
SOME RECENT GOVERNMENT-SPEAK:

- ASYMMETRIC THREATS
- VERTICAL ENVELOPMENT
- STRATEGIC AMBIGUITY
- OFFICE OF STRATEGIC INFLUENCE
- INFORMATION EXPLOITATION OFFICE
- OFFICE OF SPECIAL PLANS
- PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY
- BATTLESPACE ENVIRONMENTS
- OPERATION INFINITE REACH



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THE PRINCIPLES OF NEWSPEAK



It was intended that when Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Oldspeak forgotten, a heretical thought should be literally unthinkable, at least so far as thought is dependent on words.

The word *free* still existed in Newspeak, but it could only be used in such statements as "This dog is free of lice" or "This field is free from weeds." It could not be used in its old sense of "politically free" or "intellectually free," since political and intellectual freedom no longer existed even as concepts, and were therefore of necessity nameless.

Quite apart from the suppression of definitely heretical words, reduction of vocabulary was regarded as an end in itself, and no word that could be dispensed with was allowed to survive.

Newspeak was designed not to extend but to *diminish* the range of thought.

Any word in the language (in principle this applied even to very abstract words such as *if* or *when*) could be used either as verb, noun, adjective, or adverb. Between the verb and the noun form, when they were of the same root, there was never any variation, this rule of itself involving the destruction of many archaic forms. The word *thought*, for example, did not exist in Newspeak. Its place was taken by *think*, which did duty for both noun and verb.

In Newspeak it was seldom possible to follow a heretical thought further than the perception that it *was* heretical; beyond that point the necessary words were nonexistent.

A great many words were euphemisms. Such words, for instance, as *joycamp* (forced labor camp) or *Minipax* (Ministry of Peace, i.e., Ministry of War) meant almost the exact opposite of what they appeared to mean.

In Newspeak, euphony outweighed every consideration other than exactitude of meaning. Regularity of grammar was always sacrificed to it when it seemed necessary. And rightly so, since what was required, above all for political purposes, were short clipped words of unmistakable meaning which could be uttered rapidly and which roused the minimum of echoes in the speaker's [or listener's] mind.

Relative to our own, the Newspeak vocabulary was tiny, and new

ways of reducing it were constantly being devised. Newspeak, indeed, differed from almost all other languages in that its vocabulary grew smaller instead of larger every year. Each reduction was a gain, since the smaller the area of choice, the smaller the temptation to take thought.

In 1984, when Oldspeak was still the normal means of communication, the danger theoretically existed that in using Newspeak words one might remember their original meanings. In practice it was not difficult for any person well grounded in *doublethink* to avoid doing this, but within a couple of generations even the possibility of such a lapse would have vanished.

History had already been rewritten, but fragments of the literature of the past survived here and there, imperfectly censored, and so long as one retained one's knowledge of Oldspeak it was possible to read them. In the future such fragments, even if they chanced to survive, would be unintelligible and untranslatable.

In practice this meant that no book written before approximately 1960 could be translated as a whole.

Take for example the well-known passage from the Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of those ends, it is the right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government . . .

It would have been quite impossible to render this into Newspeak while keeping to the sense of the original. The nearest one could come to doing so would be to swallow the whole passage up in the single word *crimethink*.

(Selections from the Appendix to *Nineteen Eighty-four*, "The Principles of Newspeak," by George Orwell, 1948.)