Mastery of language implies the ability to distinguish between words and the ideas they represent. Most of us use words, but confuse them with the underlying reality. Our thesis may conveniently be illustrated by examining the time problem.

When it is 6 P.M. in New York, it is normally, though not necessarily, 5 P.M. in Chicago, 4 P.M. in Denver, 3 P.M. in Los Angeles, and 1 P.M. both in Anchorage and in Honolulu. What this means is that Americans, speaking the same language at the same time, must use different words to express the same thought.

Unsatisfactory as such a condition is from the theoretical viewpoint, it is even more so from a practical one. The fact that our globe is divided, basically, into 24 different time zones creates endless difficulties in a world of highspeed communication and transportation. Not satisfied with the intolerable complexities of many different verbal times at any one given real time, those in authority have compounded the situation by superimposing various sorts of daylight saving time, either at some times of the year or all year 'round, irregularly applied in different countries or even in different parts of the same country, such as the United States.

The human race appears to be moving in either one of two directions: extinction or near-extinction in a nuclear holocaust, or a peaceful world society. In the former case, the utter chaos in ways of expressing time is of no consequence, merely reflecting mankind's collective suicidal tendencies, in its own, small way. In the latter case, the confusion surrounding time measurement is of paramount importance, and must be eliminated as an obstacle to orderly, sensible living.

There is a simple, obvious solution to the time problem: change language to conform to reality. Let 6 P.M. in New York City also be 6 P.M. in the rest of the world—everywhere, in cities, towns, villages, and hamlets; in the countryside, atop the highest pinnacles of mountain ranges, in the deepest deeps of ocean guls. Let there be one, universal time, observed by all men, irrespective of race, religion, nationality, or political beliefs.

A universal time, applicable to the entire human race all year 'round, without any modifications for periodic changes in the sun's position, would substitute reason and order for the existing chaos and insanity. How would it affect our lives from a practical standpoint?
The effect would be verbal, not real. All men everywhere would continue to live in tune with the solar cycle, getting up around sunrise, working approximately till sunset, and sleeping while the sun was absent from their skies. Only the names of the hours at which these events occurred would change. In some parts of the world, people would be awaking at 5 A.M., in other parts at 1 P.M., in still other parts at 9 P.M.; and so forth. The name of the hour at which a customary event occurs each day is insignificant. As it is, the names of the hours vary widely in different parts of the world, on account of the tremendous multiplicity of languages in use. "Sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me."

The foolishness of clinging to some particular set of hour names is illustrated by the perpetual controversy over daylight saving time. All parties to this controversy are consciously or subconsciously assuming that there is a fixed relationship between the name of a certain hour and the daily activity occurring at that hour. This is a preposterous delusion, indicative of the strange power that words exercise over our minds.

The justification advanced by proponents of daylight saving time is that advancing the clock an hour each spring lengthens evening daylight by one hour during the summer, at the expense of one hour of morning daylight. It seems appropriate to ask, for whom? Most offices, stores, and factories open anywhere between 7 A.M. and 9 A.M., although there are exceptions opening earlier or later. Confining ourselves to the main group whose activities commence between 7 and 9 in the morning, it is highly pertinent to make a certain observation. If, in a particular location, at a particular time of the year, starting work at 8 A.M. is the most appropriate arrangement in terms of safe and convenient transportation for employees to and from work, and most appropriate in terms of maximizing the enjoyable use to which these employees can turn their leisure, non-working time, then what about all the other people at the same location at the same time of the year, who are required to start work as much as an hour earlier or an hour later? Evidently, all the other people are starting work at a "wrong" time, and are being deprived of certain inalienable rights assumed to exist by all of the disputants in the daylight saving comedy. No one involved in the time controversy seems to care about the illogic of this situation. It is self-evident that different enterprises will open and close at varying hours determined in accordance with the needs of each particular business, irrespective of sunset and sunrise times and of the preferences of its employees. Accordingly, the professed concern for the public welfare inherent in the daylight saving controversy is just so much poppycock. Let the disputants prove their sincerity by first working toward passage of national legislation decreeing a fixed, compulsory opening and closing time for all places of employment, public and private. This is far more important than shifting hours seasonally.

Moving the clock forward and backward twice a year is an obvious nuisance, incompatible with an ordered life. The logical solution is to effect a compromise, using a time exactly half way between standard and daylight saving time, throughout the entire year.

Let it be noted, and noted well, that the entire problem of daylight saving time and the under­
time evaporates with the change to a universal time, effective all over the world the year 'round. At any particular location, all activities, including hours of work, will be scheduled for those hours deemed most appropriate in the light of all relevant considerations, including the sun's rising and setting. It will remain a fact that different concerns will keep different hours, those best suited for them. The hours of any particular concern will be so fixed as to represent a happy medium in relation to the entire calendar year. Any business overly concerned with seasonal fluctuations in the sun's position will be free to adjust its hours every six months, in analogy to the effect of using daylight saving time.

The imposition of a universal time would be a first step toward sanity in an all too irrational world. It would benefit all of mankind, facilitating international and even intra-national movement and communication. It would help language fulfill its basic purpose by having certain words and numbers have a uniform meaning everywhere, rather than in just a limited area—a ridiculous state of affairs among those speaking the same language.

Naturally, we are under no illusion that this vitally needed reform is going to come about in the near future. People are unable to accept a much milder reform, the one introducing the so-called World Calendar. Words are confused with reality, and most of the public seem to believe that a change in naming hours or days will involve a change in their lives, when nothing could be further from the truth.

The time problem, therefore, serves to mirror man's inability to think rationally and to guide his own destiny. That is why it appears to increasingly many thoughtful observers that the human experiment has failed . . .

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THE TETRA-TAUTONYM

A word or name consisting of two identical parts—CANCAN, SING SING, or TWENTY-TWENTY, for instance—is known as a tautonym or reduplication. A few tautonyms consist of three identical parts: CHA-CHA-CHA and TAT-TAT-TAT, for example.


Can you match our samples with some of your own, or must we release more of our precious hoard?

WORD WAYS