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POX by Michael Parson

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Prox regular - 16pt Parsons was Winston's fellowemployee at the Ministry of Truth. He was a fattish but active man of paralysing stupidity, a mass of imbecile enthusiasms — one of those completely unquestioning, devoted drudges on whom,

PROX REGULAR - 10pt Parsons was Winston's fellow-employee at the Ministry of Truth. He was a fattish but active man of paralysing stupidity, a mass of imbecile enthusiasms — one of those completely unquestioning, devoted drudges on whom, more even than on the Thought Police, the stability of the Party depended.

> At thirtyfive he had just been unwillingly evicted from the Youth League, and before graduating into the Youth League he had managed to stay on in the Spies for a year beyond the statutory age. At the Ministry he was employed in some subordinate post for which intelligence was not required, but on the other hand he was a leading figure on the

An overpowering smell of sweat, a sort of unconscious testimony to the strenuousness of his life, followed him about wherever he went, and even remained behind him after he had gone. 'Have you got a spanner?' said Winston, fiddling with the nut on the anglejoint. 'A spanner,' said Mrs Parsons, immediately becoming invertebrate. 'I don't know, I'm sure. Perhaps the children -

There was a trampling of boots and another blast on the comb as the children charged into the living-room. Mrs Parsons brought the spanner. Winston let out the water and disgustedly removed the clot of human

At this tyrive he had just be PROX REGULAR 10pt unwillingly evicted from the Leaque, and before graduati

the Youth League he had ma stay on in the Spies for a y the statutory age. At the M was employed in some subo post for which intelligence v required, but on the other I was a leading figure on the Committee and all the other engaged in organizing comm spontaneous demonstrations campaigns, and voluntary a generally. He would inform y quiet pride, between whiffs

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He cleaned his fingers as best he could in the cold water from the tap and went back into the other room.

'Up with your hands!' yelled a savage voice. A handsome, tough-looking boy of nine had popped up from behind the table and was menacing him with a toy automatic pistol, while his small sister, about two years younger, made the same gesture with a fragment of wood.

Both of them were dressed in the blue shorts, grey shirts, and red neckerchiefs which were the uniform of the Spies. Winston raised his hands above his head, but with an uneasy feeling, so vicious was the boy's demeanour, that it was not altogether a game.

'You're a traitor!' yelled the boy. 'You're a thought-criminal! You're a Eurasian spy! I'll shoot you, I'll vaporize you, I'll send you to the salt mines!' Suddenly they were both leaping round him, shouting 'Traitor!' and 'Thoughtcriminal!' the little girl imitating her brother in every movement. It was somehow slightly frightening, like the gambolling of tiger cubs which will soon grow up into man-eaters. There was a sort of calculating ferocity in the boy's eye, a quite evident desire to hit or kick Winston and a consciousness of being very nearly big enough to

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The quacking voice from the next ta temporarily silenced during the Ministi announcement, had started up again, loud as ever. For some reason Wins suddenly found himself thinking of I Parsons, with her wispy hair and the a in the creases of her face.

Within two years those children would denouncing her to the Thought Police. Mrs Parsons would be vaporized. Sy would be vaporized. Winston would vaporized. O'Brien would be vaporiz Parsons, on the other hand, would ne be vaporized. The eyeless creature with quacking voice would never be vaporiz The little beetle-like men who scuttle nimbly through the labyrinthine corrid

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FICTION

dust in the creases of her face.

Police.

The quacking voice from the next table, the girl with dark hair, the girl from the **temporarily silenced during the Ministry's** Fiction Department — she would never be announcement, had started up again, as vaporized either. It seemed to him that he loud as ever. For some reason Winston knew instinctively who would survive and suddenly found himself thinking of Mrs who would perish: though just what it was Parsons, with her wispy hair and the that made for survival, it was not easy to say.

Within two years those children would At this moment he was dragged out of his **be denouncing her to the Thought** reverie with a violent jerk. The girl at the next table had turned partly round and was Mrs Parsons would be vaporized. Syme would looking at him. It was the girl with dark hair. be vaporized. Winston would be vaporized. She was looking at him in a sidelong way, O'Brien would be vaporized. Parsons, on the but with curious intensity. The instant she other hand, would never be vaporized. The caught his eye she looked away again. The eyeless creature with the quacking voice sweat started out on Winston's backbone. A would never be vaporized. The little beetle- horrible pang of terror went through him. It like men who scuttle so nimbly through was gone almost at once, but it left a sort the labyrinthine corridors of Ministries of nagging uneasiness behind. Why was she they, too, would never be vaporized. And watching him? Why did she keep following

Parsons was Winston's fellowemployee at the Ministry of Truth

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him about? Unfortunately he could not remember whether she had already been at the table when he arrived, or had come there afterwards. But yesterday, at any rate, during the Two Minutes Hate, she had sat immediately behind him when there was no apparent need to do so. Quite likely her real object had been to listen to him and make sure whether he was shouting loudly enough. His earlier thought returned to him: probably she was not actually a member

So did the fact of having very few words to choose from. Relative to our own, the Newspeak vocabulary was tiny, and new ways of reducing it were constantly being devised. Newspeak, indeed, differed from most 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. Ultimately it was hoped to make articulate speech issue from the larynx without involving the higher brain centres at all. This aim was frankly admitted in the Newspeak word duckspeak, meaning ' to quack like a duck'.

Like various other words in the B vocabulary, duckspeak was ambivalent in meaning. Provided that the opinions which were quacked out were orthodox ones, it implied nothing but praise, and when The Times referred to one of the orators of the Party as a doubleplusgood duckspeaker it was paying a warm and valued compliment.

The C vocabulary.

The C vocabulary was supplementary to the others and consisted entirely of scientific and technical terms. These resembled the scientific terms in use today, and were constructed from the same roots, but the usual care was taken to define them rigidly and strip them of undesirable meanings. They followed the same grammatical rules as the words in the other two vocabularies. Very few of the C words had any currency either in everyday speech or in political speech. Any scientific worker or technician could find all the words he needed in the list devoted to his own speciality, but he seldom had more than a smattering of the words occurring in the other lists. Only a very few words were common to all lists, and there was no vocabulary expressing the function of Science as a habit of mind, or a method of thought, irrespective of its particular branches. There was, indeed, no word for 'Science', any meaning that it could possibly bear being already sufficiently covered by the word Ingsoc. From the foregoing account it will be seen that in Newspeak the expression of unorthodox opinions, above a very low level, was well-nigh impossible. It was of course possible to utter heresies of a very crude kind, a

species of blasphemy. It would have been possible, for example, to say Big Brother is ungood. But this statement, which to an orthodox ear merely conveyed a self-evident absurdity, could not have been sustained by reasoned argument, because the necessary words were not available. Ideas inimical to Ingsoc could only be entertained in a vague wordless form, and could only be named in very broad terms which lumped together and condemned whole groups of heresies without defining them in doing so. One could, in fact, only use Newspeak for unorthodox purposes by illegitimately translating some of the words back into Oldspeak. For example, All mans are equal was a possible Newspeak sentence, but only in the same sense in which All men are redhaired is a possible Oldspeak sentence. It did not contain a grammatical error, but it expressed a palpable untruth-i.e. that all men are of equal size, weight, or strength. The concept of political equality no longer existed, and this secondary meaning had accordingly been purged out of the word equal. 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 vaished. A person growing up with Newspeak as his sole language would no more know that equal had once had the secondary meaning of 'politically equal', or that free had once meant 'intellectually free', than for instance, a person who had never heard of chess would be aware of the secondary meanings attaching to queen and rook.

There would be many crimes and errors which it would be beyond his power to commit, simply because they were nameless and therefore unimaginable. And it was to be foreseen that with the passage of time the distinguishing characteristics of Newspeak would become more and more pronounced — its words growing fewer and fewer, their meanings more and more rigid, and the chance of putting them to improper uses always diminishing.

When Oldspeak had been once and for all superseded, the last link with the past would have been severed. 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. It was impossible to translate any passage of Oldspeak into Newspeak unless it either referred to some technical process or some very simple everyday action, or was already orthodox (goodthinkful would be the NewsPeak expression) in tendency. In practice this meant that no book written before approximately 1960 could be translated as a whole.

Pre-revolutionary literature could only be

subjected to ideological translation—that is, alteration in sense as well as language. 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. A full translation could only be an ideological translation, whereby Jefferson's words would be changed into a panegyric on absolute government.

A good deal of the literature of the past was, indeed, already being transformed in this way. Considerations of prestige made it desirable to preserve the memory of certain historical figures, while at the same time bringing their achievements into line with the philosophy of Ingsoc. Various writers, such as Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Byron, Dickens, and some others were therefore in process of translation: when the task had been completed, their original writings, with all else that survived of the literature of the past, would be destroyed.

These translations were a slow and difficult business, and it was not expected that they would be finished before the first or second decade of the twentyfirst

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Fiction Department beetle **LABYRINTHE** face **MINISTRY** 1984

PIOX by Michael Parson

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