

Frontiersman

Facing the truth, however great the cost.

April 2024

The Power of Babel

Sam Aurelius Milam III

A member of my family recently commented to me that English is a living language. To call a language a living thing is a strange usage but, I admit, a common one. However, if the language is alive, then it doesn't seem to me to be in the best of health. Here are some examples of poor usage, in support of my diagnosis.

A deck is a floor on a ship. A floor attached to the back of a house is a porch, not a deck.

When my computer formats a drive, it names the drive "Untitled". Since "Untitled" is a title, the drive isn't untitled.

You can't go down an escalator. To escalate something is to increase it's altitude, its importance, or some such thing. The ones that go down are deescalators.

On the news, pundits and politicians claim that something is arguably true when they mean that it's inarguably true, which is the opposite of what they actually say.

A motor runs on electricity. An engine runs on the combustion of chemical fuel. Thus, the lubricant that's used in an engine isn't motor oil. It's engine oil.

On the nature shows, they talk about animals feeding. Animals don't feed. They eat. Also on those shows, they talk about birds being born. Birds aren't born. Birds hatch.

I heard some academics on a news program debating a literacy problem. Literacy isn't a problem. Illiteracy is a problem.

An internal combustion engine can have 2 piston strokes per cycle or 4 piston strokes per cycle. Thus, they aren't 2 cycle engines or 4 cycle engines. They're 2 stroke engines or 4 stroke engines.

Additional Reading

- *Ancient Mystery*, *Frontiersman*, February 2024

http://frontiersman.org.uk/2024/2024-02/2024-02.html#Ancient_Mystery

- *Milam's Dictionary of Distinctions, Differences, and Other Odds and Ends*, available in *The Sovereign's Library*

http://sovereign-library.org.uk/Main_Directory.html#Dictionary_of_Distinctions

- *Proliferation*, *Frontiersman*, April 2008

<http://frontiersman.org.uk/2008/2008-04/2008-04.html#Proliferation>

- *The Ravings of a Mad Man*, available in *Pharos*

http://pharos.org.uk/Ravings_Essays/Ravings_Essays.html#The_Ravings_of_a_Mad_Man

People are healthy. Food is healthful.

I saw a woman on a TV commercial claim to be a pet parent. Unless that mutt came out of her birth canal, she isn't a pet parent. If it did come out of her birth canal, then there are some questions about her sexual preferences and behavior. There's also a challenge to one of the fundamental tenets of biology, the idea that interspecies reproduction doesn't occur.

A house is a structure. A home is the place where you live.

There's no such thing as black-eyed beans. They're black-eyed peas.

The announcer on a reality show, preparing to announce the winner of her program's weekly contest, said that the audience had made their decision. An audience doesn't make their decision. An audience makes its decision or, alternatively, the people in the audience make their decisions. I sent her a letter but she still kept saying it.

I hear people declare that their dog is a member of the family. A family is a group of genetically related people. A dog is a pet, not a person. A dog isn't a member of the family unless, of course — see that item about the woman who claimed to be a pet parent, four paragraphs back.

Nearly without exception, people say "oh" instead of "zero". One term is a number. The other term is a letter. They're not the same.

An epicenter is the location, on the surface, directly above the subsurface source of an earthquake. The middle of something on the surface of the Earth is the center, not the epicenter.

When people think at all, they think in words. Poor usage and confused thinking tend to perpetuate one another. So, the supposed legacy of the mythical Tower of Babel endures. People are still misguided and confused. 🦅

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sam,

Hello. I pray you are happy, healthy and blessed.

I enjoyed your article “A Riot of Color”, Feb 2024 *Frontiersman*. The article was well put and smack dab on the point.

I’ve never understood why people think their color is superior, white, black, whatever. In a century we’ll all be different shades of gray anyway.

The groups who really kill me are the “supremacy” groups. In reality, 99% of the world has African ancestry blood in them, and 98% of the world has Scandinavian blood in them. So, there is no “supreme” bloodline out there any more anyway.

There was a teacher back in the 60’s or 70’s that did an experiment on all white children based on eye and hair color and discrimination. It proves how much “man” can be intelligent, but “men” are dumb as rocks because of “herd” mentality.

Anyway, have a good day. Bye for now.

—S. H., a prisoner

The theoretically possible number of your ancestors, as recently as the 1200s, was greater than the entire population of the planet at that time. So, theoretically, you could be descended from every person who was alive on the entire planet in the 1200s. See Genealogical Overkill, on pages 2 and 3 of the February 2011 issue.

—editor

Dear *Frontiersman*:

I believe that within two or three years, the United States of America may become a full-fledged, undeniable dictatorship. I believe that the trigger may be a major war, which will give the president (of whichever party) an excuse to invoke the infamous “Emergency Powers” Act. However, if this happens, it will simply be the culmination of a long trend, a drifting away from liberty, that began in the mid nineteen eighties.

“What?” I hear you saying, “Began in the 1980s? Authoritarian policies go back to the inception of the United States. And it’s uncertain that there can ever be such a thing as liberty under law!”

I know all that, but I contend that between 1975 and 1982, United States citizens enjoyed a strange bubble of relative freedom, and that foresaid bubble marked a crossroads. One part of that crossroads led to increased freedom, and the other part led to where we are now.

First, let me offer some historical reminders.

- By 1975, the civil rights movement had resulted in the repeal of most “Jim Crow” laws.

Current World Population
<https://www.census.gov/popclock/world>

Population Curve
<http://frontiersman.org.uk/Population/Curve.html>

- Nineteen seventy-five marked the official end of the war in Vietnam. Young people were no longer being drafted.
- The so-called “free speech movement” had culminated in the repeal or non-enforcement of most censorship laws. Sexuality was being discussed and depicted in popular culture in ways that would have been almost unthinkable a dozen years before.
- The Watergate scandal shocked the public and decreased trust in the presidency.
- The Pentagon Papers scandal had decreased trust in the honesty of the government.
- The Church Committee hearings revealed appalling and contemptible attitudes by the C.I.A., and other national security and law enforcement agencies.
- The Church Committee hearings helped to prompt the passage of the “Freedom of Information” Act, and other acts designed to render government more transparent.
- Finally, I remember those years as being a period in which people felt emboldened to be nonconformists. Many people felt that it was morally right to ignore minor laws, if it was for a “good cause”. While it may or may not have been a good cause, recreational drug usage was then very common in California, where I lived. Marijuana was the most popular drug of choice, but cocaine and L.S.D. were also common.

It seemed to me, at the time, that politics were on an ultraliberal, or even libertarian trajectory. If the whole U.S.A. had been like California, that might have been the case, but unfortunately, in other parts of the country, conservatives were working furiously to bring back “the good old ways of the good old days”.

For many people, Ronald Reagan turned out to be a tragic deceiver. He talked of peace, prosperity, lower taxes, less regulation, and less bureaucracy, but eventually, it became clear that he had no passionate interest in accomplishing these things. Anyone interested in the details of his administration should read “The Triumph of Politics: Why the Reagan Revolution Failed”, by David Stockman.

The net result of Reagan’s time in office was to increase the power of big business and the military, and to decrease the power of working class and lower class people.

I think that many average Americans in those days simply did not realize how selfish and arrogant the upper classes would be in fighting to hold on to power. →

However, the thing that “popped” that late 1970s, early 1980s bubble of freedom was A.I.D.S. Suddenly, sex could be deadly, and the resulting fear lent power to all of the voices preaching abstinence and submission to authority.

Since the Reagan era, society has been pervaded by a subtle but intense pressure to conform — to obey, to work, to consume, and to repeat the cycle. Since about 2006, there has also been pressure to conduct one’s whole life on line, via the marvelous medium of the smart phone. This practice leaves the individual without privacy, and without privacy, freedom is tenuous. So we tremble on the edge of a dictatorship, but apparently, all the frogs swimming in the slowly boiling kettle are perfectly happy.

—Sir Donald the Elusive

Your prediction of a dictatorship brings the Tytler Cycle to mind. Your observations about the pressure to conform reminded me of Brave New World, by Aldous Huxley, and The Tomorrow File, by Lawrence Sanders.

—editor

Blowin’ in the Wind

Sam Aurelius Milam III

When I was seven years old, and due to a medical situation in the family, I had to live temporarily with my grandparents. While I was living there, I had a cavity in one of my teeth filled. My parents weren’t available at the time, and my grandparents didn’t know if I was allergic to the anesthetic. So, the decision was made to fill the cavity without the use of an anesthetic. I can still remember my grandmother holding my arms down. I can still remember the dentist working on me with one of his legs thrown over my waist, holding me in the chair. I don’t remember how they held my mouth open or how they immobilized my head. After the procedure, as my grandmother and I were walking out through the waiting room, I was ashamed because I knew that all of those people had been listening to me scream.

Many of the hospitals in Gaza have been destroyed by the Israeli bombardment. Others have been disabled by the siege. They no longer have the facilities and supplies that we normally expect hospitals to have. Patients often have to lay on the floors, and a lack of anesthetic is commonly reported. I saw, on one of the news programs, an interview with a doctor in Gaza who reported that he’d amputated a little girl’s leg with a kitchen knife, without any anesthetic. He said that she screamed during the entire procedure.

My experience with the dentist was minor, compared to the little girl’s amputation. The

Hey Sam,

I hope this finds you well out there in the free world. But my friend as you can see I am still in here fighting for my freedom, and I’ve now been locked up 24-years! And I am 10-years past my 2014 T.E. date to be released because the [*prison name omitted*] began a new policy 2-years ago to stop giving us prisoners in the max any class, and we must be at least class #2, in order for us to be eligible to see the parole board to go home. And this is why we have such severe prison overcrowding problems here in [*state name omitted*].

And the quality of the food they give us to eat continues to get worse with each passing day. And if they can’t afford to feed us then they need to send us home.

Hey I read that some prisoners are now filing federal lawsuits against their state prisons demanding that they be paid minimum wage for their work. Besides, slavery is supposed to be against the law....

—H. L., a prisoner

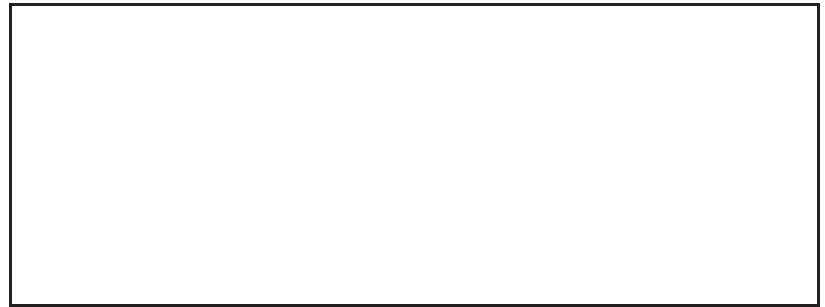
only reason that I mentioned my experience at all was for the sake of personal testimony. That is, I can verify that the influence of such emotional trauma isn’t likely to go away. I expect that, even with the best prosthesis ever designed, the little girl will probably be haunted by her experience for the remainder of her life. If she tends to avoid kitchen knives in the future, then who could blame her?

My experience was a consequence of what might be regarded as poor judgment. The little girl’s experience was a consequence of the reprehensible behavior of lunatics, fanatics, and tyrants. Every attempt to avoid such atrocities, and to achieve peace, understanding, or humility, has failed. The lunatics, fanatics, and tyrants have always intervened. Their behavior has caused ruin and agony around the world, and throughout the known history of human society. The conundrum is that we seem to be at our best when things are bad, and at our worst when things are good. Adversity seems to improve our strength and character. Easy living seems to encourage complacency, sloth, or decadence. If we ever actually became civilized, then the lack of stress and challenge might reduce our species to a such a state of indolence that we’d degenerate back to being monkeys. Maybe there’s a way for us to be good and strong, without being violent. Maybe there’s a way for us to have peace, without degenerating. I don’t know. If there are ways to accomplish such things, then I don’t know what or where they are.



Nation in Distress

A civilized culture plumbs
depths of depravity unknown
to a genuine primitive.
—from *Veruchia*
by E. C. Tubb



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Websites

<http://frontiersman.org.uk/>
<http://moonlight-flea-market.com/>
<http://pharos.org.uk/>
<http://sam-aurelius-milam-iii.org.uk/>
<http://sovereign-library.org.uk/>

Tips for Being Perceived as a Craftsman

Sam Aurelius Milam III

- Act like you intended for it to come out that way.
- Don't act surprised when it fits.
- Know when to quit.

Frontiersman

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Animal Questions

Original Source Unknown. Forwarded by W. F., of Idaho Falls, Idaho.

How do you put a giraffe into a refrigerator?
Open the door, put in the giraffe, close the door.

How do you put an elephant into a refrigerator?

Open the door, remove the giraffe, put in the elephant, close the door.

The Lion King is hosting an animal conference. All animals are required to attend. Which animal misses the conference?

The elephant. It's in the refrigerator.

You must cross a river that's the home of the crocodiles. How do you cross the river?

You swim across. The crocodiles are all at the animal conference. ∞

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—Sam Aurelius Milam III, editor

They decided to call it PMS because Mad Cow Disease was already taken.