Real words, real meanings

by James Bowman

On the changing meanings of common words.

Who was it that said politics ceased to be interesting when everybody—that is, not just the politicians of both parties, but also the voters who were supposed to keep them honest and accountable—stopped caring about deficit spending? Those wise words, though I now forget where I read them a year or two ago, suddenly came back to me when I saw the following pathetic headline to an editorial in London’s Daily Telegraph in July: “The Government’s generosity on foreign aid ought to be linked to affordability.” Indeed it ought! But the insanity of borrowing money in order to give it away is now so much taken for granted, in the media as elsewhere, that even such a minor eruption of common sense as this strikes us as vaguely inappropriate, even offensive, like a profanity uttered in church. The author of the...The rest of this article is locked. Please make sure you are logged in to view the full article.

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https://newcriterion.com/issues/2021/9/real-words-real-meanings