

13043 Ventura Blvd.,
North Hollywood, Cal.
19th May 1951.

W. M. Read, Esq., Director,
University of Washington Press,
Seattle 5, Wash.

Dear Mr. Read;-

Following up the two last paragraphs of my letter of the 16th inst., to you and apropos of your general reader's objection to my "unnecessary use of formal words." I enclose herewith a news clipping from Time Magazine of the 21st inst., which I think makes interesting reading.

Evidently Professor David White is of the same mind as your general reader inasmuch as he ardently advocates writers should "strive continually for the simplest and most logical phrasing for the presentation of communication" and he argues 'formal' words "are not used often enough in ordinary conversation for the average newspaper reader to know what they mean."

With all due respect to Professor White, however, what most impresses me is the other side of the matter, i.e., the lamentable ignorance of the average newspaper reader and the failure of our educators to cope with the problem.

According to Professor White's own showing less than 20% of the "passer-by" men he interviewed knew the meaning of "Ubiquity." Four out of every five he queried were ignorant concerning a word which has been in use for many generations.

But worse still is his further admission that of "some 200 STUDENTS and PARENTS whom he asked what the definition was of "obfuscate" only 11½% were able to give the correct answer. Nearly 9 out of every 10 of these supposedly better educated classes lacked knowledge of the word!

The conclusion I arrived at is not to talk or write down to the level of the uneducated man, but to elevate his mind so he will know and comprehend a larger vocabulary. It appears to me Professor White is not doing justice to his opportunity in advocating the suppression instead of the spread of knowledge.

Years ago I was present at a club luncheon in New York when the guest speaker was a man, whose name I forget, who had been a member of the Kerensky cabinet during its short time control of public affairs in Russia. The speaker was an educated and cultured gentleman and he held the luncheon audience

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