Principles of Clear Statement

1. WHO? It should always be made clear who is addressing whom, and on the subject of whom.
2. WHICH? It should always be made clear which of two or more things already mentioned is being discussed.
3. WHAT? Every unfamiliar subject or concept should be clearly defined; and neither discussed as if the reader knew all about it already nor stylistically disguised.
4. WHERE? There should never be any doubt left as to where something happened or is expected to happen.
5. WHEN? There should never be any doubt left as to when.
6. HOW MUCH? There should never be any doubt left as to how much or how long.
7. HOW MANY? There should never be any doubt left as to how many.
8. INAPPROPRIATE WORD OR PHRASE. Every word or phrase should be appropriate to its context.
9. AMBIGUOUS WORD OR PHRASE. No word or phrase should be ambiguous.
10. MISPLACED WORD OR PHRASE. Every word or phrase should be in its right place in the sentence.
11. UNINTENTIONAL CONTRAST. No unintentional contrast between two ideas should be allowed to suggest itself.
12. DUPLICATION. Unless for rhetorical emphasis, or necessary recapitulation, no idea should be presented more than once in the same prose passage.
13. SELF-EVIDENT STATEMENT. No statement should be self-evident.
14. MATERIAL OMISSION. No important detail should be omitted from any phrase, sentence or paragraph.
15. UNFULFILLED PROMISE. No phrase should be allowed to raise expectations that are not fulfilled.
16. UNDEVELOPED THEME. No theme should be suddenly abandoned.
17. FAULTY CONNEXION. Sentences and paragraphs should be linked together logically and intelligibly.
18. MISPUNCTUATION. Punctuation should be consistent and should denote quality of connection, rather than length of pause, between sentences or parts of sentences.
19. CONFUSED SEQUENCE OF IDEAS. The order of ideas in a sentence or paragraph should be such that the reader need not rearrange them in his mind.
20. IRRELEVANCY. No unnecessary idea, phrase or word should be included in a sentence.
21. FALSE CONTRAST. All antitheses should be true ones.
22. OVER-EMPHASIS. Over-emphasis of the illogical sort tolerated in conversation should be avoided in prose.
23. LOGICAL WEAKNESS. Ideas should not contradict one another, or otherwise violate logic.
24. CHANGE OF STANDPOINT. The writer should not, without clear warning, change his standpoint in the course of a sentence or paragraph.
25. MIXED CATEGORY. In each list of people or things all the words used should belong to the same category of ideas.

Graces of Prose

A. MISMATING OF METAPHORS. Metaphors should not be mated in such a way as to confuse or distract the reader.
B. TOO MANY METAPHORS. Metaphors should not be piled on top of one another.

C. METAPHOR CONFUSED WITH REALITY. Metaphors should not be in such close association with unmetaphorical language as to produce absurdity or confusion.

D. POETICALITY. Characteristically poetical expressions should not be used in prose.

E. MISMATING OF STYLES. Except where the writer is being deliberately facetious, all phrases in a sentence, or sentences in a paragraph, should belong to the same vocabulary or level of language.

F. OBSCURE REFERENCE. No reference should be unnecessarily obscure.

G. CIRCUMLOCUTION. All ideas should be expressed concisely, but without discourteous abruptness.

H. ELEGANT VARIATION. The descriptive title of a person or thing should not be varied merely for the sake of elegance.

I. OVERLONG SENTENCE. Sentences should not be so long that the reader loses his way in them.

J. MEMORY STRAIN. No unnecessary strain should be put on the reader’s memory.

K. TOO MUCH OF THE SAME WORD. The same word should not be so often used in the same sentence or paragraph that it becomes tedious.

L. JINGLE. Words which rhyme or form a jingle should not be allowed to come too close together.

M. TOO MUCH ALLITERATION. Alliteration should be sparingly used.

N. SAME WORD IN DIFFERENT SENSES. The same word should not be used in different senses in the same passage, unless attention is called to the difference.

O. SECOND THOUGHTS. The rhetorical device of pretending to hesitate in a choice between two words or phrases is inappropriate to modern prose.

P. AWKWARD INVERSION. Even when the natural order of its words is modified for the sake of emphasis, a sentence must not read unnaturally.
The new inquisitions and the new Popes assume infallibility. Stalin and Hitler pronounce the true doctrine; decide on pain of death and torture, that it shall not be questioned; decide what facts the millions shall be allowed to know, and what they shall not be allowed to know concerning those doctrines.

And the new inquisitions are immensely more powerful, more efficient, more omnipresent than the old, because they possess instruments so immeasurably more efficient for reaching the mind of the million. It will be easier for the new Popes to crystallize error.

From the day that a child is born in Germany or Russia, and to a lesser extent in Italy, it is brought under the influence of the State’s doctrine; every teacher teaches it through the years of childhood and adolescence. In every conscript, whether military or industrial, the process is continued; every book suggests the prevailing orthodoxy; every paper shouts it; every cinema gives it visual suggestion.

The effect of the process is, of course, to worsen the quality of the mass mind; to render it less and less capable of sound judgement.

The protagonist of dictatorship argues that the quality of the mass mind does not matter because the dictator rules and the mass only have to obey…
Those who have sought to set up a cult of love or beauty or science or humanity or country are open to the same objections as the votaries of nature. However important each of these things may be in its own place, it cannot properly be put in the supreme and central place for the simple reason that it does not involve any adequate conversion or discipline of man’s ordinary self to some ethical centre. I have tried to show that the sense of solitude or forlornness that is so striking a feature of romantic melancholy arises not only from a loss of hold on the traditional centres, but also from the failure of these new attempts at communion to keep their promises. The number of discomfitures of this kind in the period that has elapsed since the late eighteenth century, suggests that this period was even more than most periods an age of sophistry. Every age has had its false teachers, but possibly no age ever had so many dubious moralists as this, an incomparable series of false prophets....
Earl Baldwin of Bewdley
from Address to Leeds Luncheon Club, 1925

There is another observation I would like to make about the war before I pass on. It became evident to me a long time before the war was over that the effect of it, which would hit this country hardest in the years immediately succeeding, was the tragedy of the loss of the men who were just qualifying and getting ready to be the leaders of our younger men — the men who had already been at work in the factory and the mill, in all kinds of business and in the professions, who were just beginning to be the masters of their own work — men of about thirty years of age who by now would have been qualified to be leaders in their respective spheres.

There is nothing in the first twenty years after the war that can make good to this country the loss of so many men of that age.
...[One may compare the claims of the Renaissance and Roman philosophers to be regarded as of civilized intelligence]...

To play the Renaissance off against the middle ages is to deal oneself too strong a hand. But if you have the courage to examine the philosophic syncretisms of the Medicean Platonists you will find that, silly as they are, they conceal beneath their mountainous quilts of metaphysical goosedown an infantile clutching at truth which distinguishes them from the lucubrations of Roman philosophers who merely restate familiar fallacies with the complacent and cumbrous air of one who discharges a moral obligation. Lucretius himself was not original, but he was exceptional.
The history of the times of the century before one I find to be deeply interesting, for the reason that there are so many incidents and situations which coincide with the present day. There are also odd bits of interesting information.

Few people know that Napoleon was a British subject. But nevertheless, it is the truth anyway. He was thus placed technically and for a period.

It happened like this. A few months after Napoleon had distinguished himself at the taking of Toulon, Corsica proclaimed herself to be a monarchy under the sovereignty of King George III, who once addressed a most august assembly as ‘My dear Lords and Turkey Cocks’.

Viscount Castlerosse (now the Earl of Kenmore)
from The Londoner’s Log, 1940
Christianity sets a standard. Nothing that I have said about principles governing human relationships, or about the social implications of the Gospel, should be permitted for a moment to obscure the crucial importance of personal character. Life has been described as a perpetual offensive against the repetitive mechanism of the universe! This is profoundly true of moral life, which is the overcoming and transforming of hostile or unfavourable conditions and temptations continually recurring. The Christian faith demands integrity of conduct, uprightness, truth, sincerity and a vigorous initiative. The Christian religion reinforces man’s resistance to the struggle. It does not deny it. It is neither quietism in social matters, nor is it ‘socialism’ or ‘social reform’ without the energy of faith, and the vitality of personal effort rightly directed. Christianity is not a fugitive and cloistered religion. It does not slink out of the race. It endures dust and heat. It sallies out and seeks its adversaries. It is exercised and fully breathed.
The economic activities of mankind have only one object — the promotion of human happiness. There is no purpose in any economic activity unless it ministers to this object. Economists have indeed often defined the objects of man’s economic activity in terms somewhat different from these. They have said that the purpose of economic activity is to secure the maximum production of economic wealth. But it is necessary both to qualify and to expand this definition. For in the first place men may prefer more leisure to more material wealth, and in the second place it is impossible to leave out of account the conditions under which material wealth is created. The conditions under which men have to work may make either for happiness or for unhappiness. Work is in itself a good and not an evil; and mankind would be miserable without it. But some work — some toil, let us say rather — is very definitely evil; and it should be the object of the economic system not merely to create as much wealth as possible, but to create it under conditions which will make as much as possible for happiness in the doing of it and as little for fatigue, disgust and sheer boredom.
Words, like writings, have their destined fates, and it is often the distressful fate of coins in a debased currency. They gradually depreciate. Once ‘indifferent’ meant ‘just’ and ‘adventurers’ were honourable pioneers. In recent times Empire and its derivations have fallen from their high estate.

Emperors, indeed, as a class have not fared well in the judgment of history ... In the long corridor of the Holy Roman Empire many noble figures stand out, but many that are petty ... In modern times Napoleon undeniably filled the part of Emperor, but his nephew’s crown was almost pinchbeck. The later Hapsburgs could not unite their tessellated pavement of states into a solid foundation. The style of German Emperor was rejected by Frederick William IV and reluctantly accepted by William I. The old soldier thought it a finer thing to be King of Prussia as heir of Frederick II.
DR. HUGH DALTON, M. P.
From Hitler’s War, 1940

We must do our best for a new Commonwealth of States and for new strong Federal Unions, as soon as men will take them. Meanwhile, even some new Confederacies might be useful. But in the early post-war phase it is the existing Anglo-French Alliance, with such extensions as it can attract, which will be the hard core of World Order.

Let us meditate for a moment longer upon this Alliance, and upon its power of gathering reinforcements. First, in Europe, Britain and France, Poland and Czechoslovakia: then, outside Europe, the British Dominions, India — soon I hope, to become a Dominion, in spite of present misunderstandings and muddled negotiations — the British Colonies, the French Empire — including a number of territories directly represented in the French Parliament — Egypt, Iraq. This is already a massive combination. I hazard no guess as to how many States, now neutral, will, either of their own free will, or as victims of Nazi aggression, join this Alliance before the war ends. But many of the European neutrals I think will surely join it, if not before, then when the war is over. And I hope it will be a term of the Final Settlement that the New Germany too shall enter it.
DAPHNE DU MAURIER
from *Come Wind, Come Weather*, 1940

[The gallant times of Drake, Raleigh, Sir Phillip Sidney, the Pilgrim Fathers and Oliver Cromwell’s Ironsides.]

I cannot believe that the men and women of those days said ‘How is the war going to affect me?’ when the Spanish Armada put forth from Cadiz Bay. They would have sworn in rich Elizabethan words which are not, alas, at my disposal, ‘How can I affect the Spanish Armada?’

I believe that the old English spirit is not dead. It still lurks in the hearts and minds of every man and woman in this island, but centuries of soft living and thinking only in the first person singular have made the spirit a shadow of its former self, and the door which hides it is not always easy to unlock.
The position with regard to the thermodynamical running down of the universe has not materially altered since I discussed it four years ago. The impression has got abroad that the conclusions have been shaken by recent work on cosmic rays. That would be impossible, so as I am concerned; for the theory of cosmic rays that is being urged in this connection happens to be the one I was advocating at the time of writing, viz. that the cosmic rays give evidence of the building up of higher elements out of hydrogen in distant regions occupied by diffuse matter. I am not at all sure that the more recent evidence should be interpreted as favourable to it; but if it is favourable, as Dr. Millikan maintains, I have the less reason to change my views.

The coming together of electric particles to form a complex atom, and the consequent dispersal of some of the energy in cosmic rays, is clearly a step in the same direction as the other energy-dissipating processes — for example, the coming together of nebulous matter to form a star, and the consequent dispersal of energy as radiant heat. It is one more contributor to the general running-down towards an ultimate state of thermodynamic equilibrium. Millikan has sometimes called the atom-building process a ‘winding-up’ of the universe; but ‘up’ and ‘down’ are relative terms, and a transformation of axes may be needed in comparing his descriptions with mine.
Massinger has been more fortunately and more fairly judged than several of his greater contemporaries. Three critics have done their best by him: the notes of Coleridge exemplify Coleridge's fine and fragmentary perceptions; the essay of Leslie Stephen is a piece of formidable destructive analysis; and the essay of Swinburne is Swinburne's criticism at its best. None of these, probably, has put Massinger finally and irrefutably into a place.

English criticism is inclined to argue or to persuade rather than to state; and, instead of forcing the subject to expose himself, these critics have left in their work an undissolved residuum of their own good taste, which however impeccable, is something that requires our faith. The principles which animate this taste remain unexplained. Canon Cruickshank’s book is a work of scholarship; and the advantage of good scholarship is that it presents us with evidence which is an invitation to the critical faculty of the reader: it bestows a method rather than a judgement.

It is difficult — it is perhaps the supreme difficulty of criticism — to make the facts generalize themselves; but Mr. Cruickshank at least presents us with facts which are capable of generalization. This is a service of value; and it is therefore wholly a compliment to the author to say that his appendices are as valuable as the essay itself.
The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings has been pressed from several quarters to give its general reactions to the question of the fate of London’s churches and the principles it would recommend with regard to their final treatment after serious destruction.

The society was formed 63 years ago to combat the fashion, then so prevalent, for the restoration of mediaeval buildings, and advocated that repairs, reconstructions, and additions should be made to old buildings, frankly, in the manner of current work most natural to those concerned and not in a conjectural attempt to produce what was lost. The society has, however, always contended that each building must, to a very large extent, be judged individually on its own merits, and it would be manifestly absurd not to replace fragments of a building which may have been temporarily dislodged.... Since the form of use of a church has altered less perhaps than that of any other special type of building, the plan forms used by Wren are equally suitable to-day, and it may well be that fittings salved from one of his churches might be incorporated in a new church elsewhere planned on the original lines but freely interpreted in present-day architecture.

The question of finance with which the Church will be confronted is very serious, and the society could not well raise objection if a site on which a church is totally or almost totally demolished has to be sold to help finance the reconstruction of one less seriously damaged.
The European nations and the U. S. A, in the last century, meeting in conference in peace time, agreed to renounce, or to lay restrictions on, the use of certain weapons which, they considered, inflicted much human suffering without any appreciable military effect.

The first of these — the use of explosive bullets in small arms — is about the only one which has survived, and it has survived just because the military effect was trifling and the human suffering involved was great and lasting.

The others, notably the use of lethal gas, and the obligation on the belligerent to provide for the safety of crews and passengers of merchant ships sunk by him, have gone by the board just because the use or the practice of them proved to be effective weapons.
NEGLEY FARSON
from an Article in a Weekly Journal, 1940

England and France, since the last war, presented no programmes that aroused the faintest national interest in their young men, or even flicked their imagination. The United States was even worse ...

Well, at the moment, the chief desire in every sensible Englishman’s mind is to last out this war without getting killed. Of course we find marvelous heroism in the R.A.F., Army, Navy, and amongst the A.R.P.

But I’m not writing about the Englishman’s courage, for that has gone over in all the world’s mind (remarkable as it is); the thing that strikes me as being so remarkable about the British — rich and poor — is that no one seems to be thinking about any return to the ‘good old days!’

Now that is a departure — an attitude vastly more significant than the feeble reconstructive effort to make this a ‘Land Fit for Heroes to Live In’ which disgraced the years after 1918. And, also significant, you will find this receptiveness for a new kind of life — perhaps some great co-operative effort — more widely held by the average Englishman in, say, the countryside, than you will even among London’s intellectuals.

The reason for this, it seems to me, is that everyone’s life in England, these days, has been thrown out of gear. In the countryside, shopkeepers have been evacuated; there are vast segments of your seacoast perimeter where they have not been but are without customers.... Buildings, such as the long-tolerated London slums, have evacuated — been physically knocked down. It is as if some great Nihilism had swept the country, getting ready to rebuild.
The fire of Prometheus is as a rush-light compared to the volcano of steam which, like all
great world forces, is a mixture of Pandora and her box; for it has given us beauty and wealth, and
also ugliness and starvation. It revived the world, bled white by the Napoleonic wars, and, in place
of conquering the world as the great Corsican attempted, it recreated it.

...Nations grew and doubled, trebled and quadrupled their populations, and the wealth of
Croesus is to-day but the bank balance of Henry Ford. Yet out of all this prosperity, created by
steam-power, arose the Great War of 1914-1918, which, in its four years of frenzy, was to show a
surfeited civilization the destructive power of steam.
Particularly in the Koritza region, the Greek victories have had an immense effect on the strategic position of Jugoslavia ....

Germany’s strategic objective would obviously be to secure a passage for her troops down the railway through Nish and the Vardar Valley towards Salonika and Western Macedonia. That is a route which passes through many mountain defiles that are defensible by a resolute army and subject to air attack.

Greece’s successes, I should say, have a much wider strategic significance than their effect on operations in Albania — a significance which would not have sprung from mere stubborn resistance within Greek territory. At Koritza an effective wedge has been driven between possible theatres of operations of the Italian and German armies, and a connecting link broken which Jugoslavia, acquiescing in Axis demands, might have provided.

Even more important is the fact that Jugoslavia has been afforded new prospects of effectively maintaining her independence.
Viscount Halifax

from an Address after the German re-occupation of the Rhineland,
November 19th, 1936

We have been witnessing the gradual substitution in Europe of a new order — which in some degree many have long deemed inevitable — for the order constituted by the Versailles Treaty. For years the attempt was made to find some simultaneous solution for the twin problems of German equality and general security and when a simultaneous solution was not found, it was not unnatural that they still to some extent under the influence of the earlier order of ideas, should naturally feel that same doubt whether German equality unilaterally achieved would not in fact be found compatible with security.
Another form of club-association that has become of late years exceedingly popular is the women’s luncheon club; it flourishes especially in provincial towns and in some of the larger among them its membership will run into hundreds — with a long waiting list in the background. As the name betokens, the meetings of the club take place at a midday meal; this is held at intervals (as a rule once a week) when the members assemble at some local hotel or restaurant with a room large enough to accommodate its numbers and partake of a fixed-price lunch. When the serious business of the meal is over and the stage of cigarettes and coffee has been reached, the gathering passes on to its intellectual course — it is addressed by a speaker on some topic of general interest. As many of the audience are business women who will have to return to their work after lunch, the address is not overlong. To be present at a meeting of one of these luncheon clubs — in a restaurant dining-room thronged with its members — is to wonder who started the curious idea, entertained by our fathers, that women dislike each other’s company.
In all wars the final victory must be won on land. However irresistible the armed forces of a country may show themselves by sea or in the air, the naval and aerial arms can never strike the decisive blow. They can guard and protect on the one hand, devastate, cow, and paralyse on the other, but they cannot break through the last lines of defence. That task must be left to the tanks and their supporting infantry.

The importance of an early success or failure cannot therefore be estimated at once; there must be an interval of waiting until it can be fitted into the final pattern — it may be years later. Of what value were Marengo or Austerlitz to Napoleon the day after Waterloo was fought?

The British Army, by traditional usage, always seems to be compelled to start a war from small beginnings, and either play for time or take desperate risks until it has built itself up into an effective striking force. The entire history of that Army is chequered with tales of early reverses or expensive resistances, redeemed in the end, as resources and experience accumulated, by the final crown of victory.

This is partly due to the fact that though we have usually been prepared to maintain a Navy second to none, and came recently to a similar though somewhat tardy conclusion upon the subject of an Air Force, we have systematically starved our Army throughout its history, both in numbers, equipment, and adequate means of training ... and partly because when war does break out the Navy and Air Force are served first.
Robert Jordan knew that it was all right again now. Finally she stopped cursing ... and said calmly,

‘Then just shut up about what we are to do afterwards, will you, Ingles?’... ‘Take thy little cropped
headed whore and go back to the Republic but do not shut the door on others who ... loved the
Republic when thou wert wiping thy mother’s milk off thy chin.’... ‘I am a whore if thee wishes,
Pilar,’ Maria said. ‘I suppose I am in all case if you say so. But calm thyself. What passes with thee?’
It has become fashionable to talk, in a rather romantic way, about the intellectual dangers of analysis. If one would understand anything, we are told, one must consider it as a whole. By taking an organism or a process to bits, we destroy it, or at least distort it in such a way that it ceases to be itself. To be adequate to reality, knowledge must be a knowledge of wholes.

All this, of course is true and obvious. The entities which we describe as ‘society’, ‘man’, ‘cell’, ‘molecule’, ‘atom’ are other than the sum of their respective parts. If our study is confined to the parts, we shall not understand the whole. Shall we then confine our study to the whole? No; for experience shows that, if we consider only the whole, we shall never understand the nature of the whole. Knowledge of a whole cannot be adequate unless it is based on a thorough knowledge of parts. The whole must be taken to bits; these bits must be studied: having been studied, they must be recombined and the whole re-examined in the light of our knowledge of its constituents. Meanwhile, of course, we must remember that this knowledge of the bits has been obtained by a process which profoundly modifies the nature of the whole of which they are the components; hence the light it throws upon the nature of the unmodified whole may be misleading.
Man’s struggle for existence falls under three heads; his struggle with the forces of the inorganic environment, his struggle with other species of organisms, and his struggle with his own works and his own nature.

It is this last aspect of the struggle which has come to bulk larger in recent times; the economic and social forces generated by human systems have taken the bit in their teeth and threaten to pull the fabric of civilization down if not harnessed and controlled, while at the same time new manifestations of cruelty and lust for power, organized on an unprecedented scale, have arisen as monsters to be fought and overcome. Meanwhile the struggle with the inorganic world has become progressively less important during history; indeed, apart from occasional tornadoes, floods, and earthquakes, the inorganic forces have been mastered, and the old struggle has been in the main converted into a drive for increased mastery.

The struggle with other organisms, however, continues. It changes its character as civilization progresses. Every new advance in civilization, while it may knock out one set of competitors, often favours new ones.
Arsenal may have lost the League Cup replay by the odd goal of three before a 40,000 Blackburn crowd, but they made the swift moving Preston boys go all the way.

They were one down in 94 minutes — little Bob Beattie snapped McLaren’s short pass to beat Marks with a left-foot drive — but were square again with a quarter of an hour to go.

Not so bad, that. Ted Drake, who had been limping on the right wing from the start of the second-half, was off the field and Kirchen had gone into the centre when the equalizer arrived.

Kirchen, a one-man attack, crashed through as Bernard Joy took a free-kick ... Level! Could Arsenal, struggling since Drake hurt a knee just before the interval, hold out? They couldn’t. Straight from the kick-off, Dougal and Bob Beattie switched passes — the final one bringing Beattie his second goal.

While Arsenal made a scrap of it, all the grandstand experts agree that Preston had the craft.

Not even Ted Drake’s early outbursts could really upset the offside trap laid by Tom Smith and Co. Still, George Allison’s long-service star did bring speed to the attack, a thing that Leslie Compton never did in the Wembley game.

As a fact, he came within a ‘toucher’ of getting a goal just before the interval. A long, loping ball went down the middle. Drake followed it up, heading past the advancing Fairbrother.

Nothing is a certainty in Soccer, though. Smith dropped out of the clouds to hook the ball away.

Forward, Arsenal were best served by Kirchen and Denis Compton. They made grand individual runs, but the verdict is that the attack, once disorganized by Drake’s injury, never had a chance.
[Scientists can weigh stars by calculating the amount of gravitational pull that components of the same stellar system exert on one another.]

The results are interesting. Our sun proves to be of about average weight, or perhaps somewhat over. Taken as a whole, the stars shew only a small range in weight; if we compare the sun to a man of average weight, most of the weights of the stars lie between those of a boy and a heavy man. Yet a few exceptional stars have quite exceptional weights. A colony of four stars, 27 Canis Majoris, is believed to have a total weight nearly 1,000 times that of the sun, although this is not certain. An ordinary binary system, Plaskett’s star, is believed, this time with fair certainty, to have a total weight of more than 140 suns. But such great weights are very exceptional. It is very rare to find a star with ten times the weight of the sun, and no star yet found has as little as a tenth of the sun’s weight. Thus on the whole the stars shew only a very moderate range in weight.
There, spread out in space is nature, and here, inserting itself into the bits of nature, which we call bodies, is life, producing effects upon bodies, which are other than those which the laws of physics will enable us to predict, and introducing an element of arbitrary caprice which we call free will into the apparently orderly scheme of nature. Such, Whitehead says in effect, is the conventional pattern of the universe which the scientist takes for granted … Unable within its borders to find room for moral and aesthetic experience, for creativity and free will, Science has had to leave them outside the pattern.
Jefferson established the principle of a two-term limit for President. Washington set the precedent. Madison and Monroe acquiesced in it and Andrew Jackson, who until the Democratic Convention of 1940 was the second greatest Democrat of all time, favoured it. All the great Democrats from that day to this have been in accord. None has dissented. The reasons were plain. It was a fear of personal power in one man, the fear of personal power which would lead that one man to excesses. Power is a heady wine. Few human brains can resist it. And certainly there has been no evidence, or even desire of resistance in the gentleman who seeks it now.

If your imagination will permit you, go back to the first beginnings of this country. Can you see Washington and Jefferson and Madison and Monroe and Jackson and all the remaining galaxy of the great safeguarding our precious liberties? We’re the last country on earth to possess them. Shall one of our own jeopardize them, or shall one of our own be permitted to violate the sacred tradition built up by these great men of the past for the preservation and for the perpetuity of our institutions.
[How are we to decide on the best use of our productive resources in war time, considering the rival demands of the fighting services, exporters and civilians. We should be producing as much as possible and importing as much as we can afford, using as much as we need for war purposes, exporting as much as we can spare, and leaving a sufficiency for civil consumption.]

It is extraordinarily difficult to secure the right outcome for this resultant of many separate policies.

We can start out either by fixing the standard of life of the civilian and discover what is left over for the service departments and for export; or by adding up the demands of the latter and discover what is left over for the civilians. The actual result will be a compromise between the two methods. At present it is hard to say who, if anyone, settles such matters. In the final outcome there seems to be a larger element of chance than of design. It is a case of pull devil, pull baker — with the devil so far on top....

On the assumption that our total output is as large as we know how to organize, a definite residual will be left over which is available for civilian consumption. The amount of this residue will certainly be influenced by the reasonable requirements of the civilian population …

[The civilian — the baker — will have to be humoured to some extent.]

…but unless we are to fall far short of our maximum war effort, we cannot allow the amount of mere money in the pockets of the public to have a significant influence, unjustified by other considerations, on the amount which is released to civilians.

This leads up to our fundamental proposition. There will be a certain definite amount left over for civilian consumption. This amount may be larger or smaller than what perfect wisdom and
foresight would provide …[But this amount will depend far less than in peace time on what people can afford to spend. Before the war they were accustomed to produce less than they were capable of producing.] In such circumstances if we have more to spend, more will be produced and there will be more to buy. Not necessarily in the same proportion …[The demand for some sorts of goods may exceed the supply and producing power may thus be reduced.]

… Nevertheless, when men were working harder and earning more, they have been able to increase their consumption in not much less than the same proportion.

In peace time, that is to say, the size of the cake depends on the amount of work done. But in war time the size of the cake is fixed. If we work harder, we can fight better. But we must not consume more.

This is the elementary fact which in a democracy the man in the street must learn to understand if the nation is to act wisely — that the size of the civilian’s cake is fixed.

What follows from this?

It means, broadly speaking, that the public as a whole cannot increase its consumption by increasing its money earnings.
I shall catalogue some of the views I find uppermost in people’s minds.

(a) We shall gain air-superiority and gradually dislocate the economic life of Germany by dropping explosives on selected points.

My comment: I think the phrase air-superiority is misleading. Most people think of it as meaning a superiority in numbers (and quality) of say two or three or four to one. But the Germans with some inferiority in quality and great superiority in numbers and all the geographical factors in their favour, as well as highly concentrated targets, could not knock us out of the war. Real air-superiority means undisputed control of the air over all vital targets, such as the Germans achieved in Poland and Holland. I cannot see this happening over Germany in any period of time related to this war.

(b) [About the war on land]

(c) [About the war at sea]
The ordinary cultivated reader is ceasing to be able to read poetry. In self-defence amid the perpetual avalanche of print he has had to acquire reading habits that incapacitate him when the signals for unaccustomed and subtle responses present themselves. He has, moreover, lost the education that in the past was provided by tradition and social environment. Even the poetry of simple sensibility, if it is not superficially familiar, seems incomprehensible to him. And the more important poetry of the future is likely to be simple.

For not only poetry, but literature and art in general, are becoming more specialized: the process is implicit in the process of modern civilization. The important works of to-day, unlike those of the past, tend to appeal only at the highest level of response, which only a tiny minority can reach, instead of at a number of levels. On the other hand, the final values are ceasing to be a matter of even conventional concern for any except the minority capable of the highest level. Everywhere below, a process of standardization, mass-production and levelling-down goes forward, and civilization is coming to mean a solidarity achieved by the exploitation of the most readily released responses. So that poetry in the future, if there is poetry, seems likely to matter even less in the world.

Those who care about it can only go on caring.
A century and a half ago English poetry left those formal gardens brought to perfection by Dryden and Pope, where now their successors seemed able only to raise forced blooms and artificial flowers, and went into the wilderness for a change of air, a transfusion of blood. There Blake built a chapel to an unrecognized god, and Wordsworth heard on his mountain-sides the still, small voice of gods almost forgotten. Coleridge went to sea with an ancient mariner and was made immortal on those uncharted waters, though he returned from them a ghost. The boy, Keats, like Thomas the Rhymer, was rapt by a belle dame sans merci; and rode with her across the frontiers of fancy. We had many a hearty laugh at their antics, their wild-goose chases, but as the years went by we began to see that they had made the wilderness blossom like a rose. So it was roses, roses all the way, for a while: the full-blooded frank, romantic rose; till under the strain of constant crossings and variations, it lost its scent. Yes, that desert is populous now. Where the first romantic poets staked their claims, there are great cities, and many budding townships that follow their style of architecture. Tennyson, the master-builder of verse, is running up his monumental buildings with one eye on Beauty and the other on Queen Victoria. But something has been happening. Little rifts and cracks are beginning to appear in the whole, bland, ecclesiastical facade of Victorian England, and some of the more sensitive occupants are feeling the wind. There are tremors beneath our feet, and a great din of grouting fills our ears, through which we can dimly hear the voice of Matthew Arnold calling upon poetry to save our souls. At this interesting moment a Latin scholar, A. E. Housman, flinging round him a mantle of stoicism, broke out into a pure unrivalled burst of song, the last ecstasy we were to hear for many a long day; and as suddenly fell silent: while a young Jesuit, Gerard Manley Hopkins, slipped off unnoticed and took a train for an unknown destination.

Desmond McCarthy
from his Weekly Column of Literary Criticism, 1940
Of latter-day poets I like Louis MacNeice as well as any. His muse attracts me, and I like the balance that he keeps as a poet between his body and his mind.

Such expressions of personal preference are not, I know, criticism, and they have the disadvantage of drawing more attention to the critic than to the author he is writing about. But I have written often enough on this page for them to suggest something, even if it is only a negative, about any poet I am about to discuss.
During the years 1920-1923, when the Disarmament Commission in Berlin had Hitler and his furtive activities ‘under observation’ in Bavaria, we all knew that Ludendorff’s political foundling had been put out to nurse by the Rechswehr officers quartered in Bavaria, who taught him all he knew.

He learnt from them to lisp the teaching of the German War Book [a Clausewitzian handbook for Army officers] and palmed off its doctrines on a credulous German public in an illiterate paraphrase known as ‘Mein Kampf’. In him Prussian militarism has, as it were, touched bottom. It has sunk to its lowest depths.
The history of the souls of those men whose writings are thus passionately remembered is to me, by the very fact of that passionate remembrance, not indeed the outward and visible but the inward and spiritual history of the human soul. For these are the men who have uttered a truth so mysterious that it cannot be wrenched apart from the words in which they uttered it; it cannot be made current or passed from lips to lips save in that living flesh of speech with which they clothed it. Not this abstraction nor that commonplace can contain their wisdom; it is what it is and cannot be translated. Through their words men have touched what they do not understand, yet cannot forgo.

Shall we take our courage in both hands and say mysteriously that they have touched their own souls? There is nothing men understand less than their own souls, or more passionately desire to remember.
The practical man who theorizes is seldom accounted wise by his own generation, or for that matter, by any other, and the Headmaster who theorizes may be a conspicuous example of the saying. Thring is remembered as the creator of Uppingham, but not as the author of *Education and School*, which no one would buy, nor yet as the writer of the *Theory and Practice of Teaching*, for which he did indeed receive fifty pounds. Headmasters cannot even write novels about school life, for it is generally agreed that to this poor branch of literature their contributions have been the worst. They are men of action who should forswear the pen. If then I venture to tread where many predecessors have fallen, I do so because, like all authors, I have something which I want at this present time to say, and, since it belongs neither to the realms of imagination nor to the province of pure theory, I hope that even an active Headmaster may not be wholly ineffective in stating it.
The repercussions of the war go into very far corners. The derangement of the pigeon population was to be expected — for the bird may be classed as a combatant — but who would have thought that the casualties on the way home (through the depredations of the peregrine breed) would be so heavy that it has been found necessary to enlarge by a depth of ten miles the coastal strip in which the destruction of the peregrine (or its eggs) is permitted? The ornithologist gain-and-loss problem must be very complicated.
[Three lists of works were compiled by the Dictionary Committee, one for the period 1252-1526, another for 1526-1674, the third for 1674-1858.]

This division of the literature into three periods, which originated with Coleridge and was maintained for some time as a basis of collecting, has a real foundation in fact. Although the dates 1526 and 1674 were chosen because the former was that of the first printed English New Testament, and the latter the year of Milton’s death, they correspond very closely with significant epochs in the development of the English vocabulary. If arrived at by accident, they at the same time show a sound instinct for detecting the periods of essential change…

At this point it will be well, both for the sake of greater clearness and of giving credit where credit is due, to give some account of the method of collecting the material for the Dictionary and of the work done by the voluntary readers and sub-editors. Each member of these two classes stood to the final editors in a relation similar to that which Socrates in the Ion compares to the magnet and the suspended rings, each depending on and operating through the other, although in the case of the Dictionary the order of their sequence was reversed …

In May 1884 Dr. Murray thought that with six good assistants it might be possible to produce two parts in a year and thus finish the work in eleven years from next March'. This suggestion was no doubt justified by the facts as they were at the time. That it failed to work out was certainly due in great part to the fact that A was not a good letter on which to base the calculation, and to a steady increase in the material which could not at that time be foreseen…

If various [scientific] errors to be found in standard works are not repeated in the Dictionary, it is frequently because someone with a practical knowledge of the subject had been specially consulted on the point and had freely given the information desired.
Eric Partridge
from *The Teaching of English in His Majesty's Forces*, 1941

…everybody needs to learn at least part of his own language, however much one may assimilate; moreover, much of the English one assimilates is bad, or at best, inferior English. Men nurtured in good homes are often astonishingly inarticulate; although they are not classified as illiterate (nor are they illiterate), they are, when they try to instruct others, as difficult to understand as those men whom we should classify as illiterate: many an officer is as hard to follow as the N. C. O that the officer would condemn as ignorant. Indeed, an illiterate may be an effective instructor if he has the gift of vivid presentation, but it must be admitted that illiteracy usually makes for imprecision.

Clarity is essential in peace time: in war, it is doubly necessary, for men’s lives are at stake.
Mr. de Valera, I hear, is considered in Dublin to have claimed from the Vatican the preponderating voice in the appointment of the new Archbishop of Dublin.

Pundits point out that the Pope delayed nine months over his choice, and then his candidate, Dr. John McQuaid, proved to be one of Mr. de Valera’s closest friends. All his sons were educated under Dr. McQuaid at Blackrock.

To appoint Dr. McQuaid Pope or Premier went outside the eligible 369 secular parish priests of the diocese and picked on a ‘regular’. Dr. McQuaid is a member of the French-originating Holy Ghost Fathers. He is only the fifth non-secular priest to be Archbishop of Dublin in 10 centuries.

Though no one had tipped Dr. McQuaid for the Dublin vacancy, at least one forecast about the new prelate has immediately gained some credence. Cardinal MacRory of Armagh is now in his 80th year, and the question of his successor in the Irish Roman Catholic Church is frequently canvassed.

Tradition has it that the Armagh Archbishopric goes to a priest of the Ulster province. That tradition may be changed by Dr. McQuaid’s translation later on to Armagh.

The break would be softened because he was actually born in Cavan, though he has spent most of his life in Dublin.

I need hardly say how important it would be if Mr. de Valera had such a friend and confidant north of the border at Armagh.
It may (doubtless will) be objected by those who have the cult of criticism as such, but have forgotten its (criticism’s) scope and original purposes, that I have not much discussed the ‘art’ of R. Crevel. Technically, I should have spent more words on his ‘how, and the condemned reviewer for his weekly rent would furnish MM. Les lecteurs with ‘the faded and stuffy atmosphere of the bourgeois home’ etc. etc., my position being that the novel (as such) was carried to its development by Flaubert and H. James (with parenthesis already indicated in other notes by the present expositor) that since (underlined) Mr. Joyce carried on from Bouvard there has been probably no development. I don’t mean no good novels, no particular cases, Rodker’s Adolph as a delicate variant, Cumming’s [sic] Eimi as a masterwork, dealing with a particular subject matter, masterwork because its author recognized that that matter could not adequately be presented in the idiom of James or Flaubert, but outside these specific examples one can only say of a given novel that it is a fine (or other) specimen of a known category. I mean that is all one would say in speaking of the book to one’s most intelligent friends.
The Government will have to come out into the open and choose a road.

There are two roads. One is the nationalist-imperialist-big-business-and-privilege road. Hitler is to be defeated not because his very existence challenges any attempt to bring into being the good life, but because his lust for power conflicts with other people’s lust for power. He wants what ‘we’ have got. He must be put out of the way so that ‘we’ can get on with the old job, and, indeed, perhaps with more power to our elbow…

The other road, the mere thought of which must give Goebbels a headache, is international instead of nationalist; is truly and sharply democratic, and proclaims its faith in every value that Hitler’s existence challenges. It is the road of peoples really on their way to a genuine freedom…

Every move we made along that road would create hope and faith in the people here and elsewhere…

‘A grand life if we don’t weaken’. It is not a grand life. It is a filthy life, with most of the things that raise us above the level of fearful cowering savages rapidly disappearing. But on that true road, where the decent ordinary folk who are suffering most for our past idiocies can look for a recompense, we shall not weaken. Men can endure toil and sweat and tears and the pointing finger of death if they know that one day their children can come running out into a cleaner world.
On balance, both before and after the advent of Hitler, Germany is entitled to more good marks for
friendly conduct towards the U.S.S.R. than we are; and it is not even more than partly true to say
that she should also be given more bad marks for unfriendly conduct. If one includes the very early
days, when we were financing one semi-piratical invasion after another against the Soviet Republic,
the score is heavily against us; if one looks at the more recent years, it is true that the leaders of
Germany have fulminated against her more vilely and more officially than our leaders ever did, but is
that not perhaps only a difference of technique and manners.
Words are the units of composition, and the art of Prose must begin with a close attention to their quality. It may be said that most base styles are to be traced to a neglect of this consideration; and certainly if style is reduced in the last analysis to a selective instinct, this instinct manifests itself most obviously in the use of words.
The arts are our storehouse of recorded values. They spring from and perpetuate hours in the lives of exceptional people, when their control and command of experience is at its highest, hours when the varying possibilities are most clearly seen and the different activities which may arise are most exquisitely reconciled, hours when habitual narrowness of interests or confused bewilderment are replaced by an intricately wrought composure. Both in the genesis of a work of art, in the creative moment, and in its aspect as a vehicle of communication, reasons can be found for giving to the arts a very important place in the theory of Value. They record the most important judgements we possess as to the values of experience. They form a body of evidence which, for lack of a serviceable psychology by which to interpret it, and through the desiccating influence of abstract Ethics, has been left almost untouched by professed students of value. An odd omission, for without the assistance of the arts we could compare very few of our experiences and without such comparison we could hardly hope to agree as to which are to be preferred. Very simple experiences — a cold bath in an enamelled tin, or running for a train — may to some extent be compared without elaborate vehicles; and friends exceptionally well acquainted with one another may manage some rough comparisons in ordinary conversation. But subtle or recondite experiences are for most men incommunicable and indescribable, though social conventions or terror of the loneliness of the human situation may make us pretend the contrary. In the arts we find the record in the only form in which these things can be recorded of the experiences which have seemed worth having to the most sensitive and discriminating persons. Though the obscure perception of this fact the poet has been regarded as a seer and the artist as a priest, suffering from usurpations. The arts, if rightly approached, supply the best data available for deciding what experiences are more valuable than others. The qualifying clause is all-important, however. Happily there is no lack of glaring examples to remind us of the difficulty of approaching them rightly.
[Education must be democratic.] This matter of democracy and education is one as to which clarity is important. It would be disastrous to insist upon a dead level of uniformity. Some boys and girls are cleverer than others, and can derive more benefit from higher education. Some teachers have been better trained or have more native aptitude than others, but it is impossible that everybody should be taught by the few best teachers. Even if the highest education were desirable for all, which I doubt, it is impossible that all should have it at present, and therefore a crude application of democratic principles might lead to the conclusion that none should have it. Such a view, if adopted, would be fatal to scientific progress, and would make the general level of education a hundred years hence needlessly low. Progress should not be sacrificed to a mechanical quality at the present moment; we must approach educational democracy carefully, so as to destroy in the process as little as possible of the valuable products that happen to have been associated with social injustice.
Another ingredient in the seething cauldron of our times is the conflict that has arisen on liberty. At the beginning of this century it seemed as though that were among the settled questions. There might be exceptions here and there; some countries might be laggards in the march to freedom, but all enlightened men everywhere sought the same ultimate goal.

Nations should be free from alien domination; the nineteenth century had seen the overthrow of Napoleon’s empire over Europe, the birth of the republics of South and Central America, the Italian *risorgimento*, the liberation of the Balkan peoples. These were illustrious examples of a rule destined to become universal.
[Because the Fuhrer had proved that he could get all he wanted without fighting, I said that there would be no war]…I was wrong. I am always making mistakes by imagining that other people are as clever as I am myself. The Fuhrer was not the first statesman to take me in and is unlikely to be the last. [There was a war, Hitler wiped the floor with us, and Mr. Churchill then told him that he was fighting with a rope round his neck. I blundered again about Russia: I could not believe the Fuhrer would make Germany commit military suicide by attacking Russia in the middle of a very tough war.]

…Can it be said that he is as blind as all our own Tories and Clericals who persist in believing what they have been telling themselves for twenty years: that Stalin is a vulgar brigand and assassin whose rabble of tatterdemalions must scatter before the Nazi legions like autumn leaves before October winds? If so, he is lost; for if he is as far behind the times and as obsolete politically as our Old School Ties, we shall not be able to put the rope round his neck when Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin have him finally by the collar. We shall have to send him to Broadmoor. But he is not as mad as that. The only sane explanation possible is that when Russia refused to join the Axis he concluded that Stalin was waiting to attack him in the rear when he was fully engaged on the west with Britain and America and that his only chance was to smash the Red army first. The gambler’s last throw: double or quits.
...Political beliefs and events play a part in the lives of contemporaries which religious and spectacular warnings of the working out of doom amongst the great used to play in the past. Problems of social organization are so crucially important that any religious mind which ignores them, instead of providing an example to the world, like the teaching of Christ, has shrunk into a shelter from the world. The destruction which one nation can inflict on another has dwarfed even terrible natural events and examples of happiness or unhappiness in private life made public.

For the poets to ignore this tendency of every smaller issue to be swept up in the ever-widening stream of the vast issues that threaten to engulf the whole world, would be to abandon the main tradition of a culture which has always been at the centre of the life of the time. However limited its audience may have been, or rather, however indirectly its lessons may have seeped through the select audience of the genuinely initiated to the vast surrounding life outside, poetry has been a clearing house of the deepest emotional life of the people in the past. There has been no act of abdication by which poets have decided to abandon their interpretations of these passionate forces, for the transplanted alpine flowers of a rock garden. There have certainly always been gardens of retreat for poetry, but these have implied the existence of a greater life of literature outside.
The mediaevalist’s chief criterion was teleological. Phenomena were ordered in accordance with their bearing on human purposes.

...The central and dominating fact was man and his immortal destiny. The ‘material universe’ was merely a setting within which a moment of this destiny was being worked out... As a natural consequence of this point of view phenomena were explained in terms of their supposed purposes. The ‘why’ of phenomena, not the ‘how’ of phenomena, was the question that interested the mediaeval mind. The mediaeval universe was informed through and through with purpose. Men did not interpret the temporal passage of Nature as a bare succession of events, but as the passage from potentiality to actuality. All things conspired together towards some divine end. The merely spatial and temporal connections of phenomena were not considered to be of importance compared with their logical connections. Phenomena were regarded as exemplifying certain logical principles and as serving a universal purpose. The general, mediaeval out-look made the assumption that Nature was rational a reasonable one. Since both Nature and man had the same author, and Nature was designed to forward man’s destiny, it was not unreasonable to suppose that the workings of Nature should proceed in a manner intelligible to the human mind.
It is not to say that satire upon woman is not a distinct branch of mediaeval clerical literature. It is to this day the _fonds_ of most music-hall jokes, thanks to that obscure instinct for which ‘woman, in herself and without any effort on her part, is always News’. But the bourgeois is a far richer vein than the clerical. Bernard of Morlaix is rough-tongued enough in the _De Contempu Mundi_; and Golias in his _De Conjuge Non Decunda_ is profoundly grateful to the three angels who come to dissuade him from matrimony. But there is nothing in Latin to touch the sheer brutality of the vernacular. ‘I always bless God’, said William Morris, ‘for making anything so strong as an onion’; it is the ideal temper in which to approach the grosser half of mediaeval literature. It is true that Jean de Meung, the mediaeval Diogenes, is a clerk but he is too often taken as the representative of his order, his _Roman_ as the outrage of clerical prejudice on the chivalrous Dream of the Rose. But the author of the first _Roman_ seems himself to have been a clerk: his successor wrote … at the end of the thirteenth century, in the first blast of the east wind that blows for nearly two centuries.
SIR HUGH WALPOLE
from his Weekly Review column, March 1940

…There has just been published Eric Linklater’s autobiography: ‘The Man on My Back’. It is a most readable book, and finally, as I found every work of Mr. Linklater, except ‘Juan in America’ and ‘Ben Johnson’, unsatisfactory.

Why is it unsatisfactory? Because Mr. Linklater himself is not there.

I do not know why he is so elusive — whether it is by intention or by some perverseness of his own. I thought I had caught him in ‘Juan in America; which is a consistent piece of brilliant nonsense. Now I am not sure.

He can describe beautifully. The picture of Compton Mackenzie in Barra, Panama, trains in America, a Scottish election, all these things are word pieces strung like little sparkling jewels — on what? Practically nothing at all.

The point of autobiography, I imagine is that it should be about somebody, but I believe that Mr. Linklater is so fundamentally modest that he was compelled to leave out of his book the only thing that really mattered, namely himself.
For the greater part of my life I have given most of my working time to the problem of the human future, studying the possibility of a world-wide re-organization of human society, that might avert the menace of defeat and extinction that hangs over our species. That has been my leading pre-occupation since I published ‘The Time Machine’ in 1893. I have never thought, much less have I asserted, that progress was inevitable, though numerous people chose to fancy that about me. I have always maintained that by a strenuous effort mankind might defeat the impartial destructiveness of nature, but I have always insisted that only by incessant hard thinking and a better co-ordination of man’s immense but dispersed powers of self-sacrifice and heroism was such a victory possible.
If we attend to what actually has happened in the past, and disregard romantic visions of democracies, aristocracies, kings, generals, armies, and merchants, material power has generally been wielded with blindness, obstinacy, and selfishness, often with brutal malignancy. And yet mankind has progressed. Even if you take a tiny oasis of peculiar excellence, the type of modern man who would have most chance of happiness in ancient Greece at its best period is probably (as now) an average professional heavyweight boxer, and not an average Greek scholar from Oxford or Germany. Indeed, the main use of the Oxford scholar would have been his capability of writing an ode in glorification of the boxer. Nothing does more harm in unnerving men for their duties in the present than the attention devoted to the points of excellence in the past as compared with the average failure of the present day.
Excavating the site, we found Ennatum’s building standing on the stumps of the older walls which had been used by the new bricklayers as a foundation, and so recovered at one time the ground-plan of both temples.

The building was a rectangle measuring 240 feet either way, and was surrounded by an enormously heavy wall through at the heart of which a narrow paved corridor ran round three sides of it, leading from a gate-tower over the main entrance to two fortified towers at the far corners; a similar corridor cut straight across the building, dividing it into two unequal parts and affording quick access from one tower to the other.