

The Daily Tar Heel

78 Years of Editorial Freedom



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Word Overkill Creeps Into Daily Vocabulary

Journalists, as a rule, are good writers, but they developed one nasty habit over the years that is beginning to affect the sanity of the nation.

The habit is finding obscure words and then flaying them to death with overuse. The most notable recent example is "escalate". God help the naive writer who used "increase" or a phrase instead of "escalate".

Unfortunately, this overkill has crept into the colleges and into politics. The other day, I was sitting in a class and heard a student, in the space of about one minute, use the words "meaningful", "dialogue", "relevant", and "valid". It took me several minutes to realize that I didn't have the faintest notion what he was saying.

When you get right down to it, the student himself probably wasn't completely sure what he had in mind.

For instance, does "confrontation" mean an argument or simply a meeting? Despite its popular usage, the work refers only to a meeting.

Or "polarize"? Does it mean to slant or to gather about opposing extremes? Is a mandate an order or an autonomous state? Does rhetoric refer to one's philosophy or a showy use of words?

But what is far worse than the foggy and inexact use of these and other words is that they have come to be used as labels to designate political groups and schools of thought.

The exchange of ideas and arguments has been displaced by a trading of stock words and phrases.

Those who disagree with the present policies of our government are "dissidents" and "violence-prone, militant radicals."

Those who support the Nixon administration are "establishmentarian", members of the "military industrial complex", and the foundation of "the Silent Majority."

While the radicals urge confrontations and "meaningful dialogues", their elders

opt for a return to "law and order".

I am sure that if someone were to take the time to go through all the columns I have written over the last several months they would find that I have used all of the expressions above.

We are all guilty, to some extent, of this misuse, and I cannot claim innocence. But that does not mean we cannot make the effort to improve our language.

Despite the popular impression to the contrary, the various political factions of this country still have something to say to each other.

We must guard carefully against the temptation to barricade ourselves behind a wall of labels and clichés.

I received an anonymous letter the other day, accusing me and my generation of listening with one ear closed, of smirking benignly while claiming to be open-minded.

I don't think that is really true, I and most of the people I know are willing to consider every opinion and argument.

But we must make a special effort not to be curt or sarcastic if we happen to

disagree. We must avoid the impression of being bombastic and closed-minded.

We must keep the channels open for new and old ideas alike, for we, the people, must act in concert if we are to change the things in this country that need changing.

Perhaps one hope is to avoid the use of stock answers when we are questioned. We have a great deal to explain to the people who disagree with us, and explanations are best made using words that can be understood.

The slow but noticeable shift to the right among the majority of the people in the U.S. is perhaps directly connected to a large-scale reaction to the misunderstood motives of the New Left.

We have been shut out largely because we refuse to take the time to explain exactly what we want. We are not nihilists or revolutionaries. But we are impatient and our impatience has led to a lack of understanding.

It's easy to panic and cry "Fire!", but the only way things are going to happen is to pause calmly and explain our position.

Abortion And Creation

With the announcement this week that a British research team hopes to create the world's first test tube baby by the end of the year, we face a paradox in law and morality which ought to be resolved.

What this breakthrough entails is replanting the egg of a 34-year-old woman, which is to be fertilized in a test tube. The replanting is expected to take place within six weeks.

Mrs. Sylvia Allen is having the operation done because she has been unable to have children during her seven years of marriage.

With the exception of a few progressive states (North Carolina is high on that exclusive list) abortion is a hard thing to come by legally in this country. And even moving beyond the legal therapeutic abortions which some states do allow, there is a supply of doctors who will perform the task for a high price, and often with a high degree of butchery.

Now science has not only the ability to abort life, but also to create it. The fact that the majority of states in the country make it difficult to destroy life leads one to wonder how the law will respond to the breakthrough in the ability to create it.

There is a large area of opinion which is opposed to abortion because it is against God's law, or nature's law, or some other law—law, of course, being the eternal truth. Such truth, however, is at least disputable, and subject to disproof.

It is interesting to note that in most cases, the law of the land conforms to these various ideas of truth. Where law or morality deem abortion bad, the laws are going to make it quite difficult to have an abortion legally. And such laws are going to outlaw abortion in just about all cases, save the ones which will absolutely endanger the life of the mother.

(Hawaii has just legalized abortion in the latter case, which is a good example of how outdated some of our laws are and have been.)

But what about this new reality of creating life? Is that going to be immoral and thus illegal? That is, is the act of creation or abortion the thing which is bad, or is it rather the creation or abortion of life which is bad?

If either is wrong, as we might imply about abortion from the present tone of most state laws, then what is basically misguided is the right—inalienable and human, that is—of a human being to decide for himself whether or not he wants to have children.

As far as human rights are concerned, it seems to be out of the range of any government to dictate to the individual what he can or cannot do about living his own life.

If an individual wants to have a child, or if she does not, then there should be no law to prevent either alternative.

But such a likelihood is going to require that the laws begin to conform to the rights of the minority—the majority being that group which is pretty much opposed to breaking either God's or nature's laws.

Man has come to the point where he can control life. The laws are going to have to come around to recognizing that reality and giving the benefit of its powers to the individuals. Some control might also be in order to see that either the power to create or destroy life does not fall into the hands of those who would misuse that power.

For instance, it might not be such a good idea to have the government creating hundreds of thousands of people to act as soldiers in the armed forces. But it might be a good idea to permit women who are physically unable to have children to have them.

The value judgement involved in such a differentiation is, of course, nothing more than a value judgement. But then again, that is all we can be expected to make. A great power resides in the hands of man. He is going to have to make some decision about what is right and what is wrong. But whatever decision is made, it is going to have to insure that the rights of no faction of society are going to be damaged.

As abortion laws now exist in most states, the rights of those women who do not wish to have children after conception can rot. Such a circumstance is beyond the usefulness or the value of law.

Huck Finn had some thoughts on the values of right and wrong, applicable in this context:

"They went off, and I got aboard the raft, feeling bad and low, because I knowed very well I had done wrong, and I see it warn't no use for me to try to learn to do right; a body that don't get started right when he's little, ain't got now show—when the pinch comes there ain't nothing to back him up and keep him to his work, and so he gets beat. Then I thought a minute, and says to myself, hold on,—s'pose you'd a done right and give Jim up; would you felt better than what you do now? No, says I, I'd feel bad—I'd feel just the same way I do now. Well, then, says I what's the use you learning to do right, when that is—of a human being to decide for himself whether or not he wants to have children.

Jim Eldridge

Candidates Multiply; Rhetoric Reduced

Arnold Cravitz announced today as 4176th candidate for *Daily Tar Heel* editor.

Cravitz, a junior majoring in Celtic Languages, said he would appeal to the "neo-conservatively-oriented moderate student, with a liberal emphasis on issues pertaining to the ever-pressing needs of our tumultuous educational system."

The native of Cut Bank, Montana, said he was "wary" of making definite statements regarding his plans for the DTH, "because I'm sure those pinkos will misquote me or delete my important words and make me appear a bumbling idiot."

Cravitz did say he felt the DTH had tended to slant news, "especially sports stories."

"I can't read the sports page in the *Tar Heel* these days without seeing something about Dean Smith and that basketball team," said Cravitz.

"I think a little balanced news is what we need," he continued. "You know, a little more about the handball championships and Friday night lectures by visiting Celts."

Concerning his proposed editorial policy, Cravitz implied that he might totally do away with the editorial page and devote the space to "culture columns."

"In this way," he said, "we can cut down on a lot of this radical activity on campus. I mean, everybody knows that Chapel Hill is political enough without inflaming the issues on the editorial page of a paper that nobody reads anyway."

Morehead Residence College Vice-Social Chairman Claude Arbuckle joined the presidential race today by announcing his candidacy on the Unaffiliated Party Ticket (UP).

A second-year graduate student in the Department of Pottery and Basketweaving, Arbuckle became the 90th candidate to place his name on the ballot since 7 p.m. yesterday.

Arbuckle gained political experience in mayoral campaigns in his hometown of Fuquay-Varina and during last fall's SDS elections.

Hoping "to secure such necessities" as 24-hour 7-day-per-week visitation and free beer installed with each portable refrigerator, the father of three and fiancé of Lenoir cashier Sandra Marigold urged students to support him in the election but to also "support yourselves."

"Make your wishes known to the administration," declared Arbuckle. "If you don't like the system, change it. But do it through the proper channels; that's the way we got our juke box in Lower Quad. And that's the way change has got to come."

On the issue of compulsory subscription to the DTH, Arbuckle said that as Student Body President he would appoint another committee to study the situation and make a report to the Chancellor within three months of next year's elections for *Tar Heel* editor.

"For the present, though," he said, "I would advocate a position somewhere between the anarchy of the Committee for a Free Press and the blithe complacency of the DTH columnists."

As for specifically what that position was, Arbuckle declined comment, citing the fact that "a politician's words are often construed for something else than what they were intended to mean."

Letters

Sociologists Not Consulted

To the Editor:
In today's (Tuesday's) editorial you point out that if Mr. Eagles were really serious about the questionnaire being distributed to students re the food service, he would have asked for the assistance of members of the Sociology Department. In so far as I am aware, no such assistance has EVER been requested of us in spite of the fact that numerous members of our department are specialists in research methods. In fact, several are specialists in BOTH research methods and race and ethnic relations. Occasionally we are appointed as

NOTE: Dear Reader: These two candidates are obviously the most exciting thing to happen to campus politics since Bruce Strauss and the BSM almost annihilated each other.

While it is perhaps too early in the campaign to announce my support for

any one (or two) candidates, I feel that Cravitz and Arbuckle have seen through all the facades and red tape; and with clear insight into the issues, they offer the student voter not only a choice, but also an echo. And to top it off, a lot of bland rhetoric—something new to politics at Carolina.

Lynda Stedman

'An Old Love And A New Love'

"When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down
this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the
soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their
shadows deep."

W. B. Yeats

A clock ticked deep down some hollow passage of time. It viewed the room from atop its mantel place, its face marked antique by the angular numerals of its brow, its voice rusty from past rumblings.

The room was a timeless void peopled with china and old crochet, family photographs and figurines. All was quiet except for the clock's punctuations of each second that passed.

And except for the voice of the Matriarch so softly speaking.

She was talking of an old young love and of a new old love to her young

granddaughter.

"But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you."

The old love happened in 1908 when at 17 she had sat on the steps of a Hillsborough school house with friends talking and giggling girlish. A tall young man ambled by, surveyed her and announced to a companion that she was the girl he would marry. He did.

A small smile played with the musing Matriarch's mouth. "The sun never set when were angry with one another," she said.

They had set out back and breast young into married life to bear six children who would later produce 17 grandchildren.

They weathered the dry wind of Depression. They moved to a farm to work with the red Piedmont soil and make green grow from it. She baked big biscuits over a hearth and warmed bath water over the fire.

The clock was with them then, over the mantel during Christmas seasons at which time his business could never afford him. Still they managed to make things happy.

The young woman learned the life of Matriarch early when her husband was called to travel by his trade.

She managed nicely. The house. The children. She spotted them one by one in church and held their eyes with hers until they sat rigid in their straight suits.

Husband and wife lived together for 51 years. Then he died.

And she sat by the clock alone. She presided at the head of the long table of

family gatherings. She appointed a grace-sayer to bless each meal, then small and silver-headed she lifted her coffee cup for all to follow.

"And one man loved the sorrow of your changing face."

She met her old new love at age 70. She was properly courted, engaged and at seventy-one, she was married in a pale blue suit and spring flower hat.

They took a shady house near town, where the white headed lovers sat on the summer porch swing holding hands, passing time pleasantly. They proved that young is not a synonym for happy.

When the old gentleman became ill she visited him faithfully. She turned him tenderly in bed. Told him she loved him.

"I love you two times," he would answer.

The granddaughter listened loving to the stories. Laughing over reminiscences she could recall, imagining the one she could not.

The old lady's voice was slow now, quiet under the clock. But the words echoed active thoughts.

She had always been tall and grand with soft woman hands according to the girl's sources of images and pictures tucked away in the mind of a little girl looking up. How small she seemed now.

The girl took her grand mother's hand and led her down some steps. Her arm felt frail—her feet heavy.

The granddaughter stood thinking how small she was yet how much she was. Then she caught her reflection in the Matriarch's eye. She looked closer at the pupil to see if she could see her eye mirroring back her grandmother's image.

The mirror was infinite.

Americanization Of Laos

There is criticism growing, expressed Wednesday in the Senate, that the United States is turning Laos into another Vietnam, that our military involvement there is growing to dangerous proportions.

Spokesman at the White House, State Department and Defense Department refuse, however, as they have refused for quite some time, to describe the nature of American military activities in Laos or to discuss U.S. involvement in the recent military operations around the strategic Plain of Jars in

northern Laos.

Senate sources who have followed in detail the Laotian developments say the administration overcommitted itself in the campaign last fall over the Plain of Jars.

With Defense Secretary Laird warning us all of a North Vietnamese buildup in South Vietnam, we wonder who should be warning who of military buildups on foreign soil.