

Words Poorly Used #33 — Shall

Thanks to Skyler for bringing up this word, *shall*, in this blogspace. There is a strong argument that any time this word and its variations are used relative to human behavior that it is poorly used. There is also a weak argument that it might be used in a process description, say in a statute where it only applies to what generically happens next — but there are other words which may substitute nicely. The word *shall* (and its derivatives) actually comes to us from the KJV Bible[*], where it was frequently used to describe the mandatory nature of man's relationship to God. But it was soon usurped by Kings and other despots who were running a scam that they had a divine right to practice their depredations on those without divine right. (We'll do a WPU on "divine right" perhaps one day). The use of *shall* might well be done away with in modern usage. It is a vestigial remain. Part of the behavior of poorly using words is to preserve the use of words that no longer have a practical use (its power to confuse massively outweighs its power to clarify).

[*] one *shall* capitalize the initial letter of "Bible"

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