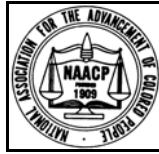


BAD WORDS, CHANGED WORDS AND NON-WORDS

It seems to me that when men learn other languages the first words they acquire are obscenities, curses and sexually oriented phrases. Most Americans who don't speak French know how to ask, in French, "Do you want to sleep with me tonight?" I couldn't master Hungarian in refugee camps after the war but I still know how to say, in Hungarian, "I love you, girl" and "Come sleep with me - I will give you chocolate" even though I was only 14, had no chocolate and didn't know any girls.



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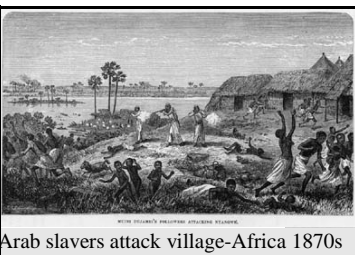
But this is not about obscenities - just about words that have always been bad, those that used to be good and are bad now and those that not said at all.

The bad words are the derogatory names used to label despised minorities: kike, spic, honky, guinea, gook, nigger and all the rest. They were always said with hate and derision. They were

screamed by mobs at pogroms and lynchings. They were an excuse for discrimination, persecution, oppression, genocide and an excuse to make "others" appear less than human.

A more recent phenomenon is the emergence of good in

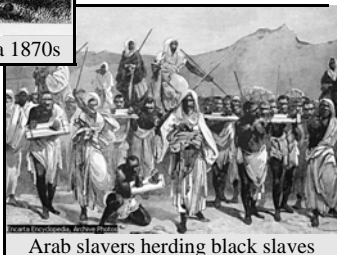
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Arab slavers attack village-Africa 1870s

words that were perfectly the past and are now unacceptable.

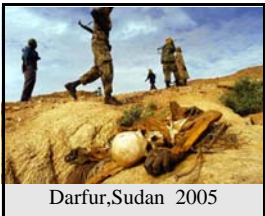
NAACP is one of America's oldest and most respected civil rights organizations. I am convinced that most



Arab slavers herding black slaves

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Americans do not know what the letters in NAACP stand for. This is because the organization doesn't want it known that one of the original words is no longer acceptable. NAACP is the National Association of Colored People and the word "colored" is now taboo. When the NAACP was founded, "colored" was used as a desirable substitute for "nigger" until it too became unacceptable and was replaced with other synonyms, first "Negro", then "black", and most recently with "African-American".



Darfur, Sudan 2005

Certainly, the "N" word has no place in polite discourse but I do not understand why African-American should be seen as better than "colored", "Negro" or "black".

There are other examples - "Asian" is preferable to "Oriental", "Hispanic" trumps

"Latino", "Chicano" or the currently seldom seen "South-American" or "Central-American" and "Native American" has replaced "Indian". And all of these are "Persons of Color", not heaven forbid, "Colored Persons".

Certain words have become acceptable and de rigueur substitutes as if their use would change the character and actions of the subjects. The replacement of "terrorist" by "militant" or "insurgent", "secretary" by "assistant" and "crippled" or "handicapped" by "impaired" or "challenged" are just a few obvious examples. So are the derogatory use of Israeli "settlements" instead of "towns" and

"cities", and the practice of referring to African nationalities and ethnicities as "tribes".

The most egregious examples, however, are the words that are avoided altogether. A perfect example is a recent Los Angeles Times story on Sudanese who had been abducted into slavery years ago, were liberated in a recent peace agreement and are now facing problems after returning to their native villages.

The story begins on the front page and continues inside the paper. It is over 3000 words long but, remarkably, the word "black" is not used even once when describing the plight of black Sudanese at the hands of the light-skinned Arabs.

The original capture and abduction of the blacks is referred to as "... the enslavement of southerners by northerners, who speak Arabic and identify themselves as Arabs."

Excuse me! If it walks like a duck, talks like a duck and thinks it's a duck - it is a duck! Why doesn't this apply to Arabs? And why not "black Southerners"?

Why not tell it like it is? The slaves are black. The slavers are Moslem Arabs.

The contemporary enslavement, mutilations, torture and rape are a continuation of the trade in human beings that has been dominated by Arab raiders and slavers for centuries. And by the way, the Arabic for "slave" and "black" is the same word: "Avid".

I do not believe that the Times' writers have consciously excluded the words "black" and "Arab" from the article. It was a conditioned reflex that habitually prevents the media from accusing a non-white group of racism and xenophobia. If the slavers were white South Africans, Rhodesians, Americans or Israelis, the accusations of racism would properly be the focus of the article. Why then are the media so circumspect when light-skinned Moslems enslave and murder black "infidels", and more recently, in Darfur, black Moslems?

Do the editors really believe that only whites can be racist, that persons of color cannot be guilty of racism and that, therefore, the Los Angeles riots 10 years ago cannot and should not be described as anti-Korean pogroms, that the Black Panthers cannot be referred to as a gang of extortionists and murderers, and that members of urban criminal gangs are not "gangsters", only "gang members"?

Tragically, I think they do.

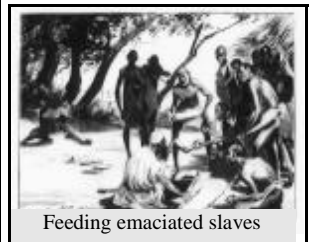
These illustrations are from a book by Hermann von Wissman, *My Second Journey through Equatorial Africa from the Congo to the Zambesi in the years 1886 and 1887*.

Translated from the German (London, 1891)

Illustration shows Arab raiders, "eager to obtain slaves and ivory," chasing and slaying members of African tribes. The author writes that "war, slave-robbery, famine, and pestilence had actually depopulate this densely populated territory". (pp.185-186)



Arab slavers attack village—1880s



Feeding emaciated slaves



Arabs march captured slaves