The Legacy of the Holocaust

words and symbols in our daily lives
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Discrimination occurs in words and symbols
The Language Never Changes

Let’s look at some quotes from the Nazi propaganda film, *The Eternal Jew*. As well as many quotes from our contemporary political leaders.
"At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Jews sit at the junction of the world financial markets. They are an international power. Although only one percent of the world's population, with the help of their capital, they terrorize the world stock exchanges, world opinion, and world politics. New York is today the center of Jewish power." - Nazi propaganda film, "The Eternal Jew,"
Gays Control Everything

- "Homosexuals display political control far beyond their numbers. A tiny fraction of the population (about 1 percent), homosexuals have one of the largest and fastest growing Political Action Committees in the country (The Human Rights Campaign) and give millions of dollars to candidates". - Robert Knight, Family Research Council, testifying before the US Senate Labor Committee hearings on S.2238, July 29, 1994.
Jews Are Criminals

• "This parasitical Jewish race is responsible for most international crime. In 1932, Jews, only 1 per cent of the world's population, accounted for ... 47 per cent of crooked games of chance - 82 percent of international crime organizations - 98 percent of prostitution." - Nazi propaganda film, "The Eternal Jew,"
Gays Are Criminals

• "They commit over 33% of the sex acts with children. Of the pupil molestations, homosexual teachers commit as many as 80% of those acts." - Paul Volle, Chairman, Christian Coalition of Maine, "The Gay Agenda," October 1998
“Wherever rats appear they bring ruin, by destroying mankind's goods and foodstuffs. In this way, they (the rats) spread disease, plague, leprosy, typhoid fever, cholera, dysentery, and so on. They are cunning, cowardly, and cruel, and are found mostly in large packs. Among the animals, they represent the rudiment of an insidious and underground destruction - just like the Jews among human beings.” - Nazi propaganda film, "The Eternal Jew,"
Gays Are Like Rats

• "They are like rats, skulking in their closets, copulating in mad frenzies, unable to control their appetites, sniffing around the doors of school classrooms for fresh prey. Young prey. They are perverts and hedonists and will make fine kindling in Hell. But before then, before God gives them what they really deserve, they must be stopped here on Earth." - Fundamentalist TV preacher, quoted in "The Gay Agenda: Talking Back to the Fundamentalists"
We may not throw people into ovens, but we still use our means of expression to enforce hatred.
Take some time and reflect on an instance when someone hurt you using only words

- Be detailed and take your time
- What happened?
- Did they know they were hurting you?
- What might have been their motivation?
It's just words!
What makes them so powerful?
What does this sign say?
In a statement like this, some things are said at a surface level. Other things are being said below the surface...
Denotation
Denotation

• When a word or expression has a direct, specific meaning

Raymond, you are being a moron. Stop it at once!
Denotation

• This homework is boring
• I hate that girl
• He reeks like cigarettes
• My classmates aren’t very smart
• Why can’t they speak my language
Connotation
Connotation

- The secondary meaning of a word or expression in addition to its direct or primary meaning.

Raymond, you are acting like Ben. Stop it at once!
Connotation

• You throw like a girl
• That class is gay
• Oh my gosh, I’m so retarded
• You got Jewed
When you jokingly call your friend a fag, you are hurting multiple people at once, as well as displaying your own ignorance.
What about profanities? Are they super-connotative or something? There’s that whole list of words you get in trouble for saying at school!
What about profanities? Are they super-connotative or something? There’s that whole list of words you get in trouble for saying at school!
THEY ARE JUST WORDS
But people use the F-word all the time for lots of reasons. Sometimes they use it just as a word filler, with no intended meaning at all. You aren’t offending anyone denotatively or connotatively when you use it. So what makes it so bad and why is it that we all know what it means?
We all share the same vernacular, and therefore, we agree that these words are bad!
Vernacular

• A variety of everyday language specific to a social group or region

Raymond, you are going to have hella homework!
So, if these words only mean these bad things because we all agree that they mean these bad things, where did these words come from?
Words have foundations. They come from somewhere. Many have distinct, unique histories.
“Words have history?”
I don’t get it!
People had to start using these vernacular terms in order for them to become vernacular. This usually means that there is a story behind them. For example...
Why do we say the sink is “clogged” when it is backed up?
Middle English late 14th
clog: weight attached to the leg of an animal to impede movement
Why is a home loan called a mortgage?
Old French mortgage translates to “death pledge”
Etymology
Etymology

• The history of a particular word or element of a word

Raymond, you are acting dumb. Though that isn’t quite accurate, because I mean to say that you are being loud and disruptive. The word dumb is actually an archaic term for one who doesn’t speak. Only in recent American English has it been given the added meaning of foolish, and if you think about it, the word is connotatively offensive.
So, really, if you ever stop in the halls of Liberty High School and just listen, you will hear a variety of hateful words being used without much thought. In many cases, the worst things are said “jokingly” between friends.

Let’s take some time now and brainstorm some words or phrases that people use to be hurtful. Think about different social groups, physical traits, economic backgrounds, and racial categories. We’re not talking about profanities, but rather words intended to attack others.

And now ask yourself, “What can I do to fix this? How can I help to reduce the use of ignorant words on my campus?”
In the space below your notes, copy down and complete the following sentence.

I plan to help combat the use of ignorant words on my high school campus by...