

MW Joseph E. Schon
Grand Master

Remarks given at the monthly meeting of the Manila Toastmasters' Club at the YMCA Restaurant on Sept. 19, 1968.

It was with misgivings that I accepted your kind invitation to speak this evening. Your reputation, for oratorical capability as for oratorical criticism, is such as to make the mightiest cower in terror.

So let me just confine my remarks to a few observations of my own which may be of interest to you, and leave the oratory to others more skilled in the art.

To my mind, one of the most pleasing sensations to be experienced is the effect on the mind of an artificer in words. The art of perfect expression of ideas through composition of words, meticulously chosen for exactitude of meaning, and euphoniously blended for effortless absorption should be the goal of every would-be public speaker.

The mind is always more receptive to harmony than to discord. We have all had the experience of listening to the symphony of words composed by a gifted orator. The impact of his individual words on the senses is no more than the touch of a snowflake, yet, when his composition has been played, the image that remains is as beautiful as a landscape under a blanket of newly-fallen snow.

Every word in a language is descriptive unto itself. But a word can not express an idea. An inept or boring speech is usually the product of a muddled mind. No number of words, no matter how beautifully spoken, can produce a pleasing mental picture if the idea, the target of

expression, is itself vague. Hence the long-winded speaker who relies on verbosity to create the camouflage for his lack of depth of thought, whereas a few appropriately chosen words could have sufficed had a clear idea been there to start with.

Has it ever occurred to you how many bruised feelings could have been spared had the thought been formulated before the words? Irresponsible use of words, usually attributable to an impulsive speaker, can inflict more unintended harm on the sensitivities of his audience than any amount of calculated effrontery, because his audience is off guard and therefore mentally defenseless.

The above thoughts are equally applicable to the written word. The successful journalist is one able to transcribe the intelligence of his eyes into an accurate verbal image through the medium of the printed word. This may not be as difficult to accomplish as the task of the orator. The journalist has at hand a visual guide — a ready reference — to keep his words focused on the image he wants to create.

In turn, the novelist has a much wider scope in which to make words work for him. His one original idea, the plot, is the only fixed target he contends with, but in developing this plot he may roam far afield in his quest for suitable supporting word images. His chore, I should think, is the easiest of the three. He has time in his favor. He can make end-

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titili at tiyaga ay maikalat ang ginintuang aral at prinsipio para sa kabutihang at kagalakan ng katauhan.

Dapat na ituring na kabanalan ng lahat ng Mason ang sinumpaang nilang tungkulin na itanim sa isip ng mga karaniwang tao ang mga maka-Diyos na aral ng Masoneria. Isinulat ng isa sa ating magiging na Bayani na: "Itinakda ng historia na ang Masoneria ay maging apostol ng pagsulong at ng kalayaan." At sa gayun ding paniniwala, ang Kap. na Marcelo H. del Pilar ay iminungkahi na "Sa Pilipinas, ang Masoneria ang siyang karampatang lider ng kilusan ukol sa ikatatubos ng ating Inang Bayan. Dapat na magpunyagi sa pagpapalaganap ng pagibig sa kalayaan, pagkakapantaypantay at katarungan. Ang lahat ng mga ito ay kailangang maikintal sa ating kaisipan, manalaytay sa ating dugo, tumibok sa ating mga puso at mailarawan sa ating mga batas." Iyan din ang matayog na mithiin ng Malakaya't Tinanggap na Mason. Δ

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less changes in his composition of words until he has arrived at the combination that describes the image as clearly as his talents permit.

To me, therefore, it would seem that the creation of an effective and expressive image, pleasing and descriptive of the thought or idea, by means of a suitable choice and composition of the spoken word is the more difficult to achieve. For the orator there is no opportunity to rephrase, erase or even to modify his words. They must be in focus at every turn or the clarity of the image would be impaired.

It is thus that I can readily appreciate the functions of this discerning organization. You are constantly improving the ability of men to express themselves, facilitating the communication of thoughts and ideas, and striving always to remove the mental or physical blocks to the achievement of this vital need in our society.

We all realize, of course, that perfection in this is impossible to achieve. None of us has ever heard the perfect speaker — nor shall we. But the closer we come to perfection, the more pleasant will become our relationships with others.

The more clearly we can communicate our thoughts to others, the more helpful and effective we will become in our society. Δ

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