

Conversation  
Egotism

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The words of a wise man's  
mouth are gracious but  
the lips of a fool will swallow  
up himself." Ecc. X:12.

How often when we  
think of or see an individual  
in our minds eye we  
see chiefly his lips - his  
lips in ~~action~~! How often  
a persons whole personality  
- perhaps a most attractive person -  
is swallowed up by an  
excessive unblushing or  
offensive  
action activity of the lips & the  
among the defects of character  
which often detract very seriously  
from the effectiveness, the  
success and happiness of those  
who carry them through life uncorrec-  
ted, is that of a lack of taste in  
that matter of which conversation  
with our friends! Now conversation

is fundamental to human sociability and human happiness. It is a ~~glory~~ ~~for~~ ~~angel~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Mad~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~of~~ ~~banishment~~ ~~pains~~ ~~and~~ ~~distresses~~ ~~discon-~~ ~~equants~~ ~~of~~ ~~life~~ ~~are~~ ~~softened~~ ~~or~~ ~~dissolved~~ ~~by~~ ~~the~~ ~~release~~ ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~feeling~~ ~~through~~ ~~the~~ ~~medium~~ ~~of~~ ~~a~~ ~~good~~ ~~talk~~. One of the greatest trials of the harassed officer in the Great War was that his men would congregate in ~~groups~~ ~~in~~ ~~echo~~ ~~blances~~ ~~subordinated~~ ~~to~~ ~~machine~~ ~~gun~~ ~~or~~ ~~shell~~ ~~fire~~. The thrust and parry of ~~with~~ ~~hard~~ ~~conversation~~ helped to mitigate ~~how~~ ~~the~~ ~~discomfort~~ ~~of~~ ~~war~~ and to keep men sane in the midst of unspeakable horrors. Men who for some reason are subjected to the penalty of solitary confinement almost invariably

for the feeling

Why would I be to run any almost certain risk of death than to do without this important form of human intercourse.

become insane because of  
 the thwarting of the deep-seated  
 craving for human companionship  
 and ~~oral~~ verbal ~~course~~ inter-  
 course.

If then verbal intercourse  
 is so indispensable a ~~factor~~  
 in the life of human beings, how  
 necessary it is to pay some  
 attention to its cultivation.

We know how easily we  
 are put off by the fact that an  
 individual ~~who~~ falls short  
 of the accepted standards of  
 good taste and decency in  
 speech! Or how quickly we are  
 drawn to a person who has  
~~the art of~~ mastered the art of  
~~knowing~~ talking and of being  
 silent in the right ~~proportion~~! There  
 are many human characteristics  
 failings which are most quickly

~~grad~~ ~~conceal~~ by revealed  
 through ones speech. Istrate  
 discourtesy ~~some~~ ~~of~~ ~~sentiments~~  
 cannot be ~~made~~ ~~concealed~~,  
 deep fundamental coarseness  
 or vulgarity of character is  
~~soon~~ ~~made~~ manifest thro  
 even the thickest outer coat  
 of worldly polish. A hypocrite  
~~cannot~~ <sup>gives himself away</sup> as often through  
 an excess of fair words as he  
 does through actions which belie  
 his speech. Some persons  
 give the ~~appearance~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~impression~~ <sup>impression</sup> ~~wise~~ <sup>wise</sup> of  
 great wisdom and depth of  
 learning until they begin to talk  
 where their superficiality of character  
 is made manifest.

I should like, however, to  
 fix your attention of on one very  
 common human failing for  
 which speech is both the  
~~medium~~ <sup>medium</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~expression~~ <sup>expression</sup> chiefly  
 through the medium of speech

from Italy<sup>5</sup>  
and ~~which~~ derives its chief  
nourishment from ~~the~~  
~~undisciplined~~ unrestrained and  
~~strength~~ support. I prefer  
to "egotism". # "Egotism" is  
defined in Webster's dictionary  
as the "act of magnifying oneself  
or parading one's own  
doings in thought, speech or  
writing". Now "egotism" is  
not quite the same as  
"egoism" which is defined  
as "regarding ones self as the  
center of everything". ~~Of course~~  
An "egotist" is a fundamentally  
selfish person and for such  
there is little or no cure.  
"Egotism" may well be the  
expression of "egoism", but  
~~it is~~ it is by no means  
invariable so. A genuine un-  
selfish man may well be

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an "egotist" simply through  
lack of ~~self-understanding~~ good taste. He is  
like the man who looked  
through the telescope and  
saw lions in the moon;  
they turned out to be fleas on  
the glass. The egotist magnifies  
things that belong to him and  
insects become mountains.  
Egotism is perhaps the  
most insidious of all faults,  
not only because it may take  
so many subtle forms,  
but also because it is so  
in any of its separate manifesta-  
tions, <sup>usually</sup> an insignificant and  
defect.

Among the faults <sup>associated</sup> with  
egotism is the <sup>often</sup> trivial but  
exceedingly <sup>damaging</sup> one  
of excessive loquacity. That  
this has been a common fault

By way of parenthesis  
For an elaboration <sup>of</sup> ~~of~~  
~~the remarks I make today~~  
on this subject <sup>of which</sup> I should  
like to refer you to Prof  
Vignoli's book, "The  
Character & Conduct of Life,"  
which is a genuine scientific  
~~at the same time~~ <sup>through</sup> ~~the~~  
lucid analysis of the  
normal human character.  
& I am indebted <sup>partly</sup> to  
him for suggestions <sup>that</sup>  
form the basis of some of the  
remarks I make today.

throughout the ages  
~~of~~ and one recognized  
as ~~one~~ peculiarly vexatious  
and tiresome we have abundant  
historical evidence in the  
multitude of aphorisms  
relating to it that have  
come down to us. From  
the Bible we have the following

"A ~~full~~ fool is also full of  
words."

"He that keepeth his mouth  
keepeth his life; but he that openeth  
wide his lips shall have destruction."

From ~~some~~ secular sources  
the following:

"Blessed is the man, who  
having nothing to say, abstains  
from giving us wordy evidence  
of the fact."

"They are born with two eyes,  
but will use tongue, in order that they may



See twice as much as they say."

"The man who uses his tongue oftener than his ears soon squeezes his ~~own~~ brain dry."

"Those who make the least noise do the most work. An engine that expends all its steam in whistling, has nothing left with which to turn wheels."

A young man who was an inordinate talker was sent by his parents to Socrates to learn oratory. On being presented to Socrates the young man spoke so much that Socrates was out of patience. When the bargain came to be struck, Socrates asked him double the price. "Why charge me

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double? asked the  
young man. "Because",  
said Socrates, "I must  
teach you two sciences; the  
one to hold your tongue and  
the other how to speak."

It is extraordinary that  
in view of the fact that the  
person <sup>to</sup> whom many words have been  
the butt of so much ridicule  
and so much the target of  
ridicule for so long, that  
there are still a great many  
people who talk too much.  
This is the sign of a <sup>sad</sup> lack of  
human perspective; and disor-  
ientation into the ~~the~~ layer of  
egotism ~~prevalent~~ or evidence  
of that form of mental myopia  
which fragments, obscures &  
distorts the image of what the other



it may, ~~as a coal dump~~  
~~spoils~~ or ~~as a~~ spoils  
 our enjoyment of an otherwise  
 beautiful Bosphorus scene  
 detract greatly from the  
~~enjoyment of affection and~~  
~~friendship~~ as a constant  
 shrill blowing of a shrill  
 whistle of the Bosphorus  
 steamer may spoil every  
 pleasure in a ride over the  
 blue waters of the Bosphorus  
 on a summer day, detract  
 greatly from the enjoyment  
 of affection and friendship.

Another tedious exhibition  
 of egotism in conversation  
 is that of the person who  
 can talk of nothing but  
 his own affairs. Such a person

is extremely <sup>12</sup> unhappy when  
the conversation does in the  
least revolve from his  
personal interests. He may  
be a most kindly, generous  
and unselfish person,  
and strangely enough many  
such people are most unhappy  
in all other relations with  
the world - people of the best  
intentions and highest virtues.  
But his interest in himself  
and his doings is so exaggerated  
that whatever topic comes  
up he must illustrate &  
adorn with some story  
of his own experience.  
If by chance we should  
be so unfortunate as to  
mention the question of health  
he will launch forth on a

detailed exposition of all his bodily ailments and their symptoms. If mention is made of the doings of some relatives ~~we are~~ one is condemned to listen to endless talk about brothers, sisters, cousins, uncles - run to the tenth generation.

What is particularly exasperating about such a person is that ~~the affairs~~ the affairs of other people - when <sup>brotherly</sup> ~~discussed~~ <sup>discussed</sup> conversation, at least - are of no interest at all; he insists on complete <sup>exclusive</sup> attention on the part of others to all he has to say but ~~does not~~ never is willing to return of the compliment. ~~of~~ I suppose

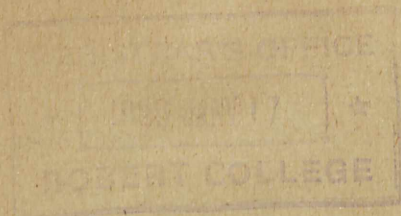
that one is never in the  
 quite so in the mood  
 to commit murder  
 as after <sup>by all</sup> sustained  
 attention for some time  
 having, in the effort to  
 be courteous, ~~be~~ sustained  
 an forced attention to a  
 wearisome flow, gets  
 a chance to talk oneself  
 out to discover that that  
~~other fellow~~ ~~make~~ ~~not~~  
~~even a effort~~ ~~to~~ ~~his~~ ~~own~~  
 worlds are full of absolute  
 deaf ears or that no sooner  
 has one started than one  
 is interrupted. This is  
 perhaps the most flagrant  
 example of the lips swallow  
 of an otherwise sensible person.

There is no surer road  
 to quick unpopularity than  
 Ignorance of this kind, and  
~~applied as a signature~~, which  
 they sometimes become estab-  
 lished as a mature person  
 there is little hope of cure -  
 most often an unalterable  
 cure is of it - it is of  
 particular importance  
 for you books have not  
 yet attained maturity to  
 avoid it like the plague.

Another form of egotism  
 manifested most often in  
 conversation is that of  
 the man who always  
 knows better than anyone  
 else what is or what should  
 be done. He has no  
 sympathy or respect at  
 all for the other man.



opinion. He refuses  
 to be influenced at all  
 by what another says on  
 the subject under discussion  
 no matter how <sup>obvious</sup> well  
 informed the other is  
 or how well thoughtful  
 his argument. The more  
 potent the opposite view  
 he becomes in the assertion  
 of his own. Such a man  
 is not only an exasperate  
 to his friends, if he has any,  
 but he is his own worst  
 enemy. He is incapable  
 of profiting by advice and  
 example and of correcting his  
 own judgments and opinions  
 under the influence of those  
 who are wiser or better informed  
 than himself.



➤ HUMAN CONDUCT ➤

To continue in our list of human failings - we know ~~well~~ those of us who meet dozens of tourists every year - the type of traveler who seems to go to foreign countries merely for the purpose of telling the benighted natives how much they ought to do things. Socrates was told that a certain Athenian was nothing improved by his travels. "I can well believe it," he replied, "for he took himself along with him". The officious man cannot bear to see anything done in any other than his own. He is always saying "let me show you how to do that" or "this is the way

we do it in our country, or our  
 city". ~~the~~ One can't put on ones  
 overcoat, ~~play a~~ make a  
 stroke in a game of tennis, work  
 a problem without ones hands  
 but insufferably <sup>interfering</sup> ~~superior~~ friend  
 tells one that that is it quite  
 the right way to do it. We  
 all have this tendency more  
 or less and it's well ~~not~~ to  
 realize that most people  
 would rather do things badly  
 than do them well under the  
 direction of a professional,  
<sup>self appointed</sup> improver of other people.

As a teacher, I am on safe  
 ground in criticizing teachers.  
 We, as a class, are didactic  
 and censorious, sometimes to  
 the point of destroying our  
 usefulness as teachers.  
 It is our business to  
 tell younger people how to  
 do things, how to behave  
 and to criticize and admonish  
 when things are not as they should be

As a consequence telling others what they ought to do, & what they ought not to do, becomes a habit and becomes, <sup>such</sup> a habit that we do it <sup>on</sup> all occasions, legitimate and otherwise.

We are <sup>generally</sup> prone to censoriousness, and no person can be so disagreeable in conversation, and in other social relationships as the one who is always distributing blame with the utmost <sup>indiscriminate</sup> freedom, but who takes none on himself. Teachers may be more liable to drift into ~~to~~ be caught by this tendency, but you as students are also subject to it. Because teachers are exacting in their demands — expect high standard of <sup>content</sup> work & achievement — you resent this often inconvenient & difficult demand.

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on your effort & time. Though  
you cannot openly object to  
their requirement for you, as they  
you recognize <sup>down and</sup> their justice, you  
are likely to find release for  
your suppressed irritation  
in fault reckless fault find  
& criticism of the school  
administration, the individuals  
teachers, the regulations, the  
boarding department, etc.  
Habitual & wide-spread fault-  
finding - constant conversation  
about real or imagined delinquency  
on the part of the teacher staff  
or student body is an infection  
poison which ruins the  
morale & spirit of an institution.  
If you want to do your school  
a real service - if you want to  
give living proof of loyalty - be  
quarled, thoughtful & generous in  
your conversation about all  
aspects of school life.

I come to the last and of  
 the list of conversational faults.  
 With this we ~~will~~ come out  
 of the class of trivial debili-  
 tations into one of the <sup>higher</sup> first  
 magnitude. There is more  
 harm done in the world  
 by the conversation which  
 deals in personalities than  
 by almost any other kind  
 of talk. A great many people  
 cannot withstand the tempta-  
 tion of to make their conversa-  
 tion more interesting by  
 revealing all & more than  
 they know about other people's  
 affairs & personalities. When  
 such gossip has a touch of  
 malice it becomes genuine  
 destructive & poisonous. Even  
 when there is no malice -  
 one's indiscretions will  
 eventually burn one out and

a friend will be hurried into  
 an enemy. ~~It is~~ It is  
~~never safe to confide~~  
 We never like to confide  
 in a person who talks with-  
 out restraint about others, as  
 we feel that once our  
 confidence in them is  
 probably be retailed to  
 the next corner.

Let us fully realize then that  
 Conversation <sup>is the almost the</sup> can be  
 a instrument of delight  
 and inspiration and it can  
 also be a instrument of  
 torture and destruction, and  
 that the slipping over  
 from the beneficent to  
 the injurious noxious  
 type is ~~very~~ easily done  
 dangerously easy. Conversa-  
 tion more than any other, else  
 too must be an art

We take for granted the one  
 all about other people. When  
~~you~~ <sup>you</sup> reads, construe  
 outwardly of human nature  
 as to yourself in relation  
 to each other discerned:

Do I commit this fault?

Does this apply to me?

Have I sufficiently developed  
 this admirable trait? Have  
 I the weakness? ~~How~~  
~~I strengthen this trait?~~

Well you in relation to the  
 lot of today ask yourselves these  
 questions: Is my conversation  
 a reflexion of the best that is  
 in me or the worst? Do I

want people to judge of me  
 by what my lips bring forth?

How can I make my  
 conversation a moral  
 asset to me + to those with  
 whose I, my persons, words  
 reach?



To be what it should be  
 it must be studied and  
 perfected as any other  
 difficult art. The only  
 way to make ones  
 conversation an art that  
 diffuses charm & happiness  
~~brings joy and benefit~~  
 is through self-knowledge  
 by way understood pretty well  
 of people & gradually reveal  
 through his talk that he has  
 no knowledge of himself -  
 his strength, his weakness,  
 his idiosyncrasies, his preju-  
 dices. This self-knowledge  
 can only come through the power  
 of reflective self-criticism made  
 a habit & of the  
 main spring of ones thought & action.  
 So much of the time we read  
 books which analyze character &  
 don't dream of applying it to  
 criticism & suggestion to ourselves.

For my talk morally disintegrated  
or morally constructive to  
myself,  
with things h. 293

Question on everyone's lips today in every part of the world  
Why is Europe on the brink of a  
abyss? Why are nations seemingly  
~~about~~ in danger of springing at  
one another's throats with fangs bared in  
fury and desperation and fear? Why  
are the so-called enlightened Nations  
of today so behaving towards one another  
that we are faced with the possibility  
of a holocaust that will shatter for  
civilization, in its present form at least?

Certainly no one of any penetrator  
of thought can be under any illusions  
of as to the devastating <sup>character</sup> nature of another  
war between the scientifically advanced  
nations. ~~The~~ One must be of an utterly  
childlike mentality not to understand  
that by fighting one gets killed or  
maimed whether it be an individual  
or a nation, and <sup>if you want to prosper</sup> ~~it be an individual~~  
<sup>in a modern way</sup> ~~it be~~  
<sup>whether vanquished</sup> ~~it be~~  
~~be a stray~~ by certainly there are  
millions of men of about my own age  
who can not ~~under~~ <sup>and dangers</sup> have any allusions  
about it. ~~If you could~~ I don't wish to  
give the impression of proclaiming superior  
penetration through <sup>special experience</sup> ~~it~~  
but I wish you could all of you have  
seen one thing I saw - a peaceful,  
wholesome, mellow little village of  
France with ~~its~~ church and houses some of  
them 3 or 400 yrs old. Its inhabitants <sup>bring in</sup>  
whispered in the fundamentally good things of the human  
life of the <sup>about</sup> ~~about~~ wings of some of the fountains were you  
or the champagne - this village, within the accredited

brief period of 30 minutes reduced  
to crumbling ruins by heavy artillery  
shells and airplane bombs - striking  
with the acid fumes of high explosive  
and the sickly <sup>crisp, deathly</sup> ~~stagnant~~ <sup>sweetness</sup>  
of poison gas. This only one of 100's,  
1000's of similar destructions; yes -  
modern weapons are instruments of  
rapid, sudden desolation and  
death. And don't let the foolishly optimistic  
<sup>anybody</sup> tell you that defensive devices keep pace  
with engines of destruction. It wasn't  
true in the last war and will be less  
so if there is another. In the battle  
of the Somme a few ~~well~~ strategic  
situated machine guns served by a few  
score of men were responsible for  
3000 dead <sup>or maimed</sup> a day, of the flower of  
British youth, in a battle that continued  
for weeks. If towns & villages were destroyed  
by the 100's in the last world war - what when  
~~the~~ war engines were overloading production  
or inefficient - what will be how many  
more, together with <sup>their</sup> inhabitants this time, will  
~~constitute~~ <sup>be</sup> proof of the ingenuity of man in  
designing improved equipment for dealing out  
death on an unprecedented grand scale.

Why then, why and why? There  
must be reasons - there are excuses for  
all things. Why are this race

in rearmings, why this distrust -  
apprehension, confusion and fear?  
The alternatives, <sup>factoring us</sup> are of ~~obvious~~ <sup>obvious</sup> ~~alternatives~~  
understanding and solution <sup>or</sup> ~~or~~  
annihilation.

News papers publish columns  
and columns <sup>professional literature</sup> are discussed by  
the hour - the more obvious  
causes of the present crisis.  
It's not my purpose to  
discuss ~~at large on this~~  
talk about the vicious  
circle of French fear of  
German aggressiveness or the  
German fear of encirclement,  
the unwisdom of the Treaty  
of Versailles, the <sup>fundamental</sup> necessity of  
making the League of Nations  
an effective reality. While all  
such conditions and problems must  
be faced and solved if we  
are to have peace there must  
be something more fundamental  
which produces such situations.  
I for one don't believe  
that we shall have a European

war now. In the very serious  
 ness of the political situation there  
 is hope. The last war one of  
 the most lamentable  
 results of the world war was  
 to produce whole nations  
 of new states - the entire  
 world, Europe at a rate was  
 and still is partly in a state  
 of shell-shock - the danger  
 of the present situation is increased  
 by the ~~serious~~ lack of nerve control  
 or nervous balance but I don't  
 believe <sup>that the</sup> ~~equally~~ <sup>is so</sup> is  
 great ~~that~~ as to be produce  
 human beings to state of complete  
 mono-mania. In the very danger  
 of situation lies perhaps safety -  
 shock of com. so near to the  
 hell of war may ~~thus~~ provide  
 spur to agreements & peace which  
 may reduce state of internal  
 anarchy now prevail

Suppose we emerge, as we do at present  
 shall, breacher & unscathed -  
 the ~~conditions~~ <sup>elements</sup> conducive to a  
 recurrence of the menace will still  
 exist. In another aspect of things  
 each nation has to be kept in  
 the ~~for~~ <sup>more</sup> ~~dist~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~rather~~ <sup>days</sup>

part a whole that part of life  
 fundamental questions  
 that numbers

**Boğaziçi Üniversitesi**

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**Scott Ailesi Koleksiyonu**



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