

Gender & language

Examples of effective hacks



BY

SA

Objectives of this talk:

- To show different Gender Fair Language strategies as tactics to stop building up constructs which force to define models of behaviour based on gender:
 1. **Neutralization** (gender neutral pronouns to respect no-binary, male and female)
 2. **Feminization** (change from masculine to feminine in common terms use)

Language Theories

&

human relations

Steven Pinker



The more frequently gendered language occurs, the more likely it is that people develop male as the prototype for a particular role.

Gendered language affects perception

Language defines relations

Simply because
it's one of our
principal learning
environment.

Judith Butler



—

It is commonly understood as language that has a bias towards a particular sex or social gender

Gendered language definition

Example of gendered language in English

Using *gender-specific terms*
as:

businessman
or
fireman

Using the *masculine pronouns*
(he, him, his) such as:

advanced computer
user knows what *he*
needs...

Gendered language and alternatives

Man



People

Mankind



Humanity

Chairman



Chairperson

Policeman



Policeofficer

Fireman



Firefighter

Salesman



Salesperson

So far so good...

See how “wise men” language commonly refers to a part of human beings only

Knowledge
has been
gender
biased for
centuries
—

Forefather of logic, poetics and reasoning

Aristotle



Man is, by nature,
a political animal

Cit. Politics

A pillar of modern Ethics

Baruch
Spinoza



Desire is the very
essence of man

Cit. The Ethics

Enlightenment hero

Voltaire



All men would
then be
necessarily equal,
if they were
without needs.

cit. *"Equality"*

A revolution in *the mode of thinking*

Immanuel
Kant

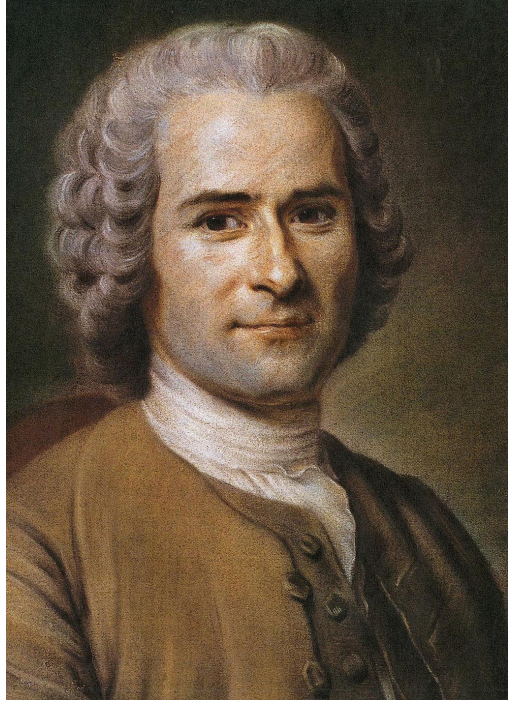


Enlightenment is
man's emergence
from his self
incurred
immaturity.

Cit. *What is Enlightenment?*

Theorist of Socialism and Education

J.J.Rousseau

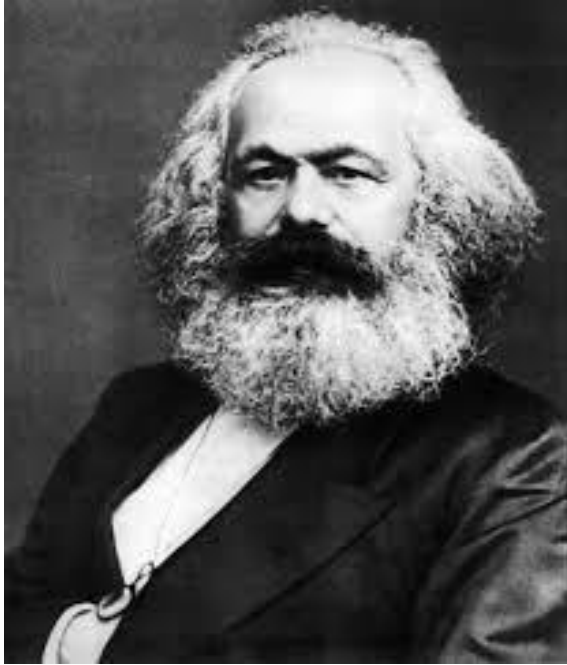


Man is born
free, and
everywhere he
is in chains

Cit. The social Contract

Prophet of social change

Karl
Marx

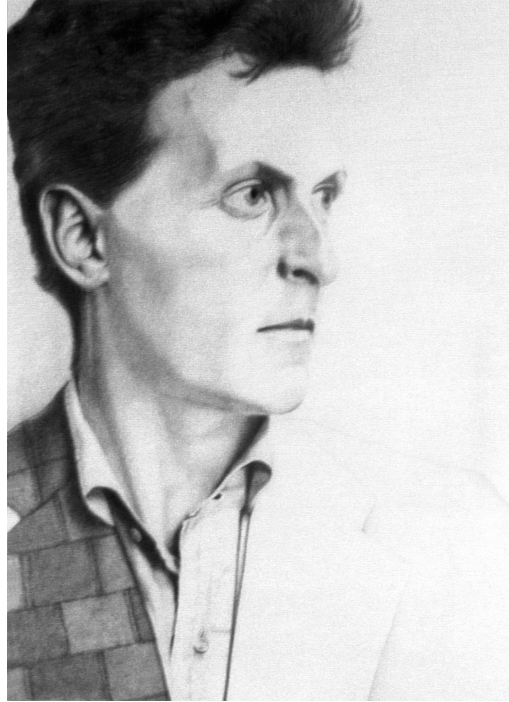


Money is the alienated
essence of man's work
and existence: this
essence dominates
him and he worships
it

Cit. Reader

Pioneer of *linguistic turn*

Ludwig
Wittgenstein

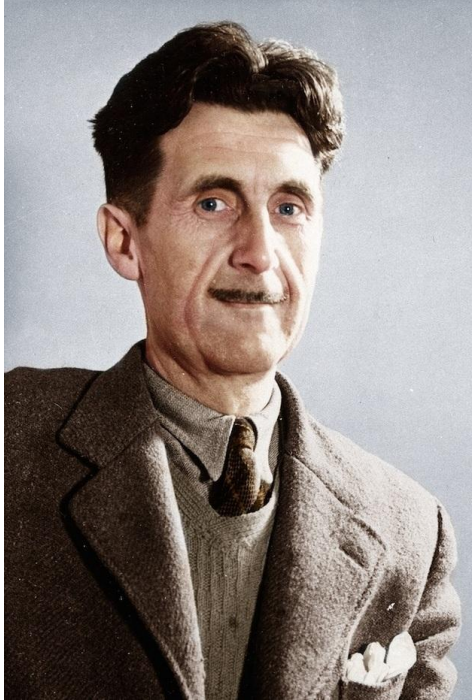


It is true: Man *is* the
microcosm:
I am my world.

Cit. Journal entry (12 October 1916)

Practical dystopias for social change

George Orwell



“Man serves the interests of no creature except himself.”

Cit. *“Animal Farm”*

Really good writer

Milan Kundera



A man is
responsible for
his ignorance.

Cit. *“Laughable loves”*

Coherence
is not
anyone's
cup of tea



Grammatical gender languages

In languages with grammatical gender, each noun is assigned to one of the classes called *genders*, which form a closed set.

Most such languages **usually have** from **two to four** different **genders**, but some are attested with up to 20.

Catalan, Cornish, French, Irish, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Welch and many more...

No grammatical gender or genderless languages

Basque, Chinese, Estonian, Finnic, Korean, Khmer, Japanese and many more...

Amongst them modern English, in which gender is found almost exclusively in **pronouns** and **titles**.

[Cit. wikipedia](#)

Gender Fair Language

Neutralization
&
Feminization

Two different GFL tactics:

- **Neutralization** (what we talked about till now)
 - **Feminization** (what we're going to introduce)
-

Spanish “*us*” has feminine & masculine version, the latter is commonly used when a group of people includes no-binary, male and female people.

Use **Nosotras** instead of **Nosotros**

A feminization GFL practice

Nosotras

It's a language hack to
modificate gender biased
construction of meaning using
feminization tactic

Well, did it actually work?

It did!

As soon as a renewed
scenery will be settled
GFL will become a
common practice .

This practice originated
in Iberian activism
movements in the 90s
and it was *implemented*
and used in hacktivist
movements as soon as
they surged.

Don't forget it is a mean to an end!

If someone points to
the moon – don't just
look at the finger

Cit. Shurangama Sutra
(core text for Zen/Chan Buddhist training)



What have we talked about?

- Tactics to represent different genders in a neutral inclusive way
- Tactics to shift focus from a dominant gender to others

With the aim to educate to a gender equality



References

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender-neutral_language

Video

Steven Pinker, [RSA ANIMATE: Language as a Window into Human Nature](#)

Judith Butler, [Your Behavior Creates Your Gender](#)

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