

THE GOOD, THE BAD, *and* THE UGLY

Taken from *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White. (pg 19).

An unskilled writer will sometimes construct a whole paragraph of sentences of this kind, using as connectives *and*, *but*, and, less frequently, *who*, *which*, *when*, *where*, and *while*, these last in nonrestrictive senses.

The third concert of the subscription series was given last evening, and a large audience was in attendance. Mr. Edward Appleton was the soloist, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra furnished the instrumental music. The former showed himself to be an artist of the first rank, while the latter proved itself fully deserving of its high reputation. The interest aroused by the series has been very gratifying to the Committee, and it is planned to give a similar series annually hereafter. The fourth concert will be given on Tuesday, May 10, when an equally attractive program will be presented.

Apart from its triteness and emptiness, the paragraph above is bad because of the structure of its sentences, with their mechanical symmetry and singsong.

I believe in aristocracy, though-if that is the right word, and if a democrat may use it. Not an aristocracy of power, based upon rank and influence, but an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky. Its members are to be found in all nations and all classes, and all through the ages, and there is a secret understanding between them when they meet. They represent the true human tradition, the one permanent victory of our queer race over cruelty and chaos. Thousands of them perish in obscurity, and a few are great names. They are sensitive for others as well as for themselves, they are considerate without being fussy, their pluck is not swankiness but the power to endure, and they can take a joke.

E.M. Forster's *Two Cheers for Democracy*

If the writer finds that he has written a series of loose sentences, he should recast enough of them to remove the monotony, replacing them by simple sentences, by sentences of two clauses, by sentences (loose or periodic) of three clauses- whichever best represents the real relations of the thought.

Macbeth was very ambitious. This led him to wish to become king of Scotland. The witches told him that this wish of his would come true. The king of Scotland at this time was Duncan. Encouraged by his wife, Macbeth murdered Duncan. He was thus enabled to succeed Duncan as King. (51 words)

Encouraged by his wife, Macbeth achieved his ambition and realized the prediction of the witches by murdering Duncan and becoming king of Scotland in his place. (26 words)