

A NEW AGE OF OBFUSCATION AND MANIPULATION

Al Seckel

In the spring of 1985, the new "Twilight Zone" series premiered with an episode called "Word Play." It was about a man who woke up to find that a few key words had changed in meaning. At work, his boss asked him whether he was ready to go to "dinosaur," rather than to "lunch." Obviously, the man became very perplexed as common words with definite meanings were substituted for other words with quite different meanings.

It appears as if I have entered the "Twilight Zone" every time I talk with or read the literature of people associated with the New Age movement. Terms that have quite specific meanings are often carelessly bandied about with the result that the message is either gibberish to someone who knows the proper usage of the terms or profound, esoteric, and sublime to those who do not.

An example: One of the local morning television talk-shows recently featured a woman who works with crystals. She wore a purple quartz crystal that she claimed liberated a "large magnetic field" from within her body, enabling her to give "psychic" readings. How did she know that her field was "magnetic"? Did she attract iron objects? Did nails, tacks, and paperclips fly up from the floor? And, when you think about it, why would a "magnetic field" help with psychic readings?

Another interesting example occurred on a television talk-show on which I was asked to appear to discuss various New Age concepts with a well-known parapsychologist and author of several popular books on psychic

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