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**Pronoun envy**

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# PRONOUN ENVY

> From earliest times until about the 1960s it was unquestionably acceptable to use the pronoun *he* (and *him, himself, his*) with indefinite reference to mean 'anyone, a person' (of either sex), especially after indefinite pronouns such as anybody, anyone, someone, etc., or in fixed phrases, such as 'Every man for himself'. [...]
> From the time of our earliest records until the second half of the 20C, *man* could be used without comment to mean 'a human being (irrespective of sex or age)'. (In OE the main words distinctive of sex were *wer* 'a man' and *wif* 'a woman'.) The use is embedded in hundreds of traditional expressions (e.g. Man cannot live by bread alone, Man proposes, God disposes; Every man for himself; Time and tide wait for no man) and in the works of our greatest poets and philosophers. We must all tread cautiously now under the scrutiny of the more militant feminists, who judge this use of man to be an unacceptable outward sign of male dominance. (Burchfield 1999: 358, 478)

Yes, it is now common in public discourse, whether the context is political, academic, or even legal, to take it for granted that the generic use of *man* and *he* (*him, his* etc.) amounts to engaging in sexist language, i.e. language which discriminates against women, makes them invisible and thereby reinforces the patriarchal subordination of women to men.

It is supposed to be offensive to women and speakers of English are exhorted, indeed bullied (by draconian speech codes, inclusive language guidelines etc.) and—in some countries—even legally required to avoid it. Thus e.g. the 45–page long Inclusive Language Guidelines for Deakin University in Australia warns that 'the federal government has made it mandatory to avoid the use of the male pronoun as "generic."'—Note the weaselly soft imperative 'has made it mandatory to avoid the use...'. The Guidelines themselves are somewhat more forthright but no less Orwellian. We are told that 'Deakin University's policy on equal opportunity disallows the use of language that is discriminatory or non-inclusive' (6).

Who would have thought even a decade ago that a sentence like

Everyone has a right to say what he thinks

rather than '...what he or she thinks' or the embarrassingly ungrammatical '...what they think', used in all innocence e.g. in a paper, could potentially land a (male) university student in hot water? If he is lucky, he might just have his mark lowered; but if he is unlucky he might also be accused of 'sexism', 'insensitivity', 'harassing speech', 'male suprematism' or of creating 'a hostile educational environment for his female fellow students' and forced to take part in a Neo-MacCarthyite sensitivity training workshop. Arguably, this might sound a little far-fetched. But it is not impossible. Some American universities warn about such sanctions in no uncertain terms. According to Charles Colson:

> A syllabus for a course at the University of Maine contains the following warning: "Any language that may be deemed sexist, racist or homophobic, or may be found offensive by any minority group, is prohibited. Use of such language can result in immediate failure of that paper and possible future action."
> It's an example of political correctness, and what makes it especially ironic is that the course in question isn't "Contemporary Feminism" or "Queer Theory 101." Instead, it's a class called "Speech Communication." (Colson 2000)

What is remarkable is the unwillingness of professional linguists to challenge the validity of such spurious assumptions. Mostly they deem them too silly to be taken seriously. Indeed, how can any serious student of language give any credence to the Lysenkoite thesis that the English language is nothing but an insidious tool of phallocracy? Those linguists who do challenge the charlatanry are immediately shut up by melodramatic and hyperbolic charges of sexism and branded as misogynists. This can often put their careers in jeopardy. And the charlatans march forward unopposed.

Like myself you must be getting sick and tired of hearing about political correctness. Most people probably think that it occurs mainly in the academic backwaters of gender studies. They are mistaken. Its tentacles are now spreading into many academic disciplines just like Marxism-Leninism was in Communist universities.

What persuaded me personally that the barbarians and linguistic vandals are not just "at the gates" but that they are, in fact, already firmly entrenched "inside the gates" is the alarming degree to which femlinguistic theories have stormed the Bastille of lexicography. Lexicography has traditionally been the most commonsensical, no-nonsense and down-to-earth area of linguistics. Totalitarian regimes have of course tried to smuggle their point of view into dictionaries but Anglo-American lexicography has traditionally been one of the most reliable and unbiased sources of linguistic description. This is now rapidly changing. When PC

comes into lexicography and is accepted as one of the guiding principles—which overrules the purely linguistic ones when convenient—you know it is getting bad.

A good example of a gender-sensitive dictionary is *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (International Student Edition) published this year (2002). On the whole I have to say that in most respects it is one of the best dictionaries of its kind. It's an admirable piece of lexicographical craftsmanship. But its editors give more than just the proverbial pound of flesh to the femlinguistic viewpoints.

Well-primed by the current orthodoxy they treat the words *man* and *he*, the dreaded verbal symbols of patriarchal oppression, with utmost squeamishness. These lexemes are presented as the new taboo words whose potential to offend is in fact much worse than that of the numerous four-letter obscenities. They are commented on in special red-shaded alerts titled in red *Words that may cause offence*. Under *man* we are told that:

> **Words that may cause offence: man**
> **Man** and **mankind** are sometimes used to refer to humans in general, including both men and women. However, many people think that this use suggests that women are not included, or that men are more important than women. To avoid causing offence, you can use words and expressions such as **humans, human beings, people, humanity**, or **the human race**.

In addition to this general red-alert warning there are specific warnings under every single entry where *man* is used inappropriately and/or insensitively—with perhaps the honourable exception of words like *gunman*, *henchman* and the like, which the feminists do not usually claim for womanhood, and, remarkably, the word *woman* which is after all a modern version of the OE *wif-man*. It would be nice to be consistent but it wouldn't do to abolish all womanhood while fighting for women's rights.

The verbose warnings are often longer than the rest of the respective entries, e.g.:

> **man-hour** the amount of work that one person can do in an hour. Some people avoid using this word because they consider it offensive to women, and they use **person-hour** instead.

Under *he* we have the following red alert:

> **Words that may cause offence**
> **He, him, his**, and **himself** are sometimes used for referring to a person of either sex, for example in writing about something that may apply to a man or to a woman. However, many people think that this use suggests that women are not included, or that men are more important than women. To avoid causing offence, you can use ex-

pressions such as **he** or **she, he/ she, s/he, him/her, him/herself** in writing. In conversation many people say **they, them, their,** and **themselves** to refer to a person without mentioning whether the person is male or female.

There are, on the other hand, no similar red alerts and/ or warnings provided for most of the so-called 'four-letter words' such as

**sh\*t, ar\*e, a\*s, p\*ss, scr\*w** etc.

and, to my amazement, together with all the crude phrases, idioms etc. in which they appear (such as e.g. *sh\*t on sb*, *kiss my a\*se*), these words are not even marked as 'coarse or vulgar slang' or 'taboo'. They are marked simply as 'impolite'. No big deal, foreign learners of English. Go ahead, use these words whenever you like, but bear in mind that some people might think that you are a bit impolite.

However, not all four-letter words are treated with the same broadmindedness. Some are more equal than others. The obscenities which refer specifically to women are treated like modern-day blasphemous profanities. They are positively festooned with warnings. Cf.:

**c\*nt 1** *offensive* an extremely offensive word for a woman's sex organs
**p\*ssy 2** *offensive* an extremely offensive word for a woman's vagina (= sex organs)
**tw\*t 2** *offensive* an extremely offensive word for a woman's vagina (= sex organs)

These words are supraoffensive or we might say offensive to the power of three. But the closest male counterparts are just 'impolite'.

**c\*ck 2** *impolite* a man's penis
**pr\*ck 2** *impolite* a man's penis
**d\*ck** *impolite* a man's penis

The extensive use in this dictionary of the word 'offensive' both as a stylistic label (in italics) standing for 'vulgar, coarse, taboo', but also 'insensitive to women and minorities', i.e. potentially criminal, as well as its use as one of the defining words, is unfortunate. Until very recently it has been used in dictionaries only with a very small number of words which are considered to be nasty racist slurs such as the dreaded N word ('nigger'). It is even more unfortunate that it is almost invariably apportioned strictly in line with the current ideological orthodoxies. Only words associated with accredited "victims", i.e. women and minorities, but not those associated with their "patriarchal oppressors" make it to the privileged vocabulary of victimology.

Dissimilar treatment of male and female words is not by any means limited to obscenities. Cf.:

> **wench** an offensive word for a woman
> **girl 2** (adult) this use is now considered offensive
> **bag 2** *offensive* an insulting word for a woman, especially one who is old
> **bitch 1** *offensive* an insulting word for a woman
> **harpy 1** *offensive* an insulting word for a woman you think is unpleasant
> **cow 3** *offensive* an insulting word for a woman, especially one who is stupid or unkind
> **slut** *offensive* an insulting word for a woman who looks dirty and untidy
> **boy 2** (adult) a young man
> **swine 1** *informal* an extremely unpleasant or cruel man
> **oaf** a man who is not sensitive or thoughtful and who behaves in a rude or unpleasant way
> **brute 1** a strong man who acts in a cruel or violent way
> **gorilla** *informal* a big man who seems stupid or violent

So it seems that it is no big deal to call a man *a swine, an oaf* or a *gorilla* because, well, because presumably men are swine, oafs and gorillas. To call a woman *a bitch, a cow* or a *slut* is, however 'offensive' even if that woman is extremely nasty, very stupid or extraordinarily untidy because she might get offended and that's very bad news. It might very well also be against the law and it might also be very costly.


* * *


Using the all-purpose label *offensive*, which can potentially criminalize words, is truly Orwellian because of its blurred and at the same time melodramatic semantics. Most other dictionaries would mark words like *bitch, cow, swine, bastard* etc. as 'pejorative' or 'derogatory' showing that these semantic features are objectively part of the conventionally established meanings of the words regardless of whether they refer to "victims" or to "oppressors".

The definitions in this dictionary are written strictly in accordance with the feminist decrees about inclusive language even if the resulting formulations end up being ungrammatical and of a kind which is recommended for use only in conversation by this very dictionary (see the red alert about *he* above). The definitions are occasionally semantically counterintuitive. Cf.:

> **adulterer** old-fashioned a married person who has sex with someone who is not their husband or wife

> **adulteress** old-fashioned a married woman who has sex with
> someone who is not her husband
> **adultery** sex that takes place between a married person and some-
> one who is not their husband or wife

Until very recently *adulterer* was defined as 'a man who commits adultery' and *adulteress* as 'a woman who commits adultery'. This was decreed insensitive and in all recent English dictionaries it has been dutifully redefined. The redefinition of *adulterer* does not, however, really reflect the actual usage. This is not without problems for compilers of bilingual dictionaries. I have yet to see a quality bilingual dictionary whose authors would dare offer a feminine equivalent as an alternative translation of *adulterer*. See French *adultère* (m), German *Ehebrecher* (m), Russian *nevernyi muzcina*, Czech *cizoložník*, Spanish, Italian *adultero* (m). But I probably should keep quiet about it. They will no doubt deal with this offensive insensitivity sooner or later too.

It is clear that major artificial changes are being imposed on the English language not because there is a linguistic need for them, but rather in the name of warped sociopolitical justice. The linguistic justifications for the changes are embarrassingly simplistic and insubstantial, consisting only of blanket statements and hypotheses which can't be easily reconciled with the current state of linguistic science.

The argumentation is based on a sweeping Marxist premise that everything in society is a reflection of its power relations. White males hold the power in the West and their hegemony has somehow been encoded into language itself. This is allegedly typical in particular of Indo-European languages whose gender systems reflect and perpetuate the patriarchal supremacy of men over women. The changes which the radical feminists clamour for are thus allegedly nothing less than demands for justice, demands for redressing this iniquitous state of affairs.

The simplistic hypothesis that grammaticalized gender systems impose a view of the world that is inherently gendered and that gender markers attribute power to one group, i.e. men, while disempowering the other, i.e. women, might lead us to come to the conclusion that e.g. Iran should be a haven of women's rights since Persian, its official language, has no gender.

The only strictly linguistic explanatory tool which femlinguists use ad nauseam to prove their sociopolitical hypotheses is the concept of markedness.

Marking or markedness is an important concept in structural linguistics. It derives from the work of the Prague School; it was first used very successfully by the Russian linguist Nikolay Trubetzkoy in the 1930s in relation to phonology. Trubetzkoy observed that sounds can be described in terms of pairs of asymmetrical opposites with one of its members being characterized by the presence and the other by the absence of a mark. Thus e.g. the phoneme 'd' is characterized (marked) by the presence of voice as against 't' which is voiceless (i.e. unmarked by voice). The unmarked member ('t') is more basic—in some positions it can also function as a default for the marked member—e.g. 'd' in final position in German, Czech, Russian etc. where the opposition is neutralized.

Cf. German:

r **Rat** [raːt] advice, counsel and s **Rad** [raːt] wheel

Czech:

**plot** [plot] fence; **plod** [plot] fruit

The same phenomenon can be observed on all levels of language, e.g. in morphology, syntax and semantics, and its use has now been extended to many other disciplines, e.g. psychology and sociology. The marking is sometimes based on the presence of a particular form, e.g. '-ed' in *played* but the criterion can also be applied to formally unrelated words, e.g. *tall* : *short* (M), *old* : *young* (M). *Short* is marked by the absence of height, *young* by the absence of age(dness). The marked members do not usually occur in questions such as 'How... is he?' where the opposition is suspended or neutralized.

A similar principle operates in relation to the pairs *man* : *woman* and *he (his, him, himself)* : *she (her, herself)*.

The "masculine" members of the oppositions are unmarked, the feminine counterparts are marked.

Thus e.g. *man* is unmarked; it has two distinct meanings: $man^1$ the generic *man* (usually in the singular) = people, mankind, humanity (e.g. Prehistoric man)—in this sense it can include *women* as well as $man^2$ a male person. *Woman* is marked. In semantics $man^1$ is a superordinate of both $man^2$ and *woman* which are referred to as 'hyponyms' (semantically narrower terms than their superordinate) or 'co-hyponyms' of $man^1$.

$$MAN^1 \qquad \longrightarrow \text{SUPERORDINATE}$$
$$MAN^2 \qquad WOMAN \qquad \longrightarrow \text{CO-HYPONYMS}$$

The pronominal opposition behaves in a similar fashion. The pronoun *he* has two distinct meanings. In the sentence 'The modern traveller can go where he likes' it does not function as a masculine pronoun at all; it is a pronoun of common gender (= $he^1$). In 'He loves me' *he* refers back to a male person (= $he^2$). $He^1$ does not refer to male persons any more than e.g. the German *die Person* or the French *la personne* (= person) refer to female persons.

$$HE^1 \qquad \longrightarrow \text{SUPERORDINATE}$$
$$HE^2 \qquad SHE \qquad \longrightarrow \text{CO-HYPONYMS}$$

Femlinguists seized on the dichotomy of "marked" / "unmarked" presenting it as the most conclusive proof of the sexist nature of English. The English language itself has been indicted as a tool of women's oppression. It is claimed that it is biased and as a result it discriminates, alienates, marginalizes and offends women. The use of masculine pronouns and nouns as a default is said to effectively hide women from view, making them invisible. It is not quite clear how it works but the concept of "marking" seems to offer a foolproof framework for illustrating women's victimhood.

The unmarked nature of masculine linguistic segments is reputedly a proof that the patriarchal culture values men over women. Our language is seen as a reflection of these values.

Rather than examine the concepts objectively femlinguists cherry-pick those characteristics of the dichotomy which support their theory without actually analysing them and providing evidence. They point out that according to linguists it is typical of the unmarked member of any pair to be the most natural, the more basic, the logically prior, in short to be the norm. The marked member is then seen as nothing else than a deviation from the norm. Men are thus supposedly presented as the norm, women are ipso facto just a deviation from the norm. What more proof does one need to see that the shackles of marking have to be broken, i.e. that the English language has to be taken to a feminist veterinarian to be deconstructed, decontaminated and suitably reconstituted and esperantized until the femlinguistic commissars give it a clean bill of health. When it is properly neutered, everybody will be happy ever after because it won't be able to offend women any longer.

This is all complete nonsense. Being more basic does not necessarily mean being superior or more valuable. It can just as well mean being more primitive, less developed, less sophisticated etc. Multiplication and division are more basic than e.g. the integral calculus but the former can hardly be considered to be more valuable than the latter. The unmarked infinitive is the basic verbal form— talking in infinitives (like the speakers of pidgin languages) is, however, hardly superior to using fully formed sentences with finite verb forms marked with proper tense and aspect markings etc. Prime numbers are marked *vis-à-vis* the other numbers. Should we view them as less numerical than other numbers?
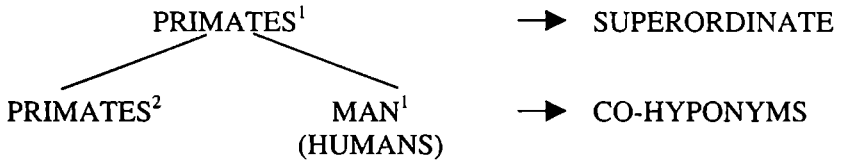
It would be nice if there were at least some consistency in the thinking of femlinguistic theorists. The patriarchal oppressors have been repeatedly attacked for basing their dominance on being more marked because of the presence of a phallus, while the less marked females were thereby seen as less valuable, indeed envious because of the absence of a phallus (Freud's penis envy). Lacan, who is much admired by feminists, even formulated a patriarchal law: 'Where there is power there must be a phallus, where there is no power there is no phallus'. The presence of a phallus of course means that in this dichotomy it's men who are marked while women are unmarked. Marked or unmarked, men are oppressors and that's the end of it. But feminists most definitely suffer from a condition that many writers call pronoun envy.

Irritated by the fact that *man[1]* is used to mean *human beings* femlinguists argue in effect that the feminine as the more "marked" gender is projected as the less human gender. This is a case of playground logic.

The pair *man* : *woman* (M) is analogous e.g. to the opposition *primates* : *humans* (M). The term *primates* has two clearly distinct senses:

> **primates[1]** an order of mammals with a large brain and complex hands and feet, including humans, apes and monkeys. (*Man is the only primate that uses language.*)
> **primates[2]** non-human primates. (*Primates are susceptible to both transmitting diseases to humans and contracting diseases from humans. Humans kill off primates.*)

$$\text{PRIMATES}^1 \qquad\qquad \longrightarrow \text{SUPERORDINATE}$$

PRIMATES[2]          MAN[1]          ⟶   CO-HYPONYMS
                       (HUMANS)

This second use is definitely much more common just like *man[2]* is more common than *man[1]*.

*Humans* is marked *vis-à-vis primates[1]*, which is unmarked—*humans* is also co-hyponymous with *primates[2]*.

If we were to paraphrase the gender-sensitive red alert about *man* given in Macmillan English Dictionary, mentioned earlier, for this pair, we might get the following:

> **Words that may cause offence: primate**
> **Primates** is sometimes used to refer to apes, monkeys as well as humans. However, many people think that this use suggests that humans are not included, that they are discriminated against, or that primates are more important than humans or that humans are subordinated to apes and monkeys. Humans are made invisible. To avoid causing offence, you can use words and expressions such as **large-brained mammals**.

Would it be sensible to moan about encoded 'apism' or 'primatism' or about 'apist oppression'? Should humans be worried about being presented as less ape-like than apes?
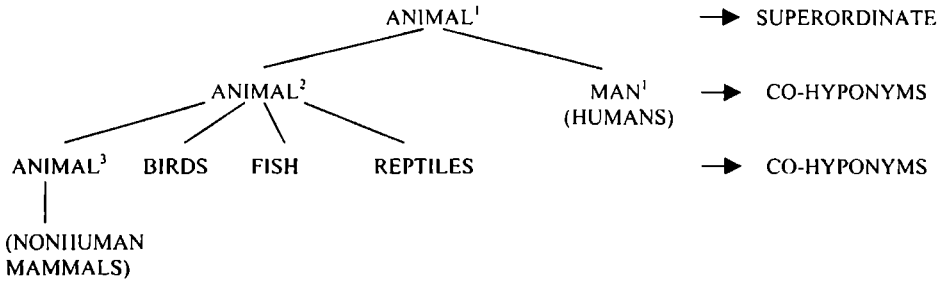
A similar relationship obtains between

**animal: man[1]** (M)

**animal<sup>1</sup>** any living creature including humans (*Man is the only animal that uses language*).
**animal<sup>2</sup>** any living creature that is not a plant or a human
**animal<sup>3</sup>** a creature that is not a bird, a fish, a reptile, a human being (= nonhuman mammals)

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                        ANIMAL¹                    ──▶  SUPERORDINATE

            ANIMAL²                  MAN¹          ──▶  CO-HYPONYMS
                                   (HUMANS)

  ANIMAL³  BIRDS   FISH   REPTILES                 ──▶  CO-HYPONYMS

  (NONHUMAN
  MAMMALS)
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A possible warning:

> **Words that may cause offence: animal**
> **Animal** is sometimes used to refer to all living creatures, including humans. However, many people think that this use suggests that humans are not included, that they are discriminated against or that animals are more important than humans or that humans are subordinated to animals or that humans are made invisible. To avoid causing offence, you can use words and expressions such as '**living beings**', '**self-propelled living creatures**' etc.

Is there a case for moaning about animal supremacy and about people being represented as less animal-like than animals or that animals are the norm and people a deviation from the norm or about animalism having been encoded into language whereby language became just a tool of animalistic oppression?
    Let's have a look at yet another example:

> **soldier : officer** (M)
> **soldier<sup>1</sup>** someone who is a member of an army regardless of rank (*Captain X is just a humble soldier*).
> **soldier<sup>2</sup>** a soldier who is not an officer (*two officers and five soldiers*)
> **officer** a soldier with a position of power

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              SOLDIER¹                 ──▶  SUPERORDINATE

   SOLDIER²              OFFICER        ──▶  CO-HYPONYMS
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A possible warning:

> **Words that may cause offence: soldier**
> **Soldier** is sometimes used to refer to military people in general, including both ordinary soldiers and officers. However, many officers think that this use suggests that officers are not included and are discriminated against, or that ordinary soldiers are more important than officers or that officers are subordinated to ordinary soldiers. Officers are made invisible. To avoid causing offence, you can use words and expressions such as **'military people'**, **'the military'** etc.

Wouldn't it be ridiculous to claim that the way language works suggests that officers are less soldierly than ordinary soldiers? Do officers worry about being less basic than the military unwashed or about being a deviation from the norm?

The campaign against the generic use of *he, him, his* is no less irrational. It has been basically declared that *he* cannot have more than one meaning, i.e. *male person*. It cannot function as a pronoun of common gender. But why? It is quite normal for words to have a multiplicity of meanings, which are absolutely unambiguous in appropriate contexts. Nobody has any trouble distinguishing e.g. between *kick someone's backside* and *kick smoking*. *He* is hardly the only multifunctional pronoun. Cf.:

> **'You'** is the pronoun of the second person singular, second person plural but it can also function as a pronoun of common gender meaning 'one, anyone, people in general' as in 'A tiny animal you can't even see. The same is true of **'they'** (*They say he is rich.*) and **'we'** (*We in the medical profession.*). **'It'** has at least 6 senses and nobody minds. It can refer to inanimate things, to people (*Who was it?*), groups of people, concepts, ideas, actions, general state of affairs (*How is it going?*) etc. Why can't then **'he'** have that well-established and well-recognized alternative meaning? Well, because it has been decreed sexist. End of discussion. Radical feminists declared a linguistic insurrection.

The whole femlinguistic project is based on the logical fallacy called 'begging the question', i.e. taking for granted that which remains to be proved. Something is so because we say it is so. This approach is combined with bullying. If anybody tries to doubt the validity of the radical feminists' claims, he is immediately vilified as a sexist and a misogynist. That means that he is not merely mistaken or wrong (if that is indeed the case) but that he is also morally evil because he is on the side of the oppressors.

It is totalitarian to tell people what they mean by what they say. It is despotic to declare that meaning is only in the response of the interpreter, not in the mind of the speaker (even if the speaker is to be sued or charged with a crime for the

interpreters having the response that they have). This sleight of hand combined with authoritarian speech codes and hate laws is bound to create a marshland of accusations and litigations and result in much injustice.

All totalitarians have tried to redefine words to support their ideological projects. Pronouns have however been outlawed only by the most deluded of them, in particular during the French revolution when the polite *vous* was outlawed in favour of the egalitarian *tu* in the belief that this will facilitate social change; more recently pronouns were also tampered with by Mussolini.

According to Paul V. Mankowski (1994), on the political level, one of the clearest examples has been given by the sociologist Peter Berger, who said:

> My mother was from Italy and my father was Austrian. As a child I spent a lot of time in Italy. This was in the 1930s, when Italy was of course under Mussolini. Sometime during that period, I forget which year it was, Mussolini made a speech in which he called for a reform of the Italian language. In modern Italian as in most Western languages, with the interesting exception of English there are two forms of address, depending on whether you are talking to an intimate or to a stranger. For example, *tu* and *usted* are used in Spanish. In modern Italian *tu* is the intimate form of address, *lei* is the formal address. *Lei* happens to be the third person [feminine singular]. I do not know the history of this, but it has been a pattern of modern Italian for, I would imagine, some two hundred years. No one paid any attention to this. Even as a child, I knew what one said in Italian. It meant nothing.
>
> But Mussolini made a speech in which he said that the use of *lei* is a sign of effeminacy, a degenerate way of speaking Italian. Since the purpose of the Fascist Revolution was to restore Roman virility to the Italian people, the good Fascist did not say *lei;* the good Fascist said *voi*—from the Latin *vos*—which is the second person plural. From that point on, everyone who used *lei* or *voi* was conscious of being engaged in a political act.
>
> Now, in terms of the empirical facts of the Italian language, what Mussolini said was nonsense. But the effect of that speech meant an awful lot, and it was intended to mean an awful lot. Because from that moment on, every time you said *lei* in Italy you were making an anti-Fascist gesture, consciously or unconsciously—and people made you conscious of it if you were unconscious. And every time you said *voi* you were making the linguistic equivalent of the Fascist salute.

My own memories from the 1950s, when the Czech Communists tried to introduce their idiom into our everyday life, are not all that different. Those who complied too readily with the prescribed usage were seen by many as toadies. Those who refused to comply risked getting into trouble.

The conscious avoidance of the generic masculine words is also a kind of genuflection to a very poorly justified form of political manipulation of the English language.

It has to be said, however, that the feminist language engineers are much more successful than were the Communists. Their propaganda is based on the winning combination of sensitizing women to their victimhood and brainwashing men into feeling guilty. The success of this campaign can be seen for example in numerous delusionary and narcissistic Internet discussion panels on the subject. These panels are frequented by hundreds of sob-sisters, each of whom has a horrific tale to tell about how sad, lonely and excluded she felt when—in her presence—someone used male words which were supposed to include her but they didn't or when she encountered these words in a text. They mostly freely admit that they hadn't been aware of the inappropriateness of such words until they were enlightened by feminism but...

I quote:

> These texts leave me feeling lonely and not included. However this is a result of my having become aware that these words which are "supposed" to include me do not really include me. Would I have been better off had feminism not made me aware of this, so that I could have gone on feeling included? NO! Because it required a considerable effort to pretend that I was a man in order to feel included, or to keep reminding myself as I read that I am meant to be included, even if that pretending was going on unconsciously in me.' (Franks 1995)

Pretend that she was a man? Pretend unconsciously? Was the lady hallucinating? And this is one of the more sensible contributions. Many others project their hallucinatory hurts even into the past or into the future, still others worry themselves to death about how their poor ancestresses in the prefeminist times must have suffered without even knowing it, when they were constantly bombarded with masculine pronouns and had to imagine and pretend unconsciously that they were included, etc. etc.

Poor modern and enlightened young women, they have been brainwashed out of their senses. If they are not careful, they will end up in a psychiatric hospital (or, as it used to be called insensitively "lunatic asylum") chanting compulsively 'included / excluded', 'excluded/ included', 'included' / 'excluded'.

### Footnote

By the way, I was eerily reminded of the banality of these concerns when reading about the Maryland sniper before he was (they were) apprehended. The sniper was always referred to as *he*—never as either *he or she* or *they*, or—for the sake of fairness—just *she*. The femlinguistic commissars tolerated this bla-

tant sexism in the media without a squeak of protest. Nor did I see a single in-
stance of *gunwoman* or even *gunperson* used in reports from the Moscow siege.


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