

On Euphemism

One of the most unfortunate components of language is euphemism. The creation and use of euphemism seems mostly a dastardly act, to fool others into agreeing with something which should be held in contempt. George Orwell called it “newspeak” in his book, *1984*. Inflicting pain through violence on children is morally outrageous, but “spanking” is not. Devaluing people’s hard-earned savings through counterfeiting is scandalous, but “central banking” is not. Others assuming coercive power to decide the course of your life and property offends the sensibilities of civilized people, but “democracy” does not. Lying is shameful, but using euphemisms is the mark of social grace. I can’t recall who said it, but I agree: the first step toward wisdom is destroying euphemism. Have you been fooled? And that’s today’s two cents.