**Orwellian Language and the Media,**

This collection of essays pivots about a neologism that has gained some currency in the last few years—"Nukespeak". The new word—a play on George Orwell's "Newspeak"—was in fact coined by Chilton when, upon the occasion of being invited to speak on the topic at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London on Hiroshima Day, 1981, he offhandedly mentioned it to a friend in a letter. It made its public debut in an article published in the autumn of that year in the journal, *Sanity,* and subsequently reappeared twice the following year.

The word, however, also appeared that same year as the title of a book published in the United States. The authors, Stephen Hilgartner, Richard C. Bell, and Rory O'Connor, subtitled the book *Nuclear Language, Visions, and Mindset,* and dedicated it to Orwell. They framed their discussion by opening with a quote from Benjamin Lee Whorf which proclaimed that "a change in language can transform our appreciation of the Cosmos." Based on this assertion they argued that "the language we use has important influences on our thinking:, especially in its power to manifestly encode and reinforce the beliefs and assumptions of the "nuclear mindset". Likewise both this theme and these two figures pervade Chilton's essays.

Paul Chilton is a lecturer in the Department of French Studies at Warwick University in England. He has published widely on language, linguistics, and literature and has edited and/or co-edited two previous collections of essays which addressed the 'nuclear discourse': *Language and the Nuclear Arms Debate: Nukespeak Today and Nineteen Eighty-Four in 1984.* *Orwellian Language and the Media,* his most recent book, is a timely compilation of papers, talks and articles (prepared by him between 1981 and 1985) which examine the role of language in the moulding of public opinion surrounding the nuclear arms debate. His "hope" with this collection is to provide a "toolkit, not just for the description of the verbal edifices which we daily inhabit, but for their dismantling and rebuilding." (viii)

This "toolkit" consists of ten essays ranging from an exhilarating exegesis of the intersection of linguistics, science fiction and utopian narrative (chapter 1) to a methodical unpacking of "revealing metaphors" and "frames" as everyday means for verbally constructing reality (chapter 6) to an examination of the cold war propaganda which circumscribed the Falklands War (chapter 7). Through these essays Chilton proceeds to 1) show how in political discourse language defines and redefines reality to fit a dominant ideology (42) and 2) persuade linguists and others to engage in a critical dismantling of the "nuclear discourse". While this enterprise has been labeled "critical linguistics" (Robin P. Fawcett in *Language and the Nuclear Arms Debate,* xi) *it essentially comprises a 'discourse analysis' of the language required to assimilate and to handle the "experience of the bomb."* (107)
Although, on the one hand, the essays succeed in revealing the complex strategies by which language-as-text theoretically positions the "consumers of nukespeak" (54) and, in the process, "confirms, reinforces or even directs people's attitudes and beliefs," (70) they, on the other hand, fail to the degree that they presume a subject not already constituted by existing discursive and social formations. In other words, they brandish a form of 'linguistic determinism', as evinced in the recurring references to a "consuming public". (53; 107; 79) To be fair, Chilton does concede that no absolute claims can be made about the "necessary determination of all thought by all aspects of language." (47) Yet, this proviso notwithstanding, he argues that most people will not resist the demands to specific speech acts and that words presently an extremely dense conceptual package will insinuate themselves into our minds (81) and, thereby, impose a linguistic grid on the real world.

In Chilton's analysis of the "verbal edifices which we daily inhabit" the audience is strangely absent. As such the model of communication he tacitly employs suffers from being overly 'consumptive'. Within its framework, the "nukespeak" text—as a site consisting of specific signifying practices—constitutes a simple link between a producer and a consumer wherein, according to Edward Thompson (quoted by Chilton on p. 79), "a certain kind of 'realist' and 'technical' language effects a closure which seals out the imagination." The text, then "effects a closure", while simultaneously precluding any negotiations among closures. That is, only a dominant, fixed reading is posited with 'negotiated' and 'oppositional' readings being effectively bracketed out.

In an attempt to redress the limitation of this model, Chilton deploys an alternative one which adopts a more plausible metaphor of two people in "conversational interaction" (101). Here he calls for a rehabilitation, from "pragmatics theorising", of the concept of "mutual knowledge", in order to fully understand certain kinds of political discourse. Pragmatics theory takes into account what happens to sentence meanings when they become utterances and makes explicit the context in which those utterances are produced. The pragmatic perspective, however, idealizes away from the ethnographic details of specific contexts and examines utterances in the abstract (although there have been recent attempts by Kay Richardson and others to conduct "exercises" in applied pragmatics in which "real people" are matched with "attested utterances"). Chilton conducts his exercise in the abstract and makes no allowance for the subaltern groups and classes in a society which continuously decode and reinterpret "nukespeak".

On the question of decoding, David Morley has argued that two different forms of determination act on the production of meaning in texts. Meaning is firstly produced by particular textual organisations of signs. Secondly, meaning is determined by such traditional social and structural variables as sex, age, race and class. Decoding takes place at the intersection of these two determinations. According to Morley, "these interpretations, or decodings, also reflect, and are inflected by, the codes and discourses
which different sections of the audience inhabit...the meaning of a text must be interpreted in terms of which set of discourses it encounters in any particular set of circumstances." (Cultural Transformations, in Language, Image, Media, 1983)

In the end, Chilton’s project requires a greater indulgence in ‘concrete’ research as suggested by Morley’s fruitful approach to media sociology. The "encountered sets of circumstances" and actual sites of linguistic negotiation need to be fully explicated. If Chilton expects his book to effectively challenge the hegemony of "nukespeak", then he must first and foremost shed an obsolete communications model which presumes, as he put it in another essay not in his collection, Words, Discourse and Metaphors (1985), that words are "planted in the head." What need to be additionally challenged are Chilton’s own assertions that the producers of "nukespeak" do not intercommunicate with the consumers of "nukespeak", that the linguistically packaged arguments of the producers are to a significant degree uncritically assimilated by the consumers, and that the media are the distributors of a "nukespeak" commodity." (p. 54) The decisive step in dismantling "nukespeak" involves a categorical refusal to accept "nukespeak" as commodity.

Aside from these few critical remarks, this collection of essays should not be underestimated for in them Chilton carries out a most provocative and compelling discourse analysis of the linguistic parameters of the texts embodying the nuclear arms debate. This in itself contributes substantially to the "dismantling" of "nukespeak".

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The Economics of Television: The U.K. Case

Can the market produce desirable television programming? In most countries outside the United States debate rages over this question. The Economics of Television: The U.K. Case is a contribution to the debate.

The book was written in response to the report of the Peacock Committee. The committee addressed the financing of the British Broadcasting Corporation, but its report went beyond this narrow mandate and provided an assessment of British broadcasting in general. The report also stressed the importance of consumer sovereignty and supported the role of the market in the area of broadcasting. At the risk of some simplification, it is possible to say the Peacock report presents the right wing, pro-market side of the debate on the market and television.

Given the background of the book—it was commissioned by the Greater London Council in its final days—and the sympathies of the authors as seen in some of their