



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on November 12, 2018

Professor Suing University Over “Transgender” Tyranny

They tried to wash his mouth out with political correctness. He resisted. Then university officials made threats to force the professor into “pronoun compliance.” Now he’s taking legal action, with attorneys from Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) having filed a federal lawsuit against the school last Monday on his behalf.



Breitbart [reports](#) on the case:

On January 9, Nicholas Meriwether, a philosophy professor at Shawnee State University in Ohio, responded to a student’s question by saying, “No, sir.” That student transitioned from male to female and confronted Meriwether after class, demanding the professor use feminine titles and pronouns. Meriwether disagreed. The student became “belligerent, circling around the professor and getting in his face in a threatening fashion,” according to the [complaint](#) filed in federal court. Before walking away, the student allegedly said, “Then I guess this means I can call you a c[**]t.”

The student promised to get Meriwether fired for pronoun noncompliance, filing a complaint. Meriwether reported the student’s alleged conduct to the Jennifer Pauley, chair of the Humanities and English departments. Subsequently, the university launched an investigation. The professor offered to call the student by first and last name, bypassing pronouns; however, Shawnee State officials rejected the middle ground fix. ADF said this forced Meriwether to speak and act contrary to his religious beliefs.

ADF Senior Counsel Travis Barham explained that Meriwether is a Christian who believes in the reality of the matter: that sex is fixed at birth (and thus, doesn’t have to be “fixed” — or, perhaps we should say, broken — later).

Barham also said that tolerance should go both ways and that Shawnee shouldn’t be imposing an ideological straitjacket on its employees. Note here that universities love bloviating about “academic freedom” when the matter is a Marxist professor or one who impugns whites, Christians, or men or embraces some other politically correct prejudice. But the academic-freedom fakery goes out the window when academia’s own orthodoxy is challenged.

In Meriwether’s case, school officials didn’t just seek to impose their will, but actually belittled the professor’s Christianity. For example, when Meriwether discussed an Obama administration letter on “transgenderism” with the aforementioned Pauley, she “exhibited hostility” toward him and his “religious beliefs,” the ADF complaint alleges. As *Breitbart* also reports, “She said ‘adherents to the Christian religion are primarily motivated out of fear.’ She allegedly commented [that] ‘the purpose of higher education is to liberate students, that religion oppresses students, and thus, the presence of religion in higher education is counterproductive.’”

Moreover, court documents state that Shawnee Interim President Jeffrey Bauer “openly laughed” at the professor’s assertion that his faith precluded pronoun compliance. Talk about closed-mindedness.

Of course, the assumption here is that the “My religion forbids it” argument is being used as a pretext



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for prejudiced behavior. Shouldn't we, as an imperative of good manners, just address people as they wish? Not necessarily.

What if a person insisted he be addressed as "God"? Or what if someone demanded he be called "Most Superior Master"? Would we demand compliance? Or would we understand why Christians and Jews in the first case and blacks (most especially) in the second might take offense?

"But c'mon, Duke," some will say. "These are matters of principle." Well, as a man of faith who doesn't use any part of the Lexicon of the Left, never mind "transgender"-oriented language, I can tell you that Meriwether's concerns are, too.

As Stuart Chase's 1938 book *The Tyranny of Words* points out, the side that defines the vocabulary of a debate, wins the debate. As an example, if French and German cultures were vying for primacy in a given area and the French could convince the Germans to speak French, wouldn't they have already won at least half the battle? Is it any different in ideological culture wars?

Words matter. Words are powerful. This is why the Nazis and Soviets had their language norms; it's why George Orwell's dystopian *1984* tyranny had its Newspeak. And it's why our Left works feverishly manipulating speech, birthing politically correct standards that include prohibiting "trigger warning" terms, mandating "inclusive language" and, to the point here, "transgender"-pronoun policies.

This gets at why insisting people adopt the latter isn't just a request for politeness. I and many others are firmly convinced that [a man cannot "transition,"](#) cannot "become a female," and that [claiming otherwise is highly destructive to society](#). Referencing a man claiming womanhood with the pronouns "she" and "her," however, would be a tacit acknowledgment that his claim is valid. It would not only be a violation of conscience, but would amount to mortally handicapping oneself in the debate. You may as well expect a gun-control proponent to argue while identifying himself as "anti-self-defense."

So this isn't just semantics. As Victor Klemperer, a German Jew who survived the Nazi era, [wrote](#) in *The Language of the Third Reich* (1957):

Nazism permeated the flesh and blood of the people through single words, idioms and sentence structures which were imposed upon them in a million repetitions and taken on board mechanically and unconsciously...."

Language does not simply write and think for me, it also increasingly dictates my feelings and governs my entire spiritual being the more unquestioningly and unconsciously I abandon myself to it.... Words can be like tiny doses of arsenic; they are swallowed unnoticed, appear to have no effect, and then after a little time the toxic reaction sets in after all [hat tip: [Richard M. Ebeling](#)].

As momma always said, "Watch your mouth." What many today call impoliteness is simply people of principle watching theirs — and making sure their tongues aren't twisted left.

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