

DALHOUSIE Gazette

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Editorial

The evolution of correct usage in our native language, the English tongue, presents a very interesting study for the Philologist and the Semanticist. And while the continuing changes in our language take place the student of English is quite prone to display disgust at what is termed "sloppy English" or "lousy grammar."

Be that as it may, it is very enlightening to examine the evolution of language in a critical light.

For example: what would the beautiful language of France be today if custom had insisted on the continued use of corrupt Gaulic Latin?

For example: what would English be today if we still spoke a language as devoid of abstract nouns as was that of our Germanic forefathers?

Quite likely the universality, faculty and grace of the English language would, today, probably be nil if the masses and nations had not, in the past years, paid little heed to the fine points of grammar necessary to a structurally simple language.

The sole purpose of language is for adequate communication and not for determining social status. Communication in turn is for the purpose of creating co-operation and harmony in our lives. When the interchange of knowledge and ideas breaks down under a corrupt language it will then be time to worry about the niceties of grammar and syntax.

In our time, in all likelihood, the use of the subjunctive in English will disappear. It is rarely heard today. The use of the possessive pronoun with the gerundial form of the verb is another form that is rapidly dying out in popular speech.

In effect, what does it matter. No less an orator than Winston Churchill conceded to using the preposition at the end of a sentence and the great G. B. Shaw identified himself with the written form "I'm" for "I'm."

In this day and age when we are so apt at casting off tradition like an old coat it seems rather curious that we should cling to archaic forms in our own language rather than continuously adapt to the most widely used form.

After all is said no language is an absolute thing. And since for many years now we have conceded to the mass opinion, be it right or wrong, it might be interesting to examine our Victorian attitude toward perfect English.

"Nuclear Giants; Ethical Infants"

General Omar Bradley once said of our modern age: "Man is stumbling blindly through a spiritual darkness while toying with the precarious secrets of life and death. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than about peace, more about killing than we know about living. This is our twentieth century's claim to distinction and to progress."

It is comforting to know that our society has produced something of distinction, despite its dubious merits.

For those of us now at University it should give us something to think about.

"We know more about killing than we know about living."

Fascinating, isn't it, to think that all our science, scepticism, learning, studies and freedom of discussion has produced more knowledge of killing than of living.

Perhaps before it is too late, if it is not already too late, we should examine ourselves, not only collectively, but more particularly, individually.

Remember: it is the individuals who make up a society.

We Salute the Mighty Rink Rats

Dalhousie University has a unique student organization—namely, the Rink Rats. This famous organization was formed four years ago under the Council of Students, and although their name may not imply it, (no, they're not a bunch of hard guys) they undertook an honest project. This was the undertaking of raising the sum of \$10,000 to defray the costs of the well-known and popular Dal rink.

"Da Rats" have further provided that their name is an unsuitable one, as they have also sponsored many worthwhile events for the students. Among the highlights of the committee's efforts in other years, has been the annual Black and Gold Revue, a show full of the talents of various Dalhousie students. Two years ago Max Ferguson, better known as "Rawhide" and last year Audrey Farnell, who hardly needs to be introduced as a famous singer, were two stars brought here by the efforts of "Da Rats". John Sinclair, a talented Dalhousie student, who with his puppet "Sammy" fascinat-

ated us in shows for the past three years, may again appear on the Dal stage under this committee. Projects of various sorts aid the Rink deficit each year; such as the "do's" following football games, carnival dances and box socials. (The little women bring lunches to this dance, which are auctioned off to the gents, in case you're wondering if this could mean a fight!) This year, to mention but a few events, "Da Rats" have planned dances to be held in the Men's Common Room following football games (watch those football players, gals!) on Saturday nights, and if past years are any indication, they should be lots of fun. Now for instance, this coming Saturday night there's going to be a dance in the gym sponsored by the committee. There'll be a visiting squad from Mt. Allison, and there'll be smooth dancing to the latest records. (Incidentally, Mt. A. has gals, too!) The annual Gazette dance will also be taken over by the Rink (Continued on Page Five)

Look at Yourself

Perhaps one of the most important questions facing a new student coming into a University is that of Fraternities. To join, or not to join that is the question. What will I have when I am a member of a Fraternity that I lack now when I am not? Is it worth it? Will I restrict myself to a clique? These are pertinent queries that are asked, and it seems unfair to me to be vague and noncommittal concerning them. If you as an individual are thinking of joining a Fraternity it is better if you are aware of the significance at hand. This discussion will apply both to boys and girls.

Thousands of pages of printed matter have been written against them. Fraternities have been labelled as undemocratic, as exclusive, as choosing only those candidates of the middle and upper classes, as breeding race prejudice, and so on. What seems to be missing from their argument is that these qualities and traits of man exist wholly apart, whether fraternities are, or are not, present. However, I think the answers to the questions in the first paragraph remains for the most part within the individual himself, or herself, whichever the case may be.

If you are joining a fraternity for the social prestige, or to have a gang to chum around with, you have the wrong slant on things. You will not get the essential good out of fraternity fellowship. For the main idea in back of them is that any action of yours whether good or bad reflects on the entire fraternity as a whole and not only upon yourself as a single person. Therefore the selfish person and the egotistical have no part therein, for the self is placed secondary to the whole. One has to give as well as get.

The second question. It is worth it? Now this depends a great deal on your explanation of the word "worth." If you measure everything in dollars and cents that is one thing, but if on the other hand, you measure it in terms of its moral value that can only be answered by yourself. Do you need fraternity friendship? Can you see behind the remunerative values and see what it will give you apart from a dent in your bankbook? Can you deprive yourself a thing like a new formal or less of the "joie de vivre" to afford to join? If you see that personal sacrifice is impossible in the forementioned sense then you will not get much out of a fraternity. Thirdly you do not limit yourself to a few friends unless you want to.

Take a good long look at yourself and try to determine what you are looking for when you join a fraternity, and then ask yourself if you can serve others rather than yourself. Service to your fellow man is a principle rule of life. Can you honestly make the effort?

"And Shall Trelawney Die...?"

A Rational Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir:

And so the old order changeth. Initiation is sacrificed to the great Twentieth Century gods, Democracy, Dignity, and Uniformity.

It is not often I indulge the luxury of letters to the editor, but I do now claim space, Mr. Editor, to write a requiem on the passing of a little more color from machine-age life.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee gives as the ratio decidendi to forbid hazing, the Senate's thought that "hazing which inflicts personal indignity on any student is not in accordance with the true conception of a university."

As one who has received, administered, and observed initiation, with recent memory, I beg leave to give as my opinion that the 'indignities' to which Freshman are subject in initiation are neither directed towards being, nor considered by the recipients to be, attacks on the personality and individuality of the recipient.

They are, rather, in the nature of a pertinent reminder to Freshmen:

You thought like a child; you were treated like a child.

Now you will be treated like an adult; behave like an adult.

Initiation is the only test by which undergraduates can discover the mettle of newcomers. No institution is without these initial tests, if it be an institution of any standing. One needs only cite as examples the personal insults hurled at candidates for admission to Harvard School of Business Administration, or the abusive questioning undergone by students at certain medical schools. Yet these ordeals are not intended to harm the dignity of the individual. They are a means of testing the self-control and suitability of admission of persons desirous of entering institutions where the admission of undesirable persons would be harmful. The same psychological approach is used, perhaps more subtly, on persons apply for important positions in business life.

I submit that Dalhousie Student Body is an institution of standing and tradition, and, therefore, entitled to test the character and control of its new members. Students do not, of course, have a say in the admission of Freshmen. They do, however, possess powers of free association, and are entitled to the opportunity of deciding the character of new undergraduates, by means of initiation, before welcoming them into their various societies and circles.

I would go further, Mr. Editor, and maintain that initiation is beneficial to the Freshmen equally as much as to the student body. Undergoing the same ordeals, tempered in the same fire, the inhibited drop their masks, the aloof relax their vigilance, mutual curses lead to mutual feeling, and Lo! — a class is born.

What friendships have not been formed while pushing peanuts

The Last Lesson

"You are very ill, Master; have you one last lesson to teach me?"

"Yes. Look into my mouth. Do you see any teeth?"

"No, Master, not even the stump of a tooth!"

"Well, is my tongue still there?"

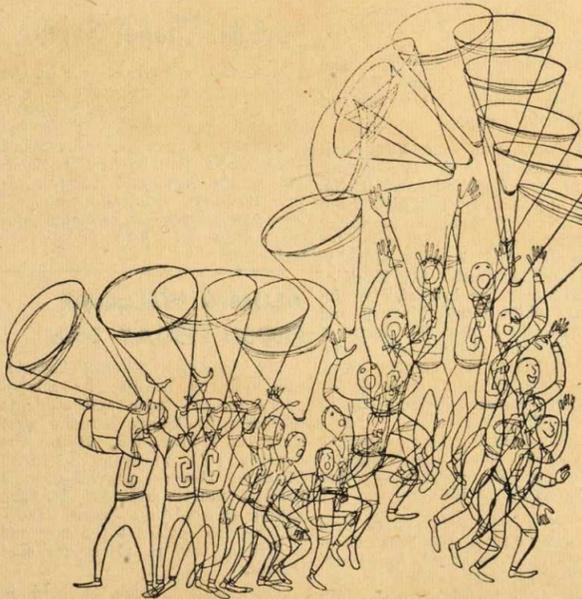
"Indeed it is, else you could not speak."

"And do you know why my teeth have long since ceased to chew, whereas my tongue still serves me?"

"Master, I cannot say."

"My teeth were hard. They bit, and sought to crush everything that passed. My tongue was gentle. It tasted of, and sought the best of everything that passed. There is nothing more to be learned of this world's affairs."

—China, 500 B.C.



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