Political lies have always come bundled in the Economy-pack: half-truths, misquotes, bald lies, propaganda, slung mud, smear campaigns, slips of the tongue, Freudian moments, avalanches of excrement, and surprised misstatements -- where the politico is stunned, simply shocked, they will tell you, at what their mouths have just gone and done. It is as if their mouths were no longer under their control, or had been repo'd, dragged or lugged off back to the shop for some diagnostic tests.

Add one more to that litany in the big Econo-pack: *Political cross-dressing*, where a politician hijacks a word or phrase from the opposition, kidnaps it, then bandies it about, willy-nilly, hoping to squeeze some attention from the thing.

This is usually done in obvious, gaudy, and quite glaring ways -- like The Willard and The Newt really reaching to pluck "vulture capitalist" and "fat cats" from the thin air, they hold them way off at arm's length, as if these animals were not related in any way to them.

The trick is to hold up these animals for the crowd in a *just-like-so* way as to create the required head-turning attention, without them turning on you, without getting yourself razored by claws or pecked at by sharp beaks, and not raked over by shredding talons.

Over the years, Regressives have been stealing and co-opting language from Progressives in such a way as to garner attention, using popular concepts -- like empowerment, or gender equality or sustainability and so on -- then turning these concepts right on their heads. With enough linguistic grease, the GOP hopes and prays, no one will notice the language has been hit by a bus and two trucks.

Verbal sleight of hand -- it's all the rage these days on the far right side of the scale, where so many of our hypnotized countrymen live, a place where facts starve to death for want of a home, where facts expire for want of some care and attention.

These moments of politically cross-dressed speech are the verbal equivalents of a man wearing a brassiere on the head as earmuffs or fishing cap, and a woman wearing a man's boxer shorts like one of those desert caps with the neck shade, or as a chef's toque.

It's all about, one supposes, attracting attention, and at any cost.

Using that logic, candidates might consider -- well, let's think, now -- we've got it! How about erupting in tears, crying for a new bottle, and a lay-down, somewhere nice and warm, where...

Oh, wait! That's Speaker Boehner's gig! *John! So sorry! Didn't mean to intrude, dude, didn't mean to pop out all those balloons!*

Weirdly, the public seems to gravitate to this stuff -- maybe, it's like shouting, in a crowded theater, "Free money, right over here!" There used to be laws about that.

In politically crossed-dressed speech, your ears and your mind has to be the beat cop, telling that stuff to scram, to beat it, find a home somewhere else.

Maybe the public will wise up and turn away, once the novelty's worn off from these new dog whistles, *speechifying* tricks, from these jargony red herrings and speech impediments.

Who knows? Maybe this stuff is the mod and mad offshoot of The Emperor's New Clothes -- one that we might here dub, The Candidate's New Foot for the Mouth, or, maybe, Candidate *X's* Foot of the Month Club.

After these head-turning word tricks start to wear off, start looking for worse -- road flares, fan dancers, parachuting kangaroos, declarations from candidates formerly from Atlantis, whatever works, whatever pulls attentions, whatever bumps up the poll numbers, keeps the cash rolling in, whatever makes the cash flow rise, floating the yachts.

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There are so many great, earnest, foundational, and Constitutionally-framed reasons to get money out of politics -- to help get us all to talking some real sense here, to let the ideas we speak about stand or fail on their own merits. The marketplace of ideas is the only true American marketplace that matters or exists; to allow the towering power of money the luxury and right of speech is to guarantee a biblically-proportioned flood of politically cross-dressed speech, with lunatic babblers at the fountains and faucets, guarding and controlling the flow.

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Politically crossed-dress speech is a relatively new thing, in our necks of the woods. It is to be hoped we have enough sense to pay it no mind. Hereabouts, we rely on things we can easily see and can quickly know to be true. We're no Luddites, just not easily fooled. Take our weather center, for example, over there, that rope strand off the porch railing.

It tells us what the weather's up to. If it goes back and forth, it's breezy; if wet, it's raining. If it feels warm, then it's all sunny, and, if it's missing -- well, now: How'd you survive that tornado we just had?

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No other civilized culture puts its people through 16 months of leader selection. Electing a president here, we would have to explain to anyone from Mars or the Dog Star, is part circus, part contact sport, part trial by mud-and-cream-pie, and part public pillory, and almost all sophomoric intramural sport, here at the American Asylum for the Deranged.

To gain some respect in the solar system and beyond, we should mention many of us are working on a way to have all candidates first be bona fide scientists before they could run.

This way, we could say, the pool would be filled with people who have experience with facts, with the pride of digging out and then caring for the truth -- seeing as how it has to be so

constantly replicated and re-proven by colleagues before it's even sipped at, and way before anyone swallows it whole.

We could say to our visitors, we hope to court people's Trust, and the Truth, in this simple, small way, having scientists run, and keep speaking with us about facts and the truth.

That could bring on some approving gestures and compliments from our visitors, and open up our sector to diplomatic visits and trade, and boost our confidence, being seen as reasonable and intelligent life once again.

Meanwhile, so long as you're here, folks -- we hope you enjoy the show, the one with these court jesters on our teetering national stage.

*On them, you know something?  Those crazy-looking hats look just right.*