

政治と英語は、1946年に発表された、ジョージ・オーウェルの随筆である。この随筆の中で、オーウェルは執筆当時の醜悪で不正確な英語の書き言葉を批判し、それは愚劣な思考と不誠実な政治の結果であると同時に、原因であり、曖昧さと全くの無能さが当時の英語の文章、特に当時の政治的な文章の最も顕著な特徴であると主張している。明晰な思考を妨げる、具体性よりも抽象性を好む当時の書き手の傾向が批判され、不誠実さは明確な文章の敵であり、当時の政治的な文章の大半が擁護不可能な事物の擁護に使われている事に加えて、それらの政治的議論は見た目には不快で不誠実である事を注記し、悪文とは道徳的な誤りであると主張される。ジョージ・オーウェルは作家として、「自分が出来た限りの努力を自分の文章に捧げたという点については(道徳的な)境界上にあつたと考えて」おり、この随筆で述べた類の悪文を避ける事に「彼自身が容赦なく駆り立てられていた」のである。[2]

オーウェルは英語は衰退途上にあるものの、その衰退は逆転可能であると主張する。オーウェルは当時の悪文を5例挙げて、それらの文章の腐敗したイメージと精密さの欠如を批判する。『政治と英語』では同時代の避けるべき文章で用いられている文章トリックと、明確な文章の構築に必要な思想が述べられる。「死にかかっている隠喩」、単一動詞に代わって使われる「作用語と義足動詞」、「持って回った言い回し」、「無意味な言葉」、の濫用が、それらの文章トリックである。...

六つの規則 オーウェルは彼の同時代の人々が彼の述べる類の悪文に陥り易い事に同意し、無意味で陳腐な決まり文句の使用への誘惑は、「肘先にいつも置かれたアスピリンの箱」の様なものだとして述べている。特に、決まり文句は書き手が明晰に考えて書くという手間を省いて思考をまとめるのに、常に都合が良い。しかしながらオーウェルは、悪文の生成過程は非可逆的ではないという結論の上で、彼が随筆の前半で提示した悪文の例の中にある誤りのほとんどを避けるのに役立つと言う、六つの規則を読者に提供する。

- 1) 印刷物で見慣れた暗喩や直喩、その他の比喩を使ってはならない。
- 2) 短い言葉で用が足りる時に、長い言葉を使ってはならない。
- 3) ある言葉を削れるのであれば、常に削るべきである。
- 4) 能動態を使える時に、受動態を使ってはならない。
- 5) 相当する日常的な英語が思い付く時に、外国語や学術用語、専門用語を使ってはならない。
- 6) あからさまに野蛮な文章を書くぐらいなら、これらの規則のどれでも破った方がいい。

...オーウェル自身もこの規則を収録した正にその随筆の中で、自分が疑いなくこれらの規則の幾つかに違反していると認めている。それにも関わらず、これらの規則は現代の書き手の教本として、今なお広く採用されている(ja.wikipedia)

Why I write by George Orwell

... Putting aside the need to earn a living, I think there are **four great motives for writing**, at any rate for writing prose. They exist in different degrees in every writer, and in any one writer the proportions will vary from time to time, according to the atmosphere in which he is living. They are:....

(iv) Political purpose.-Using the word 'political' in the widest possible sense. Desire **to push the world in a certain direction**, to alter other peoples' idea of the kind of society that they should strive after. Once again, **no book is genuinely free from political bias**. The opinion that art should have nothing to do with politics is itself a political attitude.... <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks03/0300011h.html> When I sit down to write a book, I do not say to myself, 'I am going to produce a work of art'. I write it because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention, and my initial concern is to get a hearing. But I could not do the work of writing a book, or even a long magazine article, if it were not also an aesthetic experience..... All writers are vain, selfish, and lazy, and at the very bottom of their motives there lies a mystery. Writing a book is a horrible, exhausting struggle, like a long bout of some painful illness. One would never undertake such a thing if one were not driven on by some demon whom one can neither resist nor understand. For all one knows that demon is simply the same instinct that makes a baby squall for attention. And yet it is also true that one can write nothing readable unless one constantly struggles to efface one's own personality. Good prose is like a windowpane. I cannot say with certainty which of my motives are the strongest, but I know which of them deserve to be followed. And looking back through my work, I see that it is invariably where I lacked a POLITICAL purpose that I wrote lifeless books and was betrayed into purple passages, sentences without meaning, decorative adjectives and humbug generally.

"**Politics and the English Language**" (1946) is an essay by George Orwell which criticises the "ugly and inaccurate" written English of his time and examines the connection between political orthodoxies and the debasement of language. It was originally published in the April 1946 issue of the journal Horizon. The article had been intended for George Weidenfeld's Contact magazine but it was turned down - the magazine wanted reportage. Politics and the English Language was Orwell's last major article for Horizon.[1]

Orwell said that political prose was formed "**to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind**". Orwell believed that, because this writing was intended to hide the truth rather than express it, the language used was necessarily vague or meaningless. This unclear prose was a "contagion" which had spread even to those who had no intent to hide the truth, and it concealed a writer's thoughts from himself and others.[2] **Orwell encourages concreteness and clarity instead of vagueness, and individuality over political conformity.** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_and_the_English_Language

"Politics and the English Language" by George Orwell 4 Questions plus 2

A scrupulous writer, in every sentence that he writes, will ask himself at least four questions, thus: What am I trying to say? What words will express it? What image or idiom will make it clearer? Is this image fresh enough to have an effect? And he will probably ask himself two more: Could I put it more shortly? Have I said anything that is avoidably ugly? But you are not obliged to go to all this trouble. You can shirk it by simply throwing your mind open and letting the ready-made phrases come crowding in. They will construct your sentences for you—even think your thoughts for you....

In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible. Things like the continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, **the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face**, and which do not square with the professed aims of political parties. Thus **political language has to consist largely of euphemism**, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. Defenseless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside....

But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought. A bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation, even among people who should and do know better....

But one can often be in doubt about the effect of a word or a phrase, and one needs rules that one can rely on when instinct fails. I think the following rules will cover most cases:

- 1) **Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.**
- 2) **Never use a long word where a short one will do.**
- 3) **If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.**
- 4) **Never use the passive where you can use the active.**
- 5) **Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.**
- 6) **Break any of these rules sooner than say anything barbarous.**

These rules sound elementary, and so they are, but they demand a deep change of attitude in anyone who has grown used to writing in the style now fashionable.

<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks03/0300011h.html#part42>

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