

Truth, Trust, and Democracy

Katharina Felka
(WWU Münster):

Slurs and Bad Manners

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Some authors have observed that the derogatory content conveyed by slurs exhibits features commonly associated with conventional implicatures and have therefore concluded that slurs conventionally implicate derogatory content. However, Nunberg (2018) argues that there is a class of special manner implicatures that share these features and that slurs give rise to such implicatures instead. This paper offers a detailed examination of manner implicatures and argues that while (i) Nunberg is right that certain manner implicatures behave like conventional implicatures, (ii) treating slurs as giving rise to manner implicatures faces a serious difficulty. For this reason, the talk concludes that a conventional implicature account of slurs is preferable.

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Katharina Felka is a Professor of Theoretical Philosophy at the University of Münster. Her research lies at the intersection of philosophy of language, metaphysics, metaethics, and social philosophy. She draws heavily on results and methods from linguistics to shed new light on core philosophical problems. In her PhD thesis, which received the Wolfgang-Stegmüller Prize in 2015, she explored the ontological commitments of our talk about numbers. Currently, her work focuses on hybrid evaluatives as well as foundational questions on the semantics/pragmatics interface. She is also particularly interested in the workings of that-clauses, concealed questions, and presuppositions and, particularly, the philosophical implications of their analyses.

