terms, Flew characterizes NTSM as a deception. Whatever the logical status of the necessary truths is, NTSM is built upon an implicit denying of that which is true as a matter of fact.

Although you may choose to be so tiresome as to operate not with a concept of Scot but with that of true Scott, you cannot choose whether or not Mr. Angus McSporrán is a Scot. You can only choose whether to say what is false, that he is not (p. 449).

Without this falsity the move would not work and would not make any sense. The very point of NTSM is to work around that which is true by trivializing the truth of the matter. We know that Angus McSporrán is a Scot. The point of NTSM is not to deny the obvious but rather to make it unimportant. The deceptiveness of PDs, exemplified by the NTSM, hides in plain sight: the falsity of the claim is so obvious that pointing it out is simply ridiculous. Hence, one is expected not to point it out. The correct response to NTSM would be, of course, to point out the falsity with a deadpan demeanor.

5. Bad Yet Effective Arguments

Despite such egregious examples as the one quoted from Huxley, Stevenson (1944, p. 215) argues that not all persuasion is that of a mob orator, and asks which persuasions must be rejected and which must not be?

We have seen Burgess-Jackson (1995) and Aberdein (1997) argue that not all uses of PD are illegitimate. Aberdein argues that PDs such as those implied in the slogans “pro-life” and

“pro-choice” are so obvious that they are not likely to mislead but rather to draw attention to critical issues – like any legitimate PR campaign. Aberdeen thinks that replacing vagueness with *clarity* legitimizes employment of PD. Thus, he suggests, if one is to challenge an old definition of a term with a new definition of the same term – one is to acknowledge the intended shift of meaning; supply the theoretical foundation for the shift; and to clarify, in which sense the term is being used in each case it is being used. This is the way to stipulate a definition, without taking the responsibility for the transfer of the emotional charge of the lexical definition of the term to the stipulated definition. Let us examine whether this feature makes for poor argumentation or not.

We must note that not every conversation is a philosophical debate and not every public speech is addressed to the academic or scholarly community. This is exactly the point that Schiappa is making: philosophers must not only distinguish between valid and invalid arguments, but also investigate how people persuade other people to adopt and use certain definitions to the exclusion of others.

Ad hominem attacks make for bad arguments (Wrisley, 2019). Nevertheless, they are often quite effective. One may call people names in order to change others’ attitudes toward them without arguing the merits of the cases they present. Certain terms have either laudatory or derogatory connotations because of the social status or prestige associated with them. People may see past the faulty argumentation, but they cannot ignore the social implications. Involving social stereotypes, jokingly or not, is no trivial matter. Although “true” philosophers may not be convinced, certain attitudes may be either affirmed or dismissed because they align with the listeners’ preconceptions regarding certain social groups. We argue that PDs are not essentially about the logic of sentences, but rather about the logic of the hierarchical social reality. Calling the locutor “low,” “dirty,” or “fake” takes nothing away from the locutor’s arguments, yet it may lower their credibility or importance.

Searle (1995) has made a distinction that might be crucial to our discussion: that between *social* or *institutional*, and *brute* or *natural* facts. Brute facts exist regardless of our institutions, while institutional facts are a matter of culture and society, and they only exist within the framework of our institutions. Brute facts are *discovered*. Institutional facts are *constructed* according to the rule, which may be formulated as: ‘X counts as Y in context C.’

The significance of this distinction may be disputed. Guala (2014) argues that the differences between social and natural kinds are not particularly significant since the once they are established, the characteristic properties of social kinds are discovered, just like in the natural realm. He thus rejects what he refers to as the Difference Thesis: “unlike natural kinds, social kinds depend crucially on our attitudes towards them.” In other words, Guala points out that institutions are not arbitrary in their function, and they establish facts according to rigorous social laws. A dollar bill is created, yet its value is determined, even if it fluctuates according to invented social rules. We must note, however, that when someone claims that someone’s money is “dirty,” the point is not to say that the bills are fake and would not be recognized as legal tender. The point is to say that they *should not*.

Some argue that certain NTSM arguments are not necessarily fallacious because they relate to social facts. A phrase ‘X is a true Y’, where Y is a social category, may be legitimately understood as ‘X should count as Y’ although X is, strictly speaking, not Y. Schiappa (2003, p. 3) argues that “definitional disputes should be treated to be less about philosophical or scientific questions of ‘is’ and more as sociopolitical and pragmatic questions of ‘ought’”. Following Schiappa, Anderson interprets a NTSM to mean, *though Angus McSparran is Scottish, that is not how a Scotsman should act*. Thus, he thinks that we must interpret calling a person or their behavior ‘un-American’ similarly – they are not called ‘fake-American’, ‘false-American’,

6. Social Facts and Social Oughts

or even a ‘non-American’. This is not a case of redefinition, but of clarification: that person is recognized as an American, yet they are not acting as an American should. Since the question of how a Scotsman should act is not a matter of fact, according to Anderson, there is no way to further the conversation, as a Socratic aporia has been reached. Nevertheless, under Anderson’s interpretation, NTSM may be understood as a logically acceptable way of calling our attention to something that ought not happen yet happened anyway.

While it seems plausible that using a NTSM one may merely intend to imply that someone is not living up to a certain social standard, such a line of arguing may be extended ad absurdum. One may jokingly argue that no true Scotsman puts sugar in his porridge to cause a few laughs, but this is not a philosophical argument. There is nothing wrong with telling a joke or making a trivial observation that Scots ought not to be cruel yet some of them are, but it should hardly count as a philosophical argument. One may, of course, argue against us that while philosophical arguments ought not be trivial, many of them, as a matter of fact, are. We argue that it is not the case that NTSM merely suggests that Scotsmen ought not behave like Angus McSporrán did. NTSM is better understood as a speech act intended at establishing a social fact of excommunication – we are invited to consider the Scots as a group, excluding the above-mentioned Angus McSporrán.

Manninen (2019, p. 375) gives us a real-life example of the NTSM:

The author J.K. Rowling, of Harry Potter fame, who has resided in Scotland for two decades, has been heralded as “a tremendous ambassador for the country.” But after she donated £1 million to the pro-United Kingdom campaign, she was called “a Union cow bag” by various online independence activists. Although Rowling had previously appeared to be Scottish aplenty for all Scots involved, to some members of the independence movement, all of a sudden, she was not Scottish enough. The barrage of criticism aimed at Rowling shows that living in Scotland may be sufficient to make you Scottish, absent a contentious political issue.

Membership in social groups, unlike membership in a natural genus, is not a natural fact, but rather a question of a group’s attitude towards its members: acceptance or rejection. We argue that this attitude is nonbinary in nature but may fluctuate from core membership in a social category to various degrees of marginalization within it.

**7. Fake Picasso
and Marginal
Rubens**

There seems to be a distinction between the antonyms of the categories of ‘true’ or ‘real’ relating to social facts: the *fake* and the *marginal*. By ‘marginal’ we mean no more than “excluded from or existing outside the mainstream of society, a group, or a school of thought,” and by ‘marginalization’ we mean “to relegate to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group,” as these terms are defined in Merriam-Webster. The difference between a fake painting and a marginal painting is clear: a fake Picasso painting has nothing to do with Picasso. He never touched it. It is not a Picasso painting at all. A marginal Rubens painting is by no means a forgery, though it may differ from a Rubens masterpiece in several ways: it was not painted when the artist was in his prime, it was mostly produced by his apprentices with an artist adding only the finishing touches, and so on. One may dispute the cultural importance of a painting, or one may dispute the factual originality of the painting, yet these are two separate disputes. Disputing the importance, of course, may be predicated upon the resolution of the question of originality.

Faking typically relates to “brute” facts and artifacts. Mimicry is quite common in flora and fauna. Marginalization is only common in social animals, but it is not an exclusively human

phenomenon. Language, of course, complicates these issues in humans and it is our job to clarify them. Searle's example of a dollar bill, whose reality is established through our attitude towards it, implies that if we are convinced that a particular bill was not produced in a manner that we expected, i.e., forged, our attitude towards it would change. We would be reluctant to accept it. The phrase "*Pecunia non olet*" or "money does not stink," attributed to the emperor Vespasian, indicates that there is a distinction between marginalization and forgery. "Dirty money" is not fake money. A "low" or "dirty" person is not necessarily an impostor. "Alex is not a real scientist" indicates either that she has forged her scientific credentials, or that she should be treated as a second rate or low-level scientist for failing to uphold certain values, stipulated to be essentially important for scientists, but not both. In the first sense, the sentence's truth value may be tested. In the second sense, we are not invited to evaluate institutional facts, but merely to judge according to the social stereotypes, strategically accentuated by the locutor.

'Fake' may be understood as the opposite of genuine, authentic, natural, or original. Faking involves pretense, mimicry or putting on a show. 'Marginal' is understood as the opposite of prototypical, normal, normative, excellent, core, mainstream. One rarely positions oneself on the margins on purpose, the social group usually pushes some of its members away from its core towards the fringes, from inside to outside, from high status to low status, though there may be exceptions to this rule (Becker, 1963). Strategic essentializing may be used to imply non-conformity to stereotypes to mean lack of integrity. Thus, an assertive, career-oriented woman may be characterized as "not a real woman." She is not argued to fake being a woman, only to display behavior that does not conform with the stereotype. The point being, of course, to change our attitude towards this woman, i.e., to marginalize her.

While Angus McSporrán cannot be said to be faking being a Scot, one may argue that he turns himself into a marginal member of his ethnic group by being excessively cruel. The other members of this group do not wish to be identified with him. To avoid being labeled guilty by association they wish to distance themselves from him. Thus, we do not dispute Anderson's interpretation that NTSM may be used to affirm both the descriptive (McSporrán is a Scot) and the prescriptive (Scots should not be cruel) readings. We argue that this refers to an oblique (or merely marginal) use of NTSM, which is more commonly used to imply the marginal or dubious status of the member within a group. NTSM may be said to be the rhetorical means to separate the dirty from the clean.

We conclude that the difference between the dual and single character concepts is social. The question is whether the concept relates to anything worth marginalizing. Usually, people ascribe little significance to hierarchical differences among bus drivers. The difference in recognition between an elite scientist or a musician and someone who is a marginal member of these groups, on the other hand, is life-altering.

Identities are not set in stone. Excommunication, ostracism, banning, and banishing are real historical and social phenomena. A license may be revoked, a citizen may be exiled, and a criminal may be separated from the rest of the society by walls and bars. We argue that 'You are no longer my son!' does not mean 'You are my son, but you should not be!' Instead, this phrase usually means 'You will no longer be treated as a member of my family,' which is closer to Searle's understanding of social facts.

When someone's behavior is referred to as 'un-American,' it does not usually mean that one is recognized as an American, yet, as a matter of moral opinion, it is not the way an American should act. It usually means that their American identity is threatened, and we are called upon to make them suffer the consequences of marginalization. The point of PD is persuasion: getting others to change their attitude and behavior (Macango and Walton, 2010). Thus, 'true

8. Conclusions

temperance/freedom/socialism' usually means 'drink X/submit to Y/vote Z.' PD is normally used to negate, deny, or diminish the identity of A as a member of group X. It can be done to either marginalize or deny A's lofty social status as X, or to elevate the status of X by denying the undesirable A's membership in X. 'Alex is not a true scientist' is said to persuade us to lower Alex's social status and thus change our attitude towards her. 'Angus McSporrán is no true Scot' is said to dissuade us from seeing Scots as a group, characterized by cruelty, exemplified by the said Angus McSporrán. The phrase "Hillary is the only man in the Obama administration" (Leslie, 2015) both marginalizes the male members of the said administration and elevates Hillary by favorably comparing her to a prototype. They are weak while she is strong in character although our role and gender stereotypes might have suggested otherwise. We may object to such stereotypical thinking on philosophical grounds, yet we recognize its rhetorical meaning.

The point of the positive uses of PD is to either elevate A's status within X by placing them within an elite sub-set of X, or to elevate X's status by attributing it the characteristics of A. 'A true scientist is open-minded' is said to persuade us that those scientists who are open-minded are not just scientists, but elite scientists. This phrase is used to motivate a scientist to consider a certain notion that they are likely to reject without such encouragement. 'A true warrior is brave' is said to elevate the status of the military in general, unless, of course, it is said to ascribe an outsider status to those members of the military who are implied to be not brave. This phrase may also be employed to motivate the outsiders to support or join the military, or to motivate the insiders to alter their behavior to elevate their status within the profession. Whether the members of a certain military group are, indeed, brave, according to well-defined criteria, is a simple matter of fact.

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