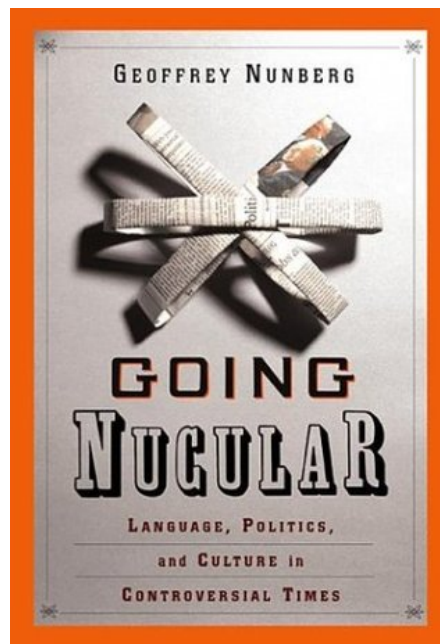




Going Nucular: Language, Politics and Culture in Confrontational Times

Geoffrey Nunberg

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The Fresh Air commentator and New York Times contributor artfully shows how our use of language reveals the true mindset of contemporary America. The words that echo through Geoffrey Nunberg's brilliant new journey across the landscape of American language evoke exactly the tenor of our times. Nunberg has a wonderful ear for the new, the comic and the absurd. He pronounces that: 'Blog' is a syllable whose time has come, and that You don't get to be a verb unless you're doing something right, with which he launches into the effect of Google on our collective consciousness. Nunberg hears the shifting use of Gallic as we suddenly find ourselves in bitter opposition to the French; perhaps only Nunberg could compare America the Beautiful with a Syrian national anthem that contains the line A land resplendent with brilliant suns almost like a sky centipede. At the heart of the entertainment and linguistic slapstick that Nunberg delights in are the core concerns that have occupied American minds. President's expense. Nunberg's analysis is as succinct a summary of the questions that hover over the administration's strategy as any political insider's. It exemplifies the message of the book: that in the smallest ticks and cues of language the most important issue and thoughts of our times can be heard and understood. If you know how to listen for them. Nunberg has dazzling receptors, perfect acoustics and a deftly elegant style to relay his wit and wisdom.

Going Nucular: Language, Politics and Culture in Confrontational Times Details

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From Reader Review Going Nucular: Language, Politics and Culture in Confrontational Times for online ebook

Marc van Bree says

An interesting collection of essays, covering a vast array of themes and topic. Most of them are interesting, some more than others, but all of them only scratch the surface and aren't nearly as in-depth as I would have liked. Pop culture linguistics.

Mary Whisner says

Delightful short pieces ("Fresh Air" commentaries and newspaper pieces) on language. I particularly liked the one about the negative branding of "liberal." Why is it that newspapers use "middle-class liberals" and "middle-class Democrats" with about the same frequency, but hardly ever say "working class liberals"? (That term is outnumbered by "working-class Democrats" about 30-1.)

Rebecca says

A must read for word nerds and those who take interest in culture and politics. Sprinkled with humor and astute observations, Nunberg's essays not only describe the evolution of various words and phrases, but puts in to context the new ones, bringing clarity to terms we hear frequently but never give much thought to in regards to their origins. Fantastic. I hearted it. -=0)

Stephanie H says

Going Nucular is an amazing collection of Nunberg's essays from 2003 on a variety of subjects involving media and political speech. He introduces a variety of new thoughts including the idea of "thinkos" expressed in his chapter "Going Nucular".

Although not as closely related to nuclear policy as one might hope given the title, it provides a wonderfully informative, often amusing account of political language. Moreover, it brings back memories of the Bush years and delightful SNL skits

Olga Werby says

If you find politics entertaining, you might want to check out how language is carefully chosen to make you believe and trust a particular politician or a campaign slogan. A book that highlights the use of language in politics is Geoffrey Nunberg's "Going Nucular: Language, Politics, and Culture in Confrontational Times." You will be thoroughly manipulated by the end.

David says

A phenomenal collection of Nunberg's columns on subtle contemporary uses of language. The titular example: Nunberg was one of the first to argue (among other things) that George W. Bush's stubborn refusal to accept the correct pronunciation is an effort to remind everyone that we have, colloquially, "nukes." Lot of fun observations like that, well argued and well written.

Irene says

It's a fascinating collection of short articles about how words are used in the English language, particularly how the connotations of words develop and change as Americans use them within specific contexts. Nunberg covers the gamut from politics (discussing the use of words like "freedom," "fascist," and "compromise") to business (contemplating the rise of "vision statements" and jargon like "best of breed" and "thought-leading research") to popular culture (defending the validity of "like" and the concept of blogs as an altogether new entity, not just an online version of a journal). Anyway, it's a really interesting and fun book.

Ronald Wise says

A dangerously enjoyable collection of the author's more interesting commentaries – from both radio and print – regarding the origin and/or evolution of how certain words are used in our modern discourse. It was enjoyable to read the brief stories behind many of the changes I've witnessed in my lifetime. The danger is that it brought me the verge of obsessively pursuing my own investigations into how additional manipulative verbal associations have been cultivated and employed since this book was published in 2004.

Many of the commentaries left me disappointed by their brevity, which was probably due of time constraints, as it appears most were done as a feature of the radio show Fresh Air. More disappointing was the fact that it was published before, and therefore doesn't cover, the monumental assault now underway on the vocabulary available for reasoned discussion.

Lars says

A quick, smart, fun read of Nunberg's columns and commentaries about word usage in the early 2000s. If you're interested in words, history, and grammar, I highly recommend this book. Important note: it's not that much about President Bush, and it lacks the invective you expect from the dust jacket description; Nunberg mostly remains politically neutral.

Nicole says

Going Nucular is a collection of essays and commentaries that originally appeared mostly in the New York Times or on Fresh Air (NPR), along with a couple original pieces, each about five pages long. This makes the whole book very light and enjoyable, and easy to breeze through pretty quickly, but nearly all the essays

are still very interesting and Nunberg is as always spot-on in his linguistic observations. There is a progressive bent, as in his other material, but it doesn't matter so much if what you're really interested in is language and how it's used both in the media and in popular culture in general. I especially enjoyed some of the commentaries on corporate culture, because you see less of this typically than of political stuff, but nearly every essay has something to recommend it.[return]The only really negative thing about the book for me was that because the pieces were all written between about 2001 and 2003, there is a very heavy focus on September 11 and the Iraq War (Afghanistan too), but that's clearly because that's where the media - and the public - has been focused too.

Pam says

Does President Bush drives you nuts every time you hear him mispronounce 'nuclear'? Think he's just a moron? Geoffrey Nunberg explains the real reason he says 'nucular'...it's more insidious than you think. This book is funny (not just dry grammatical stuff, although the author is a serious linguist) and explores what language reveals about our changing attitudes. Like, wow.

Jon says

Nunberg, a humanities professor and NPR commentator, sometimes gets too clever, as when he says we've gone "from courtly love to Courtney Love"--ah, don't go there, Teach--but as a rule he wears his learning lightly, making GOING NUCULAR an entertaining and enlightening experience for anyone interested in the current state of the English language. I prefer this book to his TALKING RIGHT, in which he makes the inevitable complaint about how Mike Dukakis should have responded ANGRILY to Bernard Shaw's question about whether he'd support the death penalty if his wife were raped and murdered. Personally, I thought Dukakis' reasoned response was the only admirable act taken by either major-party candidate during that whole wretched 1988 election. (And shame on Mario Cuomo for offering the obligatory ANGRY response when he was asked the same question.) Reading GOING NUCULAR, I noticed Nunberg and I share certain quirks, such as a distaste for using the word "beautiful." He's probably a fun guy to chat with over coffee or a drink.

Travelling Cari says

I read The Way We Talk Now [<http://bookcrossing.com/journal/3670450>] about a year and a half ago and quite enjoyed it. Have had this book for nearly three years and have meant to read it, just never quite happened. Picked it up the other night and have enjoyed it so far.

John says

Terrific short essays on the culture of language and the language of culture.

Connie says

Interesting essays on culture and language.
