

NOT JUST WORDS.

THE USE OF SLURS IS NORMALIZED AND IT MUST END. THIS IS AN OPINION PIECE.

Slurs are not just words but rather a shortcut to **PREJUDICE.**

Many believe that slurs are not as powerful as they are simply because they do not understand the negative connotation attributed to them.

Those that either deny or don't care about the history of these words are blind to the significance that they truly hold.

"If you are someone who thinks the N-word is just a word, I encourage you to do even **JUST ONE MINUTE** of research behind the meaning of it and how it was used towards Black people for hundreds and hundreds of years until recently," said Senior Eva Hicks

According to BBC News, the word is derived from the Spanish and Portuguese terms for Black, which was then used to refer to the African people who were brought to the US in the 17th century.

Kehinde Andrews, a professor at Birmingham City University, says, "It's really tied into **THE IDEA THAT AFRICAN PEOPLE AREN'T REALLY HUMAN BEINGS,**" and that "when the N-word is used, that's essentially what it's used for. So I would hope most people would understand why that is deeply offensive and problematic because it still is used in that context now."

"I don't find anything funny or playful about a word that was used to degrade me throughout my childhood, my grandparents throughout the segregation era, and my great grandparents throughout slavery," said sophomore David Craig. "To know that people want to say a word that was used to talk to my ancestors while they were being burned, hung, shot, whipped, assaulted, etc. is disgraceful and pathetic."

It's hard to believe that people don't know the history behind these terms. It's not as if you're expected to know every detail of the origin, but there is absolutely no way that you don't even have an idea of how these terms have been used to be **OFFENSIVE AND DEGRADING.**

"I think it's a choice to stay uneducated. There's not one person who doesn't know the N-word as offensive so it does bother me a lot that some people I go to school with don't have a problem saying it," said Hicks.

For some, their excuse to say these discriminatory words

is basically that the statute of limitations on being offensive is up and people should just "get over it." Get over it. **GET OVER IT?** I have a question. What if someone had said that about the tragedy of 9/11? Would you "get over it?" No. It's a real and dreadful part of history that is always accompanied with the words 'Never Forget.' So why should we forget any part of our history? Why should people have to "get over" tragic and horrendous things that happened to their community and disregard the generational impact that it has on them? Why?

"No matter your intentions, **IT IS NEVER OKAY** to say slurs if you are not a part of the marginalized community it refers to. That is because I think reclaiming words that have hurt you in the past is **AN IMPORTANT PART OF GROWTH** for some people," said senior Tyler Sousa.

Being able to reclaim a word that has historically been used to degrade your community can help give people a sense of power in their identity; and when you hear people who have **NEVER EXPERIENCED OPPRESSION** based upon that identity use those slurs, it feels as though history is being repeated. These terms are engulfed in a negative and harmful connotation no matter the context of the situation, and that will never change.

"The line between freedom of speech and hate speech tends to be thin. The best advice I could give is to be careful and thoughtful about what you say and contemplate if your words are attacking a specific group of people or not," said senior Tanvi Sabharwal. "Sharing personal opinions is fine, but **NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF BELITTLING OTHERS.**"

Do your research. It's not hard to simply remove these words from your vocabulary for the sake of other people. It's not hard to acknowledge the true meaning of slurs to fully comprehend why you should not be saying them. And come on, it's 2023. You're seriously saying these words when we all know the connotation?

DO BETTER. IT'S EMBARRASSING.



SENIOR TYLER SOUSA POSES FOR AN INTIMATE REPRESENTATION OF HIS FEELINGS TOWARD THE USE OF SLURS. "IT REALLY UPSETS ME WHEN PEOPLE CHOOSE TO IGNORE THE HISTORY OF WORDS THAT HAVE BEEN USED IN SUCH A BELITTLING MANNER," SAID SOUSA.