

Control the Language, Control the Masses

By Pieter Vree

Each word has its own particular emphasis, a specific definition, and a subtle yet distinct connotation. In communication, one can't be swapped for another without altering, in a small or great way, the meaning the concept being conveyed, or without at least casting it in a different light.

The close link between clarity in language and clarity of thought has not been lost power-seekers of all stripes. Love him or hate him, **Saul Alinsky** was spot on when he wrote, "He who controls the language controls the masses." History has proved him right on this score: The social acceptance of homosexuality, for example, was made possible in no small part by the substitution of the word *gay* for *homosexual* in popular discourse. The latter term simply sounds weird whereas the former sounds friendlier and connotes happiness. Likewise, the debate over abortion was decisively swayed when its advocates began calling themselves *pro-choice*. Anyone can be against abortion, but who could be against "choice"?

"The thought finds the words," the poet **Robert Frost** once wrote. But when words are controlled — suppressed, eliminated, replaced for others — the converse of Frost's dictum takes hold: The words help form the thought. So now we talk of abortion *rights* and marriage *equality*; these descriptors have helped form public opinion on these topics of high controversy. The controller of language controls the masses by redefining or, in some cases, limiting the very thoughts in their heads.

George Orwell explored this theme to great effect in his novel *1984*. The totalitarian government of Oceania, in order to rein in dissent and advance its peculiar form of socialism, pared down the English language, reducing it to an attenuated version of its former glory. This new form is simply called Newspeak.

"The whole aim of Newspeak," explains Syme, a government linguist, "is to narrow the range of thought. In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it." Thoughtcrime is any idea at variance with the creed of the ruling party — an idea that need not be acted upon or even given expression in order to be considered a crime. Control the speech, control the thought, and the masses are made malleable for Big Brother's purposes.

Across the Western world today we are

witnessing the whittling away of words — in various languages and by democratically elected governments — and there is every reason to believe that this is being done in order control the minds of the masses, by altering our understanding of long-established customs, particularly relating to marriage, family, and gender roles.

For instance, the draft law legalizing same-sex marriage that was approved last November by France's Council of Ministers contains a provision that removes the words *mother* and *father* from the civil code and replaces them with the gender-neutral *parent*. An ideology lurks behind this linguistic maneuvering, one the ruling socialist government makes no effort to conceal. Likewise, immediately following the legalization of same-sex marriage in Spain in 2005, the social-democratic government there ordered that words *mother* and *father* be replaced in the State Civil Registries Family Book with *progenitor A* and *progenitor B*.

The willful blurring of gender distinctions isn't limited to socialist governments. Here in the U.S., the Department of Education recently approved the replacement of the words *mother* and *father* on 2014-2015 federal student-loan applications with *parent 1* and *parent 2*. Education Secretary Arne Duncan explained that the use of the "inclusive form...reflects the diversity of American families" (www.ed.gov, Apr. 29). In other words, the parent 1/parent 2 formulation accounts for households that have two mothers or two fathers, and eliminates the distinction, at least in the eyes the education department, between same-sex households and traditional families with one mother and one father, which evidently have been deemed too exclusive.

Similar moves have been made by government agencies across the U.S. over the past several years. For example, in 2007 the California state senate approved the removal of the phrase *man and wife* from all official references to marriage and its replacement with *two persons*.

Most recently, and most comprehensively, Washington concluded its six-year effort to root out "gender bias" in its state laws by rewriting all its statutes using "**gender-neutral vocabulary**." As reported by Reuters (Apr. 22, 2013), this sweeping, almost Herculean, task was overseen by a 40-member

team in the state's Code Reviser's Office. After submitting a series of bills since 2007, each reportedly over hundreds of pages long, the Code Reviser's Office issued its final bill, a massive 475-page tome, which was signed into law by Governor Jay Inslee on April 22, 2013.

Among code reviser Kyle Thiessen's "achievements" is the substitution of the following words:

- *fisher* for *fisherman*
- *signal operator* for *signalman*
- *journey-level plumber* for *journeyman plumber*
- *handwriting* for *penmanship*
- *first-year student* for *freshman*

Clearly, one of the code reviser's chief goals was to neuter the inclusive masculine form in as many words as possible. Its very presence in such a plethora of words was, evidently, something the government of Washington thought so heinous that its purging warranted exhausting of an untold amount of resources and manpower.

Oops! Should that be *peoplepower*?

However one wishes to phrase it, the code revisions have been shrugged off as merely another instance of government waste masquerading as political correctness, an extravagant indulgence of an obsession over minutiae. The editors of *National Review* had this to say: "The notion that a little girl growing up in Puyallup will be deterred from a rewarding career in ichthyology because a law says 'fisherman' instead of 'fisher' is beyond far-fetched," they wrote (The Week, May 20).

Indeed. But there's more going on here than meet the eye; this enterprise isn't limited to placating the hysteria of radical feminists. It can't be much of a coincidence, after all, that same-sex marriage was legalized in Washington State by voter referendum this November — within months of the conclusion of the state's six-year effort to rewrite its laws in "gender-neutral vocabulary."

And Washington is emblematic of a larger and growing trend. California, Hawaii, Maryland, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Utah have already passed similar "gender-neutral constitutional mandates." The four eastern states in this list have legalized same-sex marriage. Meanwhile, California's marriage laws are currently under review by the U.S. Supreme Court; a bill to legalize same-sex marriage has been introduced in

the Hawaiian state senate; and a lawsuit was filed in Utah this March challenging the state's 2004 constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage.

An additional nine states are considering adopting gender-neutral revisions.

What we are witnessing in Washington and across the nation and world, as in Oceania, is the manipulation of language in the service of a broader socio-political agenda that is dependent on socio-psychological engineering. And the movement's cheerleaders aren't shy about saying so. "Words matter," Liz Watson, a senior adviser at the National Women's Law Center, said of Washington State's code revisions (Reuters, Apr. 22). "This is an important step in changing hearts and minds." In other words, the goal wasn't so much to change the language to reflect contemporary customs, but to customize the language to effect social change, by redirecting the affections (*heart*) and thoughts (*minds*) of the masses.

Ms. Watson eerily echoes O'Brien, a party apparatchik from Orwell's novel, who explains the objective of Oceania's linguistic program: "We convert the [resister], we capture his inner mind, we reshape him.... We bring him over to our side, not in appearance, but genuinely, heart and soul.... It is intolerable to us that an erroneous thought should exist anywhere in the world, however secret or powerless it may be." [210]

The large-scale "conversions" have been underway for some time now in our nation's colleges and universities, where administrators have been busy eradicating "thoughtcrime" for decades. For instance, in true Orwellian fashion, at the public California State University, Chico, the definition of sexual harassment can include, as reported in *The Weekly Standard* (June 10), the "reinforcement of sexist stereotypes through subtle, often unintentional means," and, noteworthy for our purposes, the "continual use of generic masculine terms...to refer to people of both sexes."

In Orwell's fictional world, and to an increasing extent in ours today, the words form the thoughts. And the words are being handed down to us from on high, by powers that wish to redirect our very thoughts.

Control the language, control the masses. Big Sister is listening to you.