

Learn how to really write

What arrogance! Does (my swell and esteemed colleague in the craft of writing) Alison Thomson mean to tell me I can't split an infinitive?

Fowler, in *Modern English Usage*, says "We maintain.... that a real split infinitive is preferable to two things, (sic) to real ambiguity, and to patent artificiality."

It seems, however, that even Fowler took the narrow neo-Thomsonian view of the split infinitive before Sir Ernest Gowers' revised *Modern English Usage*.

Fowler says in the earlier *The King's English* that the split infinitive is "an ugly thing."

But of Gowers, in *The Complete Plain Words*, is said, "Gowers wrote that the rule against splitting an infinitive is a bad rule, because it increases the difficulty of writing clearly and makes for ambiguity by inducing writers to place adverbs in unnatural positions and even misleading positions."

G.H. Vallins in his book *Good English* says "A word must be said about the split infinitive, against which the older grammarians were wont to thunder, and the avoidance of which is still almost a superstition with most of us. Fowler, protesting too much, tries to laugh the superstition away... and in his comments himself splits an infinitive 'pour

encourager les autres.

Even Strunk and White in *The Elements of Style* admit that the split infinitive has a rich heritage dating back to the 14th century.

"Some infinitives seem to improve on being split just as a stick of stovewood does. I cannot bring myself to really like the fellow the sentence is relaxed, the meaning is clear, the violation is harmless and scarcely perceptible. Put the other way the sentence is stiff, needlessly formal," they say.

Leggett, Mead, and Charvat, who wrote the Prentice-Hall *Handbook for Writers* (a standard for the U of A English department) say "There is nothing ungrammatical about splitting an infinitive and sometimes a split is useful to avoid awkwardness."

But certainly the last word goes to the lamented *Gateway* columnist Kirk Kirkwood: "Personally I think good grammar is pretentious. It certainly would be for me."

Basyl Evans-Smith
Grad Studies



Are your classes driving you crazy?

Well, here's your chance to get driven crazy by something else - by joining the Gateway in 282 SUB.

Valium not included...

Some people do study

I can't let Mr. Chamberlain's somewhat less-than-objective letter "So who studies here?" go unanswered. So where to begin?

Well, I haven't climbed a tree since this last summer, and have managed not to fall out of any, since I was first a wee squirt.

Okay, so that's out of the way. Second, I live in a house with a couple of other guys (which may qualify as a "hippie commune" in Mr. Chamberlain's opinion). The point is, these guys do rattle and bang around quite a bit and I need a reasonable level of quiet.

Mr. Chamberlain may live in a house of tomb-like silence, or maybe he's just one of those lucky people who can blot out CJSR, I don't know. For me, however, the library is usually the only place that I can get any work done.

Finally, why should Mr. Chamberlain care what time I study? He might like to go at it till 2 a.m. the night before the exam, but I couldn't give a cat's ass.

He misses the point of my letter: the posting on the door said open at 9:00 a.m. and an hour and a half later it still wasn't. Maybe the person who's supposed to unlock the door tied one on the night before or something, but that's still pretty poor performance.

There, that about covers it. If Mr. Chamberlain cares to spar further, I would be delighted to hear from him.

Louis Guilbault
Arts III

Slander invades the editorials

I would like to congratulate Mr. Soper and his running mates on being elected as next year's student representatives. It must, however, be a very hollow victory for them as they must realize that they did not win the election... Mr. Krause did. It must be a real power trip, Mr. Krause, to know that, all on your own, you managed to decide the election.

The poor journalism we've been getting all year is one thing, but your editorials in last Thursday's paper were beyond even the most remote realms of responsible journalism. Even the most politically biased of publications are not so blatantly and unfairly slanted as you were. And may I remind you, sir, that the *Gateway* is NOT a political newspaper. It is a paper for the students on campus.... all of them. Taking sides is one thing, Mr. Krause, but assaulting us with half a page of your version of the facts (not a very accurate assessment I might add) was more than just a dirty political move. It was an insult to anybody attempting to make an informed decision.

I for one, as a member of the Students' Union, and therefore one of your employers, demand

not only an apology to both of the slates involved in the election, but

also an apology to everyone who was subjected to Thursday's slander.

Elaine Keenan
Law II

Amazing lack of logic

Regarding the article entitled, "Naked man attacks woman in Ed" (by Nina Miller), *Gateway*, Tuesday, February 3, 1981.

Mr. Munro (E.O.C. chairperson), you are a magic man! That you can analyze the psyche of an 'unidentified' man and conclude so emphatically that his deviant behavior was motivated by a specific article appearing in the *Godiva* is truly exciting.

Not only have you impressed me, but I'm sure you have discovered something of great value to all mankind...

Perhaps this is an example of 'telepathic psychoanalysis.' Just imagine the deviants, murderers

and rapists we can apprehend by using your mind-raising techniques, not to mention their potential victims (we can warn them of impending sick acts by psychos).

I would be quite interested, especially, in learning how to differentiate various pornographic articles, that is, to 'know' which one causes a particular person to perform a certain indecent act.

Thank you for giving a Freshman the thrill of reading about such an astounding breakthrough in crime prevention.

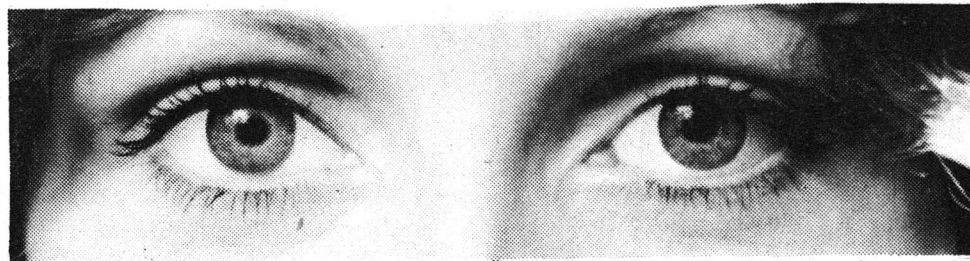
S. Preston
Science I

STAFF MEETING

Thursday, 4 p.m.

The Gateway Room 282 SUB

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