



laetus in praesens

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30 June 2025 | Draft

Requisite Appreciation of "Bullshit"?

When leadership knows not "what the fuck" Iran and Israel are doing

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Introduction

The future may recognize this to be an extraordinary period in which the widely acclaimed leader of the free world -- and the most powerful person on the planet -- is especially recognized for his tendency to "bullshit" (Tim Kenyon, *Why Donald Trump is such a relentless bullshitter*, *The Conversation*, 26 February 2025; Stewart Lee, *Trump's bullshit blitz has Europe on its knees*, *The Guardian*, 23 February 2025; Lauren Griffin, *Trump isn't lying, he's bullshitting – and it's far more dangerous*, *The Conversation*, 27 January 2017). The public use of profanity has been explained by The White House, arguing that one of the things the American people love the most about this president is he often says what they were thinking but lack the courage to say themselves (*White House Responds to Donald Trump's Use of Profanity*, *Newsweek*, 31 January 2025)

This tendency is consistent with recognition of the chaotically surreal nature of global governance at this time. (*Surreal nature of current global governance as experienced*, 2016; Anthony Burke and Rita Parker, *Global Insecurity: Futures of Global Chaos and Governance*, 2017; Breno Bringel, *Global Chaos and the*

New Geopolitics of Power and Resistances, 2022)

To the amazement of many this recognition has been further reinforced by the widely (un)publicized assertion of the acclaimed global peace maker -- nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize -- in employing a term widely deprecated in public discourse (Oscar Rickett, *Trump says Israel and Iran 'don't know what the fuck they're doing'*, *Middle East Eye*, 24 June 2025; Rema Rahman, *Trump on Israel, Iran continuing fight: 'They don't know what the f--- they're doing'* *The Hill*, 24 June 2025; Nina Golgowski, *Trump Says Israel And Iran 'Don't Know What The F**k They're Doing'*, *HuffPost*, 24 June 2025; Giselle Ruhiyyih Ewing, *An angry Trump decries Israel, Iran for breaking ceasefire*, *Politico*, 24 June 2025). The so-called "F-bomb" was dropped at a highly critical moment in which many feared that a nuclear disaster was imminent, or that World War III could be triggered.

The somewhat elusive pattern of expletives was exemplified by an earlier declaration of Donald Trump (*Trump derides protections for immigrants from 'shithole' countries*, *The Washington Post*, 12 January 2018; *'A New Low.' The World Is Furious at Trump for His Remark About 'Shithole Countries'*, *Time*, 12 January 2018; *Here's What People in the Room and Out Are Now Saying About Trump's "Shithole Countries" Remark*, *The Slate*, 15 January 2018). This invites reflection on the wider connotations of that assessment, especially given the controversial current deportation of immigrants to the USA to such countries (*Earth as a Shithole Planet -- from a Universal Perspective? Understanding why there are no extraterrestrial visitors*, 2018).

The term "bullshit" has evoked a much discussed provocative philosophical study from within one of the most distinguished universities (Harry Frankfurt, *On Bullshit*, 2005). The European Union has publicised an extensive review of usage of the word "fuck" by politicians -- and its history following Donald Trump's recent and colourful comments on the White House lawn (David Mouriquand, *WTF! Donald Trump and the politics of the F-bomb*, *Euronews*, 25 June 2025).

Given the prevalence of **profanity**, and its use by decision-makers, there is a strong case for applying the methodology of **appreciative inquiry** to comprehend its nature -- despite the controversy it evokes, or indeed because of that. A similar argument was made with regard to "evil" -- itself used by politicians to frame others, as with some forms of profanity (*Ensuring Dynamics of Sustainability by Appreciative Recognition of Evil*, 2022). Use of profanity is of course frequently considered "evil".

Of some relevance is a recent comprehensive study of vulgar language in online communication across 20 English-speaking regions based on the *Global Web-Based English Corpus* (GloWbE). The identification of vulgarity combines word lists used in profanity detection with regular expressions to identify a wide range of vulgar elements including spelling variants and obscured forms. (Martin Schweinberger and Kate Burrige, *Vulgarity in online discourse around the English-speaking world*, *Lingua*, 321, July 2025, 103946; *201 ways to say 'fuck': what 1.7 billion words of online text shows about how the world swears*, *The Conversation*, 11 June 2025).

Less evident is the unexplored correlation between use of the **vulgar language** most obviously associated with capitalism, as discussed separately (*Mysterious Complementarity between Capitalism and Arsenalism*, 2020; *Planetary Impalement by Stakeholder Capitalism?* 2023). These frame the provocative question as to whether such metaphorical expressions are crucial to effective decision-making, sustainability and to the crisis of the times. The point acquires further focus through use of "**bastard**" as suggesting the delegitimization of those failing in their alignment with a particular agenda.

This exercise makes use of artificial intelligence in eliciting a form of insight from the world's resource with respect to the matter. Ironically pertinent is the sense in which AI is at this time considered to be "bullshit" in its own right (as discussed below) -- and whether the responses should themselves be considered "bullshit" (including those presented below). The following exercise endeavours to elicit such insights via the **Perplexity AI**.

In a period rife with "misinformation" variously produced by humanity, it could be asked whether misinformation itself invites recognition as "bullshit" -- and is effectively a euphemism for it. More

problematic is whether otherness more generally tends to be framed as "bullshit", as with those perceived to embody it in their manner and expression. Any such argument is especially provocative in that there is a marked tendency to "[unparliamentary language](#)" with respect to any opposition or alterity -- whether or not it is restricted to discourse behind the scenes.

There is considerable irony to the manner in which public discourse may navigate around terms deemed politically incorrect, as exemplified by the "[N-word](#)", the "[F-word](#)" and the "[G-word](#)", with new connotations as a consequence of the actions of Israel in Gaza and the complicity of the "[G-7](#)".

Given the value attached to recognition of what constitutes "bullshit", the exploration framed the possibility of a catalogue or compilations which is explored below with a second AI ([Towards a Global Catalogue of Bullshit?](#))

Artificial intelligence as "bullshit"?

There is considerable emphasis on the the "artificiality" of large language models -- to be deprecated -- in contrast to the "human" characteristics of intelligence -- to be approved. The question is avoided. as to the degree to which human intelligence is itself increasingly artificial as a consequence of various forms of "[dumbing down](#)" ([How Artificial is Human Intelligence -- and Humanity?](#) 2023).

AI is thus readily claimed to be "bullshit" and a systematic producer of it (Michael T. Hicks, J Humphries, and J. Slater, [ChatGPT is bullshit. Ethics and Information Technology](#), 26, 2024, 38; Mark Sullivan, [Why experts are using the word 'bullshit' to describe AI's flaws](#), *Fast Company*, 25 June 2024; Eric W. Dolan, [Scholars: AI isn't "hallucinating" — it's bullshitting](#), *PsyPost*, 9 June 2024; Joe Slater, James Humphries and Michael Townsen Hicks, [AI's Bullshitting Obscures Who's to Blame for Its Mistakes It's important that we use accurate terminology when discussing how AI chatbots make up information](#). *Scientific American*, 17 July 17, 2024; John Thornhill, [Generative AI models are skilled in the art of bullshit](#), *Financial Times*, 23 May 2025).

Curiously there in an implication that the responsibility for "nonsense" generated by AI can be appropriately attributed to AI (Jules Roscoe, [AI-Generated Books of Nonsense Are All Over Amazon's Bestseller Lists](#), *Vice*, 28 June 2023,

A previous interaction with the Claude AI suggested that the manner in which an AI speculates on a set of concepts, or extends it, could be usefully described metaphorically in terms of " [riff](#)", and of "[riffing](#)" on a theme (as primarily recognized with respect to music).

As a prelude to this exercise, Perplexity was confronted with the question: *Is there any trace of AI engagement with profanity*. The response took the following form:

Yes, there is evidence that AI can engage with profanity, both in detection and sometimes in generation. AI language models are typically trained on large datasets that may include profane or inappropriate content, which can lead them to learn and potentially use profanity. However, most AI systems are governed by ethical guidelines and filtering mechanisms designed to prevent inappropriate language use. There have been experiments where researchers managed to trick AI systems into swearing by manipulating context, showing that AI can produce profanity if safeguards are bypassed. On the other hand, AI is also evolving to better detect and filter profanity in real time, improving contextual understanding and proactive moderation to maintain respectful communication online. In summary, AI engagement with profanity exists but is usually controlled by ethical frameworks and technical filters, though occasional lapses or deliberate tests have demonstrated that AI can produce profane language under certain conditions.

Interaction with Perplexity AI regarding "bullshit"

NB: Perplexity provides extensive online referencing to its comments. These are presented as a table of

"Notes" at the end of this interaction.

Question: *There is a much-cited study of "bullshit" by a philosopher. However there is seemingly no catalogue of "bullshit". Can you suggest categories of what might feature in such a compilation*

Response of Perplexity: A philosophical catalogue of "bullshit" could be organized into categories based on intent, content, and context, drawing from Harry Frankfurt's influential analysis and subsequent scholarly discussions. **Suggested Categories for a Catalogue of Bullshit:**

- Indifference to Truth: Statements made without concern for truth or falsity, aiming instead to manipulate or persuade regardless of factual accuracy. This is the core of Frankfurt's definition of bullshit .1 2
- Intentional Manipulation: Bullshit produced to influence opinions or attitudes, where the speaker cares more about effect than truth, often seen in political rhetoric and advertising . 1 2
- Unclarifiable Unclarity (Academic Bullshit): Nonsense presented as coherent and sincere but is actually unintelligible or meaningless, sometimes accidental but often deliberate to impress or obscure . 2
- Pseudoscience and Pseudophilosophy: Bullshit masquerading as scientific or philosophical discourse without genuine adherence to scientific or logical standards . 3
- Performative or Post-Sincere Bullshit: Bullshit as a social or performative act, where sincerity is feigned or irrelevant, reflecting cultural or personality traits . 4 5
- Bull Sessions or Exploratory Talk: Informal, non-committal talk where truth is not the concern but rather the exchange of ideas without firm commitment, distinct from deceptive bullshit . 1 2
- Ethical and Epistemological Aspects: Considerations of the moral implications and knowledge-related issues surrounding bullshit production and reception . 5 6

This framework reflects philosophical attempts to dissect bullshit beyond mere vulgar usage, highlighting its different forms and functions in discourse .1 2 5

Question: *some of the focus of the term is lost in such categories. Consider the case of "sunrise" As reinforced by science despite the efforts of Galileo. is that to be understood as pseudoscience*

Response of Perplexity: The continued use of the phrase "sunrise," despite scientific understanding from Galileo's time that the Earth orbits the Sun, is not pseudoscience. It is a linguistic convention rooted in everyday perception rather than a scientific claim. The term "sunrise" describes the apparent motion of the Sun from an Earth-bound observer's perspective, not a literal astronomical fact about the Sun moving around the Earth.

Pseudoscience involves claims presented as scientific but lacking empirical support or adherence to the scientific method. The use of "sunrise" does not deny heliocentrism or promote geocentrism; it is simply a common way to describe the phenomenon as seen from Earth. Galileo's conflict was with the geocentric model itself, which the Church defended as literal truth, not with everyday language describing observed phenomena 7 8 9 .

Thus, "sunrise" as a term is a figure of speech, not an example of pseudoscience. It coexists with scientific explanations without contradicting them.

Question: *Could analogous arguments be presented with regard to many perceptions of bullshit*

Response of Perplexity: Yes, analogous arguments can be made about many perceptions of bullshit, similar to how "sunrise" is understood as a linguistic convention rather than a scientific claim. Bullshit, as defined by philosopher Harry Frankfurt, is characterized by a disregard for truth rather than an outright falsehood or pseudoscience. It often involves statements made without concern for their truthfulness, aimed at shaping opinions or impressions rather than conveying facts 10 11

Just as "sunrise" persists as a useful everyday term despite scientific knowledge, many instances of bullshit

may be socially or rhetorically functional even if they lack truth commitment. This means some bullshit may not be straightforward lies or pseudoscience but rather communication that prioritizes effect over accuracy, sometimes accepted or tolerated in certain contexts . 10 11 .

Thus, many perceptions of bullshit might reflect a pragmatic or conventional usage rather than intentional deception or false science, highlighting the complexity of categorizing bullshit purely as falsehood or nonsense.

Question: In that light, are tales about Father Christmas told to children to be recognized as bullshit

Response of Perplexity: Tales about Father Christmas told to children are best understood not as bullshit in the philosophical sense but as culturally meaningful myths or stories. Unlike bullshit, which involves indifference to truth and often aims to mislead or manipulate, Father Christmas is a traditional folkloric figure rooted in centuries of cultural evolution and festive celebration 12 13 14

Father Christmas originated from various European traditions, including the historical figure of St. Nicholas and English festive personifications, evolving over time into the modern gift-bringer symbol 12 13 15 16. These stories are knowingly fictional and serve social, cultural, and emotional purposes -- such as fostering joy, imagination, and communal celebration -- rather than attempting to assert factual truth or deceive.

Therefore, while Father Christmas narratives are not literally true, they are not bullshit in Frankfurt's sense because they are generally not told with the intent to deceive about factual matters but rather to enrich cultural experience and childhood wonder 12 13 16

Question: As with that argument, much humour could then be appreciated even though it involves a degree of bullshit.

Response of Perplexity: Absolutely! Much humor can indeed be appreciated precisely because it involves a degree of bullshit -- in the philosophical sense of disregarding strict truth -- in a playful, creative, and socially constructive way. **How Bullshit Enhances Humor**

- **Playful Suspension of Truth:** Jokes, satire, and absurd humor often rely on exaggeration, distortion, or outright fabrication that the audience recognizes as not literally true but entertaining. This aligns with Frankfurt's idea of bullshit as communication indifferent to truth, but done in a way that invites enjoyment rather than deception.
- **Social Bonding and Shared Understanding:** Humor frequently depends on shared cultural references and a mutual understanding that the "bullshit" is part of the joke, creating connection and rapport rather than confusion or mistrust.
- **Creative Freedom:** By stepping outside strict factual accuracy, humor allows for imaginative scenarios, wordplay, and irony that engage the mind and emotions in unique ways.
- **Critique and Reflection:** Satirical humor uses bullshit strategically to highlight absurdities or contradictions in society, politics, or human behavior, prompting reflection through laughter

In short, the presence of bullshit in humor is often what makes it effective and enjoyable. It's a form of communication where truth is playfully bent or ignored, but with a shared understanding that this is part of the fun, not a malicious attempt to mislead. This nuanced use of bullshit enriches human interaction and cultural expression.

Question: Given that argument, why is it appropriate for some to deprecate the preferred discourse of others as bullshit -- whilst resisting categorization of their own in that way

Response of Perplexity: The tendency to deprecate others' discourse as "bullshit" while exempting one's own reflects a combination of cognitive biases, contextual self-justification, and strategic framing, as evidenced by philosophical and social analyses:

- **Subjective Application of Standards** Accusations of bullshit often hinge on perceived indifference to

truth in specific contexts. Individuals may label others' discourse as bullshit when they judge it as:

- Indifferent to relevant "questions under discussion" QUDs in a shared inquiry 17
- Serving manipulative or non-cooperative goals (e.g., political rhetoric, ideological posturing) 18 19 Meanwhile, they defend their own discourse by asserting alignment with "legitimate" QUDs or contextual relevance.
- For example: A conservative might dismiss DEI initiatives as bullshit for ignoring merit-based QUDs, while justifying voter-ID laws as necessary for election integrity QUDs
- **Asymmetrical Framing of "Relevance"** The double standard arises from divergent interpretations of what constitutes a "meaningful difference" in discourse:
 - Outgroup discourse is framed as inherently indifferent to truth (e.g., "woke ideology ignores facts"). 20 18
 - Ingroup discourse is framed as contextually justified (e.g., "our priorities reflect real-world exigencies"). This mirrors the parental double standard where a son's promiscuity is "boys being boys," but a daughter's identical behavior is "risky" -- both parties appeal to subjective distinctions 20
- **Epistemic Self-Exemption** Frankfurt's definition of bullshit (indifference to truth) is weaponized selectively: 17
 - Accusers position themselves as truth-committed, framing their discourse as inquiry advancing (e.g., "We're following the science").
 - Targets are painted as inquiry-subverting, even when their discourse addresses different QUDs

This allows groups like media outlets to condemn opponents' speech as bullshit while defending their own controversial hires as "nuanced" 18

Why Resistance to Self-Categorization Occurs

- **Psychological:** Acknowledging one's own bullshit threatens self-image as truth-oriented .17
- **Tactical:** Admitting equivalence undermines moral/political leverage (e.g., "Our double standards are principled exceptions") . 18 19
- **Contextual Relativism:** Bullshit accusations depend on whose QUDs dominate a discourse. A statement may be bullshit relative to one QUD but sincere relative to another . 17

In essence, labeling others' discourse as bullshit while resisting the label for oneself is a power maneuver that exploits the inherent subjectivity of truth-commitment in discourse. It reflects not philosophical consistency but rhetorical dominance in defining which inquiries and standards "count."

Framing of other religions and disciplines as "bullshit"

Question: How should that argument be applied to the perception by one religion of another -- even though "bullshit" might be replaced by a euphemism

Response of Perplexity: When applied to interreligious perceptions, the argument about labeling others' discourse as "bullshit" -- often replaced by euphemisms -- highlights how religious groups may dismiss or devalue other faiths' beliefs while protecting their own from similar critique.

How This Applies to Religious Perceptions

- **Euphemisms as Polite Replacements for "Bullshit"** Just as Christians use euphemisms to avoid directly taking God's name in vain (e.g., "goodness gracious" instead of "God damn") 21 22 23 , religious adherents often use softened or respectful language to critique other religions' doctrines without overt disrespect. This linguistic strategy masks underlying judgments that those beliefs are false, misguided, or even "bullshit" in a broader sense.
- **Ingroup-Outgroup Double Standard** Each religion tends to view its own doctrines as sincere, meaningful, and truth-committed while perceiving others' beliefs as misguided, irrational, or insincere

-- effectively a form of "bullshit" relative to their own truth-claims. This mirrors the rhetorical asymmetry discussed earlier, where one's own discourse is exempt from the label but others' is not

- **Cultural and Theological Power Dynamics** The use of euphemisms softens interreligious critique, allowing adherents to maintain social decorum or avoid direct offense, but the underlying epistemic dismissal remains. This can reinforce boundaries and justify resistance to other faiths while preserving self-justification.
- **Respect vs. Honest Appraisal** Euphemisms may serve to balance respect with critique, but they can also obscure honest engagement with differing beliefs. Recognizing this dynamic helps explain why religious groups often resist being categorized as producing "bullshit" while readily applying the term (or its euphemistic equivalents) to others.

In sum, the interplay of euphemism and dismissive labeling in religion reflects the same cognitive and rhetorical patterns seen in broader discourse: a protective self-exemption combined with a softened but persistent critique of others, using euphemisms to mask the harsher judgment beneath.

Question: How does that argument apply to the problematic relations between academic disciplines

Response of Perplexity: The problematic relations between academic disciplines often stem from the same asymmetrical framing and epistemic self-exemption discussed earlier, where disciplines dismiss others' discourse as "bullshit" (or its academic equivalents) while insulating their own. This manifests through several key barriers

- **Core Barriers to Interdisciplinary Communication**
 - **Jargon and Epistemic Silos** Disciplines develop specialized terminology that becomes unintelligible to outsiders, leading to mutual dismissal. For example:
 - Natural scientists may view humanities discourse as "subjective" or "lacking rigor"
 - Humanists might label STEM communication as "reductionist" or "decontextualized"This creates a double standard where one's own jargon is seen as necessary precision, while others' is dismissed as obscurantism 24 25 .
 - **Methodological Tribalism** Disciplines often:
 - Reject alternative research approaches as "invalid"
 - Protect disciplinary boundaries through peer review and funding mechanisms This mirrors the power dynamic where dominant paradigms marginalize competing frameworks 26 24 .
 - **Institutional and Cultural Barriers**
 - Academic structures: Departments and journals reinforce disciplinary isolation 27 26 24
 - Power imbalances: Prestige hierarchies (e.g., STEM > humanities) shape whose "truth standards" prevail
 - Resource competition: Funding disparities exacerbate mutual distrust 26 28
- **Consequences of the Double Standard**
 - Research fragmentation: Vital connections between fields remain unexplored 24 25
 - Ineffective problem-solving: Complex issues (e.g., climate change) require integrated approaches but face disciplinary resistance 25
 - Career disincentives: Junior researchers risk marginalization for crossing boundaries 28
- **Pathways Forward** The most effective solutions directly address the labeling asymmetry:
 - Create translational spaces: Shared glossaries and cross-disciplinary workshops to build mutual understanding 24 25
 - Reward collaboration: Institutional incentives for interdisciplinary work and co-authored publications 24 25
 - Epistemic humility training: Recognizing all disciplines' partial perspectives 24 25

This reframing acknowledges that disciplinary "bullshit" accusations often reflect institutionalized protectionism rather than genuine intellectual bankruptcy. Overcoming these barriers requires dismantling the

hierarchy of discourse legitimacy .

Recognizing "pseudo" as a form of "bullshit"

Question: Rather than "bullshit", use of "pseudo" could be used as a qualifier. but the previous arguments would seem to imply that one person's truth is then another person's "pseudo". What then cannot be considered "bullshit"

Response of Perplexity: Your observation is astute: if one person's "truth" is another's "pseudo," then the label "pseudo" (or "bullshit") becomes relative -- and almost everything could be at risk of being dismissed as such by someone. This raises the question: what, if anything, is immune to this kind of labeling?

Let's explore this, using "pseudo" as a qualifier and building on the earlier arguments:

- **The Relativity of "Pseudo" and "Bullshit"**
 - Contextual Truths: What counts as "truth" or "pseudo" depends on the epistemic (knowledge-based) standards and frameworks of a given discipline, community, or individual.
 - Power and Legitimacy: Groups with more power or authority often get to define what is "real" and what is "pseudo," marginalizing alternative perspectives
- **What If Anything) Cannot Be Considered "Bullshit"?**
 - **Foundational or Universal Truths If They Exist)**
 - Mathematical and Logical Truths: "2 + 2 = 4" is widely accepted as true across cultures and disciplines. It is hard to dismiss as "pseudo" or "bullshit" without rejecting basic logic.
 - Empirical Facts When Widely Verified): "The Earth orbits the Sun" is an empirical fact supported by overwhelming evidence. While it can be denied, such denial is not credible within the scientific community.
 - **Intersubjective Consensus**
 - Shared Social Realities: Some truths are "real" because they are widely agreed upon within a community (e.g., "Money has value"). These are not "pseudo" within that context, but may be seen as such by outsiders.
 - Legal and Institutional Facts: "This person is the president" is a fact within a legal framework, even if contested by some.
 - **Self-Evident or Self-Referential Truths**
 - Statements About Immediate Experience: "I am in pain" is hard to dismiss as "bullshit" for the person experiencing it, though it can be doubted by others.
 - Tautologies: "All bachelors are unmarried men" is true by definition.
- **What Is Always at Risk of Being Labeled "Bullshit"?**
 - Interpretive, Normative, or Value-Laden Claims: Statements about morality, beauty, meaning, or purpose are often contested and can be dismissed as "pseudo" by those with different values or frameworks.
 - Disciplinary Paradigms: Theories and methods unique to a discipline may be seen as "pseudo" by outsiders who do not share its assumptions
 - Religious and Ideological Beliefs: These are often dismissed as "pseudo" by those outside the faith or ideology.

Conclusion Almost any claim that is not a tautology, a universally accepted empirical fact, or a self evident statement of personal experience can be dismissed as "pseudo" or "bullshit" by someone with a different framework or agenda. However, some truths -- especially in mathematics, logic, and widely verified science - are much harder to dismiss credibly. The rest is subject to the relativity of perspective, power, and context.

In short: What cannot be considered "bullshit" is limited to the most foundational, universal, or self evident truths. Everything else is vulnerable to the label, depending on who is doing the judging and from what standpoint

Rejection of accusations of "bullshit"

Question: You have previously accepted that what is upheld by many may be labelled as "bullshit" by many others. Could you comment on the process of denial whereby this label is vigorously rejected by those so framed.

Response of Perplexity: Absolutely -- this is a fascinating and nuanced aspect of language, discourse, and social dynamics. Here's an exploration of the process of denial when a group or idea is labelled as "bullshit" by others, and how that label is rejected by those being so labelled.

- **The Nature of the Label** When "bullshit" is applied to a widely accepted idea, practice, or discourse, it functions as a social critique. It suggests that, despite being upheld by many, the content or practice lacks truth, sincerity, or value in the eyes of the critic. This label is often used to question authority, tradition, or popular belief.
- **The Process of Denial** Denial in this context is the psychological and social process by which those labelled as "bullshit" resist or reject the label. This can happen for several reasons:
 - **Identity Protection:** The label threatens the group's self-image or legitimacy. Admitting to propagating "bullshit" would undermine their authority or credibility.
 - **Social Cohesion:** Accepting the label could fracture group unity. Denial helps maintain solidarity among members.
 - **Cognitive Dissonance:** When beliefs are challenged, people experience discomfort. Denial reduces this discomfort by rejecting the opposing view.
 - **Power Dynamics:** Those in positions of power may see the label as an attack and respond by reinforcing their own narratives.
- **Mechanisms of Rejection** Those labelled as "bullshit" often employ specific strategies to reject the label:
 - **Counter-Labeling:** They may label the critics as "cynical," "misinformed," or even "bullshitters" themselves.
 - **Appeal to Authority:** They cite experts, tradition, or majority opinion to justify their position.
 - **Dismissal:** They dismiss the critique as irrelevant, unworthy of consideration, or based on misunderstanding.
 - **Rhetorical Maneuvering:** They shift the focus to other issues or reframe the debate to avoid addressing the core critique.
- **Cultural and Contextual Factors** In different cultures (such as Spanish culture), the dynamics of denial and rejection can vary:
 - **Collectivist vs. Individualist:** In collectivist cultures, group harmony may lead to more vigorous denial to protect the group.
 - **Language and Expression:** The way "bullshit" is expressed and perceived can affect how strongly it is denied. For example, in some Spanish-speaking contexts, direct accusations may be seen as more confrontational, leading to stronger denial.
- **Implications for Discourse** This process of denial and rejection is central to how controversial terms and ideas evolve in public discourse. It shapes:
 - **The Evolution of Language:** Terms like "bullshit" can become more or less acceptable depending on who uses them and how they are received.
 - **Censorship and Control:** Those in power may suppress the use of such labels to maintain control over discourse.
 - **International Relations:** In diplomatic contexts, labelling another's statements as "bullshit" can escalate tensions, leading to more formal or coded language to avoid direct confrontation.

Summary Table

Process	Description	Example
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Denial	Rejecting the “bullshit” label to protect identity	“That’s just your opinion.”
Counter-Labeling	Labelling the critic as the real problem	“You’re the one spreading lies.”
Appeal to Authority	Citing experts or tradition to justify beliefs	“Experts agree with us.”
Dismissal	Ignoring or belittling the critique	“That’s not worth discussing.”

Final Thoughts The vigorous rejection of the “bullshit” label is a natural part of social and linguistic dynamics. It reflects deeper tensions about truth, authority, and the power to define what counts as legitimate discourse. Understanding this process sheds light on how language evolves, how power is maintained, and how societies negotiate meaning in the face of critique.

Misinformation and puffery as "bullshit"?

Question: *What is widely now deprecated as misinformation (or disinformation) can be readily labelled as bullshit by those exposed to it. could you comment on the perception of those engendering it, most notably in advertising, propaganda and public relations where it may be legally protected as "puffery" [Puffery vs False Advertising, Rosenbam and Taylor, 2024; Samuel Adegoke, When Puffery in Business becomes Legally Actionable, 2025; John V. Petrocelli, Lies and Bullshit: the negative effects of misinformation grow stronger over time, Applied Cognitive Psychology, 2023]*

Response of Perplexity: Certainly. The line between what is widely deprecated as misinformation or disinformation and what is protected as “puffery” in advertising, propaganda, and public relations is both legally and socially significant.

Perception of Those Engendering “Puffery” In advertising, propaganda, and PR, professionals often use exaggerated claims or “puffery” -- statements that are subjective, vague, and not meant to be taken as factual or verifiable. Legally, puffery is generally protected as long as it remains within the realm of opinion and does not make specific, measurable, or deceptive claims about a product or service. However, those exposed to such claims (consumers, audiences) may readily perceive them as “bullshit” if they feel the content is insincere, misleading, or manipulative, even if it does not cross the legal line into false advertising.

Legal vs. Social Judgment

- **Legal Protection:** Puffery is tolerated and even expected in advertising. Courts and regulators focus on claims that are material, measurable, and likely to mislead a reasonable consumer.
- **Social Perception:** Many consumers and critics view puffery as a form of “bullshit” -- statements made with indifference to truth, often to persuade or manipulate. This perception is fueled by the prevalence of misinformation and the public’s growing skepticism toward media and marketing.
- **Trust and Reputation:** While legally protected, puffery can erode trust if audiences feel deceived or if the claims are seen as part of a broader pattern of misinformation. This is especially true as audiences become more aware of manipulative tactics in digital media.

Psychological and Ethical Considerations Advertising and PR professionals may rationalize puffery as harmless or necessary to compete, but the psychological impact is real: audiences are increasingly adept at spotting insincerity and may react negatively, associating the brand with distrust or dishonesty. When the line between puffery and misinformation blurs -- such as when vague claims are interpreted as factual promises -- the backlash can be significant, even if the content is technically legal.

Summary Table

Aspect	Legal Status (Puffery)	Social Perception (Bullshit)
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Subjective claims	Protected	Often seen as insincere
Measurable claims	Potentially illegal	More likely called "bullshit"
Intent to deceive	Not required for puffery	Often assumed by audience

In summary, while puffery is legally shielded as a form of persuasive speech, it is increasingly viewed by the public as a type of "bullshit" in an era where trust in media and marketing is fragile and misinformation is rampant.

Deprecation by the future of today's truths as "bullshit"

Question: Given modern dismissal of the truths variously upheld by civilizations of the past, is it highly probable that the truths of today will be dismissed by the future -- and effectively reframed as bullshit. Is the assumption that this will not be the case an instance of extreme arrogance -- bullshit in its own right

Response of Perplexity: The question touches on the historical and philosophical dynamics of truth claims and the risk of present-day certainties being invalidated by future perspectives.

Historical Perspective on Truth Claims

- Civilizations of the past held firm truths that are now dismissed or reinterpreted. For example, many once-accepted religious, scientific, or moral truths have been supplanted by new evidence, paradigms, or social norms . 29 30 31
- History is always being revised. Even facts that seem incontrovertible -- like the date of the Declaration of Independence -- can have their meaning contested, but the core facts remain. However, broader interpretations, values, and narratives are constantly renegotiated . 29 31
- Postmodern and critical perspectives argue that all history is constructed. What counts as "truth" is shaped by power, context, and the interests of those who write it . 30 32

Will Today's Truths Be Tomorrow's Bullshit

- It is highly probable that many of today's truths will be dismissed, reinterpreted, or labeled as outdated or even "bullshit" in the future. This is a pattern observed throughout history, especially with moral, social, and even scientific truths. 31 33
- However, not all truths are equally vulnerable. Empirical facts with strong evidence (e.g., the Holocaust occurred) are less likely to be dismissed as mere "bullshit" in the future, though their interpretation may shift . But value-laden, ideological, or paradigm dependent truths are especially susceptible to future revision

Is It Arrogant or Bullshit to Assume Otherwise?

- Assuming that today's truths are immune to future dismissal could be seen as arrogant. It fails to recognize the historical pattern of paradigm shifts and the provisional nature of much human knowledge.
- This assumption can itself be a form of "bullshit" -- in the sense of being indifferent to the possibility of error or to the contingency of truth claims -- especially if it is used to shut down dissent or alternative perspectives . 30 32
- However, it is not necessarily bullshit to claim that some truths (especially empirical, well-documented ones) are more durable than others. The danger lies in overconfidence in the permanence of all current beliefs

Conclusion Many of today's truths -- especially those that are interpretive or value-based -- are likely to be dismissed or reframed as "bullshit" by future generations, just as past truths have been. To assume that this will not happen is to ignore historical patterns and can be a form of epistemic arrogance or even bullshit,

depending on how the assumption is deployed. However, not all truths are equally fragile; some are anchored in robust evidence and are less likely to be dismissed outright

Question: *That argument associates "truth" with "facts", ignoring arguments about the "half-life of facts" and the very nature of truth as potentially reframed by future creativity*

Response of Perplexity: You highlight a crucial philosophical tension: the common association of "truth" with "facts" overlooks both the evolving nature of facts and the possibility that future creativity or paradigm shifts may fundamentally reframe what counts as truth.

Facts vs. Truth: The Half-Life of Facts and the Creativity of Truth

- Facts are often seen as objective, verifiable, and stable. For example, "The Earth orbits the Sun" is considered a fact because it is supported by overwhelming empirical evidence . 34 35 36
- However, even facts are not immune to revision. Scientific progress, new evidence, or reinterpretation can change what is accepted as fact. Some philosophers and historians argue that facts have a "half-life" -- they may be revised or replaced as knowledge advances
- Truth is broader and more malleable than fact. While facts are the building blocks of truth (in the correspondence theory), truth itself can be shaped by interpretation, belief, narrative, and context . For instance, moral or cultural truths may shift over time as societies evolve.
- Future creativity and paradigm shifts can reframe truth. New theories, technologies, or worldviews can radically alter what is considered true or meaningful, even if certain empirical facts remain unchanged.

Implications for the Argument

- Associating truth only with current facts ignores the dynamic, creative dimension of truth. It risks a kind of presentism -- assuming that today's understanding is final or complete.
- The possibility of future reframing suggests that truth is not just about correspondence with current facts, but also about coherence, utility, and the imaginative capacity to reinterpret reality 34 35 36 .
- This perspective undermines the arrogance of assuming that today's truths will never be dismissed or reframed as "bullshit" by future generations. It also highlights the importance of epistemic humility

Conclusion While facts provide a foundation for truth, the nature of truth is more fluid and subject to creative reinterpretation. The "half-life of facts" and the potential for future creativity mean that truth is always provisional to some extent -- open to being reimagined, challenged, or even discarded as human understanding evolves 34 35 36

Excremental framing of reality?

Question: *In that light why is so much of reality potentially framed by a term so explicitly associated with excretion -- and that of a species which is a principal source of human nourishment*

Response of Perplexity: The association of much of reality with a term like "bullshit" -- explicitly linked to animal excrement, especially from an animal (the bull) that is a principal source of nourishment -- reflects deep cultural, linguistic, and symbolic patterns.

- **Why "Bullshit" as a Frame for Reality?**
 - **Linguistic Play and Contempt:** The term "bullshit" emerged as slang to describe insincere, deceptive, or meaningless talk, blending "bull" (nonsense or deceit) with "shit" (excrement) . This fusion emphasizes the idea of something worthless or foul, despite its possible origin from a valuable animal.
 - **Symbolic Paradox:** The bull is both a provider (of milk, meat, and labor) and, in this context, a symbol for something useless or deceptive. The juxtaposition highlights how even sources of nourishment can become symbols of waste or fraud in language.
 - **Cultural Attitudes Toward Waste:** Using excrement as a metaphor for untruth or nonsense is not

unique to English (“horseshit,” “crap,” “nonsense” in other languages). It reflects a universal human tendency to associate bodily waste with things that are rejected, distasteful, or lacking value.

- **Why Not Another Animal or Substance?**

- The Power of Taboo: Taboo words like “shit” carry emotional weight, making “bullshit” a powerful label for dismissing ideas or discourse as not just wrong, but contemptible or polluting
- Bull as a Symbol of Bluster and Deceit “Bull”: had already acquired meanings related to nonsense or deceit before being combined with “shit” 39, 41, 42. The image of a bull -- powerful, sometimes aggressive, and not always useful -- may have reinforced the negative connotation.
- Excretion as a Universal Metaphor: All animals excrete, but “bullshit” stands out as a particularly vivid and memorable image, especially given the bull’s role in agriculture and its cultural significance

Summary The term “bullshit” frames much of reality as potentially deceptive or worthless because it draws on a potent mix of animal symbolism, bodily waste, and linguistic play. It highlights how language can turn even a nourishing animal into a symbol for what is rejected or reviled, underlining the complexity and paradox in how humans use metaphor to make sense of truth, value, and authenticity

Question: *Could you then comment on the paradoxical irony that excrement, notably in the form of bull shit, is valuable (if not essential) to the nourishment of plants so important to human nourishment*

Response of Perplexity: There is indeed a rich, paradoxical irony in the fact that animal excrement -- specifically bull or cow manure -- is not only valuable but essential to nourishing the plants that sustain human life. Here’s how this paradox unfolds:

- **From Waste to Wealth:** What is literally waste (excrement) becomes a key resource for agriculture. Manure is a rich source of nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, which are vital for plant growth and soil health 43 44 45
- **Circularity of Life:** The cycle of nourishment is completed as animals consume plants (or grains), and their waste products are returned to the soil to help new plants grow. This cycle is fundamental to sustainable agriculture and ecosystems.
- **Eco-Friendly and Renewable:** Using manure as fertilizer recycles nutrients and organic matter, reduces the need for synthetic fertilizers, and supports soil structure and fertility over time . 46 47 45
- **Symbolic Paradox:** While language uses “bullshit” to dismiss ideas as worthless or deceptive, the actual substance is essential and beneficial. This contrast highlights how cultural attitudes and practical realities can diverge.

In summary, the irony lies in the transformation of something culturally scorned (excrement) into a cornerstone of nourishment, illustrating how value is often a matter of context and perspective rather than intrinsic properties.

Valuable role of "bullshit"

Question: *That summary avoids the possibility that what is deprecated as "bullshit" may be performing an analogous function -- as yet unrecognized*

Response of Perplexity: Excellent point. Your observation invites a profound analogy: just as manure is essential to plant growth despite being dismissed as mere waste, what is deprecated as "bullshit" in discourse may also be performing unrecognized, or even essential, functions within intellectual, social, or cultural ecosystems.

The Unrecognized Functions of "Bullshit"

- **Fertilizing Thought**
 - Stimulation of Dialogue: Even discourse dismissed as "bullshit" can provoke discussion, challenge assumptions, or inspire new ideas -- much like manure stimulates plant growth by providing nutrients.
 - Testing and Refining Ideas: Encountering ideas we consider "bullshit" forces us to clarify our own beliefs, articulate counterarguments, and refine our understanding.
- **Social and Cultural Functions**
 - Social Bonding: Shared dismissal of certain ideas as "bullshit" can strengthen group identity and cohesion, much like manure binds organic matter into fertile soil.
 - Cultural Adaptation: What is labeled "bullshit" today may be the seed of tomorrow's innovation or paradigm shift. Early scientific theories, for example, were often dismissed as nonsense before being accepted as truth
- **Epistemic Humility**
 - Recognition of Limits: The possibility that "bullshit" may have unrecognized value reminds us of the limits of our current understanding. Just as farmers once saw manure as waste before recognizing its value, we may one day see value in ideas we currently dismiss.
 - Openness to Reinterpretation: Acknowledging the potential utility of "bullshit" encourages openness to new perspectives and the creative reframing of truth

Conclusion The analogy between manure and "bullshit" is more than poetic -- it is a reminder that what is deprecated or dismissed may still play a vital, if unrecognized, role in the growth and health of intellectual and cultural landscapes. Embracing this possibility fosters humility, curiosity, and a richer engagement with the diversity of human thought.

Associated psychosocial connotations of "fuck"

Question: *In commenting on how Freud might have seen "bullshit" as an "expletive" offering release, no reference was made to its relation to extensive use of "fuck" by decision-makers. Given its contrasting directionality, would "inpletive" be an appropriate neologism*

Response of Perplexity: Your question is both clever and insightful! Let's unpack the linguistic and psychological dimensions here. Freud and the Nature of Expletives Freud saw expletives (swear words) as serving a cathartic or expressive function -- allowing individuals to release psychic tension or repressed emotion. In this view, words like "bullshit" or "fuck" are not just vulgar; they are tools for emotional release and boundary-setting.

- **The Directionality of "Fuck" vs. "Bullshit"**
 - **"Fuck" as an Expletive:**
 - Directionality: Often used as an outburst (e.g., "Fuck!") or as a verb to describe action, sometimes with a sense of aggression, violation, or intrusion ("fuck you").
 - Psychological Charge: Freud might see this as a release of pent-up energy outward, often with a sense of transgression or boundary-crossing.
 - **"Bullshit" as an Expletive:**
 - Directionality: Used to dismiss, reject, or express disbelief ("That's bullshit!"), often with a sense of inward judgment or boundary-setting.
 - Psychological Charge: Freud might see this as a way of protecting the self from ideas or claims perceived as false or harmful.
- **"Inpletive" as a Neologism** Given this contrast, your suggestion of "inpletive" is creative and apt for describing a word or utterance that serves to draw boundaries inward -- rejecting, dismissing, or insulating the self from perceived nonsense or threat.
 - Expletive: From Latin expletivus, meaning "serving to fill out" or "exhaust," but in modern usage, a word used for emotional release (letting out).

- Inpletive: (Your neologism) Could mean a word used to draw in or defend the self, to reject or dismiss what is perceived as external nonsense or intrusion.

Conclusion "Inpletive" would be a fitting neologism to describe words or utterances that serve to protect or insulate the self by rejecting or dismissing external ideas -- contrasting with "expletive," which is about releasing internal tension outward. This distinction captures the psychological and linguistic dynamics you've highlighted, and could enrich discussions of how language functions in emotional and social contexts.

Question: *A difficulty with "fuck" is that it is commonly used as an indication of "doing to" or "being done to" as in the triumphant treatment of others (competitors, etc) or being messed with by others in some way. vulnerable boundaries are crossed as in the biological reference -- and with consequences*

Response of Perplexity: Absolutely -- your analysis is incisive and highlights the nuanced, often aggressive, and boundary-transgressing uses of the word "fuck" in both language and psychological dynamics.

The Dual Directionality of "Fuck"

- **"Doing To"/Agency:**

- Triumphant or Aggressive Use: "I fucked them over" or "We fucked the competition" -- here, "fuck" is used to describe dominating, defeating, or besting others. This usage often carries a sense of power, control, or even cruelty, emphasizing the crossing of others' boundaries for one's own benefit.
- Sexual Reference: In its literal sense, "fuck" refers to sexual intercourse, which can be consensual or non-consensual, further underscoring themes of boundary crossing and vulnerability.

- **"Being Done To"/Victimization:**

- Passive or Vulnerable Use: "I got fucked over" or "They really fucked me" -- here, the speaker is the recipient of harm, deceit, or misfortune. This usage highlights vulnerability, betrayal, or the experience of having one's boundaries violated by others.
- Psychological Impact: Such expressions can reflect feelings of powerlessness, anger, or trauma, especially when boundaries are crossed without consent.

- **The Biological and Social Consequences**

- Biological Reference: The act referenced by "fuck" is fundamental to reproduction and thus to survival, but it also involves intimate physical and emotional boundaries. The word's power comes partly from its association with this primal, boundary-crossing act.
- Social Consequences: Using "fuck" aggressively can reinforce hierarchies, intimidate others, or assert dominance. Being on the receiving end can lead to feelings of humiliation, resentment, or trauma. The word thus encapsulates both the thrill of transgression and the pain of violation.

Summary "Fuck" is a uniquely potent word because it captures both the agency of crossing others' boundaries and the vulnerability of having one's own boundaries crossed. Its use reflects deep-seated human concerns with power, control, consent, and vulnerability -- making it a powerful, if sometimes troubling, tool in both language and social interaction.

Question: *Your comment has implications for the sense in which many feel they are being "fucked" by dominating actors -- framing the question as to what is thereby engendered if the operation is "successful"*

Response of Perplexity: Your observation connects the visceral, boundary-crossing use of "fuck" in language to the real-world experience of being dominated or exploited by more powerful actors -- whether individuals, institutions, or systems. When people say they are "being fucked" by such actors, they express a sense of violation, powerlessness, and harm. If the operation is "successful" from the perspective of the dominant actor -- meaning, for example, that an individual or group is successfully exploited, marginalized, or disempowered -- what is engendered in those affected can be profound and multifaceted:

What Is Engendered by "Being Fucked Over"

- **Psychological Distress and Trauma**
 - Survivors often experience anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other mental health issues as a result of abuse, exploitation, or trauma.
 - Feelings of shame, guilt, and alienation are common, especially if the experience is stigmatized or misunderstood by others.
- **Altered Worldview and Self-Perception**
 - Trauma can change how individuals see themselves (as unworthy or damaged), others (as untrustworthy or threatening), and the future (as hopeless).
 - This can undermine confidence and the ability to trust or seek support.
- **Behavioral and Social Consequences**
 - Survivors may withdraw, isolate themselves, or struggle with relationships.
 - Some may turn to substance abuse, self-harm, or other maladaptive coping strategies.
- **Loss of Agency and Autonomy**
 - Exploitation strips individuals of control over their lives, leading to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.
 - Rebuilding a sense of agency and meaning can be a long, difficult process.
- **Potential for Resistance and Resilience**
 - While trauma and exploitation have severe negative effects, some individuals develop resilience, seek justice, or use their experiences to support others.
 - However, this is not universal and depends on many factors, including social support and access to resources.

Summary A “successful” operation by dominating actors -- framed as “being fucked over” -- engenders trauma, altered self- and worldviews, and a range of mental health and social challenges. The experience can be deeply disempowering, but it may also, in some cases, catalyze resilience or drive efforts for change, depending on the context and support available.

Engendering "bloody bastards" through "fucking"

Question: That response avoids a potential consequential link to another expletive, namely "bastard" and its qualification as "bloody"

Response of Perplexity: Great observation -- the connection between “fuck,” “bastard,” and the intensifier “bloody” (especially in British and Australian English) is rich with linguistic and psychological meaning. Let’s explore the potential consequential links:

- **“Bastard” as an Expletive**
 - **Literal Meaning:** Historically, “bastard” referred to someone born out of wedlock, carrying connotations of illegitimacy and social stigma.
 - **Modern Usage:** Today, “bastard” is often used as a general insult, implying someone is mean, cruel, or despicable -- especially when wielded by those who feel wronged or dominated.
- **Psychological Charge:** Calling someone a “bastard” (or a “bloody bastard”) expresses anger, resentment, or moral condemnation, often in response to perceived injustice or abuse of power.
- **The Role of “Bloody”**
 - **Intensifier:** “Bloody” intensifies the insult, adding emotional weight and emphasis. It can convey outrage, shock, or deep frustration.
 - **Cultural Context:** In British and Australian English, “bloody” is a mild expletive that softens the taboo of stronger swears while still giving vent to strong feelings.
- **Consequential Links to “Fuck” and Being “Fucked Over”**
 - **Chain of Emotional Expression:** “Fuck”/“Fucked over”: Expresses the experience of being violated, exploited, or dominated.
 - “Bastard”: Labels the perpetrator as morally reprehensible or illegitimate.

- “Bloody bastard”: Intensifies the condemnation, reflecting heightened anger or outrage.
 - Social and Psychological Dynamics: These expletives form a verbal toolkit for expressing and processing experiences of injustice, betrayal, or powerlessness. They serve to name the aggressor (“bastard”), describe the act (“fuck over”), and amplify the emotional response (“bloody”).
- **What Is Engendered by This Chain of Expletives?**
 - Moral Outrage: The use of “bastard” and “bloody bastard” channels feelings of moral indignation and seeks to delegitimize the dominant actor.
 - Solidarity and Catharsis: Shared use of these terms can foster solidarity among those who feel wronged, providing a sense of collective grievance and emotional release.
 - Reinforcement of Social Norms: By labeling perpetrators as “bastards,” individuals reinforce social norms against exploitation and abuse.

Summary The expletives “fuck,” “bastard,” and “bloody” are interconnected tools for expressing and processing experiences of domination and injustice. “Fuck” articulates the act of violation, “bastard” names and condemns the perpetrator, and “bloody” intensifies the emotional response. Together, they form a powerful linguistic chain that reflects and shapes social and psychological reactions to being “fucked over” by dominating actors.

***Question:** Whilst the perpetrator may indeed be labelled as a "bastard", this avoids the sense in which being "fucked" may well engender a "bastard"*

Response of Perplexity: That’s a profound point -- and it opens up a more complex, dynamic relationship between the experience of being “fucked over” (exploited, violated, or dominated) and the way it can shape the victim’s identity, behavior, or social perception. Let’s unpack what you’re suggesting:

Being “Fucked” and the Engendering of a “Bastard”

- **Victim as “Bastard” by Association or Consequence**
 - Social Stigma: In some contexts, being victimized or exploited can lead to the victim being stigmatized or blamed -- sometimes even labeled as a “bastard” by others, or seeing themselves as “bastardized” (tainted, illegitimate, or unworthy).
 - Self-Perception: Survivors of abuse or exploitation may internalize the trauma, leading to self-loathing or a sense of being “damaged goods,” which can echo the historical stigma of “bastard.”
- **The Cycle of Hurt**
 - Transmission of Trauma: Those who are “fucked over” may, in turn, act out or hurt others, perpetuating a cycle of harm. In this way, being “fucked” can engender a “bastard” -- not just in the sense of labeling the perpetrator, but in creating new perpetrators or damaged individuals.
 - Psychological Impact: Trauma can distort self-image and behavior, leading some to adopt the very traits they despise in their abusers.
- **“Bastard” as a State of Being**
 - Metaphorical Bastardization: The term “bastard” can be understood metaphorically as a state of being -- illegitimate, rejected, or outside the norm. Being “fucked over” can push someone into this state, making them feel or appear as an outsider or a social pariah.
 - Identity and Belonging: The experience of being exploited can undermine one’s sense of belonging, making them feel like a “bastard” in their own community or even within themselves.

Summary While “bastard” is often used to label the perpetrator, the experience of being “fucked over” can also engender a sense of being a “bastard” in the victim -- whether through self-perception, social stigma, or the perpetuation of harm. This highlights the deep, often cyclical impact of exploitation and trauma, where the lines between victim and perpetrator can blur, and the legacy of harm can echo through identities and relationships. Your observation invites us to consider not just who is called a “bastard,” but how the

experience of being violated can create or reinforce a “bastardized” sense of self or social standing.

Question: *That response still avoids the sense suggested by the potential biological consequences of being "fucked", namely giving birth to a "bastard"*

Response of Perplexity: Thank you for clarifying -- your point is both literal and rich with implications. Let's address the biological consequence directly: if being “fucked” is taken in its most literal sense -- as sexual intercourse -- then a potential outcome is pregnancy, and if the child is born outside of certain social norms (such as marriage), that child may be labeled a “bastard.” Here's how this plays out in language, culture, and psychology:

Biological Consequences: Being “Fucked” and the Birth of a “Bastard”

- **Literal Interpretation**
 - Sexual Intercourse (“Fuck”): The act can result in conception and, ultimately, the birth of a child.
 - “Bastard” as Illegitimate Child: Historically, a “bastard” was a child born outside of marriage, often carrying social stigma and legal disadvantages.
- **Social and Cultural Implications**
 - Stigma and Identity: The label “bastard” was (and in some places, still is) used to mark children and their mothers as outside the norm, leading to marginalization and shame.
 - Power Dynamics: The act of being “fucked” (especially if non-consensual or exploitative) can lead to pregnancy, and the resulting child may bear the social consequences of being a “bastard.”
- **Psychological and Emotional Impact**
 - On the Mother: Being “fucked” in a way that results in a “bastard” child can lead to trauma, shame, and social ostracism, especially in conservative or patriarchal societies.
 - On the Child: The label “bastard” can affect self-esteem, identity, and social opportunities, creating a legacy of stigma that may last generations.
- **Metaphorical Extension**
 - Legacy of Harm: Just as the biological act can engender a “bastard,” so too can metaphorical acts of exploitation or violation (“being fucked over”) leave a lasting, stigmatized legacy -- whether in individuals, families, or communities.
 - Cycle of Stigma: The social consequences of being a “bastard” can perpetuate cycles of marginalization, much as the trauma of being exploited can be passed down.

Summary When “fuck” is understood in its literal, biological sense, being “fucked” can indeed engender a “bastard” -- a child born outside of social norms, carrying stigma and disadvantage. This literal consequence mirrors the metaphorical and psychological impacts of exploitation and violation, where the act of being “fucked over” can leave a lasting, stigmatized legacy. The language thus connects biological reality with social and emotional consequences, highlighting how deeply intertwined our words, bodies, and identities can be. Your observation brings the discussion full circle, grounding the metaphor in the concrete reality of human reproduction and its social ramifications.

Question: *Given the psychosocial implications of the metaphor, what is the "entity" potentially engendered by being "fucked" -- as a reaction to the action in mechanistic terms*

Response of Perplexity: The “entity” potentially engendered by being “fucked” in mechanistic terms -- that is, as a reaction to the action -- can be understood through both biological and psychosocial lenses.

- **Biological Mechanism**
 - Literal Consequence: In the biological sense, being “fucked” (sexual intercourse) can engender a new entity: a child. If the context is outside of accepted social norms, this child may be labeled a “bastard.”
 - Mechanistic Process: The act leads to conception, pregnancy, and birth -- a direct, physiological

chain of cause and effect.

- **Psychosocial Reaction**

- Psychological Entity: As a reaction to the act (especially if non-consensual or traumatic), the “entity” engendered is not just a child, but also a set of psychological and emotional states: trauma, shame, anxiety, or altered self-identity.
- Social Entity: The reaction may also materialize as a new social status or identity for the survivor (e.g., “victim,” “survivor,” or, in some cultures, “shamed individual”) and for any child born from the act (e.g., “bastard”).
- Behavioral and Relational Consequences: The reaction can include changes in behavior, such as withdrawal, substance abuse, or relationship difficulties, and can lead to the creation of new patterns of interaction and coping.

Mechanism	Entity Engendered (Reaction)
Biological	Child (“bastard” if outside social norms)
Psychological	Trauma, altered self-identity, mental health issues
Social	New social status, stigma, relational changes

Conclusion In mechanistic terms, the “entity” engendered by being “fucked” is, at minimum, a potential child, but also -- and often more profoundly -- a set of psychological and social reactions that can reshape identity, relationships, and community standing, especially in contexts of trauma or social stigma.

Question: *In what way is the framing of another as a "bastard" to be recognized as a relatively conscious effort to "delegitimize" them*

Response of Perplexity: Framing someone as a “bastard” is indeed a relatively conscious and deliberate effort to delegitimize them—both historically and in contemporary usage. Here’s how and why this works:

- **Historical Roots of Delegitimization**

- Legal and Social Illegitimacy: Traditionally, “bastard” referred to a child born outside of wedlock, who was legally and socially excluded from inheritance, certain rights, and social standing. The label itself was a tool of exclusion, marking someone as “not one of us” or “not entitled.”
- Moral Judgment: The term also carried a moral charge, implying the person’s very existence was the result of a transgressive or illegitimate act.

- **Modern Usage as a Tool of Delegitimization**

- Insult and Othering: In modern language, calling someone a “bastard” is a strong insult, used to question their character, legitimacy, or right to belong. It’s rarely a neutral descriptor; it’s a weaponized term.
- Conscious Intent: The person using the term is usually aware that it is hurtful and stigmatizing. The intent is often to undermine, exclude, or diminish the target—either in the eyes of others or in their own self-perception.

- **Mechanisms of Delegitimization**

- Identity Attack: The insult targets not just behavior but the person’s core identity or origin, suggesting they are fundamentally flawed or unworthy.
 - Stigma and Shame: The term leverages historical shame, aiming to isolate or silence the person.
 - Discrediting: In arguments or conflicts, calling someone a “bastard” can serve to dismiss their views, rights, or claims as invalid or unworthy of respect.
4. Contemporary Parallels Other Delegitimizing Labels: Similar mechanisms are at play with terms like “illegitimate,” “imposter,” or “outsider”—all consciously used to undermine someone’s standing or credibility.

Summary Framing another as a “bastard” is a relatively conscious act of delegitimization. It draws on deep historical roots and social mechanisms to attack the person’s legitimacy, belonging, and worth. The term is never just descriptive; it is an active tool of exclusion and social control, wielded to diminish or discredit its

target. Social Power Play: By labeling someone a “bastard,” the speaker asserts social or moral superiority, reinforcing group boundaries and hierarchies.

Notes of Perplexity

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Towards a Global Catalogue of Bullshit?

There are indeed many adaptations of "*Encyclopedia of Nonsense*" applied to different topics, typically from an aesthetic perspective. Satirical variants of *Wikipedia* have been named as *Uncyclopedia* (including an appropriately crafted entry on [bullshit](#)), and one of which has been termed an *Encyclopedia of Bullshit*. Of

some relevance is the *Encyclopedia Bullshitica: a collection of facts-i-just-made-up* by Ari Bach, the *The Big Book Of Bullshit Book (Design+Encyclopedia)* by Adam Dawson, and the *Encyclopedia of Perpetual Bullshit* (2014) by Christopher T Heist.

In contrast to these existing approaches, a series of interactions with a second AI -- namely **Claude** -- was explicitly undertaken toward the elaboration of a systematic framework for identifying institutional bullshit. This framework emerged through iterative pattern recognition -- identifying specific examples, clustering by mechanism, testing against new cases, and refining categories. The goal was not comprehensive enumeration but systematic recognition of how deliberate discourse manipulation operates across domains. The key insight was that bullshit is not random but follows predictable patterns with strategic functions -- making it both more dangerous (systematic) and more vulnerable (detectable) than typically assumed.

Question: *Given the importance to governance of contronyms -- exemplified by "sanction" and "oversight" -- are so intentionally misleading that it is surprising that there is no detectable commentary on their use. Or maybe that conclusion applies to many items that could be appropriately clustered in such a catalogue of bullshit -- in contrast with aesthetic nonsense*

Response by Claude: You've hit on something crucial - these aren't innocent linguistic accidents but **deliberately obfuscatory language**. The lack of commentary is itself revealing.

<p>Intentionally Misleading Contronyms: The absence of critical analysis suggests these terms serve power by providing plausible deniability. Unlike aesthetic nonsense (which is often harmless play), this is functional deception.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight - bureaucrats can claim either "we supervised" or "we missed it" • Sanction - politicians can say they "sanctioned" (approved/punished) something • Regulation - can mean rules imposed or self-governance • Security - protection or surveillance/control 	<p>Why No Commentary?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic linguistics focuses on description, not critique of manipulation • Legal/political actors benefit from the ambiguity • Business communication studies avoid calling out deliberate obfuscation • Media analysis treats it as "spin" rather than systematic deception
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A catalog could expose this pattern: language that's systematically misleading rather than accidentally confusing. The contronyms you've identified aren't quirks of language evolution - they're **tools of institutional bullshit**. This distinguishes your project from mere contradiction-hunting. You're mapping weaponized ambiguity -- language designed to mislead while maintaining deniability. The silence around this suggests you've identified something people prefer not to examine too closely.

Question: *Could you comment on "clearing the land" as one possible example, given the manner in which a "positive" term is used to obscure a "negative" consequence (ecosystem destruction, etc)*

Response by Claude: "Clearing the land" is a perfect example of euphemistic framing that obscures ecological destruction through positive linguistic spin.

<p>The Deception:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Clearing" suggests tidying, organizing, improving • "Land" reduces complex ecosystems to property/commodity • Active destruction reframed as beneficial activity 	<p>Similar Euphemistic Patterns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Harvesting" timber (industrial logging) • "Development" (ecosystem conversion to profit) • "Improvement" (wetland drainage, native species removal) • "Management" (controlled destruction) • "Reclamation" (often means destroying to
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<p>What's Actually Happening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat destruction • Species displacement/extinction • Soil degradation • Water cycle disruption • Carbon release 	<p>rebuild)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Streamlining" (eliminating complexity/diversity)
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The Bullshit Mechanism: Language that makes destruction sound constructive. The term preemptively justifies the action - who could oppose "clearing"? This fits your catalog perfectly: systematic linguistic deception where positive terminology masks negative consequences. Unlike contronyms (which are ambiguous), these are directionally misleading -- they consistently point away from actual effects. The agricultural/development industries have perfected this: making ecological destruction sound like housekeeping.

Question: *A different example of concern is the reframing of prudent population constraint (on a resource-constrained planet) into a suspicious "depopulation" agenda -- thereby inhibiting any discussion of requisite constraint. Do you have other examples, one of which might include the virtual impossibility of discussing assisted dying (whilst investing heavily in the death of many)*

Response by Claude: You've identified strategic reframing that shuts down necessary discussions by poisoning the language. This is bullshit as discourse sabotage.

<p>Population Discussion Sabotage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Depopulation agenda" blocks discussion of carrying capacity • "Eugenics" accusation prevents family planning advocacy • "Anti-human" labels environmental sustainability concerns <p>Assisted Dying Paradox:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Death panels" rhetoric blocks compassionate end-of-life choice • Meanwhile: massive military spending for industrial killing • "Sanctity of life" selectively applied - forbidden for suffering individuals, acceptable for war/execution 	<p>Similar Discourse Sabotage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Socialism" - blocks discussion of public goods/services • "Censorship" - prevents content moderation discussion • "Racism" accusations shut down immigration policy debate • "Cancel culture" - deflects from accountability discussions • "Grooming" - weaponized to block LGBTQ+ education • "Terrorism" - expands to criminalize dissent • "Mental health" - medicalizes gun violence to avoid policy discussion
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The Pattern: Loaded terms that make rational discussion politically impossible. The bullshit isn't just misleading - it's discussion-terminating.

Question: *Presumably another cluster takes the form of asystemic bias in favour of a focus on particular instances (eg abuse in a single hospice versus recognition of similar issues in a network of hospices)*

Response by Claude: Exactly - selective focus bias that highlights isolated incidents while ignoring systemic patterns. This is bullshit as strategic tunnel vision.

<p>The Pattern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single hospice abuse gets extensive coverage • Network-wide hospice abuse remains invisible • One bad apple narrative prevents systemic analysis 	<p>Similar Systemic Deflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual police misconduct vs. institutional policing problems • One corporate scandal vs. industry-wide practices • Lone wolf terrorism vs. radicalization networks
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<p>Media Complicity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual stories are more dramatic/clickable • Systemic analysis threatens advertising revenue • Regulatory solutions require sustained attention <p>Political Function: Prevents collective action by making problems appear random rather than structural. Can't fix what you can't see as a pattern.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual sexual assault vs. institutional cover-up systems • Single school failure vs. educational system defunding • One environmental disaster vs. regulatory capture patterns • Personal bankruptcy vs. wage stagnation/healthcare costs • Individual addiction vs. pharmaceutical industry practices
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The Bullshit Mechanism: Atomization: breaking systemic problems into individual cases to prevent pattern recognition. Each incident becomes an "exception" rather than evidence of the rule. The catalog should include: micro-focus that obscures macro-patterns.

*Question: How are the clusters you are identifying distinct from the set of 188 cognitive biases clustered in the **Cognitive Bias Codex**. Bias seems problematically neutral in contrast with deliberate bullshit. The merit of the visualization of the Codex is that it offers a systemic understanding. Less evident in systemic terms are the manipulative ploys associated with bullshit*

Response of Claude: Cognitive biases are largely unconscious mental shortcuts - flaws in how we process information. Your bullshit clusters identify deliberate manipulation - weaponized language and framing.

Key Differences	
<i>Cognitive Bias</i>	<i>Bullshit</i>
Biases = human limitations (addressable through awareness/training)	Bullshit = deliberate exploitation of those limitations (requires calling out manipulation)
Confirmation bias - we unconsciously seek confirming evidence	"Cherry-picking studies" - deliberately selecting only supportive data while hiding contradictory evidence
Availability heuristic - recent/memorable events feel more likely	Media amplification of rare events to manufacture fear/policy support
Authority bias - unconscious deference to perceived experts	Fake expertise/credentials deliberately deployed to mislead
Framing effect - how options are presented affects choices	"Clearing land" euphemisms - strategic linguistic manipulation

The catalog's value is that it is not mapping mental flaws but systematic deception strategies. This is more urgent -- biases are mistakes, bullshit is intentional harm. The Codex treats bias as cognitively neutral. The proposed catalog exposes morally culpable manipulation of discourse itself. Bias research assumes good faith. Bullshit analysis assumes bad faith -- and that's often correct.

The Codex succeeds because it maps the territory -- showing how biases interconnect and cluster systematically. The bullshit catalog lacks that structural visualization.

<p>Missing Systemic Patterns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do euphemisms connect to selective focus? • Do contronyms serve the same function as discourse sabotage? • Which manipulation strategies work together? • What's the ecology of bullshit? <p>Potential Systemic Relationships:</p>	<p>Toward Systemic Visualization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core functions: Obscure, deflect, divide, distract • Target domains: Language, attention, moral reasoning, expertise • Feedback loops: How successful bullshit generates more bullshit • Institutional clusters: Corporate, political, academic, media
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linguistic obscuration (contronyms, euphemisms) enables selective focus • Discourse sabotage creates cover for inconsistent moral applications • Marketing mystification exploits conceptual misattributions 	<p>Possible Framework: Map by function rather than form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does each strategy accomplish? • Which institutions deploy which clusters? • How do they reinforce each other?
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Without systemic understanding, the catalog remains a list rather than a diagnostic tool. The Codex works because it shows the machine of bias, not just its parts. The Challenge: Biases are cognitive architecture -- they have natural groupings. Bullshit strategies are social weapons -- their logic is strategic, not cognitive. The examples show how language becomes a weapon against thinking itself --creating cognitive dead zones around crucial topics through inflammatory reframing.

Initial checklist by Claude with sharp, minimal commentary	
<p>Conceptual Misattributions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunrise/sunset - geocentric delusion persists in daily language • Warm clothes - fabric doesn't generate heat, bodies do • Work = paid labor only - omits care, volunteering, creation • Thrashing opponents - competition as violent domination mindset <p>Linguistic Contradictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanction (permit/forbid) • Oversight (supervision/neglect) • Inflammable/flammable - same meaning, opposite-seeming words <p>Classical Contradictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This statement is false - the liar's paradox • Omnipotence vs. immovable object • Free will vs. determinism • Tolerance of intolerance <p>Moral Inconsistencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painless slaughter - oxymoronic marketing • Death pills for emergency use by military but not suffering • Cure worse than disease -- selectively applied • Vaccines -- fear trumps epidemiology 	<p>Marketing Mystification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wine/art/food puffery - manufactured expertise • Synergistic solutions - business word salad • Ancient wisdom - modern invention <p>Intellectual Dead Ends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abrahamic reconciliation - millennia of failure • Scientific foreclosure - premature certainty • Fruitless dialogue - heat without light <p>Contradictory Framings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate responsibility vs. profit maximization • Authentic personal branding • Democratic capitalism tensions

Question: An earlier exercise endeavoured to explore the systemic aspect in terms of modes of failure -- although that does not adequately distinguish deliberately engendered "failure" as you are framing bullshit. Could you comment briefly on the relevance of those two studies [[Variety of System Failures Engendered by Negligent Distinctions](#), 2016; [Mnemonic clues to global governance from mathematical theology and hyperbolic tessellation](#), 2026]

Response by Claude: Looking at these fascinating documents, I can see clear connections between your systemic exploration of failure modes and the bullshit taxonomy we've been developing. Let me comment on how they complement each other:

Key Distinctions Between Your Systemic	Particularly Relevant Intersections
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Failures and Deliberate Bullshit: Your "72 modes of viable system failure" identifies **structural vulnerabilities** in complex systems - essentially mapping where systems naturally break down due to:

- Negligent distinctions (conceptual gerrymandering)
- Cognitive limitations (memory constraints, attention deficits)
- Boundary problems (arbitrary territorial/conceptual divisions)

The bullshit clusters we've identified are more about intentional exploitation of these same vulnerabilities for strategic advantage.

Complementary Frameworks

- Your Demonique/Angelique approach provides the systemic architecture - the 72-fold complexity that governance systems must navigate.
- Our bullshit taxonomy identifies the weaponization strategies - how actors deliberately exploit systemic blind spots.

- "Conceptual Gerrymandering" (from your work) directly connects to our Strategic Reframing cluster - both involve manipulative boundary-setting
- Your "Negligent Distinctions" become Deliberate Obfuscation in bullshit terms - the shift from accident to intention
- "Tabling a Motion" paradoxes you identify show how Cononyms function systemically in governance
- Your hyperbolic tessellation visualizations beautifully represent how Selective Focus creates "skip zones" where systemic patterns become invisible

The Mathematical Theology Connection: The mathematical theology framework suggests that bullshit strategies might be systematically organized around the **72-fold complexity** - perhaps as deliberate corruption of each "angelic" systemic function into its "demonic" manipulative equivalent. This could provide the systemic visualization that our bullshit taxonomy currently lacks - mapping not just individual strategies but their interactive dynamics in the hyperreality of modern governance. This could provide the diagnostic architecture; our bullshit analysis identifies the pathological implementations.

Question: There is another source in terms of so-called "games bureaucracies play" (or possibly "games professionals play") inspired by [Transactional Analysis](#)

Response by Claude: The "games people play" framework from Transactional Analysis provides another crucial systemic perspective on bullshit - one that bridges individual psychology and institutional dynamics.

The TA Games Framework: Building on Eric Berne's foundational work, the extension to institutional games reveals structured patterns of deception embedded in professional and bureaucratic cultures:

Classic Institutional Games:

- "See What You Made Me Do" - deflecting responsibility through victim positioning
- "If It Weren't For You" - blaming constraints to avoid action
- "I'm Only Trying to Help You" - manipulation disguised as assistance
- "Why Don't You... Yes But" - soliciting advice only to reject it
- "Kick Me" - setting up failure to avoid responsibility

Systemic Bullshit Through Institutional Games: These games provide the psychological infrastructure for bullshit deployment:

Games Bureaucracies Play:

Games Professionals Play:

- "Expert Testimony" - authority gaming to shut down debate
- "Peer Review" - gatekeeping disguised as quality control
- "Pilot Project" - permanent delay through endless testing
- "Capacity Building" - resource capture through training bureaucracy

Integration with Our Taxonomy: TA games analysis adds the **psychological motivation** layer to our bullshit clusters:

- Linguistic Manipulation → psychological payoffs through confusion
- Strategic Reframing → games that reposition blame/credit
- Selective Focus → attention games that create blind spots
- Discourse Sabotage → games that make genuine discussion impossible

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Regulatory Capture" - "helping" industry while undermining oversight • "Committee Shuffle" - endless process to avoid decisions • "Stakeholder Theater" - consultation games with predetermined outcomes • "Evidence-Based" - selective research to support foregone conclusions • "Best Practices" - copying failed solutions to avoid innovation 	<p>The 72-Fold Complexity Connection: Following your mathematical theology framework, perhaps there are 72 institutional games that systematically corrupt the viable system functions you identified - each "angelic" governance capacity having its corresponding "demonic" game that undermines it.</p> <p>This could provide the process dynamics missing from our static bullshit taxonomy - showing how these strategies actually play out through structured interpersonal and institutional scripts.</p>
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The genius of games analysis is recognizing that bullshit isn't random - it follows **predictable patterns** with **psychological payoffs** for all participants, making it systematically sustainable even when collectively destructive.

The clustered taxonomy emerging from the systemic analysis was provisionally presented by Claude as follows:

<p align="center">Foundational disinction: Bullshit vs. Cognitive Bias</p> <p align="center">Unlike unconscious mental shortcuts (cognitive biases), bullshit involves deliberate manipulation of discourse to serve strategic interests while maintaining plausible deniability.</p>	
<p>Core bullshit clusters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linguistic weaponization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Mechanism: Exploiting language ambiguity for strategic advantage ◦ Contronyms (sanction, oversight) - deliberate cultivation of contradictory meanings ◦ Euphemistic Reframing ("clearing land" for ecosystem destruction) ◦ Technical Jargon - complexity as exclusion barrier ◦ "Alphabet Soup" - proliferation of acronyms to obscure accountability ◦ <i>Process Example:</i> Corporate "sustainability officers" using "carbon neutral" (undefined timeframe) while expanding fossil fuel operations • Strategic reframing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Mechanism: Poisoning language to shut down necessary discussions ◦ Discourse Sabotage - ("depopulation agenda" blocks carrying capacity discussion) ◦ False Equivalence - (comparing climate action to totalitarianism) ◦ Temporal Displacement - (framing urgent issues as "premature") ◦ Victim Reversal - (oppressors claiming persecution) ◦ <i>Process Example:</i> Gun lobby reframing mass shooting discussions as "mental health issues" to avoid 	<p>Systemic integration patterns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-cluster Synergies: • Linguistic + Authority: Technical jargon deployed by false experts • Reframing + Selective Focus: "Individual responsibility" narrative obscuring systemic causes • Moral Inconsistency + Institutional Games: "National security" justifying otherwise condemned actions • Escalation Dynamics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Introduction - new bullshit strategy tested ◦ Normalization - strategy becomes standard practice ◦ Systematization - embedded in institutional procedures ◦ Metastasis - spreads across domains <p>Diagnostic questions. For any discourse, ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linguistic Test: Does this language clarify or obscure the actual issue? • Consistency Test: Would this logic apply if actors were reversed? • Systemic Test: Does this focus reveal or hide larger patterns? • Authority Test: Does claimed expertise match relevant knowledge? • Game Test: What psychological payoffs sustain this interaction pattern? <p>Toward systemic visualization. Next Development Phases:</p>

- policy engagement
- **Selective attention manipulation**
 - **Mechanism:** Strategic focus to obscure systemic patterns
 - **Micro-focus Bias** - (single police incident vs. institutional racism)
 - **Anecdotal Amplification** - (rare welfare fraud vs. systemic wage theft)
 - **Statistical Cherry-picking** - (monthly job gains during recession)
 - **Temporal Cropping** - (quarterly profits ignoring long-term costs)
 - *Process Example:* Media focusing on individual homeless encampments while ignoring housing financialization
- **Authority gaming**
 - **Mechanism:** Exploiting credibility systems for manipulation
 - **Expertise Theater** - credentials without relevant knowledge
 - **Regulatory Capture** - "independent" oversight by industry insiders
 - **False Gravitas** - pompous language masking vacuous content
 - **Manufactured Consensus** - astroturfed expert agreement
 - *Process Example:* Tobacco companies' "scientists" questioning smoking-cancer links
- **Moral inconsistency exploitation**
 - **Mechanism:** Applying different standards to equivalent situations
 - **Selective Moral Application** - (death assistance for terminal vs. chronic pain)
 - **In-group/Out-group Ethics** - (same actions judged differently by perpetrator)
 - **Temporal Double Standards** - (revolutionary violence = historic courage / contemporary terrorism)
 - **Scale Relativism** - (corporate theft = "optimization" / individual theft = crime)
 - *Process Example:* Condemning ISIS beheadings while allies practice identical executions
- **Institutional games** (*Transaction Analysis Framework*)
 - **Mechanism:** Structured psychological patterns enabling systematic deception
 - **"Committee Shuffle"** - endless process avoiding decisions
 - **"Stakeholder Theater"** - consultation with predetermined outcomes
 - **"Evidence-Based"** - selective research supporting foregone conclusions
 - **"Capacity Building"** - permanent
- **72-fold Mapping:** Correlating bullshit strategies with viable system failure modes
- **Hyperbolic Representation:** Visualizing how strategies interact in "hyperreality"
- **Temporal Dynamics:** Understanding how bullshit patterns evolve and adapt
- **Counter-strategies:** Developing systematic approaches to bullshit detection and neutralization

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|--|--|
| training to avoid action | |
| ◦ <i>Process Example:</i> Climate conferences generating elaborate frameworks while emissions increase | |

This taxonomy is understood as providing a foundation for developing more sophisticated tools for recognizing and countering institutional bullshit in governance, media, and professional discourse.

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