



The Cheapening of Language

Robin Mizrahi

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When people, especially public figures, use hyperbolic language, words lose their meanings, and the real usages of the words get whitewashed.

"Words matter." We hear that buzz-phrase so often. So why don't more people pay attention to their word choice?

Let's start with Carmen Yulin Cruz, the mayor of hurricane-devastated San Juan, who **begged** the federal government to send more help, or, "... what we are going to see is something close to a genocide."

Genocide? Puerto Rico would erupt into a mass killing spree of a particular ethnic group? Who would do the killing, and who would be massacred? And our country would allow that to happen?

The mayor's misuse of language demeans every real instance of past genocide, as well as the many massacres happening today in the Middle East and Africa.

Michael Wilbon, an ESPN host, **compared** Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones to a slave owner after Jones said he would ban players who kneel-protest during the national anthem. "The word that comes to mind, and I don't care who doesn't like me using it, is 'plantation'," Wilbon said.

Really? NFL players are like slaves? Subjugated laborers who worked the plantations by force and without pay are like pampered football players who willfully earn tens of millions of dollars a year?

By Wilbon's equating Jones to a slave owner, he belittles the tragic lives of millions of real slaves who suffered under real slave owners.

President Obama's opponents, after he agreed to a nuclear deal with Iran, likened him to Neville Chamberlain. (In 1938, the British prime minister negotiated an ersatz peace with Adolph Hitler, and returned to England heroically declaring "peace in our time.")

The Iran deal is nothing like the Munich Agreement. Chamberlain **gave** Hitler permission to occupy Austria and parts of Czechoslovakia, without even demanding that Germany scale back its military machine. The Iran deal **stipulates** that it give up 68 percent of its nuclear centrifuges, that it will not enrich uranium to weapon-grade purity and that it will cut its current stockpile of low-enriched uranium by 97 percent.

There's no guarantee that Iran will follow these agreements, but the deal itself is nothing like Chamberlain's giveaway to Hitler (which immediately emboldened him to take over more of Europe).

There's no shortage of journalists **comparing** President Trump to Hitler. Leading up to his election, the Washington Post **warned**, "You don't have to go back to history's most famous example, Adolf Hitler, to understand that authoritarian rulers can achieve power through the ballot box."

Our U.S. President is another Hitler? He plans to annihilate millions of Jews, gypsies and intellectuals? The president even has a Jewish daughter and grandchildren, yet the comparison to one of the most evil rulers in modern history is socially popular.

We live in a great country that allows criticism of our president — but calling him Hitler not only diminishes the tragedy of the Holocaust, it degrades the concept of true evil.

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