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Tongues Twisted Left: Manipulating Minds by Managing Words

It has long been noted that disagreements can be won by massaging the definition of words. Liberals repeatedly apply this lesson to influence the culture.



“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less.” “The question is,” said Alice, “whether you can make words mean so many different things.” “The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master — that’s all.” This passage, from Lewis Carroll’s book *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872), has been cited in at least 250 U.S. judicial decisions (with our judges, one wonders if it was in condemnation of lawyers’ arguments or in justification of their own). But what about when language engineers use words to master us?

Pining after the good ol’ days, Archie Bunker sang of the time when “girls were girls and men were men”; now using the word “girls” can be deemed offensive, and a University of Florida student had his grade lowered for using “man” in an essay. “Girls” are supposed to be women, except when feminists call them “womyn” as they try to purge men. Then there were the training documents at a Lincoln, Nebraska, middle school advising teachers not to call “students ‘boys and girls’ or ‘ladies and gentlemen,’ but to instead use more generic expressions like campers, readers, athletes or even purple penguins,” reported NebraskaWatchdog.org in 2014. Because boys and girls are, you know, so yesterday.

Of course, it’s tempting to just laugh this off as so much nonsense, until you realize that those pushing it are deathly serious — and deadly to society. Oh, it’s not that we’ll be universally referring to children as penguins anytime soon. The reality, however, is that social engineers have long been transforming our language and twisting our tongues left. Why, for example, do so many of us use “African-American” instead of “black,” “underprivileged” and not “poor,” “gender” in place of “sex,” “entitlements” as opposed to “handouts,” and “gay” instead of “homosexual”? Why would we view “masculinism” as something bizarre but accept that “feminism” can be a good thing? And how much does any of this really matter?

It could also be pointed out that language always changes. A “hussy” originally was a housewife, a “mistress of a household”; now it’s a woman of disrepute. Nice once meant silly and silly once meant blessed or pious. And upon reading the line, “An. M.LXVI. On þyssum geare man halgode þet mynster æt Westmynstre on Cyldamæsse dæg,” few today would know it’s Old English from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (translation: “1066. In this year the monastery at Westminster was hallowed on Childermas



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day”). Why, Shakespearean works, now considered a tough read, are written in Early *Modern* English!

Yet the question isn't whether language changes, but when it does, why does it change? Is it normal, matter-of-course evolution, or selective breeding designed to create lexical Frankensteins? Is it democratic — let's say, when younger generations began using “cool” to mean fashionable — or is it the handiwork of a Machiavellian, de facto oligarchy of academics?

There are obvious examples of language manipulation. One often in the news currently is “sanctuary” city, a euphemism putting a happy face on lawbreaking, as the municipalities in question are better called traitorous cities. Related is the nauseating practice of calling an illegal alien an “undocumented worker,” which is much like calling a rapist an undocumented husband. Then there's abortion, which sometimes masquerades as “reproductive rights” and can be called by doctors “intact dilation and extraction” (Intact D&E), but once was termed “foeticide” or, better still, prenatal infanticide.

Of course, using verbal Trojan horses is nothing new. “In 1946, [George] Orwell wrote a famous essay, ‘Politics and the English Language,’ that described political speech and writing as ‘largely the defense of the indefensible,’” wrote *Religion News Service* last year. “‘Political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness,’ he wrote. Politicians turn to strange phrases in order to ‘name things without calling up mental pictures of them.’” It's also used to create emotional distance, on a personal level, such as physicians referring to their latest D&E or innocent civilian casualties in war being dubbed “collateral damage.”

Whatever the motivation, the power of language has long been recognized. Orwell wrote in his dystopian novel *1984* that the aim of “Newspeak” (the prescribed language of the totalitarian government portrayed) was “to narrow the range of thought” and render dissent “literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it.” The ancient Chinese sage Confucius, stressing the need for the “rectification of names,” warned that failing to call things by their proper names would lead to social disorder because, through mislabeling, you'd make it impossible for people to clearly perceive reality. And the thesis of Stuart Chase's 1959 book *The Tyranny of Words* is that the side that defines the vocabulary of a debate, wins the debate.

This last point is easy to understand. Imagine a German culture and a French one vying for primacy in a certain geographical area. If the French could convince all the Germans to speak French, wouldn't they already have won at least half the battle? Is it any different in our “culture wars”? Would traditionalists have any chance of victory if they reflexively adopted the lexicon of the Left?

Yet this is precisely what we do. Just consider the term “gender,” used now by virtually all in reference to people. Many today likely would agree with an Internet commenter I came across who, addressing the distinction between gender and sex, quite self-assuredly wrote, “‘Sex’ is what you do; ‘gender’ is what you are.” In reality, though, “gender” was rarely used vis-à-vis people until relatively recently. Rather, its definition was as presented in my 1975 edition *American Heritage School Dictionary*: “n. In grammar, one of a number of categories, such as masculine, feminine, and neuter, into which words are divided.” The book says absolutely nothing about usage relating to individuals' sex — *only grammatical classifications*.

Now, this word's prominence was shortly followed by the prominence of something else: the “transgender” agenda. Coincidence? And what an agenda it is. Children are not only allowed to attend school as members of the opposite sex and use its bathrooms and locker facilities, but the other



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students may endure “sensitivity training” to inure them to the lunacy. Educators often teach that “transgenderism” constitutes normal human variation and must be respected, and sympathetic “transgender” characters have begun appearing on television. Even more unbelievably, men claiming womanhood have been allowed to compete in women’s sports (including a weightlifter with male pattern baldness) and often are, not surprisingly, trouncing the competition. Moreover, dare question the agenda — which is wholly unscientific; “transgender” actually means Made-up Sexual Status (MUSS) — and you’re labeled a bigot or “hater.” It’s a tragic story, but perfectly illustrative of how to capture the culture by crafting the language.

First note that the language engineers never claimed when co-opting “gender” that it was synonymous with “sex”; rather, while the latter is a biological distinction, “gender” is your *perception of what you are*, they stated. Of course, since there can be as many perceptions as people, it’s no surprise the list of “genders” grows like the national debt. Examples are “agender,” “bigender,” “gender fluid,” “pangender,” “two-spirit,” and “cisgender.” Be this as it may, “gender” has now supplanted “sex” in everyday speech in reference to the biological distinction. When addressing this, sources will generally, and generally sincerely, claim it’s due to the term “sex” having taken on a more “erotic quality.” Yet I believe this is more of a secondary factor, akin to how an accelerant makes a fire consume more quickly.

Consider that inventions are always followed, and sometimes preceded, by a term describing them, which is how we relate information about their conception or existence (images are another way). Thus did “air-plane” enter the English lexicon in 1907, “velocipede” (an early bicycle) in 1809, and “robot” in 1923. More to the point here, you could believe in the existence of something real you witnessed without having a name for it — such as happened with the first Westerner to see an elephant or giraffe — but how can people (in large numbers) believe in the wholly imaginary?

Assigning it a name is a prerequisite. After all, we can have lots of ideas, but how do we transmit them? It would be impossible without words and imagery. Words are vehicles through which ideas can be explicitly transmitted. But then, how do you make the transmission most effective? Explanations and detailed descriptions are fine and have their place, but they’re much like the instruction manual for an electronic device. That’s not what really makes people buy something — or buy into it.

For example, someone originated the idea of a “large hairy primate that roams the Western United States” (maybe after eating some mushrooms), and now a notable percentage of Americans believe it’s real. Would this have been as likely to happen if the quoted description was all we had, if it hadn’t been branded as something, in this case “sasquatch” or “bigfoot”? There are many things people imagine and even describe, but giving them names makes them real in language. “Sasquatch” certainly exists — in our lexicon — and that’s a start.

In business this is called “branding,” and associated with this is “brand identity.” Sound familiar?

After accepting “gender,” the “brand” for the imaginary phenomenon in question, we began hearing about “gender identity” — which now can be anything human imaginations may disgorge.

Now question: Would any of the aforementioned cultural insanity, this now metastasized MUSS agenda, have become reality if we hadn’t begun applying “gender” (or some equivalent term) to people? Maybe so, but it wouldn’t have been nearly as easy. After all, to normalize something, it helps to lump it in with that which is normal. This was clearly the agenda early on, with the apparent goal, modest by today’s



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standards, of further legitimizing homosexuality. For example, organizers of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 sought to define what could constitute a family and claimed it could comprise up to five “genders”: male heterosexual, female heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian, and bisexual (this language was ultimately stricken from conference documents because of Vatican contingent protests). And now, a generation later, we have “cisgender.” It refers to someone whose “gender identity” corresponds to that person’s sex “assigned at birth” — a normal person, in other words — defined by way of “other words” as just one of scores of “genders.”

So now the method to the madness is clear. How far would social engineers have gotten trying to claim, early on, that there are more than two sexes? Not only would they have been fighting accepted science, but it was already cemented in people’s minds that only two exist. But “gender,” as the earlier definition informs, refers to “a number of categories.” So where there once were, to quote Orwell again, “no words in which to express” the messy MUSS idea, this changed with gender’s co-option.

Of course, manipulation via language is a slow process, with people’s understandings altering the neologisms’ definitions while being altered by them. For instance, a common schoolyard taunt from my childhood was, “You’re such a faggot!” which to us just meant a wimpy kid (homosexuality wasn’t on our radar screen). Then this was deemed offensive, and “gay” became the politically correct term.

Consequently, you heard young boys saying, “You’re so gay!”

Yet a transformation does occur. Consider “gender” again. As indicated earlier, the average person now considers it synonymous with “sex.” But the change here is dangerous precisely because it’s not revolutionary, which would be obvious, but evolutionary. But more on this momentarily. First consider the findings of Lera Boroditsky, a University of California, San Diego professor of cognitive science who studies how language shapes thinking. In 2009, she reported at [Edge.org](#) on how grammatical gender, which varies with a given language, influences that language’s speakers:

In one study, we asked German and Spanish speakers to describe objects having opposite gender assignment in those two languages. The descriptions they gave differed in a way predicted by grammatical gender. For example, when asked to describe a “key” — a word that is masculine in German and feminine in Spanish — the German speakers were more likely to use words like “hard,” “heavy,” “jagged,” “metal,” “serrated,” and “useful,” whereas Spanish speakers were more likely to say “golden,” “intricate,” “little,” “lovely,” “shiny,” and “tiny.” To describe a “bridge,” which is feminine in German and masculine in Spanish, the German speakers said “beautiful,” “elegant,” “fragile,” “peaceful,” “pretty,” and “slender,” and the Spanish speakers said “big,” “dangerous,” “long,” “strong,” “sturdy,” and “towering.” This was true even though all testing was done in English, a language without grammatical gender. The same pattern of results also emerged in entirely nonlinguistic tasks (e.g., rating similarity between pictures). And we can also show that it is aspects of language per se that shape how people think: teaching English speakers new grammatical gender systems influences mental representations of objects in the same way it does with German and Spanish speakers. Apparently even small flukes of grammar, like the seemingly arbitrary assignment of gender to a noun, can have an effect on people’s ideas of concrete objects in the world.

Of course, this first just illustrates language’s power over thought. As for the matter at hand, though, one constant here is that conceptions of the objects were *all shaped by a universal conception of the*



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sexes, which are what define masculinity and femininity. That is, Germans and Spaniards viewed keys and bridges differently because they viewed the sexes the same way. Yet just as how teaching new grammatical gender systems influences conceptions of objects, applying a gender system to people can influence the conceptions of men and women. Moreover, note that grammatical gender is relative and a social construct. So does applying gender to the sexes work to convince that that they, too, are social constructs?

That certainly is the goal, and the language facilitates it. This brings us back to that transformation. Here's the process:

1. Start the rebranding by introducing the new term, "gender," along with the concepts behind it. While the term and concepts will be embraced by the pseudo-elites quickly, only the term will rapidly take hold among the general population. The concepts will seep in *incrementally*.
2. As to the concepts, first say to people, "Yes, sex exists, of course, but there's also the 'perception of what you are' — gender." This is the aforementioned biological/psychological-self-image distinction.
3. Once this gains acceptance, the next step is to discredit the biological distinction altogether and eliminate it as perceived reality, leaving only "gender." This is accomplished largely via pseudo-science and specious interpretations that characterize abnormalities (e.g., hermaphroditism) as indicating that what was viewed as male and female is "merely a continuum."

The end of this transition — sex, to sex plus gender, to gender minus sex, leaving only gender — is already evident. For example, University of Toronto historian Nick Matte pronounced last year that "it's not correct that there is such a thing as biological sex." Then there is a new play, that's designed "for ages 6-10" and was recently touring schools (4/10 through 5/15), about a cross-dressing eight-year-old boy entitled *Boys, Girls, and Other Mythological Creatures*. So reality is imaginary, you see, and the imaginary is reality.

Of course, whether this agenda can be brought to full fruition remains unclear. Convincing all and sundry that sexes don't exist would be quite a coup, and more likely is that Western civilization will collapse due to such social re-engineering. To paraphrase economist Herb Stein, "If something can't go on, it won't."

In the meantime, let's do our part by bucking the language engineers and guarding our tongues. Here's a short list to consider:

- Climate skeptics: It certainly sounds better than "deniers," but we who doubt the anthropogenic-climate-change scam should call ourselves "realists." After all, that we're right should be reflected in our language. The other side comprises deniers — of science and reason.
- "Poor" vs. "disadvantaged" or "underprivileged": Always be suspicious when people substitute a four or five-syllable word for a simple monosyllable. "Poor" is merely an adjective describing economic state, yet "privilege" and "disadvantage" can be verbs, which denote *action*. And action implies an actor. Now, if some external agency "privileged" some and "disadvantaged" others, not only is people's success not attributable to their own effort, but it's also very unfair. That outside agency then has an obligation to balance the scales via income redistribution.
- "Gay marriage": If it's homosexual, it ain't gay or marriage. Using this term is tacit acknowledgment that such an institution exists. Moreover, "traditional marriage" sends the same message, for what is



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the other side of that coin?

Call the same-sex coupling in question “faux marriage” if you must address it, but be clear that there is only “marriage” — period — and it involves one man and one woman.

- “Black” vs. “African-American”: Many terms have been used to identify black people, some pejorative, some not so. But one thing they all shared was they referred only to racial characteristics, not geographical area of origin. “African-American,” however, partially shifts the focus away from our homeland and toward a different part of the world. It thus serves to further divide and alienate blacks from America.

The term is also very imprecise when read literally. If I’m an Afrikaner or an Arab North African (both classified as Caucasian) who has immigrated to our nation and been naturalized, am I an “African-American”?

- Avoid inclusive language: It’s not just nauseating formulations such as “snow-person,” “chairperson,” “humankind” and other terms reflecting hang-ups, but also the all-too-common “he or she.” Note that terms such as “he” and “man” (when used generically) and “chairman” are already inclusive in that they can refer to both sexes.

This obsession with demasculinizing the language reflects the nonsensical idea that the sexes should be treated identically, which no one actually believes (should we eliminate women’s sports?). For that matter, it reflects the desire to eliminate the masculine and feminine, in language and people; it thus leads to ever-greater lunacy, such as so-called “gender-neutral” pronouns, examples being “ze,” “hir,” “mer,” and “zir.”

- “Virtues” vs. “values”: George Washington had values. So did Hitler. Saying “You need values” is like a nutritionist saying “You need food.” Virtues are good by definition and reflect Truth (an absolute); values are the stuff of atheism/relativism and include the good, the bad, and the ugly.

- Vulgarity: Ignoring that it was mainstreamed by the Left and again proving that conservatives never saw a culture-war battle they couldn’t lose, even rightist publications now sometimes use words such as a** and s***storm. Philosopher Edmund Burke warned that “intemperate minds cannot be free.” Is a coarse society fertile ground for the cultivation of temperate people who can be?

Tragically, most don’t buck language fashions because they’re, well, fashionable. Often originated on college campuses, they’re spread by media and entertainment types who fancy academics sophisticated. They’re then parroted by the general population because people are social beings and, hey, “gender” sounds so much more intellectual than “sex.” Who wants to be a knuckle-dragging, one-syllable simpleton? Intellectual pride is the Devil’s ploy.

A good rule of thumb is that if you’re not speaking like your great-grandfather, you’re probably doing something wrong — maybe like being a Humpty Dumpty and creating a through-the-looking-glass civilization.



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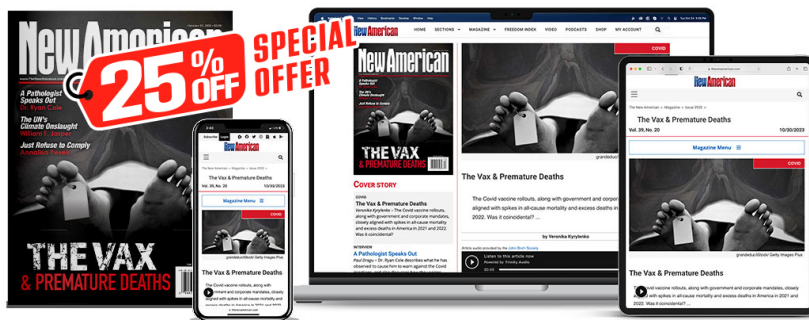
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