

ELIZABETH CAMP

(RUTGERS UNIVERSITY)

ON

WHY METAPHORS MAKE GOOD INSULTS

Metaphors are powerful communicative tools because they ‘frame’ their subjects in certain ways. These effects are especially palpable when the metaphor is an insult that denigrates the hearer or someone she cares about. In such cases, comprehending the metaphor can produce a kind of complicity, one that cannot be undone just by denying the speaker’s claim. Where some theorists take this to show that metaphors accomplish something different in kind from ordinary talk, I argue that metaphorical insults are so rhetorically powerful because they combine three distinct features, each of which is independently common in communication. This result is not just theoretically interesting; it also helps to suggest more effective techniques for hearers to fight back.

APRIL 20TH / 7:00 P.M.

**BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY
10 GRAND ARMY PLAZA**

100% FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**BROOKLYN
PUBLIC
PHILOSOPHERS**

