



Name Calling

By SAM BENEVELLI

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The last year has not been kind to our language. Students throw “racist,” “homophobic,” “Islamophobic,” etc. does it matter what the majority opinion around to end a conversation on a virtue is. What matters is who is the loudest signal instead of engaging in a challenging discussion. While the necessity to use In an environment with so many friends, these words may be more frequent, their peers, and activities, there is substantial meanings, and thus the arguments stemming social pressure to mold your opinions from them, lose their punch without comport with “acceptable” standards. This proper definition. John McWhorter, a distinguished linguist at Columbia across the country, observes:

“The Martian anthropologist would recognize no difference between the way those accused of being witches were treated in 17th-century Salem, Mass., and the way many innocent

This year, Enquiry will focus on definition – the literal definitions of words, the definitions of personal beliefs, and the clarity that students can bring to conversations that we may not have the opportunity to hold outside of a college campus.

people are being accused of ‘racism’ today.”

The fact that Americans are body, we have reasons for our beliefs. conducting race-based and other sensitive discussions without proper definitions is by no means a new phenomenon.

Students founded Enquiry in 2013 Historically, the progressive left has used to elevate debate on campus and to amplify political correctness and language policing silenced perspectives. These perspectives to shape the definitions of political terms. were conservative. Now, I see a somewhat A non-ideological example of poor different need for us to fill in the current definition is “welfare.” It includes so many campus environment. I want us, as a student different temporary aid programs that body, to work on defining our language even the most politically aware citizens and thus our thoughts before jumping to have trouble defining it. Defining the insults. I want us to critically analyze our term “welfare” is not a widespread topic beliefs and disagree with each other. Often.

of conversation, however. Race and racism So here is my proposal: write for us. is a different story -- it is now fashionable Simple, right? You have opinions and we to discuss how little anyone wants to talk will pay you to publish them here. That's about race. This observation is often made not quite the full answer. It can be nerve-by young adults and college students who wracking to publish opinion pieces on are privileged enough to have time to a small campus – it took me months of devote to extensive media consumption. hemming and hawing before I published Race is a topic for discussion, not an integral part of their daily lives. People write for us, argue with what we publish. who have typical jobs and families don't

This year, Enquiry will focus on spend their precious free time discussing definition – the literal definitions of race and class relations. College students, words, the definitions of personal beliefs, on the other hand, have ample free time. and the clarity that students can bring One would think that the free time to to conversations that we may not have experiment with new ideas and definitions the opportunity to hold outside of a would lead to more clarity, or at least college campus. As John McWhorter consensus, about what words like “racist” put it, we want to discourage the use of mean. As we can see from protests at the University of Missouri, UC Berkeley, and by a certain set of people committed to Middlebury, we are far from a consensus on moral condemnation and comfortable the definition, let alone a good discussion with shutting down exchange.”

The American Right Today

By DR. DAVID FRISK

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

The divided quality of American conservatism is among its major features, but the exact nature of its divisions can change with the times. American conservatism may be in a new political era which began with the 2016 election cycle. Although it's too soon to know for sure, it's possible that we really are in new times—and have been since the end of 2015, when it was clear that Donald Trump's candidacy for the Republican nomination had not only survived but flourished despite both its strangeness and its seemingly formidable adversaries. Trump's capture of the nomination made clear how strongly a relatively non-ideological (albeit rancorous) candidate could appeal to many Republican voters who had been assumed to hold more ideological views.

Ever since, pundits have wondered whether their commentary over the years has overestimated the strength of small-government principles, in particular, among conservatives. It probably has: suspicion of big government, and regret that it's so expensive and powerful, doesn't necessarily mean a vast, eager political market for cutting government, or one that worries about its size and scope more than about other things. Cutting government isn't really Trump's priority (although some of this has begun to happen on his watch). And his de-prioritization of the small-government cause seems unlikely to hurt him with his base.

A good classification of ideological groups among conservative leaders and voters was offered more than 20 years ago by neoconservative pundit David Frum, in a book starkly titled *Dead Right*. The point of his title was that none of the three major groups he identified had a program for public policy that was, in his judgment, either sufficiently realistic or a political winner. Frum, who is today one of the right's strong and especially thoughtful critics of Trump, saw American conservatives in the immediate post-Reagan years as divided into “Optimists,” “Moralists,” and “Nationalists.” His analysis has, I think, shown more than a little staying power.

The first group could loosely be defined as “economic conservatives.” By the time Frum wrote, Republican

continued on back



economic policy had long since abandoned concern about out-of-control government spending and deficits as its highest priorities. Tax cuts, especially as means of stimulating growth, were really the centerpiece—partly because they were politically more popular and partly because conservatives from President Reagan right down to many average citizens among conservatives had embraced the “supply-side economics” belief that tax cuts are the best way to grow the economy. Two related beliefs among the Optimists were that sufficient economic growth would, if sustained long enough, provide enough jobs and also go a long way toward solving social problems. Thus Frum’s (skeptically intended) term for them.

The second group, the Moralists, were basically the social conservatives or religious right. They tended to agree with tax cuts and, in the economic realm, less government, but were more concerned about what they viewed as America’s moral decline, the weakening of the family, and most sharply abortion. And finally the Nationalists, who worried a lot about maintaining America’s military strength and national sovereignty, often opposed military involvements abroad and what would later be called “wars of choice,” were open to tariffs and doubtful that expanding free-trade agreements made economic sense for most Americans, and wanted to place much greater restrictions on immigration—or at least strictly enforce laws against illegal immigration. When Frum wrote in the early to mid-1990s, Pat Buchanan had recently proved, in a primary campaign against then-president George H.W. Bush, that Nationalists were a substantial constituency on the right. Trump clearly benefited from this group in 2016, and it should surprise no one that Buchanan was sympathetic to his campaign and now supports his presidency. “Optimism”—a view closely associated with Reagan and major Republican donors as well as many officeholders—has waned as an attitude on the grassroots right due partly to the continued hollowing-out of the middle class and the continued decline in manufacturing employment in the free-trade, tax-cutting era despite often-healthy macroeconomic statistics indicating a good overall economy. Meanwhile, many Moralists have lowered their policy goals and become more defensive in orientation, as cultural pressures against them and political and legal defeats of their positions have piled up.

The Optimists and Moralists were, I think, beaten in the 2016 Republican primary contest not only because they didn’t unify behind one candidate—ideally, given

Trump’s obvious strength, it would have been the same person—but also because many voters had become less interested in their policy emphases. (Their candidates were, especially, Marco Rubio, Jeb Bush, and John Kasich for the Optimists and a variety of other hopefuls, including evangelical Christians Ted Cruz, for the Moralists. Cruz of “Conservatism Inc.” as a smug, status quo force that it insists has accomplished what they view as a decline in constitutional political work of one kind or another, government to try to make it their priority.) The large majority of economic and social conservatives voted for Trump in the general election; indeed, Trump’s support from self-identified Republicans overall was as good as Mitt Romney’s in 2012. But it’s clear to at least the more politically attentive voters in these groups that Trump cracking down on illegal immigration is more accurately classified as a Nationalist.

In closing, a word about libertarians. It is important to distinguish between extreme libertarians—both of them doctrinaire libertarians, whose main goal minorities among the Nationalists—which seems to be to convert more Americans to a right,” whose opposition to, for instance, liberal immigration policy goes far beyond Trump enthusiasts and, perhaps, many nationalistic and pragmatic concerns other conservatives) really do care deeply to espouse white supremacy and white separatism. The most worrisome things about this noxious but powerless group are that it is young and that its members, as best I can tell from a less-than-expert standpoint, are members of Congress and presidents so alienated from most of American society that they think they have little to lose by openly stating their views—and perhaps by so increasing increasingly perpetrating sporadic violence. One of the many bad things about the often-violent street activism of the “antifa” (self-describedly anti-fascist) movement is that it could, although I’m not sure it actually will, help the “alt-right” to grow. Trump in office and having won last year’s

There’s a separate group of anti-system Republicans who are generally believers in small government, social conservatism, and nationalism as Frum defined it, but equally interested in political struggle with other conservatives: the alliance called “business conservatives,” and large numbers of right-of-center journalists, experts, and major organizational leaders, something of a libertarian. Trump never numbers of right-of-center journalists, policy can find one, and only one, who qualifies as a libertarian. Trump never had one opponent for the nomination in 2015-2016. In the crucial early and middle phases, he had many. And that’s one of the reasons—I’ve cited others—why he won it and became, in some people’s questionable opinion, the leader of America’s conservatives.

*Dr. David Frisk has been a Resident Fellow at the Alexander Hamilton Institute (theahi.org) since 2013. The author of *If Not Us, Who?* William Rusher, National Review, and the Conservative Movement, he currently teaches “Modern Conservative Politics” in the Government department.*

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