

AT Banter Podcast Episode 251 - What's My Pronoun?

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

pronouns, people, gender, singular, english, language, discussion, person, identify, gender issues, plural pronoun, coined, terms, today, book, speak, started, grammar, talking, cold winter

SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Dennis Baron, Ryan Fleury

-
-  Rob Mineault 01:16
Hey, and welcome to another episode of AT Banter.
 -  Ryan Fleury 01:22
Banter, banter.
 -  Rob Mineault 01:25
Hey, my name happens to be Rob Mineault. Oh, and joining me today is Ryan Fluery.
 -  Ryan Fleury 01:34
I'm back.
 -  Rob Mineault 01:35
I think I've said that 251 times now.

R Ryan Fleury 01:42
There was probably one or two I wasn't here for

R Rob Mineault 01:46
Oh, yeah, that's right, you did. Yeah, that's true.

R Ryan Fleury 01:50
But not many,

R Rob Mineault 01:53
I think I've missed one episode. I don't think I recall if I've ever missed more than that.

R Ryan Fleury 02:02
I don't know. I know you missed one that I had to do on my own. But I don't know of any others.

R Rob Mineault 02:09
Yeah, interesting.

R Ryan Fleury 02:12
That's dedication.

R Rob Mineault 02:14
That's right.

R Ryan Fleury 02:15
Committment.

R Rob Mineault 02:17
What's shakin over there?

R Ryan Fleury 02:20
Well, it's warming up again here we're 30 degrees today again and tomorrow they're saying while we're recording this but it's alright we'll take it because soon we will be bitching that won't stop raining so are

R Rob Mineault 02:32
You know what? I'm never gonna bitch about rain again. Not after those heat waves that we've had so far. And now we're into our third one. have convinced me, it's broken me of that habit of complaining about clouds.

R Ryan Fleury 02:53
Bring it on. I'm ready for that.

R Rob Mineault 02:58
No, they say, I read somewhere that according to the Farmers Almanac, we're gonna have a cold winter, so that'll be great.

R Ryan Fleury 03:05
Yeah, I saw a headline that Environment Canada has released its prediction for our fall but I didn't dig any deeper into it yet.

R Rob Mineault 03:13
I think I think we're supposed to get a really cold winter so we super hot summer and then a super cold winter. We're just f'ed

R Ryan Fleury 03:22
Yeah, we we humans you know, we're not very good when we inhabit a place.

R Rob Mineault 03:28
Yeah, well, you know .. First one, it was a first try.



Ryan Fleury 03:39

You think we would have learned by now.



Rob Mineault 03:41

Everybody should get a second chance.



Ryan Fleury 03:43

Should we?



Rob Mineault 03:48

Man, you're you're, you're cynical today.



Ryan Fleury 03:52

Well, that's just who I am. That's my identity. And it's my pronoun.



Rob Mineault 03:56

Yeah. Okay, you're funny. Okay. Well, that way is, let's talk a little bit about what we're doing today.



Ryan Fleury 04:08

All right. Well, today we are talking with Dennis Baron who is a professor of English and Linguistics and author of the best selling book, "What's Your Pronoun: Beyond He and She"



Rob Mineault 04:20

Yeah, so I guess I guess we should set this up a little bit. Because it's probably a segment of our audience when you're talking about what??



Ryan Fleury 04:26

That was me.

R

Rob Mineault 04:32

No, yeah, we thought you know, this is this has come up before on the podcast for whatever reason we don't I think we just we just started talking about pronouns on one episode, and you got it in your head that you were going to get somebody on the show to talk a little bit about it. And so I thought this is this is a good idea. I think it's a good opportunity for us to learn and it doesn't specifically tie into disability, but it certainly ties into inclusion. Um, you know, we want we inclusion and accessibility are both very important aspects of the show. So, yeah, I think that that's how, how I see it tying into the show. So I'm excited for this conversation.

R

Ryan Fleury 05:17

Well, like you said, I was curious about what this whole pronoun thing was, you know, I keep seeing people on Twitter, posting their pronouns, him and his and her and hers, and she and whatever else. And I'm just like, What is all this? What's this about? Where is this coming from? And so, you know, doing a little bit of research, you know, we found Dennis we having him on the show to talk about it. Currently, I'm, I'm about to start reading his book. So it'll be interesting. I think it's an interesting topic. And, you know, like you say, it's nothing related to assistive technology. But you know, we are about inclusivity diversity, and people do have their particular way of wanting to be identified. And that goes for the same if you're blind or partially sighted, you know, people have said to me before, when they're introduced me, you know, this is Ryan, he's visually impaired. I'm not visually impaired, I'm blind. Impairment to me means that there's some vision there, but my vision isn't perfect. So, again, it's an identity thing. And we'll have a choice to make and how we want to be identified and more power to them.

R

Rob Mineault 06:32

Yeah, exactly. So you know, I'm, I'm really curious, I did a little bit of, of reading as well. Coming into this, and I'm really surprised that just some of the things that I've learned, that I won't spoil, I won't spoil for the listeners, but it's going to be a good conversation. I think that no matter what, what dog you feel that you have in the race, in terms of, and you know, it shouldn't even be a debate. That's the sad thing about this, I feel like this is a an dem bait that's going on. But it really shouldn't be, this should just be we should just change like change. For a lot of people. I think change is scary. And, and especially with things that you don't may not understand or that don't affect you. But that's no reason to fight against change. So I think that I think it's a good learning learning experience for all of us.



Ryan Fleury 07:29

Well, why don't we bring him on? Joining us now is Dennis Baron. Dennis, I want to thank you so much for taking some time to join us today.



Dennis Baron 07:39

Hey, Ryan, hi, Rob.



Rob Mineault 07:42

This is such a big discussion. I don't even know where to start. But maybe we could just start off a little bit and just tell us a little bit about about who you are and what you do and some of your credentials.



Dennis Baron 07:53

Okay, well, I, I am a professor of English and Linguistics. Emeritus, which means that I'm retired at the University of Illinois and Urbana Champaign, I spent pretty much all of my academic career, at Illinois and my specialty is history of the English language. And I focus on the impact of language on issues of current concern like technology, like law and the present case, pronouns, and the burnin thing and the issue of language and gender. In general, something I've been looking at for, you know, maybe 40 years or more, but it resulted a couple of years ago, and this book called "What's Your Pronoun?", and was significantly aided by all the newspapers that have been archived online for the 18th and 19th century, in the last five or 10 years or so. So there's a huge database out there that it used to be very difficult to consult because you'd have to depend on microfilms and crumbling paper copies in library basements, and all kinds of stuff like that.



Ryan Fleury 09:32

So it's interesting, that's the reason I wanted to reach out to you is, you know, being totally blind. I've been seeing especially on Twitter for probably the last year, year and a half of people using their pronouns he she her, hers, and so on, Ryan, I'm like, What is this all about? Like, why are people doing this now because I had no idea what this is what this was. And so I did a little bit of research and found you and found your book. Just a little plug, I bought your book last night, the audio book started reading it this morning. And a side note, did you do a word count on how many times you use the word "he", "she", or "pronoun" in that book?

D

Dennis Baron 10:17

I have to admit that I have not listened to the audio book, they sent me a link to it. But since I didn't record it, they hired an actor to do with some. I looked up his credits apparently had a minor role on Star Trek.

R

Ryan Fleury 10:40

yeah, it's an interesting discussion. And so that, you know, like I said, that's why we wanted to reach out to you because yeah, we are seeing more and more of these pronouns being used. And I'm sure there's people out there like myself, who have no idea where all this came from. So here we are.

D

Dennis Baron 10:56

So yeah, I mean, it came from, I mean, the current discussion, I think, really is tied up with the prominence of in the last few years of gender issues, issues of inclusivity. For people who identify as non binary or or gay or lesbian, or trans or gender non conforming, I mean, there's a whole bunch of different ways of identifying now, in terms of gender, the we're not part of the discussion, it's not that they didn't exist, it's that we weren't using kind of language that has developed to talk about these issues, they weren't as big of a public concern, as they have become in the last decade or so. And so along with that has sprung up this interest in, okay, so if you are non binary, or you have to refer to someone who is non binary, that's great. But what, what happens is that the English pronoun system doesn't have an exact term, an exact pronoun to identify someone who is neither male nor female, or both, or somewhere, not on a binary, but on some other sort of gender scale. And so people have been coining pronouns or recovering them from the past, it turns out that the issue of there not being what in the past was called a common gender pronoun. And in the 20th centuries, we started using the term gender neutral, and more recently, gender non conforming or non binary pronouns. This discussion began in the late 18th century, when people started saying, hey, if I'm talking about a person, and their name is gender ambiguous, or I don't even know their first name, and I need a pronoun to refer to them, I know when to insult them by using the wrong pronoun. If I, I refer to a woman with the masculine pronoun or man with the feminine pronoun that that could they could be assaulted, they could be hurt, you know, if I'm trying to sell them something, I'm trying to establish some kind of relationship with them, it could offend them. And I don't want to do that. And or what if I'm talking about a category of people like a writer or a student, and we want to generalize and they could be either male or female. You don't want to say the writer he because that excludes the women who writer the student, she because that excludes the male students. So in the 1770s 1780s, people started saying, Hey, we need a pronoun. There isn't one do we people are using singular

they in those instances, hey, somebody left their book here. Hope they come back for it, well, somebody is singular, they is plural. And in the 18th century, English speakers have become more self conscious about using what they felt was correct grammar. So if somebody is singular and they is plural, they said well, that's that's grammatically incorrect. But pronouns are supposed to match within gender and number with the noun that the referring to. Somebody left his book Well, what if somebody is actually a she? Somebody left her book? Well, what if somebody is a He using one of the gender pronouns as a generic doesn't isn't grammatical either, because it may satisfy the requirement that number, a chord has, there has to be a fit, singular pronoun singular noun, but there also has to be a gender Concord masculine, noun masculine pronoun feminine, feminine pronoun. So if singular, they doesn't do it in terms of number, how about by inventor pronoun? So people started in the 19th century to invent pronouns, they started, well, what about the first the earliest one I found was actually invented in 1841. Before that, people said, well, let's take a word like one, or that or which, and, or who, and use that as a pronoun to. By the mid 19th century, people were inventing new pronouns, coining new pronouns. So in 1841, a doctor coined the pronouns, he s and M, just capital V, e, s, and E M. And he called them masculine and feminine, using a kind of Latin sounding word that meant either male or female. And nobody took him up on that. In the 1860s 1870s 1880s, a lot more pronouns started to appear in newspapers, somebody would write and say, Hey, I got a great idea. We've got a missing pronoun. How about how about IP? or How about hische? Or how about his or and hammer? Or how about, um, you m, things like that. And then 1884 these were not all crackpots, either, some some of the more well known writers, well known professional people. In 1884, a very famous American hymn writer, Charles Converse, coined the pronoun bomb, th, o n. And he said, I got it by blending that, and one, and it shouldn't be pronounced Vaughn. And it's a great time saver D believe that. It was also an attorney, that time is money. And by instead of having to say he or she, if you said on it save time, it's more efficient. You don't risk insulting a person by using the wrong pronoun. It's inclusive, rather than exclusive. And that actually got a lot of publicity. And people said, Oh, what a great idea. Let's try it out. Other people said, I don't like "thawne", how about "eel", or, or "lu" or something else. So they, they had I got a better idea of pronouns. And there was a whole discussion, flourishing in the 1880s, about which pronoun to pick. And in 1912, the superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools, the first woman to lead the school system, proposed haish hammer and his are, are here hammer and his her. And that's got a lot of publicity in the newspapers. And it turned out that somebody had actually invented that paradigm a year before in 1911. And she kind of stole it from him. She got most of the credit for it. And there was a lot of publicity, people started using it, people started complaining about it. Every time somebody coined a pronoun that drew attention, there was a lot of resistance to it as well. And then it gets revived in the 1970s, the quest for this missing word. And now again, in the early 2000s, you start seeing people looking for the word again, and settling on either

singular they are a coined pronoun.

R

Rob Mineault 19:31

It's it's so fascinating, the historical aspect of this because I think for a lot of people, we feel like this is sort of come out of come out of left field and is a new phenomenon. But I find it fascinating that you know, this is all stuff that's that seems to go through a cycle. And we've had this conversation before.

D

Dennis Baron 19:56

Exactly, and the new wrinkle is the issue of non binary Gender rather than a pronoun that includes both sexes. Now we're looking for pronouns that include more than two sexes or genders.

R

Rob Mineault 20:13

So having studied this for so long, and maybe this sort of gets into the the psycho, psycho social aspect of it, but why is it? Do you think that that pronouns are such a hot topic that people get so passionate about it? Because, really, that's what I've been noticing in this current discourse is that no matter what side you come down on there, you're very passionate about it. Is,

D

Dennis Baron 20:40

I've actually thought about this issue, because Yeah, why is easy to say why now? Because there's a kind of moment in the conversation where people are talking about multiple issues surrounding gender and inclusivity. And, you know, rights, what, you know, protecting, you know, what are the protected categories in terms of anti discrimination? Can can someone be discriminated against if they're trans and or does the law protect them and, and things like that. And so, the pronouns have become part of that discussion, but in a way, they have come to symbolize the whole of that discussion, pronouns do reflect identity issues. So for example, if you know if, if if you are talking about the first person, plural pronoun we use we. So does that What does we mean when somebody says we, are they identifying a group that is exclusive, you know, who qualifies as being one of us? Are they using it to separate a sort of group of people from a bunch of outsiders, it becomes a kind of boundary marker, well get the second person pronoun in, in many languages. It's not the case currently, in English, but it was at one time, there was a distinction between the polite and the intimate, second person pronoun. So it's in Spanish and French in German. For example, if you use the familiar, second person pronoun, when

you're talking to a family member, when you're talking to a good friend, when you are talking to someone who is significantly lower than you in status, it becomes a social marker, as well as a sense of inclusion or exclusion, and the polite form you use in a language that distinguishes you know, intimate and polite, or familiar and polite, use a polite form for someone who's higher in rank for someone you've just been introduced to, for someone who's older enough to honor you know, the senior citizen kind of thing, or someone who is significantly more powerful. So this used to be the case in English. And we had the familiar pronoun. Now the N di. And the polite pronouns were E and U. In the 17th century, you started taking over all the other functions of the pronouns, it began as a plural pronoun, it started functioning as a singular, and now it's both singular and plural, and nobody bats an eyelash. Nobody says oh, you can call any one person. You because You as a plural pronoun, and so you know, that's grammatically incorrectly you just forgot that whole battle, cause that was over a couple of centuries ago. But in the 17th century, when singular, you started to appear, there weren't complaints. It was ungrammatical. You can't you can't use CQ for one person is just unheard of look at all these other languages, where you is plural and there's a separate second person pronoun for the singular. And so, anybody who objects to singular they is grammatically inaccurate. you point out well, then singular you has got which is even newer, this singular They is grammatically inaccurate as well. singular, the singular day in English goes back to the 14th century. That's a pretty long history. That's about as long as we have records for for the "th" forms of pronouns in English. And so almost as soon as the th pronoun Bay was borrowed from Old Norse into English, it became possible to use as a singular as well as a plural.

R

Rob Mineault 25:33

So when you look back at these things, historically, and you'll look at sort of these touch points, when a lot of these changes were were being proposed and implemented. Do you find that a lot of times you can you can pinpoint specific types of social change that was going on in that particular society at that time that sort of influenced these changes? Or, like, Can we see a pattern of what's going on when these changes are being pitched?

D

Dennis Baron 26:02

As it happens in the 18th century, One of the reasons why people were so concerned with correct usage, which then really been before, had to do with the changing place of English on the world scene. So English starts off as a little used, little known language, spoken by people on an island off the coast of Europe, who were more or less inconsequential. Then, in the 16th, and 17th century in England starts to become a major naval power, it starts to accumulate colonies around the world, in the 18th, and 19th century, in England starts to become an industrial power, as well as a military and political power. And so with the

growing footprint of English of England, around the world, the language spoken by the English gets put to more uses. It used to be even in the 16th, and part of the 17th century, that if you had if you are an English writer, and you had something important to say, he wrote it in Latin. But more and more a half of half of what Isaac Newton wrote, in his major scientific discoveries, he wrote in Latin, more and more people started putting that kind of writing into English. And so English was growing in status and in stature, along with, you know, the growing profile of England itself. And so, you know, it's an economic political dynamic that's pushing language into these roles. And people started to say, Well, if, if English is becoming so widespread, and so important, there's demand from non English speakers for material so they can learn English, there's a concern among English speakers that we ought to somehow change the language to make it even more respectable, and figure out some rules to apply. And so you start seeing in the 18th century, all these grammar books and usage books, telling people who were you know, sort of entering the middle class, the upper middle class in England getting sort of economic power and political power, how to speak and write using a language that was suitable for their new elevated status. And so you started seeing all these, you know, artificial rules springing up, like you can't end a sentence with a preposition, or, you know, singular they is, is ungrammatical, or all kinds of things like that, and people were buying these books, there was a market for them, there was an increase in literacy among the population more and more people were learning to read and write, more and more people were getting some kind of formal education. So that has that was changing too. And so that meant you needed more textbooks for this increased number of students. And the textbooks are all telling students how to do how to tell right from wrong, how to do the right kind of language, how to do the right kind of history, how to do the right kind of mathematics, things like that. And so all these converge to, you know, give a kind of attitude toward correctness in speech and writing that never existed in English before.

R

Rob Mineault 30:15

Yeah, and that's so interesting, too, because it sounds like a lot of the pushback that these movements would have had in the past. It sounds like it was around things like proper grammar or Exactly. Whereas today, I really feel like the disagreement and even the discourse itself is is very political or, or social. And it's, it's really not about grammar boat. So So historically, though, was it was it was the grammatical opposition to some of this stuff was that driven by things like socio economics?

D

Dennis Baron 30:56

That was absolutely a status thing. And it was a way of sort of labeling who was in and who was out who was acceptable in terms of society, and who was beneath you. Right, so

language became a kind of marker. For that, you have a lot of pressure today to speak, what people identify as a standard English to get a good job to get respect to go on the air. For the longest time, the BBC would not hire any announcers who had regional accents, because they claimed, listeners didn't want to, didn't want to hear that. They wouldn't hire women and answers because they claimed, listeners didn't want to hear a woman's voice, it had less authority. All that was just rubbish. It was just a way of, you know, identifying who you were favoring, and who you were excluding from these positions. And it was kind of discrimination based on language use. And what happened was when when people who were from areas where there was a, an accent that was somewhat different from the radio standard, wanted a job they they worked to eliminate their accent didn't work very well, because there were still prejudice, if you came from Yorkshire, even if you spoke in a standard English pronunciation, they were less likely to hire you in London, just because you weren't from you didn't go the right school, you know, they find some other reason to discriminate against you. So it's a standard for for more general kind of discrimination. One of the things you hear today is that, well, if you immigrate to a country, that's English speaking, you must speak learn to speak the language without an accent and correctly, otherwise you will succeed economically. But as, as survey after survey reveals even those non first language English speakers who who pick up English and managed to, to speak without some kind of foreign accent, something identified as a foreign accent, there are still ways that employers will find to discriminate against them, they'll find some other reason not to hire them, Well, you've got an ethnic sounding name, so we can't hire you know, but they will say that they'll just look for some other reason. So you know, doing what, what all the rules say you should be doing is not a guarantee. It's not a, a magic recipe for social and economic success. It can help but it won't necessarily help. It's not necessarily worth the effort. And you'll lose a lot in terms of your, you know, self image and how you think about things. If you if you buy into that.

R

Rob Mineault 34:25

It must be really interesting, having studied this for years, and just watching, you know, the different changes that we've been going through in terms of inclusion and diversity. Did you kind of look at all of this social change and be able to see this, this new influx of pronouns coming? Like, was it a surprise to you that this these conversations started happening?

D

Dennis Baron 34:51

I didn't predict I didn't predict it at all. Actually, what what because I was really looking at pronouns. In the past, rather than it in the present, I began noticing that people were putting pronouns in, in their emails, on their business cards or on their conference name

tags and things like that. Or, you know, introducing themselves in person and saying, you know, Hi, I'm so and so these are my pronouns. And I noticed that some of those pronouns were coined pronouns. And I noticed that a lot of these people seem to think that these, this was a new thing to have these quaint pronouns. And I knew from the work I had done 40 years ago that there were all these efforts in the 19th century, and early 20th century to coin pronouns. And I suddenly saw what was driving this new interest in them. Because obviously coincided with other discussions about gender issues in the present that were somewhat different from gender issues in the past, which were basically women's rights issues, then gay rights issues, and now trans rights issues. So that kind of progress suddenly occurred to me, well, the pronouns are tracking that.

R

Rob Mineault 36:19

Yeah. And I think that what's really interesting about this particular time in history, of course, is what the what the big game changer is, is of course, the the presence of the internet and social media. These types of ideas can spread a lot quicker, I'm assuming, then they ever could be for sure. Can you speak a little bit about that? And just like, can we compare this particular periods pronoun usage with the past?

D

Dennis Baron 36:51

You're absolutely right, that the, the internet makes communication, so much more widespread, and also so much more public, that the discussion reaches a lot more people this way, through internet, through social media, through internet, news stories through websites that specialize or report on gender issues. And you just see a lot more discussion going on, in larger and larger groups, whereas in the past, you would discuss something like pronoun preference, or gender issues with your friends, or people you corresponded with, by mail, or telephone, telephone, very traditional means of communication, pre internet. But one of the things I did notice in the 1970s was that one group of people that was seriously interested in these coined pronouns, or people interested in science fiction, because a lot of the science fiction writers were creating new societies, on new planets, where people did not necessarily match the gender categories that we have on earth. And they were, the writers felt free to invent non gendered civilizations, or civilizations that were all female, or all male or, or had some other kind of gender configurations that were different. And they would just freely create pronouns in these new universes that they were creating. And there was a lot of early online discussion in these communities about pronoun use in in the science fiction world. And so that even even before the sort of gay rights, trans rights issues have started online discussion, I think the sci fi people were keeping this issue alive and bringing it to the public in ways that our print media had not done before that.

R

Rob Mineault 39:29

I think the big takeaway from this and what's going on right now is to put these things in historical perspective. And remember that, you know, for all these people that you know, don't like these new wave of pronouns, because, you know, the ones that we have worked just fine and are like sort of the, quote, normal pronouns. What you need to remember when you look back historically is that we didn't, we didn't always use the the pronouns that we would now deem "normal". There was a time and when then you they're using what we would deem normal now was completely out of the the ordinary previously.

D

Dennis Baron 40:09

Absolutely, I mean, language changes, and people forget that. And they think, you know, something they haven't seen before, has got to be brand new. Well, sometimes it is. But sometimes it's got a history. And so what I like to do is to try to fill in some of that history to help us explain what's going on now. Which is, you know, evolves from previous discussions, but it's also different from those previous discussions. It's, you know, everything new is old again, or the other way around. And also, everything do is also do.

R

Rob Mineault 40:50

So from your perspective in in having studied this for so long, what's your sort of takeaway from the current discourse? Do you do you get the sense that we're pretty much discussing this as we would have 300 years ago? And and this is going to pretty much end up in the same place? Or do you feel like this, there's something new about, about this time around where I don't know these, these pronouns will eventually work their way into the lexicon. And

D

Dennis Baron 41:22

Definitely, they're here to stay, at least in the short term. So what is going on now is that attention is being drawn to pronoun issues, pronouns are becoming a stand in, they're becoming a symbol for sort of gender revolution, or resistance to that gender revolution. So you'll see comments on Twitter and other social social media by people who reject pronouns, saying, I can't be friends with you use pronouns. I mean, I've seen a number of posts, where, where people are saying that, you know, if you use pronouns, I'm going to block you. And the irony there, of course, is that these pronoun resisters are using pronouns. And what they mean is, if you're using these gender, non binary pronouns, then I'm gonna, I've got a problem with, with you, but you know, I, as a pronoun, use a pronoun. You can't speak a language without using pronouns very easily, but they're just, they're

just, you know, the pronoun is now carrying a lot of weight that it never used to, before that matter. And people are sort of, you know, who who, who are supporting non binary pronoun use, or wanting to make it more widespread and more acceptable. are also using it to say, Well, you know, when, when they, when they say my pronouns are that elevates pronouns to more than a part of speech more than a, you know, a corner of the grammatical universe. People figured, well, I'm done with school and have to worry about pronouns anymore. And here, they are, suddenly, back in our consciousness, that my pronouns are this, that the other, they're there, they're elevating pronouns again, to, here's part of my identity that I would like you to, to recognize and to accept.



Rob Mineault 43:31

Well, the name of the book is "What's Your Pronoun: Beyond He and She", we will certainly include the link in the show notes. Highly recommended. Dennis, I want to thank you again, so much for joining us and explaining some of this stuff.



Dennis Baron 43:46

Okay. Well, it's been great. Rob and Ryan talking to you.



Ryan Fleury 43:50

Thank you so much. Have a good rest of your day.



Dennis Baron 43:52

You too. Thank you.



Rob Mineault 43:53

Please take care. Bye. Bye.



Ryan Fleury 43:55

I had no idea, the history behind pronouns. And why we're seeing it all over social media now, you know.



Rob Mineault 44:03

Yeah, it's super interesting. I mean, that certainly answers your question about, you know,

Why, what's going on? Why is this happening? kind of a thing.

R

Ryan Fleury 44:13

And like I mentioned earlier, I'm currently reading the book, and the books gonna go into all of this as well. So I'm going to come out the other side of the book, knowing a whole lot more than I knew going in for sure.

R

Rob Mineault 44:25

Yeah, well, I look Yeah, I'm an English major. So I'm, I know, this kind of the nerd part of me is kinda like was kind of dig in that this is super interesting. Because it is like the historical moment is, is really, it puts things into context in a way that you don't have because we forget that, you know, there were other areas. There was an era when, like you said, people were using he for everything. Yeah, he wasn't even used, you know, and that was a big deal when, you know, she as a pronoun started being used, like people didn't like that. It's change.

R

Ryan Fleury 44:57

Well, and you know, we evolve we I won't say we've but I have gotten pretty sloppy when it comes to using proper English grammar, right? I don't think about it, I say what I say I write how I write. And I don't even take a second glance at it most of the time. So there's, there's a proper way of doing things. And going forward, you know, if we want to be inclusive, we want to be sensitive to other people, then, you know, we need to kind of open our eyes wake up to the new world. And, you know, take notice.

R

Rob Mineault 45:34

Yeah, well, the interesting part about that is that you language used to very much be tied to class, right? And grammar, like grammar used to be a really big deal, because it was tied to your your stand your social standing right, in a way that it's just not now like, people don't care.

R

Ryan Fleury 45:53

What people look into text messaging, we have kids who can't spell we have kids can't read or write. And that's always been a thing. But I think, you know, the whole social media, texting, internet, World Wide Web has made a lot of people sloppy and lazy, right?



Rob Mineault 46:07

Yeah, it just doesn't hold the weight anymore. We have different ways of measuring socio-economic status now that have nothing to do with grammar. So that part of it is sort of out of the equation. For us, I think that a lot of this stuff is tied is more tied politically, right than anything else. I think that the people that come down on either side of this really hard. It's more about about politics than anything else, like the left versus the right. Oh, you libs, you lives in your pronouns? Right. Oh, you, you know, whatever, Alt right, Nazi. They get, you know what I mean? Like, it's just, it's all about, it's all once this shouldn't I shouldn't say it's all about that. But there is that part of it. That those sides, I think, use the pronouns as as sort of fodder in these culture wars that were going on for right now. But I think at the end of the day, yeah, it's about it's about labels. It's about identity. And I think that that's why people really get passionate about it. Is because, yeah, identity is important and being included is important. So so it's all stemming from there you go. Hey, Ryan.



Ryan Fleury 47:26

Rob.



Rob Mineault 47:27

Where can people find us?



Ryan Fleury 47:29

They can find us online at atbanter.com



Rob Mineault 47:33

Hey, where can they find Steve?



Ryan Fleury 47:35

Steve is out in the ocean. Yeah, playing with SpongeBob.



Rob Mineault 47:41

Now wait, yeah, he probably is. Yeah, he's fishing. Have you heard, has he caught anything yet?

- R** Ryan Fleury 47:48
Oh, yeah. He's got a couple salmon. At least a couple salmon. He posted pictures up on Instagram.
- R** Rob Mineault 47:52
Ah, interesting.
- R** Ryan Fleury 47:53
Yeah, I think check it. I think it's only up he's got a personal Instagram page - search for Steve Barkley on Instagram.
- R** Rob Mineault 48:02
Don't tell people that he's gonna go find him and troll him.
- R** Ryan Fleury 48:10
He loves talking about politics, go find him.
- R** Rob Mineault 48:28
Where are we? They can also find us and Steve on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- R** Ryan Fleury 48:36
And they can also email cowbell@atbanter.com
- R** Rob Mineault 48:40
We screwed all that up, didn't we? Whatever. It's all good. All right. Well, hey, listen, I think we've rambled on enough and enough damage for this one episode. Thanks everybody for listening in. Big thanks to Dennis for joining us. And we will see everybody next week.
- R** Ryan Fleury 49:05
Bye.

