

Industry and Academic Biotechnology: teaching students the art of Doublespeak

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Academics generally take pride in making effective, articulate, well-reasoned arguments. Skill in both written and oral expression reflects an in-depth understanding of the nuances of the language of choice. Increasingly, however, language is being misused by some academics, intentionally and overtly, to achieve goals at variance with those of academia.

I speak of the encroachment into academia of a genre of discourse which I will call 'doublespeak', a term which will be explained below. Evidence of the widespread adoption of doublespeak as standard policy by industry and government will provide a foundation for more detailed coverage of its adoption by some professors, and more alarmingly, by students under their guidance. I focus specifically on the students, because their involvement illustrates the progressive, pervasive infiltration of the values of the proponents of doublespeak into Canadian universities. The values borne by these doublespeak apprentices will influence not simply the future professoriate, but the place of academia in society in general.

What is 'Doublespeak'?

The term 'doublespeak', as used in this paper, draws inspiration from the terms Newspeak and Doublethink coined in Orwell's chillingly prescient novel, 1984.

Newspeak is intended to replace conventional English (Oldspeak), by allowing only words that pertain to proper thoughts. Screening the dictionary regularly to eliminate undesirable words - words which might have unorthodox meanings - was expected to control thought itself.

"Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought?... Has it ever occurred to you, Winston, that by the year 2050, at the very latest, not a single human being will be alive who could understand such a conversation as we are having now?... The whole climate of thought will be different. In fact, there will be no thought, as we understand it now. Orthodoxy means not thinking—not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness." (Orwell, 1949)

Doublethink is an ideology of acceptance of intentional and perpetual fabrication. Everything is subject to continual revision and reinterpretation by the Ministry of Truth, inculcating the citizenry to acknowledge contradiction as a normal part of life.

"Winston sank his arms to his sides and slowly refilled his lungs with air. His mind slid away into the labyrinthine world of doublethink. To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them, to use logic against logic ...to forget whatever it was necessary

to forget, then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it was needed, and then promptly to forget it again: and above all, to apply the same process to the process itself. That was the ultimate subtlety: consciously to induce unconsciousness, and then, once again, to become unconscious of the act of hypnosis you had just performed. Even to understand the word 'doublethink' involved the use of doublethink” (Orwell, 1949).

Doublespeak. The new term doublespeak combines these two terms, as:

Doublespeak: expression intended to deceive, to mislead, and to control, using not simply words but orchestrated strategies of contradiction.

One example might be the following, from a tenured Assistant Professor at a Canadian university. Why this is doublespeak will be made clear later in this paper:

“In the midst of all of this confusion over GE foods, there has been an abandonment of educational leadership.... Lamentably, these people are not doing what they are paid to do: to think critically and provide well-informed decisions. scientists abdicate their leadership responsibilities and leave students to form their opinions in a sea of websites, conversations rooted in caffeine-stimulated intuition, and conspiracy-theory speculations.”

Industrial Applications of Doublespeak

Some industries have found it prudent to manipulate the public, including government, to safeguard profit-making opportunities. This is particularly true for corporations engaging in business practices which might not withstand public scrutiny. To control public access to information, it has become standard practice for such corporations to employ firms specializing in what is euphemistically called public relations (PR) - or more bluntly, doublespeak. For example, Monsanto hired two PR people to attend the trial of Percy Schmeiser, a Saskatchewan canola grower being sued by Monsanto for patent infringement (see below, under **Student Doublespeak**). Their job included speaking to the press during court breaks, to provide Monsanto's version of the proceedings, and distributing press releases summarizing the salient points of the favorable testimony of Monsanto's chief witnesses as soon as they finished testifying, but before they were cross-examined.

The Father of PR. Much of the art of contemporary doublespeak traces back to **Edward Bernays**, who was the son of Sigmund Freud's sister, and reportedly, a man of enormous ego and incessant self-promotion. Among his many lasting contributions was a book published in 1928, unabashedly entitled Propaganda. A quote gives both the flavor of the man and the foundational assumption of the contemporary doublespeak industry:

“The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country...” (cited from Rampton and Stauber, 2002)

Applications of his thinking, both by himself and by more contemporary players, are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Applications of Bernays' philosophy on PR (adapted from Rampton and Stauber, 2002)

Who (for Whom)	Strategy	Tactic	Proximal Approach	Distal Intent	How Exposed
Edward Bernays (American Tobacco Co.)	to get women to smoke	to use cigarettes as symbolic of the women's liberation movement	encouraged debutantes to march in the 1929 NY Easter Sunday parade, smoking cigarettes - for which he coined the term 'torches of liberty'	to convert socially unacceptable behavior into something admirable to women of the era: defiant independence	
Edelman Public Relations Worldwide (Microsoft)	to oppose anti-trust investigations in 11 states	to give the appearance of public support	planted articles, letters to the editor, and opinion pieces in newspapers as spontaneous testimonials	to create 'leveragable tools' for the company's lobbyists, in the form of a dossier of positive press clippings	an anonymous whistle-blower released a large binder of confidential documents to the LA Times
		to lend professional credibility	placed full page ads "Open Letter to President Clinton from 240 Economists", from the <i>Independent Institute</i> - surreptitiously funded by Microsoft	to obscure the issues and deflect blame to others	second set of leaked documents, to the NYT (actually generated through dumpster diving by a rival PR firm)

The Timberlands Debacle. PR firms employ a range of doublespeak methods, as detailed in a new text by Deegan (2001). A representative repertoire is seen in the work of the PR firm *Shandwick New Zealand* on behalf of their client *Timberlands West Coast Ltd.* (Hager and Burton, 1999). Timberlands is owned by the N.Z. government, and is responsible for logging N.Z. forests. Environmental groups sought to protect remaining old growth, native forest lands on the west coast of the South Island of N.Z. Documents leaked by an insider afford unusually frank insights into an 8-year counter-campaign orchestrated by Shandwick, at the behest of Timberlands (Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of the documented doublespeak tactics employed by Shandwick on behalf of Timberlands in an 8-year anti-environmentalist campaign (adapted from Hager and Burton, 1999)

1	attempt to discredit and marginalise opponents publicly, using specific value-laden words such as <i>eco-terrorist</i> , <i>misinformation</i> , and <i>extremist</i>
2	send ‘moles’ to attend conservation group meetings to source information/discredit them
3	photograph and videotape participants in anti-logging protests, and track, monitor, and respond to every letter to the editor, public comment, or innuendo; always ‘have the last word’
4	threaten protesters with legal action (analogous to SLAPPS ¹ used in the US)
5	seek to identify financial weaknesses in critics and undermine sources of funding
6	screen journalists writing unfavorable articles and apply pressure/complain to editors; provide lavish opportunities for site visits to sympathetic journalists and politicians
7	write school principals whose students were involved in a protest, threatening legal action
8	pressure an environmentalist academic/complain to vice-chancellor of her university; provide modest funding to other academics, then employ them for credibility (see Third Party Technique, below)
9	create a front group, to appear to represent community interests; fund a range of community activities, especially sporting events, to generate public support
10	ghost-write letters to the editor, to be signed by local residents
11	exaggerate statistics on logging and employment
12	physically destroy a treetop protest site by helicopter, to intimidate protestors
13	repeatedly remove protester graffiti, each time it reappears
14	divide and conquer environmental groups/misrepresent importance of those sympathetic to the cause

Third Party Technique. This method deserves special emphasis, because it has become so popular with some academics. Rampton and Stauber (2002) describe the ‘third party technique’ in the words of Merrill Rose, executive VP of the Porter/Novelli PR organization:

“to put your words in someone else’ mouth”

The advantages of the third party technique are many:

☛ it offers camouflage, hides vested interests, and lends credibility

¹Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation

- ☞ it encourages conformity to a vested interest while pretending to encourage independence, and

- ☞ it replaces factual discourse with emotion-laden symbolism

We will return to these points in the section on **Academic Applications of Doublespeak**.

An employee of Burson Marsteller, the largest PR firm in the world, put it this way:

“For the media and the public, the corporation will be one of the least credible sources of information on its own product (and) environmental and safety risks....Developing third party support and validation for the basic risk messages of the corporation is essential. This support should ideally come from....political leaders, union officials, **relevant academics**, fire and police officials, environmentalists, regulators” (Little, 1990) (N.B. emphasis added).

Public Backlash. However, the behind-the-scenes efforts of PR firms have become increasingly transparent, leading to negative public perceptions. In 1999, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the Rockefeller Foundation released results of a survey employing a *National Credibility Index* to ‘measure trust in a person advocating or espousing a position’ (quoted in Rampton and Stauber, 2002). PR professionals came 43rd out of 45, after ‘famous athletes’ and just before ‘famous entertainers’ and ‘TV or radio talk show hosts’.

It does not seem implausible that similar disrepute will follow those, including academics, who employ the same philosophy. That is, of course, if they are exposed as such. The essence of PR - both within and without academia - is secrecy. As quoted by Rampton and Stauber (2002), ‘the best PR ends up looking like news’... ‘you never know when a PR agency is being effective; you’ll just find your views slowly shifting’.

Government Applications of Doublespeak

Richard Nixon’s ‘dirty tricks’ campaign is arguably the best known, but certainly not the best run doublespeak campaign. Government application of doublespeak is known by various names, including ‘public affairs’ and ‘spin-doctoring’. Donovan et al. (1981) stated forthrightly, “...in the real-life political arena, none of the participants...will behave in an intellectually honest fashion....(instead) will distort the advantages of their positions and the disadvantages of their opponent’s. They will shade the truth - first for their audiences; then in many cases, for themselves”. While doubtless always true, and not just in politics, doublespeak has attained new prominence with the tightening of industry:government linkages.

One example of government doublespeak in Canada relates to the unqualified promotion of GM (genetic modification) in agriculture. Freeze (2002) cited evidence obtained by Brad Duplisea through Access to Information protocols that AAFC (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada) and

the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) jointly allocated \$3.3 million over 5 years to promote the perceived safety of GM foods to Canadians, including \$2 million for direct mailings to households, with at least \$1 million in other communications. Articles reportedly ghost-written by the CFIA were inserted into *Canadian Living* and *Coup de Pouce* starting in July 2000, at a cost of \$302,000 (Abley, 2000). At least \$700,000 was funneled through the FBCN (Food Biotechnology Communications Network) located at Guelph - an organization which purported to offer objective information to interested consumers. Other ‘third party’ recipients of government funding to promote biotechnology were the Consumers’ Association of Canada and the National Institute of Nutrition (Freeze, 2002).

To cite a specific example of doublespeak, consider the wording of *Biotechnology in Agriculture*, a glossy color pamphlet jointly produced by the CFIA and AAFC (CFIA0012:1997) (Table 3).

Table 3. Analysis of doublespeak in Biotechnology in Canada

Quote from <i>Biotechnology in Canada</i>	Doublespeak Principle
The opening question, “ <i>What is Biotechnology?</i> ” is answered by “ <i>Do you eat bread, cheese, or use antibiotics? Then you have been enjoying the fruits of biotechnology</i> ”.	Framing the question in this way narrows the range of thought and encourages buy-in to the technology, by trivializing the very real differences between conventional breeding and genetic modification
The section on “ <i>How will Biotechnology Affect You?</i> ” claims “ <i>biotechnology will have major payoffs for Canada’s economy....it is creating opportunities for farmers, food processors and distributors, to sell new or improved goods in Canada...enabling farmers to achieve greater yields....</i> ”.	‘Creating opportunities....new and improved goods’ is attractive symbolism. In reality, roughly 99% of GM hectareage is sown to either herbicide tolerant (e.g. Roundup Ready (RR)) crops which promote dependence on proprietary herbicides, or insecticidal crops (Bt) of uncertain environmental impact. Benefit to consumers is virtually nil.
“ <i>Biotechnology Working For You</i> ” implies that disease, pest, and stress tolerant crops, nutritionally enhanced foods, healthier animals, chemical substitutes, and disease diagnostic kits are the products of biotechnology	Extolling the hypothetical, and as yet unrealized virtues of presumptive GM crops is more attractive symbolism. With quite modest exceptions, these claims have not come to fruition in the intervening 5 years.

Nowhere in the document, or for that matter, in any more recent government document, is there a hint of the significant, unanswered questions which have been raised in the refereed literature (reviewed by Clark and Lehman, 2001), by the Royal Society of Canada’s *Panel on the Future of Food Biotechnology* (www.rsc.ca/foodbiotechnology/indexEN.html), or through on-farm experience. Coverage is so one-sided that you’d assume government documents were actually written by Monsanto if you missed the small logo in the corner of the front cover.

The Canadian government fails to acknowledge - anywhere - that it has made no attempt to

document the purported advantages of GM crops - for anyone - apart from the proprietors. A hand-picked group of individuals was appointed by the Canadian government to serve as the *Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee (CBAC)*, with the mandate “to optimize the economic, health, safety and environmental benefits of biotechnology...”. To assist in their deliberations, the CBAC commissioned 35 separate reports, all available at their website (www.cbac.gc.ca). Of the 35, at least 14 deal with patents and protecting intellectual property rights. In the only one which assesses the costs and benefits of GM crops, Harley Furtan, chair of Agricultural Economics at Saskatchewan wrote:

“As of January 2001 there is no publicly available survey or data on how individual farmers have benefitted from the adoption of GM crops in Canada. Therefore, it is not possible to say how much economic benefit farmers have experienced from adopting this technology.”
(Furtan and Holtzman, 2001)

Is it at all plausible that the Canadian government would abstain from surveying farmers and publicizing the results if the crops actually did what had been promised - produced higher yields, reduced pesticide application, protected the environment, improved farmer profit, or fed the world's hungry? As a result of this curious disinclination, government is left with a vacuum of substantive evidence to justify annual expenditures of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to support the GM industry. Instead, they've reverted to increasingly desperate and transparent efforts at doublespeak - with the same effect on public opinion as that experienced by industry.

Public Backlash. As occurred with industrial applications, use of doublespeak has reduced the credibility of government ‘in the public good’. Government has failed miserably in its efforts to manage public outrage at being involuntarily obliged to consume GM foodstuffs. Bill Leiss (2002), who holds the NSERC/SSHRC Research Chair in Risk Communication at Calgary, was forthright in his assessment. He admonished the Canadian government against continued involvement in GM promotion, if they wish to regain credibility as independent promoters of the public good.

Academic Applications of Doublespeak

Orwell (1949) said ‘those who control language, control the debate’. With apologies to Orwell, I would expand his reference to ‘language’ to *communication* and in the present context, to *education*, namely, ‘those who control education, control the debate.’ Those entrusted with graduate education frame the research questions and methods which solidify the values of the students they supervise. And what some are doing today under the umbrella of academic freedom is actually not far removed from the proclamations of Orwell’s Ministry of Truth.

The chilling effect of industrial encroachment on academic freedom is increasingly viewed as a threat to academia as we know it. The withdrawal of ‘public good’ funding and the requirement for matching funds to access what is left effectively control the research questions that we can ask, and hence, the lessons our students can learn, as seen by the following dialogue in the

October 2002 issue of *University Affairs* (Toomey, 2002):

**Brian Ellis, Associate Director, UBC
Biotechnology Laboratory, and co-chair of
the Royal Society of Canada's Panel on the
Future of Food Biotechnology.**

“Its my conclusion, having watched the biotechnology scene over the past 15 years, that the universities have been remarkably quiet about these issues of regulation and the consequences of biotechnology....don't see any concerted efforts within the university community to begin addressing the related questions...health to impacts on our economic system, particularly in agriculture, but also in the health-care sector”.

**Alan Wildeman, VP Research,
and Director, Food System
Biotechnology Centre at the
University of Guelph.**

“The role of the universities is to pursue knowledge so that policies...are ...based on fact rather than on conjecture, speculation, purely economic motives, or fear mongering...all of that is going on right now.”

Unreported in the article were Dr. Wildeman's views on what - if anything -

any Canadian university, including the centre he directs at Guelph, is doing to address the substantive regulatory issues of the downstream health and environmental impacts of agricultural biotechnology.

Few cases are as obvious - or as contentious - as the November 1998 purchase (lease?) of an entire department at the University of California, Berkeley - the Department of Plant and Microbial Biology - by Novartis (now Syngenta). In a 5-year deal, Novartis paid \$25 million for first rights to negotiate licenses to patents on specific discoveries made by the department, as well as for 2 of the 5 seats on the committee charged with selecting research projects (Buchanan and Chapela, 2002). As a participant at the *International Workshop on the Ecological Impacts of Transgenic Crops* at Berkeley in March 2000, it was disheartening to observe a number of graduate students energetically papering the audience at our evening on-campus seminar with thick information packets bearing the Novartis logo. It is difficult to image a professor, let alone a graduate student, in this department even contemplating research into anything other than the potential benefits of GM products.

Industry interest in publicly funded institutions as venues for research may be fading. The £50 million, 3-year old alliance between Syngenta, the John Innes Center, and the Sainsbury Laboratory is being dissolved at the instigation of Syngenta (http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/news/pressreleases/02_09_18_jic.html). The John Innes Center is an independent research center, supporting over 850 staff and students. The threat that industry funding will channel university research away from societal needs and compromise the integrity

of the university as a source of unbiased information may subside if industry finds it more expedient to restrict its funding to in-house research.

However, the long-term legacy of industry encroachment may well be more insidious, as a result of professors who have chosen to become ‘the third party’, as referenced above. Of many contemporary examples, C.S. Prakash of Tuskegee University, who operates the influential *AgBioWorld* website established in conjunction with Greg Conko of the Competitive Enterprise Institute, is perhaps the best known.

The impact of such professors is prolonged and indeed exacerbated when they enact their third party role - replacing factual discourse with value-laden diatribes to camouflage and further the goals of external vested interests - through the very graduate students they are entrusted to teach. These are the students who will replace us and inculcate the next generation with the values and skills of doublespeak.

Based on his experience as a professor at Berkeley (above), Ignacio Chapela (personal communication, 2002) offered unique insights into the rationale for teaching doublespeak to graduate students. He noted that “targeting sophomoric students with a thirst for seeing their name in print has multiple advantages:

- (a) avoiding the exposure of advisors (both in the faculty as well as in the PR campaign),
- (b) lightening-up the style with rhetorical and stylistic daredevil jumps that more mature writers would not dare take,
- (c) providing easily "burnable" figures in case their statements turn out to be too damaging and
- (d) establishing a new generation of fire-tested and technically conversant proselytes for "the cause".

He concluded by adding that this is a “Great testament to the maturing of the PR (I think it is appropriate to call it propaganda) campaign”.

Student Doublespeak

Evidence that students are already mastering the art of doublespeak is not hard to find. Just one of many examples is an article posted 6 September 2002 to a Canadian university website regarding the case of Percy Schmeiser, a 71 year old Saskatchewan canola grower being sued by Monsanto. The article, which was also linked to the Monsanto website (<http://www.monsanto.co.uk/news/ukshowlib.phtml?uid=6671>) and has since been published in the National Post, was written by a graduate student emulating the distinctive writing style of the faculty adviser who was quoted at the start of this paper. A critical analysis of the student’s article reveals his efforts to use intentionally misleading wording, innuendo, and ridicule - the

standard tools of doublespeak - to discredit and diminish without actually addressing the substantive issues raised by the Schmeiser case.

Background. In a **29 March 2001** lower court decision, Schmeiser was found guilty of a) having Monsanto's patented Roundup Ready (RR) gene in canola on his land, and b) not advising Monsanto to come and remove it. A **4 September 2002** Appeals Court ruling (<http://decisions.fct-cf.gc.ca/fct/2002/2002fca309.html>) upheld the original judgement, and Schmeiser is now seeking leave to appeal to the Supreme Court. This is a major, precedent-setting case which will affect not simply the hundreds of farmers being charged by Monsanto with patent infringement. Although the patented genes are demonstrably uncontrollable, the farmer has been found guilty of their simple presence on his land. These findings bear directly on the whole issue of corporate patent rights vs. individual property rights.

Four selected quotes from the student's article are presented in Table 4, followed by the apparent inference or intent, the substantive evidence to refute the intended message, and finally, a short comment on the doublespeak principle being invoked for each quote.

Table 4. Detection/analysis of doublespeak in a 6 September 2002 article written by a Canadian graduate student.

	Student Text	Inference	Rebuttal	Third Party Doublespeak
1	<p>“Big-bad multinational Monsanto dragged Schmeiser into court after it was suspected that he had been growing a GE Roundup Ready variety of canola and had not been paying the licensing fees that thousands of other Canadian farmers had willingly paid. A Canadian federal court ruled in 2001 that he had indeed infringed Monsanto's patent.”</p>	<p>That Schmeiser intentionally grew and benefitted from something he'd not paid for</p>	<p>"The uncontradicted evidence of Mr. Schmeiser was that he has never purchased Roundup Ready Canola and has never signed a TUA² relating to Roundup Ready Canola. Monsanto had initially alleged that Mr. Schmeiser had somehow acquired Roundup Ready Canola in 1997 but that allegation was withdrawn along with all claims of infringement with respect to Mr. Schmeiser's 1997 canola crop." (Para. 18, Court of Appeal)</p>	<p><i>“Replaces factual discourse with emotion-laden symbolism”</i></p> <p>‘Big-bad multinational’, ‘dragged into court’, and ‘other...farmers had willingly paid’ are symbolic innuendos intended to leave impressions at variance with the facts of the case, as expressed by the Appeals Court judges themselves.</p> <p>Inferring that he should have been paying licensing fees obscures the fact that the gene had encroached involuntarily on his farm - and was in fact a nuisance rather than a benefit to him. Also ignored is the issue of patent rights over property rights, industry’s inability to contain proprietary genes, and the implications of same for farmers and society as a whole.</p>
2	<p>“Schmeiser has stood by his defense that the GE canola was blown into his field by passing seed trucks and then cross pollinated his crop, resulting in the detectable traits; at least until the a few months ago, when Schmeiser took a new tack, declaring that he had indeed deliberately planted the Roundup Ready canola, but that as a farmer, it was his right to brown bag seed or purchase it from a neighbour”.</p>	<p>That Schmeiser intentionally planted brownbagged seed (e.g. bought fraudulently from an unscrupulous neighbor, instead of from a seed dealer), and hence, denied Monsanto its technology fee</p>	<p>"Only the Schmeiser canola crop for 1998 was found to infringe the Monsanto patent. That crop came mainly from seed saved from the glyphosate resistant canola found on and adjacent to the Schmeiser property in 1997. However, the Trial Judge did not reach any conclusion as to how glyphosate resistant canola came to be there in 1997, because in his view it did not matter." (Para. 47, Court of Appeal)</p>	<p><i>Deliberate fabrication to encourage conformity to a vested interest.</i></p> <p>As a lifelong seedsaver, Schmeiser is a tireless advocate for the right of seedsaving and for seed sharing among neighbors as traditionally practiced in most farm communities around the world even today. He has never said that he obtained patented seed fraudulently or encouraged others to do the same.</p> <p>Endless repetition of allegations of brownbagging - which directly contradict the publicly accessible findings of the Courts - is reminiscent of Orwell’s doublethink. Either the student had access to information which was somehow missed by the investigative power of Monsanto, or the intent is deliberate misinformation.</p>

²TUA is a technology use agreement, which must be signed in order to buy Monsanto’s GM seed

	Student Text	Inference	Rebuttal	Third Party Doublespeak
3	<p>“Stompin' Tom Connors sang a song that if it weren't for copyright laws (not that Schmeiser has shown much respect for legally-protected things) would probably become Mr. Schmeiser's theme. A line of the lyrics reads: I'm a poor, poor farmer, what am I going to do? Now that he has been instructed to pay Monsanto's court fees of \$153,000, he really will be.”</p>	<p>That Schmeiser has not shown respect for the law</p> <p>That Schmeiser is getting what he deserves for breaking the law</p>	<p>Schmeiser is a law abiding citizen, with a long record of public service. He served as Town Councillor for the Town of Bruno from 1960 to 1963, and Mayor from 1964 until 1983. He was the MLA for the constituency of Watrous in the Saskatchewan legislature from 1967 to 1971. He was appointed to and served on the Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission from 1990 to 1999.</p> <p>He has no criminal record.</p>	<p><i>“Replacing factual discourse with emotion-laden symbolism”</i></p> <p>Publicly disparaging an opponent, particularly under false pretenses, is stock-in-trade doublespeak. As shown by the documented activities of Shandwick on behalf of Timberlands (Hager and Burton, 1999), practitioners of doublespeak feel no obligation to remain within the facts of the case.</p> <p><i>“Hiding vested interests.”</i></p> <p>Does undisguised gloating over the misfortune of others serve the interests of academia and society - the intent of academic freedom? Or, considering the Monsanto link to this paper, does it serve external interests whose goals may be contrary to societal needs?</p>

	Student Text	Inference	Rebuttal	Third Party Doublespeak
4	<p>“Schmeiser has been preaching a tale of corporate omnipotence, but only after getting caught with his hand in the cookie jar. His rants against corporate rule have nothing to do with the safety of genetically engineered foods. It appears that good old Percy, practical as are most farmers, wanted to use a product that worked but didn't want to pay for the technology.”</p>	<p>That Schmeiser intentionally used the RR gene for personal benefit (hand caught in the cookie jar)</p> <p>That Schmeiser's primary argument relates to food safety.</p>	<p>" His 1998 canola crop was mostly glyphosate resistant, and it came from seed that Mr. Schmeiser had saved from his own fields and the adjacent road allowances in 1997. Although the Trial Judge did not find that Mr. Schmeiser played any part initially in causing those glyphosate resistant canola plants to grow in 1997, the Trial Judge found as a fact, on the basis of ample evidence, that Mr. Schmeiser knew or should have known that those plants were glyphosate resistant when he saved their seeds in 1997 and planted those seeds the following year. It was the cultivation, harvest and sale of the 1998 crop in those circumstances that made Mr. Schmeiser vulnerable to Monsanto's infringement claim." (Para. 58, Court of Appeal)</p> <p>"The uncontradicted evidence of Mr. Schmeiser is that he did not spray Roundup on his 1998 canola crop. The Trial Judge did not say whether he believed Mr. Schmeiser on that point or not, because he concluded that spraying with Roundup was not an essential element of the alleged infringement." (Para. 29, Court of Appeal)</p>	<p><i>“Deliberate fabrication to encourage conformity to a vested interest, while replacing factual discourse with emotion-laden symbolism”.</i></p> <p>To benefit financially, Schmeiser would have to have sprayed the herbicide Roundup (glyphosate) to realize the only benefit offered by the patented RR gene, namely, simplified weed control. Monsanto did not contest his sworn statement that he did not spray Roundup. Thus, far from having his hand in the cookie jar, Schmeiser was simply the unwitting recipient of uncontrollable gene flow.</p> <p>The oblique reference to food safety - an issue which has never been central to Schmeiser's case - is an effort to deflect attention from the substantive issues which <i>are</i> central to Schmeiser's case. It may also be an attempt to rationalize why this article should be posted at a site ostensibly focused on 'food safety'.</p>

In the same paper, the student acknowledges having read the Appeals Court decision, “The appeal panel unanimously rejected all of Mr. Schmeiser's 17 points of contention, leaving only the Supreme Court of Canada as the last refuge for legal appeals”. Thus, the contentions in the posted article cannot be excused due to ignorance, and can only be interpreted through the lens of doublespeak.

Public Backlash. As has already been demonstrated with examples from industry and government, professors who embrace the principles of doublespeak are eventually exposed, to their discredit and that of their employer. In an article entitled *Rude Science* (Manitoba Co-operator. (58(46):4 21 June 2001), editor John Morriss reviewed the performance of a tenured Assistant Professor (e.g. A.P.) at a Canadian university.

John Morriss stated, "...at some point, (A.P.) morphed into a full-blown apologist for biotechnology, while still operating under his 'food safety' umbrella....More serious are (A.P.)'s aggressive if not vicious attacks on other scientists who dare to challenge his views. The National Post piece - as part of 'Junk Science Week' was a particularly offensive attack on no less than the Royal Society of Canada and the members of the panel it appointed to review food biotechnology....(A.P.) dismissed the report as 'a document that more resembled a Greenpeace hatchet job than a reasoned analysis of the science surrounding GM issues (and) aroused understandable outrage from this country's scientists.'..... 'This country's scientists?' Perhaps (A.P.) means all with the exception of the 14 scientists on the panel...including (one) at the University of Guelph.... apparently 'academic freedom' at that university allows trashing of your colleague's work in non-peer reviewed journals"

The article in question was co-authored with a visiting Irish journalism student now employed in a similar capacity at the CFIA³.

The Assistant Professor profiled in this editorial is the author quoted at the beginning of this article, who charged that scientists had failed in their responsibility to teach students to "think critically and provide well-informed decisions" - a particularly good example of doublespeak.

Conclusion: What is Education For?

In his provocative text Earth in Mind, educator David Orr of Oberlin College **asks 'what is education for'?** He notes that the various crises confronting the world today - ranging from global warming to shrinking biodiversity - are not the work of ignorant people. He refers to a similar observation from Elie Wiesel, who noted that the perpetrators of the Holocaust were the heirs of Kant and Goethe, among the best educated people on the planet.

Wiesel's explanation of 'what went wrong' in Nazi Germany bears repeating in the context of academic doublespeak today. Wiesel stated that the education of pre-WWII Germany:

"emphasized *theories* instead of values, *concepts* rather than human beings, *abstraction* rather than consciousness, *answers* instead of questions, *ideology and efficiency* rather than conscience" (Wiesel, 1990).

Has our curriculum today been informed and nourished by this insight? When academics commit themselves to proprietary research of no apparent redeeming social value, meanwhile teaching students how to discredit detractors through doublespeak, what *values* are we bequeathing to the future? Are students learning critical thought processes leading to meaningful questions, or are they rewarded for the speed with which they can parrot answers lifted from the electronic media? Teaching 'content' in isolation from 'context', and 'product' independent of 'process' has placed us perilously close to the values of Orwell's 1984. Unless and until academics acknowledge that doublespeak has no place in academia, let alone society,

³the CFIA is responsible for vetting the possible environmental impacts of GM crops.

regardless of how many overhead dollars it brings in, we cannot hope to step back from the precipice which awaits us, and our students.

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