

Blenglish: A variation on language

CLAYTON'S CORNER
by Michael Ollie Clayton

Not too long ago there was a strong sentiment sweeping the country in regards to whether or not "Black English" ("Blenglish", as I've fashioned it) should be incorporated into schools and school books.

This language schism, Blenglish, was slowly gaining credibility as a viable expression of what was considered African-American dialect.

If the Blenglish sentiment were to ever muster the steam of recognition, it would be unfair not to allow the English speaking peoples who live in the Southern States of America to incorporate their very

special manifestation of the English language.

If the legitimization of slang is to prevail, America would have to grant each generation of coming Americans a new brand of English.

Blenglish, as a form of language, has its roots in neither culture nor race. It is not the manifestation of geographical diversity. It is not the encumbrance of an entrenched foreign tongue, tamed years later by the introduction of new (foreign) soil.

Blenglish is the result of millions of people not being taught how to read or write. It is the artistic result of codifying sounds. It is feedback. It is a sender's utterance fed back by an adaptive receiver.

African-Americans were not formally taught English when they

arrived at their new country. They were forced to relinquish their native tongue(s) and made to incorporate strange words from strange people into their dialect.

The "Englishization" of African-Americans was achieved primarily through association. (Forget the reasons why...forget any rage or anger—at the time it was against the law to teach black slaves how to read or write.)

There aren't many foreigners (if any) past age 16 who arrive in America and completely erase the native spice of their language—even when they are formally educated.

Most African-Americans who were initially relocated in America were over age 16. This is documented fact. There was no tabula rasa (blank tablet) to fill in. They

had already been socialized to, with, and by their native tongue(s).

Consequently, language was passed on by parent to child, by "institutionally ignorant others" to newborns. Now we hear the manifestation of the going trend of times past.

Blenglish is not the manifestation of inherent deficiencies—it is the manifestation of institutional, systematic deprivation.

Blenglish isn't a flaw; it is an unintended laboratory experiment.

Compulsory education distends this; environment supports this; over-exposure and under-exposure prove this.

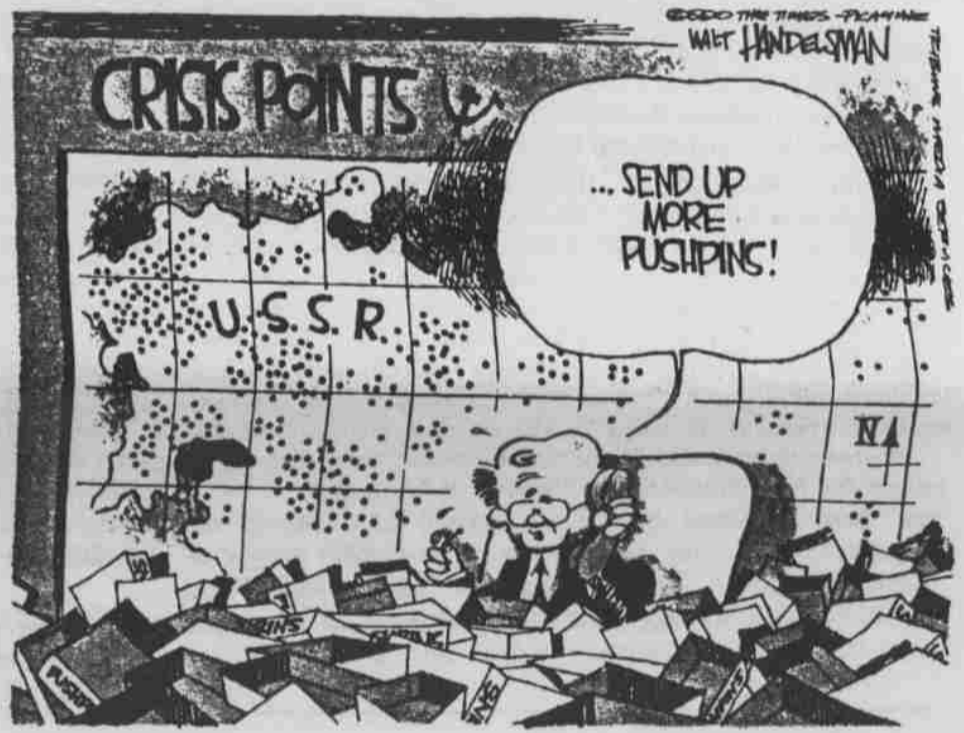
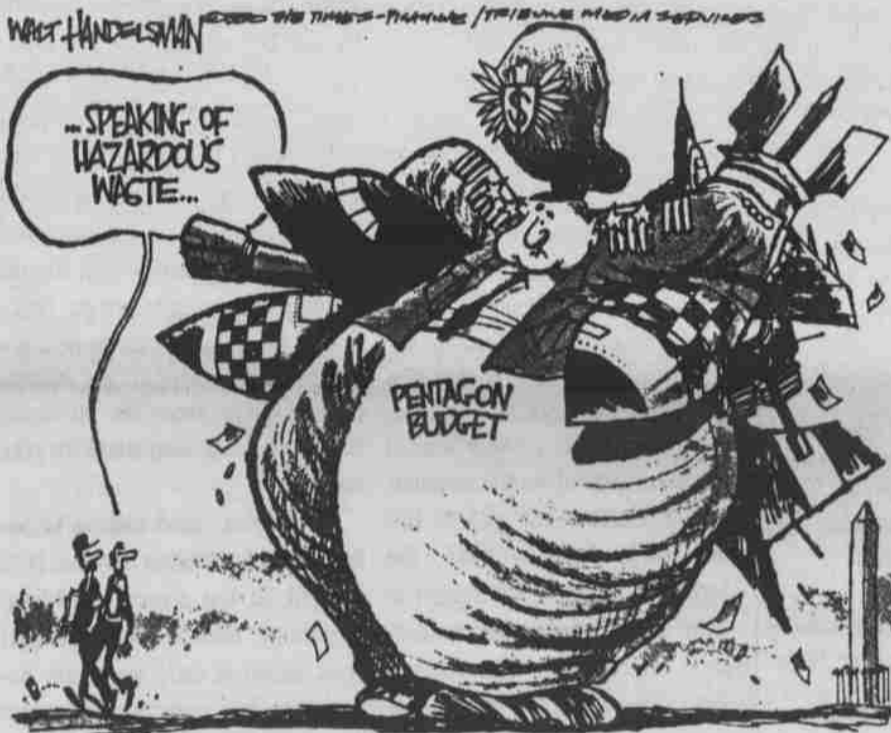
To be able to enunciate with grammatical proficiency is the direct result of conditioning. The reverse is true as well.

Exposure equates to limitations. Exposure is causal. Exposure conditions.

To romanticize Blenglish is one thing; to recognize the variation of language is one thing; not to understand how it came about is to participate in ignorance yourself, because you have succumbed to a cancerous preoccupation with appearance

Blenglish is more complex than matter. It is the result of bad training. It is not the way a person is. It is the way a person has been taught. It is surface, and many are perceived as ignorant and inferior because of the appearance of surface. There is no distant drum beating.

Education—proper education is the key!



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