

# Preamble Of Research as Political Practice and of Changing Language as Political Intervention

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[M]ethods are not a way of opening a window on the world, but a way of interfering with it. They act, they mediate between an object and its representations.

(Mol 2002: 155)

Radical verbal hygiene wants to leave speakers with no unpoliticized linguistic corner into which they can retreat. Merely continuing to speak as they have always spoken will not protect them, for the bringing into existence of a different way of speaking makes the old one appear – whether in fact it is or not – as a wilfully conservative or reactionary choice. In this respect, the radicals are iconoclasts, destroying the ideal of a value-free language.

(Cameron 1995: 162)

This 2018 Language Special Issue of *Textus*, which focuses on *Aspects of Political Language in the Age of “Post-democracy” and Beyond*, collects the papers of seven Italian scholars on topics ranging from parliamentary to political discourse analysis, from referendum campaigns to political activism, from presidential Twitter posts to a political gaffe. While the Preface proper, authored by my co-editor Luke Blaxill, will present the papers in more detail, this Preamble aims to frame them as an explicit statement on academic research and publishing<sup>1</sup> as political practice. I will make reference to a

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<sup>1</sup> And public speech, though not the specific objective of this volume.



series of specific political events to support my argument, which I present in three main sections. In the first, I reflect on research as political practice, outlining and condensing scholars' existing views on this matter, before making my own contribution, namely: a linguistic analysis of the Lakoff vs Bailey debate on "environmental regulations/protections", whose former component (Lakoff's) well lends itself to be exploited as a model of scholarly linguistic action aimed at the constitution of public sense. In the second section, I emphasise the active role that academic research has had on politics in recent years (especially at the present moment) following the politicisation of academics and universities – partly through their own deliberate choices and actions, and partly as a reaction to their presentation by politicians and journalists as part of the liberal élite and intellectual aristocracy. I will pursue this aim by focusing on the issue of changing language as political intervention. In the last section I will pull the threads together by providing a comment on Mark Lilla's controversial *New York Times* op-ed "End of Identity Liberalism", which presents an opportunity to implicitly reflect on other recent events which are not so much political in the more restricted sense of the adjective, but are nonetheless still highly so, as they concern questions of language and representation which challenge who gets to decide what is "normal" and "good".

## 1. Of research as political practice

Discussing the "turn to practice" (Bacchi and Eveline 2010: 292ff) that seems to characterise both the present political state of things and reality at large, and the related arguments advanced by Mol that reality "does not *precede* the mundane practices in which we 'interact' with 'it', but is rather shaped *within* those practices"<sup>2</sup>, and that "(b)ecause practices are multiple, so too are the realities they produce"<sup>3</sup>, Bacchi (2012a: 142, emphasis in the original) contends that it is not actors, in the conventional sense, that are "the prime movers in this process" who "*consciously* engage in practices that

<sup>2</sup> Mol 1999: 75, emphasis in the original.

<sup>3</sup> Mol argues that "if reality is *done*, if it is historically, culturally and materially *located*, then it is also multiple. Realities have become multiple" (Mol 1999: 75, emphasis in the original).



shape their realities". Rather, it is "a proliferation of non-intentional practices" that shapes realities. To explain this, Bacchi refers to Mol (2002: 33) again, as well as to Law (2004: 159), who argue that the idea that conventional subject-actors are the originators of practices is encouraged by the widespread use of the term "performance" to refer to most communicative events, also within the scientific domain, dealing with and/or focusing on such practices. To prevent such misleading inferences, Mol suggests we use the term "enactment" instead. Enactment implies that "activities take place but leaves the actors vague":

Events are made to happen by several people and lots of things. Words participate too. Paperwork, rooms, buildings, the insurance system. An endless list of heterogeneous elements that can either be highlighted or left in the background. (Mol 2002: 25f)

Derived from the field of psychoanalysis, where it refers to the non-reflecting playing out of a mental scenario (Jacobs 1986), the term "enactment" is strictly linked to Freud's idea that one cannot change something by talking about it or reflecting on it. One can only work on what is made "immediate and manifest". "For when all is said and done, it is impossible to destroy anyone *in absentia* or in *effigie*", Freud argues (1912: 108 emphasis in the original), to clarify the need to make psychical conflicts present in the relationship with the analyst, so that they can be worked through.

While I do not wish to enter the heated experience vs language debate<sup>4</sup>, and have no reason to get out of the one and only track allowed in a volume that presents itself as a linguistic monographic issue<sup>5</sup>, I still feel the need to highlight, like Bacchi, that, in addition

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<sup>4</sup> For an updated summary of the controversy, see Johnson 2014.

<sup>5</sup> And yet, see Cameron's dismissal of the descriptive versus prescriptive binary which is traditionally looked at as the founding principle of linguistics (1995: 5f): "The linguist's (often extreme) distaste for prescriptivism is, I have been arguing, an ideologically non-neutral one dependent on value judgements that are 'highly resistant to rational examination'. But there is more to this antiprescriptive stance than moral indignation. Prescriptivism is also a negative term for linguists in a more technical sense. It is the disfavoured half of a binary opposition, 'descriptive/prescriptive'; and this binarism sets the parameters of linguistics as a discipline. The very first thing any student of linguistics learns is that 'linguistics is descriptive not prescriptive' – concerned, in the way of all science, with objective facts and not



to verbal (and nonverbal) actions of the clearly identified political actors that the authors of the papers in this special issue have analysed and discussed, we should not overlook, amongst the many events and factors which interact, affect and “interfere” in the production of political events, the crucial role played by research itself:

[...] *research is an active component in the shaping of different realities* and therefore is, at its core, *a political practice*. Hence, it becomes important *politically* to *contest* the view that research produces disinterested, objective contributions to solving clearly observable societal problems. [...] *research creates realities* – a position captured in the term ‘ontological politics’. (Bacchi 2012a: 142, emphasis in the original)

Clarifying how, despite being multiple, realities are generally experienced as singular, Bacchi refers to Mol (2002: vii–viii) once again to explain this phenomenon as the result of acts of coordination, or “interferences” (Mol 1999: 82): research is part of the coordinating activities, or interferences, identified by Mol as precisely what causes the generalised perception of reality as singular. As Bacchi argues, summarising Mol’s view, “knowledge is no longer treated primarily as referential, as a set of statements about reality, but as a practice that interferes with other practices to *create* realities” (Bacchi 2012a: 143, emphasis in the original).

The authors of the papers collected in this special issue discuss different “enactments” of politics – some carried out through more traditional channels, some others via social media – highlighting individual actors in some and institutional actors in others. They fit such enactments into narrative accounts which make them comprehensible and assessable for other scholars and readers in

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subjective value judgements. Prescriptivism thus represents the threatening Other, the forbidden; it is a spectre that haunts linguistics and a difference that defines linguistics. Again, this absolute binary distinction is something I prefer not to take for granted. I have already tried to show that anti-prescriptive discourse makes value judgements about language, just as prescriptive discourse does; but there are additional reasons to be sceptical of the claims of linguistics to be ‘descriptive not prescriptive’. Those claims have been criticized as incoherent by a number of linguists and philosophers. To put in a nutshell what is argued at length in their various critiques (e.g. Baker and Hacker 1984; Harris 1980, 1981; Taylor 1990), the standard notion of linguistic rules as ‘descriptive’ – crudely, ‘natural’ rather than normative – is either disingenuous or it is a category mistake”.



general (i.e. they translate and condense them<sup>6</sup>). Such discussions facilitate understanding of different aspects of the issues that the authors explore, and create different versions of those very issues, versions that the methodological tools employed by the authors/researchers (corpus analysis, discourse analysis, etc.) help to enact. In short, they “impose singularity on multiplicity and on contingency in necessarily political ways” (Bacchi 2012a: 148). While trying to offer a perspective that reaffirms multiplicity and contingency (for example, opening, where possible, several windows on the same political phenomenon), my coeditor and I also feel the need to explicitly point to the creative (constitutive) role of academic research and its instruments. We suggest that academic research must acknowledge, and assume, responsibility for the active construction of politics. Indeed, the very tools used to conduct research have an evident impact on politics, since they play a role in manufacturing opinion and share in the management (i.e. in governing), rather than just the description, of political reality.

On the one hand, this means paying attention to the external constraints on research that may lead it in a certain direction. As Bacchi warns: “there is a responsibility for researchers to reflect actively on the political implications of these constraints” and so a need to “scrutinise and critique the models of explanation built into designated research questions and priorities” (2012a: 148). Rowse has demonstrated this with evidence from research on censuses:

Tim Rowse (2009) offers censuses as an example of a method assemblage, an object with an implicit politics. As he explains, censuses are not ‘innocent’, neutral statistical registers. Rather, he (2009: 35) argues, they constitute a *political* technology that shapes *political possibilities*. This is because they rest on certain key (and contestable) assumptions and because they have specific (and contestable) political effects. Most obviously, he points out, a census ‘presupposes a territory (usually a nationstate)’. It also presupposes ‘a shared understanding of the key terms of the instrument – such as “household”, “income”, “employment”’. For Rowse, as for Mol, the setting up of what he calls this ‘infrastructure’ is a ‘political achievement’ or ‘interference’. It is not something natural. It is *one* way of organising political information. He shows that, within national censuses in Australia and New Zealand over a period of time, Indigenous peoples have been

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<sup>6</sup> See Harvey 1996.



created in specific ways – most recently as part of a population binary [...] This example illustrates that the realities our methods create have complex and unpredictable consequences that need to be negotiated with an eye to specific, on-the-ground implications. (Bacchi 2012a: 144)

On the other hand, the awareness that research plays a part in the construction of political reality points to the critical role played both by political scholars/discourse analysts and the very technology of the corpus collected (to which the CDA categories refer)<sup>7</sup> as well as, in some cases, by the specific features of popularised discourse analysis<sup>8</sup>, in the shaping of public opinion. Paraphrasing Osborne and Rose (1999: 383) we can say that corpora, CDA and, in some cases, popularisations of the latter etc. are probably “as important to twentieth century politics as the telescope was [to the ‘hard’ sciences] in the sixteenth”: public opinion is the product of “the particular procedures by which opinion is elicited” (Osborne and Rose 1999: 387). This is certainly not meant to charge research with partisanship or, paraphrasing Bacchi, “to suggest manipulation by some outside research ‘god’” (2012a: 145), but to stress its “both *retrospective* and *prospective* focus of attention” (Okulska and Cap 2010: 4, emphasis in the original). As Wodak argues, research *has* to aim to affect reality, therefore it *has* to aim for political engagement. Extending to it the aims Chilton and Wodak propose for CDA (if we *do* feel this is feasible and reasonable), its “emancipatory mission” is “to at least contribute to the betterment of society and liberation of individuals”<sup>9</sup> (Chilton and Wodak 2005: xv), which means renouncing the veneer of neutrality *tout court* and explicitly stating its subjectivity<sup>10</sup>:

This does not mean, however, that the research is necessarily one-sided, not “scientific” as such. But we all know – at least since the important discussion on subjectivity and objectivity in the social sciences (see Adorno

<sup>7</sup> On this point see Joseph 2006: 126ff.

<sup>8</sup> To understand what I mean by popularised discourse analysis, see articles and blog posts like, for example, Giaimo and Laskow 2016; Gordon 2016, which popularise corpus-driven political discourse analysis.

<sup>9</sup> Chilton actually reflects: “I want to pose the question whether CDA has any credible efficacy, on its own terms, as an instrument of social justice. And if not, or even if the answer to that question is just a bit in doubt, do we need it?” (2005b: 21)

<sup>10</sup> As Chilton argues, “acknowledging one’s interests is per se a form of scientific objectivity” (2005b: 21).



1969) – that no research is completely objective, i.e. the interests, values and decisions of the researcher always guide the analysis. It is important, therefore, to state these values explicitly, to analyse all aspects, to take into account multiple data and methods before drawing any conclusions or before starting to interpret or explain. A certain *distance from the subject under investigation* is necessary. (Wodak 1989: xiv, emphasis in the original)

Again with Bacchi, this focus on the role of research in the construction of political reality “is meant to make us think about things we often simply take for granted as obvious and as non-political” (2012a: 145): in the present instance, the stirring and/or construction of public opinion that academic research can overtly or covertly perform and the consequent effect this has on political practice.

A very obvious recent case in point is Lakoff’s encouragement to progressives to engage in “honest reframing”<sup>11</sup> (i.e. presenting news stories from the angle of ordinary people) and the tangible effect this has had on the debate about US environmental policy. The recent debate is an excellent example both of the fact that “neither the confidence with which a political belief is held nor its contemporary popularity is an indicator of its validity, though it is an indicator of its reality” (Edelman 2013: 11) and of the consideration (reported in Badie, Berg-Schlosser, Morlino 2011 referring to Fairclough and Wodak 1997) that “a particular policy will always come with categories and target groups and descriptions of deserving and undeserving people, thereby creating its own political reality”: “the description will shape not only our understanding of what it is but also the ways we respond to it” (p. 687).

In an article entitled “The Left is Rebranding Environmental Regulations as Environmental Protections” which appeared in the 12 May 2017 issue of the libertarian magazine *Reason*<sup>12</sup>, and which includes the still more explicit subtitle “Cloaking Government Control in the Language of Benevolence”, Ronald Bailey first complains about two specific *Washington Post* (28 March and 27

<sup>11</sup> Edelman would define it as “the evocation of meanings that legitimize favored courses of action and [...] reassure people so as to encourage them to be supportive” (1985: 10).

<sup>12</sup> The magazine is published by the American libertarian think tank Reason Foundation.



April) articles (and others from the *New York Times*, *Huffington Post* and *New Yorker*), then about the mainstream and activist media at large. He argues that they have opted for the expression “environmental protections” instead of the more predictable “environmental regulations” when talking about rules and requirements regarding the environment. Citing Aristotle and offering a definition of rhetoric for the layperson, Bailey implicitly accuses the press of trying to underhandedly convince ordinary people of the good intentions of those proposing and/or imposing such change of names by stirring emotions:

[...] which word has more emotional appeal, *regulation* or *protection*? Regulation denotes “a law, rule, or other order prescribed by authority, especially to regulate conduct.” Protection is defined as “the act of protecting or the state of being protected; preservation from injury or harm.” Regulation is coercive, perhaps punitive; protection is warm and fuzzy. (Bailey 2017: n.p., emphasis in the original)

Reflecting on this “apparent shift in terminology”, Bailey identifies George Lakoff as the originator of this supposedly “virtuous” circle:

Lakoff has spent years thinking about how political progressives could become more persuasive with the public. To achieve that, he wants progressives to engage in what he calls ‘honest reframing.’ ‘Reframing is telling the truth as we see it – telling it forcefully, straightforwardly, articulately, with moral conviction and without hesitation,’ he writes.

Lakoff believes that conservatives have been masterful at rhetoric, ah, framing. He cites the phrase ‘tax relief,’ which implies that taxes are an affliction and the politicians who favor it are heroes. People on the left, he argues, need to reframe progressive taxation as requiring ‘those who benefit most should pay their fair share.’ (Bailey 2017: n.p.)

Indeed, on 28 January 2017 Lakoff published a short Political Comment<sup>13</sup> entitled “The Public’s Viewpoint: Regulations are Protections” on the website he has run for over three years now. The paper strongly encouraged the readers to change their viewpoint:

Here is a typical example. Minority President Trump has said that he intends to get rid of 75% of government regulations. What is a ‘regulation’?

<sup>13</sup> The paper is assigned this category by Lakoff himself.



The term ‘regulation’ is framed from the viewpoint of corporations and other businesses. From their viewpoint, ‘regulations’ are limitations on their freedom to do whatever they want no matter who it harms. But from the public’s viewpoint, a regulation is a **protection** against harm done by unscrupulous corporations seeking to maximize profit at the cost of harm to the public.

Imagine our minority President saying out loud that he intends to get rid of 75% of public **protections**. Imagine the press reporting that. Imagine the NY Times, or even the USA Today headline: **Trump to Eliminate 75% of Public Protections**. Imagine the media listing, day after day, the **protections** to be eliminated and the harms to be faced by the public.

[...] Words have meanings with real effects.

Imagine reporters finding out and reporting all over America exactly what **protections** would be removed. Imagine Republican officials, and media in their districts (including social media) swamped with calls, letters, emails, and tweets from voters protesting the removal of such **protections**, day after day. That is only one example of shifting the frame – the word and the meaning of the word – to a public viewpoint. (Lakoff 2017a: n.p., emphasis in the original)

Lakoff’s was a deliberate attempt to intervene in the course of the evolution of language, an attempt at restricting the use of a possible collocation for the adjective “environmental” (“environmental regulations”) while widening the use of another possible collocation (“environmental protection”) and making it a definite part of its rule-of-use so as to both introduce a change in word meaning and “epistemically open the way for new discourse, i.e. to a complete semantic network as an epistemic horizon of understanding and realization of sense” (Busse 1993: 124). Lakoff’s deliberate linguistic intervention was crucial not so much from a linguistic perspective: “environmental” as a lexical expression is not so restricted in its distribution that it will appear with only one or two items in the language; it is a free (open) collocation, i.e. in the collocation spectrum which ranges from free combinations to collocations proper, it lies somewhere in between. Rather, it was major and far-reaching because it altered a presupposition, as Robin Lakoff points out:

[...] the introduction of a new phrase or word into the popular lexicon is world-changing because it alters our presuppositions: it identifies the new concept as both real and worthy of mention, assigns it to a frame, and so enables us to talk and think about it. (Lakoff, 2000: 90)



It displayed that George Lakoff had managed to detect a “dog whistle”, that is a code sent off to a particular audience that was supposed to pick up on a frequency that others would not hear (Zimmer 2014). In other words, as a linguist, he was able to identify the “invisible attributes” of the exnominated social group whose interests the “environmental regulations” were supposed to favour. As Robin Lakoff explains, referring to Barthes’s arguments about the bourgeoisie’s self-obliteration, or “exnomination” (Barthes [1957] 1972): “if you’re a member of the dominant group, your attributes are invisible, as your role in making things the way they are is not noticeable” (Lakoff 2000: 53). Basically, with his political comment George Lakoff had openly exposed this “dog whistle” to the public ear, thus both making it possible and contributing in first person to undo the potentially dangerous power it may have had for the “victims” of its effects. In addition to that, Lakoff had encoded his ideological difference into a different vocabulary choice (Fairclough 1989), “environmental protections”, which he was hoping to turn into a “dog whistle” for a different audience.

Focused as it was on environmental policy change, the new Discourse started on this occasion potentially had “effects which include the constitution of subjects and subjectivities; the imposition of limitations on what can be said and what can be thought; as well as the ‘lived’ effects, or the material effects on people’s lives” (Goodwin 2012: 29).

The impression power of Lakoff’s new Discourse appears stronger if we look at it in connection with the enormous contemporary impact of hundreds of Native Americans presenting themselves as “protectors” of Standing Rock<sup>14</sup> rather than “protesters”, an event which also contributed to generate those “vocabularies of resistance” that two academics, Michelle Moyd and Yuliya Komska, recognise as starting to germinate “among US-based progressives, isolated though each instance remains”, a much needed expression of dissent in contemporary political reality:

It’s not only fascism. Authoritarianism of any shade warps language in lasting ways. Newspeak spreads fast and furious. ‘Language is like air. You

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<sup>14</sup> The legal team for the ceremonial resistance camps at Standing Rock also designated themselves as Water Protector Legal Collective (WPLC).



realize how important it is only when it is messed up. Then it can kill you,' the Nobel laureate Herta Müller once cautioned, recalling communism.

Resistance, then, needs and breeds a language: this much was obvious to the German clear-cutters, decolonization activists the world over or Soviet-bloc dissidents. But it has yet to dawn on Donald Trump's opponents. [...] Whence the obliviousness to this need?

It's possible to chalk it up to America's inexperience with authoritarianism, although this should be to its credit. But the real reason is infrastructural. Compared to most other places, the country pays little heed to language. [...] Instead, the burden of thinking about the issue has fallen to immigrants and minorities. Language has been on their minds at work, at home and even abroad. [...] The way out now is to stop outsourcing and establish that language matters for all Americans, always, but especially in radical moments of transition in governance. [...] only broad 'linguistic disobedience' can move beyond the liberal-conservative, left-right dualities that have proved so damaging to American politics. In a famous 1946 essay, George Orwell recommended 'starting at the verbal end' to change the course of events. This can be a silver lining of the Trump years. Because finding a language of resistance doesn't take linguists or writers. It takes citizens who grasp, as Baldwin did, the importance of this foremost 'political instrument, means, and proof of power'. (Moyd and Komska 2017: n.p.)

The two communicative events (Lakoff's encouragement to assign a new name, "protections", to "environmental regulations" and the Standing Rock activists naming themselves "protectors") prompt "their users to set up mental ontologies, little interrelated virtual worlds" (Chilton 2005a: 21). One struggle links up with another struggle in a "rhizomatic" fashion (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1988: 9); one Discourse gets "infected" with another Discourse (Gee [1999] 2014: 55), they push the boundaries, meld together and widen what "counts" in the two. Since language also constructs the people who use it, Lakoff's invitation to undo the conservative rhetoric's habit of "inverted naming" (in the specific case, calling "rate increase" "regulations") and "take the Public's Viewpoint", instead, can also be read as an attempt at constructing a shared language on matters of common concern for the American people. The aim would be that of reinforcing the progressives' ingroup's feeling of belonging as well as fostering the use of a stronger rhetoric on their part. While norming the group's experiences and constructing the latter's assumptions, or schemas, i.e. defining what is "normal" for



them, Lakoff's proposed cultural model, or explanatory theory (the "storyline") connected to "protections", also seems to aim at shaping the same group's identity; at encouraging a minority to create "models for itself" (Deleuze [1990] 1995: 173). It is by now widely accepted that "(s)ince, when we use language, social goods and their distribution are always at stake, language is always 'political' in a deep sense"<sup>15</sup> (Gee [1999] 2014: 7). Lakoff's use of language is, not only in this context (think of the explicit objective to convince progressives to "frame" their political language expressed by Lakoff in 2004 and 2014<sup>16</sup>, for example), twice political, i.e. also political in the more restricted use of the adjective, which indicates something that exercises power in the governmental or public affairs, "a device for achieving political goals or ends". It is "deliberate and strategic" (Beauvais 2015: 1), as it clearly appears also in the Berkeley linguist's incitement to name adverse environmental events after the president in office in the blog post "Disaster Branding: The Importance of Naming", published on 3 June 2017:

[...] we need not feel powerless in the face of the Trump government. The citizens of the United States have a power beyond the ballot box: the power of naming, and of disaster branding. Acting together, we can give a brand name to all those major fires, storms, floods, and droughts perpetuated and caused by Mr. Trump's actions against the worldwide effort to end those disasters.

Name the major disasters after the person most responsible for perpetuating and causing new ones in the future. When sea level rise floods Florida, or when atmospheric heating produces massive evaporation over the Pacific that blows north and east resulting in huge floods throughout

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<sup>15</sup> Joseph reminds us that "the idea that language might be political in its very essence [...] is an idea with a venerable heritage" (2006: 1): "Thirty years ago one would have had a much harder time finding anyone prepared to take seriously the idea that language might be political in its very essence. Yet it is an idea with a venerable heritage: 'Hence it is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal ... Now, that man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animals is evident. Nature, as we often say, makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal whom she has endowed with the gift of speech'".

<sup>16</sup> The 2004 version of the book already advertised itself, on the cover, as "The essential guide for progressives". The 2014 updated version reads, on the cover, "The essential progressive guide for the issues that define our future: climate, inequality, immigration, health care, and more".



the Midwest, name them **Trump flood disasters**. When continued atmospheric heating systemically leads to massive fires in Texas, name them **Trump fire disasters**.

When the heating of the Gulf of Mexico above historic norms leads to extra strong hurricanes, name them **Trump hurricanes** and name their effects **Trump devastation**. When the systemic effects of unusual atmospheric heating lead to a drought, with water shortages and agricultural loss, name it a **Trump drought**.

We are not accustomed to using the power that millions of ordinary people have to name what is harming them and their planet and the futures of their children and grandchildren. But the time has come to use that power. Just say it.

If such Trump disaster branding becomes viral, it will illustrate the seriousness of the Trump's Administration's opposition to addressing the devastation caused by the heating of the earth's atmosphere.<sup>17</sup> (Lakoff 2017b: n.p., emphasis in the original)

As Cameron argues, "the meaning and use of words is a matter of contestation" (Cameron 1995: 165): Lakoff's is an iconoclastic<sup>18</sup> attempt at "disrupting the complacency with which dominant groups regard their own ways of using language as the only legitimate or intelligible ways of using it" through the use of "various, inventive and mostly confrontational" strategies:

Some strategies rest implicitly on a turning of the tables: 'we are going to use language as if we, not you, were the centre of the universe: if you don't like it, think how we feel after centuries of having it done to us.' (Cameron 1995: 162)

<sup>17</sup> Lakoff's is an attempt at acknowledging the active role of exnominated 'neutrals': "[...] the language war is being fought over just these issues: who must be named, who can choose whose names and what meanings. The demand that the exnominated 'neutrals' acknowledge their active role and political status goes along with the ability of formerly speechless groups to demand that their own language choices be accorded equal status with the conventional ones. The fact that the official namers are themselves no longer invisible, exnominated, or unnamed means that their linguistic activities are no longer normal or unmarked. Those activities can now be commented on and criticized. They no longer define our cultural frames unilaterally and uncontroversially. Competition will arise, the discourse become more heated and less open to 'reasonable' compromise (since reasonableness itself is no longer obviously definable)" (Lakoff 2000: 79).

<sup>18</sup> In the sense that, in its creative, re-writing attempt, it also destroys the ideal of a value-free language.



It is a “a triumphant assertion of agency” (Cameron 1995: 18), a clear example of linguistic action aimed at the constitution of the public’s sense to “determine which social and political events and facts are accepted and with which connotations as a part of social reality, which are ‘existent’ (in a certain sense of that term) and which are not” (Busse 1993: 121). Moreover, Lakoff’s use of language also appears as a form of resistance to the technologies of control, if we apply to it Newman’s description of such resistance as the “new collective politics based on the people and its radical potential”, i.e. a new way of uniting to overcome the society of control:

Resisting the technologies of control is not simply a matter of destroying its machinery, although this might be an important aspect of it. Nor is it a matter of enthusiastically embracing technology and using it for subversive purposes – although once again, we should not discount the radical implications of things like ‘hactivism’, ‘Internet activism’, independent media, blogging and so on. Rather, resistance is a matter of understanding the logic of control, and creating new forms of politics – new ways of being together – which transcend it. As Deleuze says: ‘But the machines don’t explain anything, you have to analyse the collective apparatuses of which the machines are just one component’ (Deleuze [1990] 1995: 175). Perhaps, then, to overcome the society of control, we need to construct a new collective apparatus – a new collective politics based on the people and its radical potential. (Newman 2009: 120)

Borrowing Cameron’s concept of “verbal hygiene”, we may describe Lakoff’s as a form of radical (in the sense of fostering extreme social and political change) verbal hygiene, whose assumptions are explicitly exposed to critical scrutiny:

[...] narrowly conceived ‘prescriptivism’ – elitist, conservative and purist – is only one kind of verbal hygiene among many, only one manifestation of the much more general impulse to regulate language, control it, make it ‘better’. This impulse takes innumerable forms, not all of which are conservative, authoritarian or (arguably) deplorable. [...] What unites them is their defiant refusal to ‘leave your language alone’ – a refusal that is grounded in a strong concern with *value*. (Cameron 1995: 9, emphasis in the original)

Reporting on the results of Lakoff’s “honest framing” campaign, Bailey comments, rather worryingly, that “(f)rom simply inspecting



recent coverage, I don't have to *imagine* that<sup>19</sup>. I can just open the paper and read it", then turning his criticism into an open accusation to "rhetoricians" of putting their hands in Americans' pockets (so, basically reframing, in turn, Lakoff's encouragement to "honest reframing") since the "protections" are threatening rather than enhancing "the public's well-being". "Rhetoricians" such as Lakoff have basically carried out, in Bailey's opinion, a process of "strategic manoeuvring" (i.e. of argumentative management, van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2000) and are, on that basis, accused of violating the "sincerity conditions" of the argumentation<sup>20</sup>, presenting a proposition "as an acceptable justification or refutation of a standpoint while the speaker or writer does not really believe that it constitutes an acceptable defence. [...] (T)he speaker or writer who performs the (complex) speech act of argumentation is guilty of a form of misleading that amounts to an attempt at manipulation"<sup>21</sup> (van Eemeren, 2005: x). Such "rhetoricians" as Lakoff are therefore clearly identified in Bailey's comment as enemies of – or at least harmful to – the American people, which must obviously be understood as a different group of citizens from the one to whom the cognitive linguist keeps addressing his political comments:

Interestingly, Lakoff also urges his readers to always take the Public's Viewpoint by asking themselves, "What would increase the public's

<sup>19</sup> "(R)eporters finding out and reporting all over America exactly what **protections** would be removed" (Lakoff 2017a: n.p., emphasis in the original).

<sup>20</sup> Searle's sincerity conditions are renamed as "responsibility conditions" by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984).

<sup>21</sup> However, also consider the argument that "(l)anguage use is subjective. Everything linguistically expressed is perspectivated. For this reason manipulation is, at least to a certain degree, inherent in 'language in use'" (Danler 2005: 46). As a matter of fact, as Rigotti argues, manipulative processes are very complex phenomena. In order to be studied effectively, they "require a multidisciplinary approach going far beyond the purely logical analysis characteristic of the traditional research on fallacies" (2005: 76). In a similar vein, Chilton (2005) discourages any definition of manipulation "in the abstract" and van Eemeren (2005) fosters the production of "a more detailed examination of the characteristics that are to be included in a definition of manipulation that is theoretically adequate" (2015: xi). Saussure sums up the issue emphasising the need for "much further elaboration and research" (2005: 140).



wellbeing?” I think that’s good advice. As it happens, regulations – sorry, *protections* – are making Americans \$4 trillion poorer than they would otherwise be. So keep an eye out for reframing, everyone! Otherwise, rhetoricians might get away with reframing those costly, job-killing environmental regulations as healthy, community-building environmental protections. (Bailey 2017: n.p., emphasis in the original)

Bailey’s words exhibit high levels of polarisation<sup>22</sup> and they clearly serve the critical linguistic function in politics of helping (or at least trying to) “maintain established inequalities in resources, status, and power” (Edelman 1985: 11). The “good reason” he offers (“*protections* – are making Americans \$4 trillion poorer than they would otherwise be.” They are “costly, job-killing”) is strategically effective because it is “a sensitive index to the problems, aspirations, and social situation of its audience” (Edelman 1985: 14) in so far as it reflects many people’s fears (while obviously also contributing to construct and/or re-enforce them), and this makes his argument cogent and appealing. However, it is evident that how good that reason is depends exactly upon its premise, but, as typical in politics, this is “controversial and susceptible of verification” (Edelman 1985: 13).

McHoul and Grace argue that since discourses play a part in reality production, they should be assessed in terms of their contribution in real struggles:

[...] discourses don’t merely represent the ‘real’, but if in fact they are part of its production, then which discourse is ‘best’ can’t be decided by comparing it with any real object... Instead discourses (forms of representation) might be tested in terms of how they actually intervene in real struggles. (1993: 35)

<sup>22</sup> The high level of polarisation is not surprising. First of all, as Danler reminds us, it is a constitutive feature of political language: “Polarization between good and evil, between friend and foe, or to put it less linguistically, black-and-white painting is an important strategy in political discourse. There is no room for grey areas or obvious ambiguities of any kind, for those might allow for critical and independent reflection on the listener’s part. After listening to a political speech the audience should have a clear, unequivocal picture of which ideas are worth fighting and suffering for and which must be categorically rejected and fought against” (Danler 2005: 52). Second, in recent decades partisan polarization (particularly among politicians) seems to have risen considerably in the United States (Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope [2005] 2010; McCarty, Poole, Gentzkow, Shapiro and Taddy [2016] 2017 and Rosenthal [2006] 2016).



As appears in the comment below, Lakoff's response to Bailey's worries is clearly enthusiastic in realising his "impulse at mastery over language" (Cameron 1995: 18) has brought about positive results: he seems to have become the temporary 'winner' of the "semantic struggle" (Dieckmann 1975; Heringer 1982) in question, which "has succeeded in establishing his own rule-of-use as the linguistic norm for his linguistic community" (Busse 1993: 123):

*Success!*

Normally I would never post a link to a story in Reason, a right-wing magazine. But I consider this particular story a tribute to the power of your voices and your actions.

The writer of this piece is upset that we are reframing regulations as protections. He's upset because he even sees regulations being framed as protections in the pages of the newspapers.

He attributes this to the work we have done to raise awareness among journalists, elected officials, and our fellow citizens that, from the Public viewpoint, regulations are protections. And most regulations come into existence to protect the public from harm by irresponsible or unscrupulous corporations.

Specifically, the author references an essay I posted in January – aptly titled "Regulations Are Protections." He does a great job of repeating all of our arguments in an effort to negate them. In other words, he's saying: Don't think of protections!

Please read the piece, then come back and leave a comment on Facebook or Twitter. I want to know what other ideas you think need reframing from the Public viewpoint. We have lots of important work to do!

Thank you for reading. (Lakoff 2017c: n.p.)

The victory can only be looked at as temporary because, as Fairclough argues, "successful enactment does not guarantee relatively successful inculcation: there is a stage short of inculcation at which people may acquiesce to new discourses without accepting them – they may mouth them rhetorically, for strategic and instrumental purposes" (2003: 26).

The whole Lakoff vs Bailey (or, more generally, Progressive vs Libertarian<sup>23</sup>) issue is a typical example of "semantic struggle", as hinted at above. In other words, Lakoff's and Bailey's are efforts to

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<sup>23</sup> More precisely Libertarian transhumanist. Bailey self-identifies as such, advocating the right to human enhancement, which is, in his opinion, best guaranteed by the free market (2005).



respectively opening and restricting “the possibilities of constituting symbolic meaning and sense within a range of socially accepted definitions of political and social reality” (Dietrich Busse 1993: 121). In short, they are attempts at dominating the linguistic possibilities within the discourse of politics (Edelman 1974), i.e. conflicts “about the rules of usage of linguistic signs” (Busse 1993: 123) which impose singularity on multiplicity and on contingency:

With regard to the important role of dominating interpretations of social reality there must be a strong interest for the bearers of political power to defend their interpretation against competing interpretations. This includes the interest to maintain the belief that there is only *one* reality and that this reality is the same as the official reality defined in the political discourse. (Busse 1993: 122, emphasis in the original)

Within the discussion undertaken in the present Preamble, Lakoff's, in particular, seems to be a good example of how academic research can impact political reality and is thus in itself a form of political practice.

## **2. Of changing language as political intervention**

In our exchanges via email during the preparation of this special issue, John E. Joseph and I reflected on similar semantic struggles, though of a different linguistic nature, involving the semantic flux of certain key terms. Some of these included the keywords associated with the papers collected in this volume: *populism*, *left-wing* and *right-wing*, *(post)democracy*, *neo-liberal* and *Europhile/sceptic/pragmatic* etc., rather than the development of new collocations. Starting from John's comment on our choice of “post-democracy” as the thematic title of the volume, that “recent events might be seen either as a resurgence of democracy in the face of the institutions that Colin Crouch identified as responsible for its decline, or alternatively as something else operating in the guise of democracy” (Joseph 2017), we discussed how, “as scholarly analysts we are used either to exploring and evaluating static situations using evolving terminology, or evolving situations using static terminology. But getting a grip on rapidly shifting situations when even our most basic definitions are themselves shifting -- that confounds us” (Joseph 2017).



In the remainder of this Preamble, I will focus – due to space constraints – on just a handful of the words John mentioned as particular examples of linguistic fluctuation. I do so with the awareness that my approach is impressionistic, benefiting from the advantages of “distant reading”<sup>24</sup> but without exploiting the crucial empirical assets of corpus linguistics. Indeed, the latter has now reached very sophisticated levels in the analysis of political language, which up until recently had not exploited such crucial additional dimensions as, for example, social and political variability (see the approach for semantic shifts detection between different viewpoints and ideology proposed in Azarbonyad, Dehghani, Beelen, Arkut, Marx and Kamps 2017, which takes into account political and social contexts). While recognising the subjective and unsystematic nature of my proposition, I feel this is by convention fitting for a Preamble, which the scholarly discourse community would expect, I suppose, to read as an expressionary statement explaining the volume’s underlying philosophy and purpose: in short, as a subjective account.

I must at the outset excuse myself for only focusing on American events. This is due, on the one hand, to space constraints, and on the other, to a better understanding of affairs in the USA on my part. However, my co-editor brings to my attention the fact that “many of these remarks could apply to the UK too in 2016 regarding the verbal hygiene and the assembly of a perceived hegemonic liberal discourse police, influenced by increasingly fashionable imported identity politics (something historically confined to the feminist movement in Britain where left wing politics has traditionally been mainly about class solidarity). The rise of UKIP culminating in the decision to exit the European Union in the referendum in 2016 were similarly widely interpreted as blows struck by outsiders against the supposedly self-constructed and policed ‘legitimate’ sphere of language and ideas which were the creation of the liberal metropolitan elite, amongst which university academics are undoubtedly counted” (Blaxill 2017). Indeed, the contributions of Bevitori, Gray, Ponton and Sampugnaro, Zuccato and Partington, and Zummo in this volume illustrate that many of my observations below also apply to the British political scene.

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<sup>24</sup> See Moretti 2013.



The evolution of word meaning and language change at large is a natural phenomenon, which reflects the historical and cultural evolution of discourse communities. However, the process of meaning evolution in political language is particularly fast at accommodating the ever-changing needs of political groups. This explains, for example, the tremendous instability of political labels. Duranti argues:

Political labels are ever in flux, as the liberals and progressives of one age were the conservatives and reactionaries of another. Individuals initially on the left of the political spectrum could subsequently occupy the right side even (or especially) if their political views remained the same. Because conservatism was so context dependent, an essentialist approach that renders it a static phenomenon with a fixed set of features will not do for any study that spans multiple decades and countries. (Duranti 2017: 380)

Much of this fluctuation and unpredictability may be due to deliberate political camouflage, a technique which has been traditionally used in the open conflicts of democracies, but has developed at a heightened pace in recent times:

The latter consists of concealing one political objective behind another that is broader, less partisan, and nobler than the first, and consequently more likely to win popular support. Every class, every social group that is actually fighting for its own special interests, claims to be fighting in some measure for the common interest – for the nation, for justice, for truth. It thus strengthens its position by sowing seeds of doubt among its opponents. This kind of camouflage presupposes an open political struggle, where power is acknowledged to be the prize at stake. (Duverger [1972] 1980: 205)

Indeed, it was a very similar situation that David Green described in *The American Interest* magazine five years ago – when the speed of change had already accelerated vertiginously –, discussing the political scene of the United States on the eve of the country's presidential election of 2012. Green labelled the specific set of circumstances “linguistic gridlock” (2012, n.p.).

In the same article, David Green also reflected on the common perception of political labels like “liberal”, “conservative”, “left” and “right” as being constitutively in constant flux, since the latter



are condensation symbols and as such naturally based on ambiguity and flexibility:

The first thing to recognize is that political labels like ‘liberal’ and ‘conservative’ are what social scientists call *condensation symbols*. They condense a lot of information into small packages. Such condensation includes not only assertions of fact but values and emotional cues as well. Condensation symbols are designed to evoke emotional responses and are thus central to what George Lakoff calls *framing*, or the organizing of political discourse to promote certain perspectives and discredit others.

Condensation symbols derive their evocative power not from any precision of meaning but rather from their ambiguity and flexibility. Far from having fixed definitions, political labels evolve over time. That is to say, there is no such thing as ‘the correct definition’ of words like liberal and conservative. There are only those definitions that particular individuals and groups have assigned to the labels at various times and places by condensing certain information into them. (Green 2012, n.p., emphasis in the original)

Paraphrasing what Robin Lakoff says about the use Republicans and Democrats do of such adjectives as “moderate” and “extremist”, we can say that political labels are constantly redefined and reframed, they lose and regain political meaning and/or pure-pragmatic meaning but “(b)ehavior and beliefs don’t change, and aren’t expected to; rather, the parties fight over who gets to choose the words to characterize themselves and the others” (2000: 67).

The expression “political correctness” seems to be experiencing a similar state of fluidity to the political labels abovementioned, with some equating it with identity politics<sup>25</sup> and others renaming such attention to language as the one commonly referred to using the label as “elitist”: overall, it “remains an effective and damaging strategy.” (Fairclough 2003: 27) (Also see the reference to a “politically-correct” rule of silence and the related meanings on the British political scene in Gray’s paper in this volume).

The more recent usage of the expression<sup>26</sup>, which “has proved

<sup>25</sup> Identity politics is commonly looked at as a way of bringing people together based on a shared aspect of their identity.

<sup>26</sup> As Allan and Burrige explain, “(t)he practice of labelling certain behaviours and certain attitudes as either correct or incorrect has been around for a long time. The phrase politically correct is not as recent as the media makes out. An



to be such a durable tactic, still widely resorted to in contemporary debate"<sup>27</sup> (Fairclough 2003: 24), has allegedly started in conservative sources<sup>28</sup>. Cameron (1995) raises the issue of right-wing critiques of political correctness as a form of policing thought and Robin Lakoff similarly argues that "(f)or over ten years it served as the weapon of choice to defang what was perceived, or represented, by the right as the threatening menace of the left"<sup>29</sup> (2000: 90), explaining the offense was perpetrated in fear of a power loss:

'Political correctness,' 'politically correct,' and the common abbreviation for both, 'p.c.,' cover a broad spectrum of new ways of using and seeing language and its products, all of which share one property: they are forms of language devised by and for, and to represent the worldview and experience of, groups formerly without the power to create language, make interpretations, or control meaning. Therein lies their terror and hatefulness to those who formerly possessed these rights unilaterally, who gave p.c. its current meaning and made it endemic in our conversation. (p. 92)

However, the expression appears to be quite volatile. In consideration of the contrasting views, it would probably be better to define "political correctness" as a floating signifier (Levi-Strauss 1950; Chandler 2001), i.e. as "a signifier with a vague, highly variable, unspecifiable or non-existent signified"<sup>30</sup> (Chandler 2001: 229). As

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early appearance is the 1793 US Supreme Court decision *Chisholm v. Georgia*" (2006: 91).

<sup>27</sup> About previous use, see Robin Lakoff 2000: 92.

<sup>28</sup> Scholars and journalists used the expression in this sense first commenting on Allan Bloom's 1987 *The Closing of the American Mind*, later on Roger Kimball's 1990 *Tenured Radicals*, then on Dinesh D'Souza's 1991 *Illiberal Education* and in the debate which followed. See, for example, Bernstein 1990; McFadden 1991; Berman 1992; Whitney and Wartella 1992; Schultz 1993; Wilson 1995; van Heteren 1997; Roberts 1997; Schwartz 1997; Smith 1999; Robinson 2000. Also see Hughes description of PC language as "a linguistic Lourdes, where evil and misfortune are dispelled by a dip in the waters of euphemism" (1993: 18). However, before the Nineties the expression was in use in the American New Left as "a kind of in-house joke" (Allan and Burridge 2006: 91). Also see Perry 1992 and Cameron 1995.

<sup>29</sup> See Allan and Burridge's argument that "the assault on PC-dom was largely media fed" (2006: 92).

<sup>30</sup> Allan and Burridge write that "its meaning seems to change every time it makes an appearance" (2006: 90).



Fairclough puts it, the apparent homogeneity of the expression is artificial and therefore constantly open to redefinition:

[...] the homogeneity of ‘PCers’ (those who are labelled ‘PC’) is no more than a constructed homogeneity produced through the labelling [...]. The objective on both sides is cultural change [...] as a trigger for broader social change. [...] Because changing culture is conceived on ‘both sides’ as partly a matter of changing language, the ‘PC’ controversy is partly, but only partly, a controversy over language. (2003: 17)

If not the initiator of the fight against political correctness, the US president in office, who equates “language changing to reflect an increasingly diverse society” (in his words, the liberals’ view of political correctness) to a “conspiracy” plotted to stop people like him from calling problems by their names, is famously the person who brought the debate to vitriolic excesses<sup>31</sup>:

Every demagogue needs an enemy. Trump’s was the ruling elite, and his charge was that they were not only failing to solve the greatest problems facing Americans, they were trying to stop anyone from even talking about those problems. ‘The special interests, the arrogant media, and the political insiders, don’t want me to talk about the crime that is happening in our country’, Trump said in one late September speech. ‘They want me to just go along with the same failed policies that have caused so much needless suffering’ [...].

Throughout an erratic campaign, Trump consistently blasted political correctness, blaming it for an extraordinary range of ills and using the phrase to deflect any and every criticism. (Weigel 2016, n.p.)

So much so that the expression “politically correct”, which is, like “environmental regulations”, a free collocation but certainly a stronger form, one leaning towards the end of collocations

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<sup>31</sup> Allan and Burridge argue that, starting in the mid-Nineties, the expression shifts from the political domain to indicate, more generally, a behaviour: “Nowadays, political correctness typically refers to behaviour, especially verbal behaviour, rather than to a political position. Moreover, the emphasis has now moved to civil gentility. This shift was already apparent in 1995, when journalist Jefferson Morley wrote, ‘the moral seriousness of politically correct people has become part of what is regarded as decorous behaviour’” (2006: 94). It would be interesting to trace back this resurgence of “political correctness” as a political expression.



proper, has since undergone a similar process of open exposition to the public eye<sup>32</sup> and has changed (it seems to have actually been reappropriated, as I argue further down) into a “dog whistle” for a different audience through the label “populist correctness”, which complements, if it does not substitute, the previous “conservative correctness”<sup>33</sup>, “Right-Wing Political Correctness” (RWPC)<sup>34</sup>, “Conservative Correctness” (CC), “Patriotic Correctness” (PC)<sup>35</sup>. The latter expressions have “Left-Wing Political Correctness” (LWPC) as their counterpart. The adjective “populist” would deserve separate treatment; due to space restraints, I will confine myself to referring the reader to Demata’s and Zummo’s papers in this volume. In a recent *The Guardian* article, Arwa Mahdawi explains how what she identifies as “populist correctness” clearly includes the “hegemonic”, “oppressive” system of thought policing that it presented itself as seeking to critically engage with. “Whining”, for example, – which is “perceived as something that is done by weaklings, the subordinate, and “victims,” another conservative anathema”, Robin Lakoff reminds us<sup>36</sup> (2000: 69), is blamed on the opponents (“snowflakes”) and redressed as “righteous indignation” when it applies to oneself:

As well as silencing opposing opinions by branding them elitist, populist correctness works to rebrand ideas, creating a new vocabulary for a new world order. The right prides itself on being straight-talking, on calling a spade a spade, but when it comes to calling a Nazi a Nazi or a racist a racist – well then, things are more vague. They are the ‘alt-right’, please. Use unacceptable terminology and they will get very angry indeed. (Mahdawi 2017, n.p.)

Such system of thought policing through language had come under explicit attack before, with Roy drawing up a list of words which

<sup>32</sup> Robin Lakoff informs us that “(t)he term picks up steam around 1990, peaks between 1991 and 1995, and appears to subside after that. It continues in heavy use but has gone from being the subject of articles, or appearing in their titles, to throwaway uses” (2000: 95).

<sup>33</sup> See Wilson 1995.

<sup>34</sup> See Krugman 2012.

<sup>35</sup> See Wilson 2008.

<sup>36</sup> “Nobody wants to be a pitiful, helpless ‘victim’ in a society that has always prized rugged individualism and entrepreneurial initiative”, Robin Lakoff adds (2000: 69).



make up the language of the “alt-right” in her view (2016) and Lakoff discussing the same words on the occasion of a BBC Radio 4 interview with Michael Rosen and Laura Wright (2017). Predictably, the “alt-right” was quick to produce a wave of counter-epithets (Petrow 2017a; 2017b). An all-encompassing glossary in the *New York Times* was the much needed, though again predictable result (Stack 2017).

As Allan and BurrIDGE explain, each side is trying to emphasise the other’s behaviour as unorthodox:

This is not a triumph of the offensive over the inoffensive, of dysphemism over euphemism, of impoliteness over politeness; in fact the tabooed, the offensive, the dysphemistic and the impolite only seem more powerful forces because each of them identifies the marked behaviour. (Allan and BurrIDGE 2006: 2)

The situation previously described as a “gridlock” (Green 2012) seems to have evolved into the birth of two separate ideological countries, as Kurtzleben argues, reporting the words of George Saunders, on commenting on yet another case of verbal fluctuation, one that would certainly require separate treatment: the shifting definition of “fake” (see Napolitano and Aiezza’s paper in this volume).

The shifting definition of fake news may be a sign of a broader gap between right and left. In July, author George Saunders painted a picture of that gap:

‘Intellectually and emotionally weakened by years of steadily degraded public discourse, we are now two separate ideological countries, LeftLand and RightLand, speaking different languages, the lines between us down. Not only do our two subcountries reason differently; they draw upon non-intersecting data sets and access entirely different mythological systems.’

If it is indeed true that the term fake news has come to mean something different for a conservative than a liberal, it could be one more sign that the LeftLandian and RightLandian languages – and the people who speak them – have moved one more inch apart, into increasingly different realities. (Kurtzleben 2017, n.p.)

Considering the tones of the debate, it may not be too surprising to see that Trump’s fight against political correctness is retrospectively



identified by some as the secret to his victory (“an essential catalyzing ingredient”, *“political correctness elected Donald Trump”*, Brahm 2017: 327, emphasis in the original):

I think it stands to reason that candidate Trump, as we knew him, was inconceivable except as a reaction to p.c. Was it not that brilliant, inspired grand gesture – the consistent, intuitive, reflexive disregard for the pretentious mores so dear to the college-educated middle classes – that defined his style of communication, if nothing else? And surely in the age of Cable News, Twitter, and BuzzFeed, a candidate’s style, or appearance, *is* his essence. (Brahm 2017: 327, emphasis in the original)

However, it is maybe interesting to point out that Trump seems to look at political correctness in two different ways. On the one hand, he emphasises the “thought policing” mechanism which prevents people like him from calling things the names they want to<sup>37</sup>, which often amounts to sanctioning against using the politically incorrect language they use in private in public<sup>38</sup>. Or, from making jokes, since joking is, self-evidently, a politically sensitive area<sup>39</sup>. Indeed, Trump’s seemingly successful import of politically incorrect language associated with the informal private sphere, into the formal public sphere<sup>40</sup>, may have helped gain the favour of many ordinary voters (see also Demata in this volume). The non-acceptance of euphemisms, combined with New Yorkers’ habit of letting other

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, the Twitter comment “Time to end political correctness & secure our homeland!” after being blamed for his “got schlanged” sexist remark about Hillary Clinton’s 2008 primary run. However, also see Moyer’s point that “Trump reached for what he thought was a Yinglish word for ‘beat’ and inadvertently coined an obscene one” (2005).

<sup>38</sup> See West’s counterattack on commenting on Trump’s interview with the Associated Press on his first 100 days in office (2017).

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, Davies, who argues that censors “will deny that they are exercising the arbitrary power for are they not doing so in the name of equality?” (2004, 20). In jokes issues, British politicians seem to be similarly under attack by the press (see, for example, Moore 2017 and, particularly, Emily Thornberry’s resignation from the Labour party’s front bench due to a tweet about the Rochester and Strood by-election). Making jokes also implies taking jokes and Trump is often the target of many media jokes, the latest probably being Julia Louis-Dreyfus’s song “Imagine if your president was not beloved by Nazis?” at the 2017 Emmy Awards.

<sup>40</sup> Probably preceded in this by former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.



people finish their sentences for them may have given many the impression he was engaged in an intimate conversation with like-minded people (see Golshan 2017).

On the other hand, the expression “political correctness” describes, in Trump’s speeches, a political situation that seems to share the condition of decline of social responsibility that Kristeva referred to as the “power vacuum” (see, for example, Trump’s accusation that “(t)hey [Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton] have put political correctness above common sense, above your safety, and above all else”) and ascribed to postindustrial and post-Communist democracies: “the absence of plans, disorder, all the things we speak of and that political parties show the effects of, that we as citizens show the effects of” (Kristeva [1996] 2000: 4).

It is interesting to notice that, faced with (or in response to) a reality in which both Foucault ([1975] 1977) and Kristeva ([1996] 2000), had seen power as distributed via normalization and internal surveillance, Trump’s campaign seems to have relied dramatically on external surveillance and punishment. Indeed Trump’s campaign and presidency appears to have substituted the enemy that does not present itself in definite forms with explicit enemies (Farand 2017; Herndon and McGrane 2017; Smith 2017).

### 3. The way forward?

The two forms of political correctness which seem to have come under attack in Trump’s campaign seem to mirror the two commonly identified sides of the expression “political correctness”, in which the linguistic and the political intersect, as Hughes sums up in his 2009 volume, *Political Correctness. A History of Semantics and Culture*:

[...] linguistically it is a form of *euphemism* rooted in various social agendas, while politically it can be seen as a new form of *orthodoxy*, a term which has its roots in ethics and religion. Indeed, the *Random House Webster’s College Dictionary* (1991) defined *political correctness* as ‘marked by or adhering to a typically progressive orthodoxy on issues involving especially race, gender, sexual affinity, or ecology.’ (Hughes 2009: 24, emphasis in the original)

In this light, language is explicitly recognised as the arena where different political views and diverse social conflicts find symbolic



expression, and the Clinton vs Trump confrontation essentially becomes a war of words<sup>41</sup>, with Trump's style-essence making a strong impact on a large number of electors, who felt excluded in Hillary Clinton's rhetoric of diversity. Not surprisingly, several commentators judged the latter choice "a strategic mistake"<sup>42</sup>:

Trump voters, in sum, were people tired of hearing that everyone else was disadvantaged, except them. And [...] they were likewise tired of being scapegoated, demonized as the source of everyone else's disadvantage. (Brahm 2017: 327)

Intervening in the conversation after the publication of Mark Lilla's 18 November 2016 *New York Times* op-ed "End of Identity Liberalism", which caused many opposing reactions, Brahm revives the idea that this war of words is deeply rooted in the American academia. Indeed, he sees the result of the presidential campaign as the natural offspring of "a world largely given over to its sadistic impulses, the world of academia as we have known it for the past three decades" (Brahm 2017: 330). He contends:

Decades of mind-numbing political correctness on the academic far-left robbed the humanities and social sciences of their legitimacy, generated the alt-right as its very own dialectical alter-ego, and provided an essential catalyzing ingredient in Donald Trump's electoral victory – understood as the clearest expression of a weary nation's revulsion at p.c.'s intolerable moralizing. The illiberal, antisemitic, white nationalist alt-right and the illiberal, antisemitic, anti-American alt-left mirror one another perfectly! Faced with competing totalitarianisms at both extremes, the liberal center should defend itself first of all by forthrightly reclaiming the university as a space for education and not indoctrination. Yet the politically correct professoriate do not want to hear this – and their over-the-top hostile overreactions to the news that they are to blame for what they hate most prove that it's so. Time to repeal and replace political correctness. (p. 326)

<sup>41</sup> Paraphrasing Cameron, we may say that "passionate political argument has come to be conducted, on all sides, by way of disputes about the proper use of words" (Cameron 1995: 119).

<sup>42</sup> "If you are going to mention groups in America, you had better mention all of them. If you don't, those left out will notice and feel excluded" (Lilla 2016: n.p.).



If we agree to fix (for a mere scholarly need to apprehend and share the subtleties of one specific situated meaning) this floating signifier on the view of “political correctness” as a sort of coded language, the “dog whistle” of far-left academics<sup>43</sup> (writing in 1995 Cameron

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<sup>43</sup> Also see Kimball 1990. On University premises, a third side of p.c. emerged: that of curriculum restrictions on academic freedom. In a 1990 *New York Times* article, Bernstein describes the serious allegations made on campus against non p.c. opposers: “Professor Gribben, who opposed the curriculum change at the University of Texas, has been denounced in the campus newspaper as a right-winger; a rally was held on campus to harangue him. ‘I just wanted to question a few features and my world fell apart,’ he said. [...] there were worries expressed in papers and conversations that p.c.-ness has become a rigid concept, a new orthodoxy that does not allow for sufficient complexity in scholarship or even much clarity in thinking. One speaker, Michel Chaouli, a graduate student in comparative literature at Berkeley, said that ‘politically correct discourse is a kind of fundamentalism,’ one that gives rise to ‘pre-fab opinions.’ Among its features, he said, are ‘tenacity, sanctimoniousness, huffiness, a stubborn lack of a sense of humor.’ Mr. Chaouli’s paper was probably the most frontal assault on p.c.-ness at the conference, most of whose participants were rather gingerly (sic) in their criticisms, allowing that, yes, some p.c. ideas needed refinement, but the overall thrust of the p.c. program remained, as it were, correct. There was no challenge to such ideas as unequivocal support for affirmative action or the legitimacy of gay and lesbian studies. When Mr. Chaouli referred to the belief in an unsympathetic power structure dominating American life as ‘a fantasm,’ he was immediately reprimanded and accused of being a ‘right-winger’ by a member of the audience. Mr. Chaouli’s critic said his ideas flew in the face of what everybody knew to be true, namely that American society was, of course, hegemonic. Lind equates p.c. with America ‘becoming a country with an official state ideology’: “In conclusion, America today is in the throes of the greatest and direst transformation in its history. We are becoming an ideological state, a country with an official state ideology enforced by the power of the state. In ‘hate crimes’ we now have people serving jail sentences for political thoughts. And the Congress is now moving to expand that category ever further. Affirmative action is part of it. The terror against anyone who dissents from Political Correctness on campus is part of it. It’s exactly what we have seen happen in Russia, in Germany, in Italy, in China, and now it’s coming here. And we don’t recognize it because we call it Political Correctness and laugh it off. My message today is that it’s not funny, it’s here, it’s growing and it will eventually destroy, as it seeks to destroy, everything that we have ever defined as our freedom and our culture” (2000: n.p.). Finally, see Hollway and Jefferson’s discussion on the politics of sexual harassment on university campuses in the UK and the US (1996), Klatt’s account of his personal experience as a victim of p.c. in Canada (1997), but also Fish’s argument that the rigidity of p.c.-ness may be a necessary evil: “The assumption, in other words, is that discrimination – the favoring of some groups over others – is a deviant practice and that the appropriate



identifies “advocates of so-called ‘politically correct’ language” as “the radical fringe” and opposes them to “the ultra-conservative (e.g. US English)”, p. 24) and Hillary Clinton’s (among others) identity politics as the vested shape it can take<sup>44</sup>, it would seem like the expression has been exposed and appropriated twice. The right has allegedly used it first<sup>45</sup>, to mock and then “correct” the left’s

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response to it is simply to eliminate it. I challenge that assumption by observing that whenever a policy of ‘fairness’ or ‘merit’ is put into place, those values will have been defined in ways that could be challenged by parties whose concerns were not uppermost in the minds of the policy’s drafters. A policy that was fair to everyone could be devised only if everyone’s interests and perspectives were the same; but if everyone were the same – believed the same things, envisioned the same future as a realization of the same hopes brought to fruition by the same agreed-upon means – there would be no problem because there would be no politics (politics after all is unthinkable apart from difference and faction), and the question of fairness would never arise. It arises because of the irreducible differences that make it impossible for anyone ever to think up, never mind implement, a policy that is universally equitable. Discrimination is not a deviant practice; it is the practice everyone is always and already engaged in. And when its particular effects are overturned by a plan devised specifically to remove them, that same plan will inevitably produce new discriminatory effects felt by persons whose interests are, for the moment, being slighted. You can only fight discrimination, practices that disadvantage some groups, with discrimination – practices that disadvantage some other groups. This does not mean that all discriminatory practices are equal; all it means is that one cannot condemn a practice just for being discriminatory (since there are none that are not)” (1994: 11).

<sup>44</sup> However, see Holmes’ consideration that “(m)uch of Donald Trump’s campaign was an exercise in identity politics” (2017): “When Republicans pander to evangelicals or gun-owners, that’s identity politics too. Much of Donald Trump’s campaign was an exercise in identity politics. He attacked minority groups – Muslim Americans, Hispanic Americans, LGBT Americans, African-Americans – for the precise purpose of winning votes from the minority group he identifies with: Aggrieved white Americans”.

<sup>45</sup> Again, I am focusing on the more recent usage of the expression, which started in the Nineties. Before that time, “political correctness” was used by the Left as “a kind of in-house joke”: “Despite a few early appearances, the expression did not really take off until the emergence of the American New Left in the later 1960s. English translations of Maoist literature seem to have been the main influence. It is supposed that the description politically correct became a kind of in-house joke, to mock extreme toers of the party line: someone PC was a selfrighteous ideological bigot. It was intended as a kind of self-mocking irony in Is that fruit salad politically correct, or has the fruit been picked by exploited non-unionized labour? But the term was soon co-opted by conservatives, who stripped it of its ironical element and turned the meaning on its head, thereby creating a sneer (or snarl) phrase to



concern for diversity. In this line, the war on political correctness has sought to efface the impetus of diversity politics, which manifested itself in a form of creative – radical – verbal hygiene whose aim was liberation from oppressive discourses, claiming this was a form of micropower and normative coercion.

A 2001 article on Kristeva's alleged withdrawal from "group identity" comes to my mind, for some reason, though I must confess I do not know enough of the issue to be sure I am making the right connection here. This is may only be a personal way of filling the gaps of the *macchina pigra* (Eco [1994] 2004):

[...] it was the fate of Ms. Kristeva and this three unlikely subversives [Lacan, Foucault and Derrida] to be accused of planting the seeds of political correctness in American colleges long before the concept was re-exported back to France to be mocked as a typically American aberration.

Now, however, at age 60, Ms. Kristeva is bringing a new twist to this bizarre trans-Atlantic to-and-fro. She feels she has been misunderstood in the United States by the very circles that have embraced her as an icon of feminism and multiculturalism. 'Many of our American colleagues have taken what we proposed and have simplified it, caricatured it and made it politically correct,' she said. 'I can no longer recognize myself.'

[...]

Today, [...] Ms. Kristeva believes that the group identity adopted by some feminist, gay and ethnic leaders as a pedestal for their revindications is outdated and even, in her word, 'totalitarian,' that freedom of the individual should take precedence over communitarianism, that political assertion of sexual, ethnic and religious identities eventually erodes democracy. (Riding 2001: n.p.)

If we decide to entrust the right with the property of the expression in its contemporary shape, then it would seem that, more recently, left-wing journalism has reappropriated it through the substitution of a handful of different collocates for "political" in order to expose the right's afocited effort to "rebrand ideas, creating a new vocabulary for a new world order" (Mahdawi 2017: n.p.). It seems as if the political reality that the expression "political correctness" originally described (the signified, political correctness as a form

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rubbish left-wing activities such as affirmative action" (Allan and Burrige 2006: 91f).



of public action focused on social equity<sup>46</sup>) has been subjected to a process of erosion – or attempted dissolution (caused by the attacks of being “over-benevolent” and/or “corrective”) – while its signifier has been reappropriated to describe the changed political reality, where action is valued over form and the greatness of America over social equality.

Resonating with Rorty’s ‘prophecy’<sup>47</sup> in his opinion article, Lilla sounds certain that it was indeed the liberals’ obsession with diversity<sup>48</sup> that “encouraged white, rural, religious Americans to think of themselves as a disadvantaged group whose identity is being threatened or ignored”<sup>49</sup>. Not difference but commonality, he suggests, would recapture “Americans’ imaginations about our shared destiny” (Lilla 2016: n.p.).

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<sup>46</sup> As Allan and Burrige argue, “(b)y drawing attention to form, it forces us to sit up and take notice” (2006: 97).

<sup>47</sup> “Members of labor unions, and unorganized unskilled workers, will sooner or later realize that their government is not even trying to prevent wages from sinking or to prevent jobs from being exported. Around the same time, they will realize that suburban white-collar workers – themselves desperately afraid of being downsized – are not going to let themselves be taxed to provide social benefits for anyone else. At that point, something will crack. The nonsuburban electorate will decide that the system has failed and start looking for a strongman to vote for – someone willing to assure them that, once he is elected, the smug bureaucrats, tricky lawyers, overpaid bond salesmen, and postmodernist professors will no longer be calling the shots” (1998: 81).

<sup>48</sup> Like identity politics, diversity is one of the shapes that “political correctness” can take and actually, with multiculturalism, it is seen as one of the targets of identity politics: “Diversity within a nation destroys unity and leads to civil wars. Immigration, a benefit during the youth of a nation, can act as a disease in its mature state. Too much internal diversity in large nations has led to violence and disintegration. We are now in the process of destabilizing our own country. The magic words of destabilizers are ‘diversity’ and ‘multiculturalism’” (Hardin in Hunter 2017: n.p.). However, identity politics and diversity can be viewed as opposing realities: see Reeves 2008 and Florentine’s take on the issue.

<sup>49</sup> Schrecker explains “the remarkable turn to Trump among the left-behind” with the lack of a credible narrative: “In the United States, absent a competing and credible narrative that challenged the role of corporate capital in spreading economic insecurity and inequality, the remarkable turn to Trump among the left-behind – those whose health status is most clearly endangered by ‘neoliberal epidemics,’ as *The Economist* pointed out after the election – is lamentable but hardly surprising” (2017: 673).



Lilla calls for a wider engagement of research with the university rather than with identity issues and, of course, this may simply appear as another voice in the debate on political correctness as “a debate about how democracies made up of diverse populations subscribing to a variety of beliefs and customs are to preserve a common culture” expressing the fear that “society is disintegrating” (Cameron 1995: 160)<sup>50</sup>. If not (and Lilla’s account has indeed been attacked as such) as a proper grand-narrative, with a precise political agenda – “bringing white supremacy out from the shadows and visibly into the mainstream of American politics, even while concealing his own allegiance to it” (Brahm 2017: 328).

And yet, I think Lilla’s voice cannot be ignored: it seems to me an invitation to move the politics of language and representation from centrestage but not necessarily to return it to the margins. While providing a negative assessment of recent events, Lilla does not seem to be contending that renaming practices and the reality behind them are futile. Rather, he just seems to be encouraging academics to place such practices into perspective and to emphasise the intelligibility end slightly more than the identity end of the language continuum (Crystal [1997] 2003: 22) than they have

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<sup>50</sup> As Cameron argues: “[...] (t)he possession of a ‘common language’ is felt to be one of the most salient markers of a ‘common culture’ (more than this, perhaps, it is thought to have the power to bring such a culture into existence), while the lack of such a language is felt, conversely, to be a sign of fragmentation which may also encourage resistance among alienated minority groups using their own languages as a rallying point. So-called ‘politically correct’ language may not be as overt a threat to the project of cultural unity as the existence of militant minority language groups, but [...] it dramatizes the existence of viewpoints that appear not just different but incommensurable. Furthermore, whereas language has traditionally been the privileged symbol of one kind of social identity – ethnicity – the ‘PC’ phenomenon makes it symbolic of a bewildering range of affiliations: gender, race, sexual preference, region, subculture, generation, (dis)ability, appearance, and so on. For those whose ideal is a common language in a common culture, this is an unsettling development. Obviously, it alarms conservatives, whose recipe for cultural unity is the assimilation of all groups to a traditional and usually elite norm. But it also disturbs liberals, who espouse a philosophy of tolerance and cultural pluralism. Liberals make much of the idea that differing opinions can be exchanged and debated in a public sphere of free and rational discourse, to produce, if not consensus, then at least a civil compromise. Central to this liberal ideal is the notion that people speaking from widely divergent standpoints can nevertheless find a common language in which to talk to one another” (1995: 160ff).



in recent years. Which of course, in its most extreme form, may depend “on everyone accepting definitions which are presented as neutral and universal, but which covertly represent the particular standpoint of straight white men from the most privileged social classes” (Cameron 1995: 161). But Lilla seems to me to be aiming for a more balanced form of intelligibility, one which focuses on diversity rather than identity, on bonding rather than othering<sup>51</sup> (also see Lilla and Goldstein 2017).

Applying to Lilla Welch’s concept of Hyperdemocracy one could say he is complaining of Hyperinclusivity, i.e. too much inclusivity, or better an excessive politicisation of issues that have by now been brought to the fore and may be predicted to stay in the picture as a permanent acquisition. It is all too tempting, in a volume that places post-democracy<sup>52</sup> in a central position setting it as the background of the research it presents, to adjust Crouch’s reflection to Lilla’s concerns:

Stephen Welch in *Hyperdemocracy*, [...] argues that rather than a decline of democracy, we are today trying to have too much of it, politicising issues that are inappropriate for such treatment. But he and I are talking about two sides of the same coin. I would reconcile our positions by pointing out that when political debate is about nothing, it tries to be about everything. When there is very little real debate over major policy directions (a fundamental characteristic of post-democracy), politicians start exploring every little avenue they can in order to claim that they have found a difference from their opponents – anything from each other’s personal morality to the desirability of particular medical treatments or ways of teaching children to read. This leads to an intrusion of politics – whether democratic or not – into areas with which it is not well equipped to deal. [...] When democracy becomes weak, there is a risk that voters will become detached from it. While this leaves the field even more vulnerable to manipulation by powerful interests, these may also become

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<sup>51</sup> Lakoff labels it “hate speech” in a political comment on his website: “Hate speech defames, belittles, or dehumanizes a class of people on the basis of certain inherent properties – typically race, ethnicity, gender, or religion.” Othering – also in the variant otherizing (Martin 2016) – seems to be, together with disgust, Trump’s dog whistle for his base of white voters: Edsal 2016; Hurst 2015; Murphy 2016, Powell and Menéndez 2016; Powell 2017; Richardson 2017.

<sup>52</sup> “Post-democratic mafia state” seems to be working its way up the list of new collocations (see Gessen 2016; Gessen 2017).



uncomfortable that they lack legitimacy. They need people to vote and to be engaged by voting according to a mass of minor questions that avoid raising major questions over who is really gaining from the way the system is operating. Politicisation of a mass of little, often technical, issues then becomes very useful. It is therefore necessary to achieve some kind of understanding over which kinds of issues are very properly at the heart of passionate political debate, and which are primarily technical questions that should be the domain of professionals. There are no a priori means of making such a distinction, and indeed making it is itself the kind of major decision that is fit meat for democratic controversy. Academic analysis can point to the need for such a debate, to suggest how the lines might be drawn, and to indicate the kinds of structures that might best defend the necessary boundaries between democracy and professionalism in the interests of both. (Crouch 2016: 73ff)

Groups based on a particular shared identity (be it ethnicity, gender or other) may leave underlying class (and other) contradictions unaddressed. They may fail to take into account differences among themselves that matter: “(t)he problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend differences, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite – that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences”, Crenshaw argues, pointing to the role of intersectionality in identity politics<sup>53</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Also consider the general feeling in the UK, as expressed in the topic of 2014’s The Times/ Herbert Smith Freehills Student Advocacy Competition, that political correctness has inhibited rather than promoted genuine diversity: “Changing public attitudes and progressive legislation have turned the United Kingdom into a more inclusive society. Yet in reality, have recent events shown that our ‘diversity’ is limited in its scope? Have perceptions of which ideas, policies and language are acceptable inhibited rather than promoted genuine diversity? Are there more prescriptive lines around what is ‘appropriate’ for people and organisations to do and think? In short, do notions of ‘political correctness’ stifle diversity of speech and behaviour? [...] The debate has reached the highest ranks of the judiciary. Recently Lord Neuberger, president of the Supreme Court, said: ‘Possibly as a counter-reaction to the permissive society, a combination of political correctness and moral reaction appears to be developing ... I fear that it may risk spilling over into a censoriousness about what views people can publicly air as to the merits of diversity or other issues which indirectly relate to diversity. As has been said on more than one occasion, freedom only to speak inoffensively is a freedom not worth having. The more that arguments and views are shut out as unacceptable the less diverse we risk becoming in terms of outlook. And the less diverse we become in terms of



Lilla can certainly be viewed as one of the liberals “disturbed by the idea of activists treating language as a priority when ‘real’ social change should be higher on their agenda” (Cameron 1995, 141). But I wonder whether Cameron herself would interpret this picture in the same way in light of the change in reality we have witnessed in the twenty years since she wrote her remark. Personally, I see Lilla’s words as provocative. He is not dismissing language as a trivial concern; he is not saying that words and images should not be treated as “useful material with which to work for social change” (p. 142) but rather that they should not be the sole focus. Which is what the authors of the papers contained in this volume implicitly assert, while bringing an active contribution to the political debate. Which is, in fact, what Cameron argues for when she presents herself as a supporter of the weak version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis:

Ehrenreich and Hughes both doubt whether changing the words people use by fiat does anything to change the way they think. This is an important issue, and the scientific jury is still out: most linguists and psychologists today are sceptical about the strong version of the Whorfian claim that language *determines* perceptions, but on the weaker claim that it can *influence* perceptions there is conflicting evidence. My own view is that language is a highly variable and radically context-dependent phenomenon which may have effects on perception, but only in conjunction with other factors. Linguistic conventions help to naturalize and reproduce certain beliefs and assumptions, but these are not necessarily dependent on language or ‘caused’ by it. (p. 142f; emphasis in the original)

It is true, as Cameron wrote back in 1995, that “the struggle to make others accept the label you choose remains an important component of verbal hygiene practised by subaltern groups” (p. 145) and that “(t)he verbal hygiene movement for so-called ‘politically correct’ language has the merit of bringing contests that are often submerged to the surface of public discourse” (p. 165). However, some of these contests are by now very clear and risk becoming sectarian. Lilla seems to me to just be contesting the approach of “verbal hygienists who seem to believe that language is both the cause and the solution

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outlook, the more we risk not valuing diversity and the more we therefore risk losing diversity in practice” (Fennell 2014: n.p.).



for every social ill” (p. 224). After all, American campuses are not Aleppo.

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