
The Underground GRAMMARIAN

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Reflections at Three

We are neither peddlers nor politicians that we should prosper by that use of language which carries the least meaning. We cannot honorably accept the wages, confidence, or licensure of the citizens who employ us as we darken counsel by words without understanding.

THIS ISSUE marks our third birthday, a happy event, some would say. For us, it is made all the happier by the knowledge that some others will observe this day with clenched teeth and digestive disorders.

The passage quoted above appeared in our first issue. We cite it partly as a birthday observance, but also as a melancholy reminder of the innocence with which we began. We truly imagined that it was only out of haste or heedlessness that so many members of the academic community wrote ignorant and incoherent English. We believed that when they realized what they were doing they would take care to stop doing it. We were wrong.

Some of them, it turned out, simply *were* ignorant and incoherent, unfortunate victims of the anti-academic educationism in whose service they now labor. They could not have mended their minds had they chosen to, which they didn't. Even worse, many others proved to *be* peddlers and politicians, sellers of scams and devices, and projectors of Lilliputian empires. In their case, the traditional academic reverence for clarity of language and thought must give way to the Fifth Amendment.

Accordingly, the results of our first three years of nagging have actually been the opposite of what we expected. Our victims do, to be sure, make harsh demands of secretaries and quietly ask friends to help them with the placement of modifiers. Committees quarrel occasionally about some phrase, and at least one department, the one

in charge of remedial programs, naturally, has simply forbidden its members to commit writing in public. More and more documents appear either with many names of putative authors, or none. Reports and recommendations are conspicuously labeled "DRAFT," as though inanity and mendacity were little things that could be "fixed" later, like the doublespace after a colon.

These things are not signs of a longing to clarify thought through the practice of clear writing. They are maneuvers. When found wanting, the peddlers and politicians of education will undertake to do better only when they can make such amendment contingent upon "increased funding." Lacking that, they respond to criticism by devising stratagems that will, they hope, protect them from more criticism. They don't mind *being* peddlers and politicians, but they would rather not be *called* peddlers and politicians.

We no longer hope to improve them, but only to remove them. We expect to succeed, too, because we will bring against them the most arrant accusations of unnatural vice and unmitigated folly, the most glaring testimony to ignorance and weakness of mind, the most damning and defaming weapons that we can find—their very own words.

The Holistic Hustle

FORTUNATELY for American educationists, there is never any dearth of trashy and popular fads, the raw material of curricular novelty. The half-life of most bold innovative thrusts is less than that of the pet rock or the nude encounter group, and pedagogical gimmicks have to be cooked up more often than situation comedies. But, thanks to the fertile inventiveness always inspired by exuberant greed, the master schlockmongers will always provide the educationists with full measures of readily adaptable inanities.

Of course, there is a difference between the peddlers of pop and the educationists. The peddlers of pop are skillful. When promoters have deposited the take from Woodstocks and Earth Days, the educationists come limping behind with mini-courses in the "poetry" of rock and roll, and environmental awareness. In a frantic scramble after what crumbs may fall from the merchants' tables, they rush to "teach" soap-opera-watching,

the casting of horoscopes, and the throwing of the Frisbee. Coming soon: Elvis, the copper bracelet, and the T-shirt as literature.

Future historians of education (how's that for a dreary calling?) will understand better than we that the most powerful influence on education in our time was not new knowledge of the psychology of learning, not the rise and dominance of the electronic media, not the fervor for democratization that followed the civil rights movements, not even the newly awakened public recognition of the tensions between the demands of an increasingly automated society and a reinvigorated and often anti-materialistic individualism, but, purely and simply, the Big Mac. Our schools are, in almost every respect, analogues of the fast-food industry, although there probably is some nourishment in the Big Mac. Even the slogans are the same: Have it *your* way; We do it all for yoo-oo-oo.

It's not surprising, therefore, that educationists respond to public discontent not by trying to improve what they do, but by trying to "educate" the public into some other "perception" of what they do. In education, as in the fast-food business, it's called "image enhancement," and, like all flackery, it's done with slogans and buzz words. When the public finally noticed, for instance, that fewer and fewer children were learning to read, the educationists quickly discovered that "learning disabilities" were far more common than anyone had ever suspected. Therefore, we ought in fact to *praise* the schools for doing such a great job with swarms of undernourished, disaffected imbeciles, many of whom were also myopic, hard of hearing, hyperactive (if not lethargic), or even lacking in self-esteem.

Now, pestered by complaints about student writing, the educationists have drawn from the bottomless pit of mindless pop a bucket of inspiration, the Whatever Turns You On Plan for the Enhancement of Public Perceptions Concerning Student Writing. They call it "holistic" grading. It will improve grades dramatically without requiring any improvement in the teaching of writing. It will work even in schools where there is *no* teaching of writing. Now *that's* educationism.

Most of what we've heard about holistic grading has come from the horse's mouth, the National Council of Teachers of English. We now have a

report from another part of the horse, the Educational Testing Service, which is offering "workshops" in holistic grading:

With this method, the essay is read for a total impression of its quality rather than for such separate aspects of writing skill as organization, punctuation, diction, or spelling. The method takes a positive approach to the rating of compositions by asking the reader to concentrate on what the student has accomplished rather than on what the student has failed to do or has done badly. Holistic scoring is both efficient and accurate. The standards by which compositions are judged are those that the readers have developed from their training and from their experiences with student writing.

We have to presume that the written parts of tests given by ETS will be "rated" in this "efficient and accurate" fashion from now on. In a few years, we'll hear that the writing crisis, if indeed there ever was one, is over.

This, you see, is a "positive approach." To fuss about organization, punctuation, diction, and spelling is the bad old negative approach that caused the whole flap to begin with.

To judge writing by this "holistic" method is like judging a musical performance without reference to rhythm, tempo, or dynamics, and taking no heed of false notes or of "organization." What could we say of a performance in which all of those things were wrong? We could certainly *not* judge it as a musical performance if we choose to give no weight to the attributes of musical performance. If we could consider things without regarding their attributes, which we can't, we wouldn't even know what the hell they were. It is only by their attributes that we can distinguish a musical performance from a billiard ball. It is by just such attributes as organization and diction, dismissed above as presumably optional "aspects," that we can distinguish between written composition and the egg stains on an educationist's face.

And *that* is a distinction that we had better learn to make. There will never be good, universal, public education in America until we learn, from their own words, that the people in charge of it are badly in need of an education. Educated people

will not be deceived by such nonsense. Some knowledge of the history of thought and some skill in logical language can be expected of the educated, but they are not required for a degree in “education.”

Educated people are likely to know what “holistic” means. They know, simply because they have the power of language and thought, that if something is *more* than the sum of its parts, it cannot be *less* than the sum of its parts. They even know what “aspects” are, and that to call punctuation, spelling, diction, and even organization, “separate aspects” of writing suggests either ignorance or mendacity. They know, too, that this slick hustle, designed not only to deceive the taxpayers about the state of student writing but also to make the grading of compositions one hell of a lot easier, may appropriately be called many things, but “holistic” isn’t one of them.

“Contemptuous,” however, *is* one of them. It is not out of kindness but out of contempt (and sloth) that educationists design ways to excuse students from the demands of good work. To tell a student that “what he has accomplished,” however little that may be, is an adequate substitute for “what he has failed to do or has done badly,” however much *that* may be, is not “humanistic” (they don’t know the meaning of that word, either) or even humane. It is arrogant.

It is also unmistakably to imply that the mastery of good writing is not important. Do you suppose that those educationists would want their dentists or even their electricians “rated” by their “holistic” method? When pilots and flight engineers are licensed by “positive approaches” without regard for all those trivial “separate aspects” of their crafts, will the loyal members of the National Council of Teachers of English fly to the annual convention *anyway*, just to demonstrate their faith in a “total impression of quality”? Will they consult physicians whose diplomas have been granted in spite of “what the student has failed to do or has done badly”?

One thing must be said in fairness to the educationists who have packaged and touted the Holistic Hot ‘n’ Juicy: The standards by which they propose to measure students’ work are no more rigorous than those by which they judge their own work. After all, the ability to write good English isn’t required for a doctorate in education,

so why bother high school kids about it? Of course, there may be some kids who aim higher and would like to do useful and respectable work that calls for the habits of accuracy and clear thought that come from the mastery of written composition, but the fast-food business doesn’t work that way. When ETS serves up the Holistic Hot ‘n’ Juicy, everybody eats it.

And the educationists all get to do a little something for themselves too-oo-oo.

Teratology

WHAT follows is a description taken from the course catalog of the Normandale Community College in Bloomington, Minnesota. The first word has been blanked out by our informant, who intended to protect the perpetrator, obviously the one who teaches these blankety-blank courses:

—?— courses involve the inextricable interrelationships of different disciplines, but linguistic sophistication and communicative competence to improve interpersonal communication and international understanding are the all-encompassing objectives.

So how’s that for linguistic sophistication and communicative competence? (The latter can only mean “any competence that communicates,” and not, as the writer imagines, “competence in communicating.” The difference is important. This writer has no competence in communicating, and his competence, such as it is, is all too communicative of that fact.)

Note the weasel-word, “involve,” which is intended to mitigate the moral responsibility implicit in the making of an assertion. Lest they commit themselves, for instance, to the exact content of a course, thus putting themselves to the pain of understanding what the hell they’re doing, school people wave airily in the direction of some vague generalities that a course may *involve*. This is especially true of educationists whose courses have no content but can be said to *involve* any absurdity that an idle tongue can find to utter.

Such folk, if ever they become involved in findings centered around reading books, will pronounce Raskolnikov a nontraditional student who became involved in an experiential continuum concerning ax-murder.

Brief Notes

GET OUT your hankies. Here comes a very sad story about Dale Woods and some of his colleagues at Northeast Missouri State University. Woods is Head of the Division of Mathematics there, and he has written us a poignant letter about a little problem they've been having.

Last May we considered a dreadful passage from *Wisconsin Teacher of Mathematics*, the work of one Marlow Ediger from NMSU. We called him, instinctively, a "math educator." Wrong, or at least sort of wrong. Woods says:

I read, with some interest, your Brief Notes. I would like to have you publish...a retraction or at least a note indicating the fact that Dr. Marlow Ediger is not a member of the Division of Mathematics, nor a member of the Division of Mathematics Education. Dr. Ediger does not teach courses in mathematics or mathematics education. Unfortunately, I do not have control over the articles he has published. I disagree violently with many of these articles and if I were a reviewer or an editor of journals in which these publications appear, I would not accept these articles for publication.

All members of the Mathematics Division are concerned with the fact that the Mathematics Division is getting undesirable publicity from these publications, and we hope that a correction...would assist somewhat in letting the public know that the publications are not from the Mathematics Division or Mathematics Education at Northeast Missouri State University.

Well, we are slightly sorry for Dale Woods, *et al.*, but the academic community is a corporate body. It is not at all reluctant to pat itself on the back for the work of some of its members. If others bring it "undesirable publicity," then remedy, however difficult to accomplish, is still possible. Lacking the will to pursue it, the academic community will just have to take its raps. Those, *we* can provide.

Neither can his mind be thought to be in tune, whose words do jarre; nor his reason in frame, whose sentence is preposterous.



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Naming of Parts

LIKE the counterjumper who drinks from his fingerbowl while trying to pass himself off as a peer, the academic arriviste betrays himself by mouthing words he doesn't understand. His sequenced modules and problematical parameters are Academe's versions of bronzed baby shoes and lawn ornaments in the shape of flamingos.

The Snopeses of Academe (who won't even know where to look that up) have problems not only with hard words like *holistic*, which they occasionally spell "wholistic," but even with simple words like *phase* and *factor*. They seem baffled by words that name the various possible kinds of parts.

Their students catch their ignorance. A few months ago, we quoted a "communications" major, a young lady who wanted to experience the segments of the field in order to pinpoint a facet to pursue. She was probably following some ga-ga creative writing teacher's rule for colorful and varied diction, but she will suffer permanent brain damage if she actually thinks that *segment* and *facet* are synonyms, or that either makes sense in naming the parts of a *field*. Of course, she probably wasn't thinking any such thing; she just wasn't thinking.

And that explains why our educationists and their victims have so much trouble with the naming of parts. You have to do a little thinking—not much, but obviously too much for some people—to understand the difference between a segment and a facet, and a little more to understand why the mind is not clarified by considering either the segments or the facets of a field.

Such thoughtlessness is aggravated by the cloudiness of *field*, which readers of pedagogue will recognize as a handy plug-in replacement for *area*, *sphere*, and *domain*. Educationists can

babble forever about the phases of their fields and the facets of their spheres. There is no need for precise definition where there are no real things to be defined.

There are no boundaries to the happy land of Let's Pretend. If you can imagine that you are *thinking* as you contemplate the facets of your cute little sphere, you are only one baby step away from sucking on their aspects and their parameters. Aspects and parameters are two of the darlinest baubles of the mindless, who find them especially useful in the naming of parts. Segments and phases *are* in fact certain kinds of parts. If you talk about facets of a segment of your area, some rude elitist—from *off* the education field, naturally—may call your bluff, requiring that you describe *exactly* the nature of the parts and of their relationships both to each other and to the whole. You can avoid such embarrassment by hiding in the aspects and parameters, which aren't parts of *any* kind. If you prate about the problematical parameters of the affective aspects of your area, your playmates will give you a D.Ed., and the rude elitists, realizing that you are beyond the reach of reason, will trouble you no more. But, hoping still, they will tiptoe away, leaving you to amuse yourself in your playpen with your favorite words; luckily, they're all sharp instruments.

The Black Whole of Connecticut "Mistah Kurtz—he transpersonalized."

The center cannot hold, you say? Poo. Come with us now, up some tranquil New England waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth and into the heart of an immense darkness. There, we will come at last to the Connecticut Teachers' Center for Humanistic Education, and it's holding very well indeed, thank you.

Dark humanistic shapes we will make out in the distance, flitting indistinctly against the gloomy border of the forest, and, chief among them, brooding over some inscrutable purpose, Emily, the Assistant Director. All we know of her is what we read in *Centering*, the Center's little newsletter. Here it is—*sic*:

Emily has experience training in the areas of Bio-energetics, Psychosynthesis, Gestalt Therapy, Arica Psychocalesthenics, Yoga and

Tai Chi. Emily has been a consultant to Connecticut Public Schools . . . in self-awareness training, confluent education, and organization development.... Emily is committed to working with individuals wholistically—facilitating the integration of their emotional, intellectual, physical and transpersonal aspects.

In the hush that falls suddenly upon the whole (or "hole,") sorrowful land, do remember that Emily is only the *Assistant* Director. What must *he* be, who can direct the labors of such an assistant? And whose heads are those, their transpersonal aspects hideously integrated on self-awareness training poles, that fence these murky precincts? They look so small.

We are lost, lost in an area. Is it the area of Psychosynthesis or the area of Tai Chi? Could we be in the neighborhood of Bioenergetics or even in the immediate environs of Arica Psychocalesthenics? Who knows? They look so much alike. That's why we all need Assistant Directors, real *professionals* of education, with rigorous "experience training" in areas. Oh, what a mistake we made studying junk like geography when what we ought to have had was experience training somewhere in the area-awareness area. Now we just can't seem to facilitate the integration of *any* of our aspects. The horror, the horror.

We have, of course, no idea at all of what teachers *do* in a teachers' center, and we obviously never will, for the gravity of the Black Whole of Connecticut is so enormous that no light escapes. We can only guess, therefore, that teachers hie themselves there to have their Gestalten therapized in the lotus position, performing the while, quietly within the psyche, synthesizing calesthenics, whatever *those* may be, interspersed with an occasional aspect-integrating and big-energizing round of Tai Chi, perhaps a confluent form of Parcheesi for individuals. That would explain a lot.

That's all we can tell you. Like that other cryptic screech, our source gave "no practical hints to interpret [or even to understand] the magic current of its phrases . . . unless a kind of note . . . scrawled evidently much later, may be regarded as the exposition of a method," or, at least, of a course in methodology. "It was very simple, and

at the end of that moving appeal to every altruistic sentiment it blazed . . . luminous and terrifying, like a flash of lightning in a serene sky: ‘Excruciate the brats!’” And that, of course, would explain *everything*.

The Long Spoon Effect

IF you are considering thinking about deciding to contemplate beginning to get ready to start preparing to become an academic administrator, you had better do a little homework. As the old Bulgarian adage puts it, Who would sup with dogs must bring along fleas, or, according to another translation, He who lies down with a long spoon gets up with the Devil. Either, or both, can mean, or can be seen as meaning, that in learning to think and write in a manner appropriate to high office, you must seek experience training in the area of communicative aspects facilitation. Don’t worry. It’s a big area. You can’t miss it. Go to the classics. Read studiously the written work of anyone who sports the word “academic” in his title. Any Academic Dean will do, but an Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs is even better.

Doyle E. Howitt is exactly one such at Kearney State College in Kearney, Nebraska. On November 8, 1979, Asst. VP for AcAf Howitt sent out a memo about IDEA, which has something to do with “faculty review and evaluation” and is either a “system” or an “instrument.” Howitt tells faculty: “As a tenured member of the faculty you have access to the option of selecting when to implement and utilize the IDEA instruments.” (Sorry. We forgot. Sometimes it *is* “instruments.”)

There. In one swell foop Howitt has shown you almost everything you need to know to be an academic something or other. Keep your distance! Don’t, for heaven’s sake, tell people that they can select. Don’t even tell them that they have the option of selecting, which is to say, and oh so bluntly, that they can decide whether or not to select. If you *must* tell them something, first ask somebody else to do it; the canniest academic administrators never commit writing if there’s any chance of being caught. As a last resort, however, you can tell them that they have *access* to the

option of selecting, which is to say that they are free to choose whether or not to decide whether or not to select when to implement and utilize. (Forgot that last bit, didn’t you? Please stay alert until you *become* an Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs.)

To feel the power of language that retreats as far as possible from what it has to say, all you need to do is compare it with the amateurish forthrightness of ordinary human speech. Just think how Dewey, if only he had been an *academic* admiral, could have changed the whole sad history of our age. An academic admiral would have said: “You have access to the option of selecting when to utilize and implement your weapons system instruments, Gridley.” Words to remember! In Spanish, of course.

SEX has addled some of the soundest pates of our age, or of any age, for that matter. Sitting around brooding on sex has never led to clarity of language and thought. The writer’s problems are now aggravated by the fact that he *must* think about sex in order to write, as he is now expected to write, as though he hadn’t been thinking about sex at all. That last sentence, with its three *he*’s, for example, shows that the writer, obviously hypnotized by sex, was unable to achieve that clarity of mind that would permit sufficient attention to sex out of which to compose a sentence that proves the writer impervious to sexual distraction. (Now *that* is a better sentence—not a single *he*!)

Consider the plight of George Thompson, Director of Freshman Composition at Emporia State University. He’s not a bad writer, and it’s not his fault that his memo of last November 30 has to speak of an Exit Exam. But here’s what happens to him:

Should a student have . . . conflicts with the date and time, please send he or she to my office so other arrangements can be made.

You see? He was so worried about worrying about not seeming worried that he couldn’t even think of changing “student” to a plural.

Teratology

The Faculty Development Committee of the Department of Management at Central State University in Edmond, Oklahoma, met on the 28th of November, 1979. The committee sends word that some “Definitive constructs were exchanged as to accountability and consensual concern produced desire to poll our colleagues for expression about priorities of factors associated with areas of accountability.”

Having polished off concern for expressions about factors associated with areas, the committee went on to “develop” a “tentative but generalized view.” Although it said nothing about research, the committee declared that “research service” was to be accorded “very minimal” consideration, and also thought it best “to defer... consideration as to primacy of peerage judgments.” To sum it all up:

The committee expresses concern for the need to facilitate a more helpful/acceptance oriented vehicle as antecedent provision to voting for individual faculty members on occasions of promotion and tenure. We are leaning toward a periodic peerage meeting, perhaps annually, during the ongoing years of service. We lean toward openness in constructive discussion procedurally enabling peerage interaction.

We lean the same way, and we suggest that somebody send this writer and all of his pals, who evidently let this gibberish go forth, back to the wind-up toy factory at the very next occasion of tenure.

We don’t know who wrote that rubbish, because our misguided informant blotted out the writer’s name. That name, however, appears regularly on the checks with which the taxpayers of Oklahoma pay him for the work of his mind. That work shames the entire academic community. That we permit it is disgrace enough. To protect him who does it is to suggest that we’re *willing* to permit it. That had better not be true.

Brief Notes

We should have known. Goethe told us that the betterment of fools was work for fools, and St. Thomas warned us about that “invincible ignorance” against which reason can never prevail, but we didn’t listen. In the December issue, speaking of the Teacher-training Turkeys and their pernicious influence, we said: “... the turkeys are influential. That’s why every rinky-dink administrator in academe wants to speak their gobble.”

On the Glassboro campus, you can’t throw a rock without clobbering either a Teacher-training Turkey or a rinky-dink administrator, and often both birds at once, in the same flesh. It gives you a good feeling, of course, but it’s futile. They are troubled not at all by severe injuries to the head. And—would you believe it?—many of them read what they can of this Journal hoping, of course, to find bad English, of which they have heard.

One of them read the passage quoted above and crowed with delight. (The crowing of a turkey is a terrible thing to hear.) Unable to keep in mind more than one sentence at a time, he concluded that “their” had to refer to “administrator.” Triumphantly, the poor boob sent us his “findings.”

Unfortunately, he didn’t provide a “correction” for what he thought was a failure of agreement. That would be: “Every ... administrator... wants to speak *his* gobble.” That *is* true, and if we ever want to say that, that’s exactly what we’ll say.

Come to think of it, Pope warned us too. If there’s one thing you can always find at the teacher academy, it’s “little learning.”

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R. Mitchell, Assistant Circulation Manager
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The Royko Papers

When you talked us in your paper you called us barbarians. It is even more rude than when you call us delinquents. You cant compare us to 50 years ago because we dont wear knickers' and deliver newspapers. All you Old Farts are the same. At Cominsky Park we were just expressing our feelings about disco, because disco sucks. If you write another column like that you will have to answer to me in person.

*A letter to Mike Royko
From a high school student*

I was struck by a manifest shallowness in the doer [Eichmann] that made it impossible to trace the incontestable evil of his deeds to any deeper level of roots or motives. The deeds were monstrous, but the doer . . . was quite ordinary, commonplace, and neither demonic nor monstrous. There was no sign in him of firm ideological convictions or of specific evil motives, and the only notable characteristic one could detect in his past behavior as well as in his behavior during the trial and throughout the pre-trial police examination was something entirely negative: it was not stupidity but *thoughtlessness*. . . . Is wickedness, however we may define it, this being “determined to prove a villain,” *not* a necessary condition for evil-doing? Might the problem of good and evil, our faculty for telling right from wrong, be connected with our faculty of thought?

*Hannah Arendt, in
The Life of the Mind*

MIKE ROYKO is a columnist at the *Sun-Times* of Chicago. His essays appear in many

newspapers throughout the country, thank goodness, for he has the habit of clear language and thought. Mike Royko wrote a column about those eleven people who were trampled to death at a rock concert in Cincinnati. He suggested, by no means injudiciously, that “those who would climb over broken bodies to reach a seat in an auditorium could be called ‘the new barbarians’.” That suggestion must have seemed less than humanistic and perhaps even somewhat un-self-esteem-enhancing to a certain Robert Maszak, a teacher of English at Bloom Township in Chicago Heights. Maszak, probably remembering his training in the teacher academy, seized for his students this marvelous opportunity for a relevant and experiential exercise in the integration of self-awareness aspects and the clarification of values. He had them all write letters telling Royko where to head in, and proving, since they *could* write, that some teenagers were not barbarians. In fact, they couldn't, and they are.

Royko, to be sure, had said nothing about teenagers—or about the worth of rock music, which was stridently championed in many of the letters. Maszak, however, may well be a member of the National Council of Teachers of English, and thus both a proponent and a practitioner of *holistic* reading, in which the reader must scrupulously refuse to consider what the writer actually says, a mere *aspect* of writing.

Maszak may also be a holistic grader, for he was not reluctant to display the fruits of his teaching, which look like this:

Dear Tenage hater

I was disappointed by what you written on the Who concert. From what you said I can see you have know so called barbarism. You used some strong words in there with very little fact, you say everyone was numbed in the brain. I will say from concert experience maybe half or three fourths were high on something or nether but I also know that theres not one fourth to half that weren't. You say everyone was pushing and throwing elbows, did you ever think that some of the thrown elbows were from people who didn't like getting pushed. You said something about when you were a kid, well times have change. . . .

Yes. The times indeed have change. Well, let's try to be holistic. Let's ignore failures of technique and, as we were instructed in last month's quotation from ETS, concentrate on "what the student has accomplished rather than on what the student has failed to do or has done badly." Let's remember as well the aggrieved whimpers of the educationists who beseech us to believe that skill in writing is obviously, while useful, much less important than humanistic things like the encouragement of self-expression, the enhancement of self-esteem, and the clarification of values.

Now we can understand why Maszak was untroubled by such a piece of work. It is, in fact, a testimony to the triumph of educationism over education. That poor student, not a villain but a victim, has indeed expressed nothing more than *himself*. His esteem for that forlorn and meager self is firm and truculent. And his values are perfectly clear.

Perfectly clear, too, are the values of the few students who actually mentioned Royko's topic, the death of eleven people. One saw it as a perfectly expectable concomitant of everybody's inalienable right to have what he wants when he wants it. Here's his clarification of values:

If there were someone yer looked up to and yer went to see them in person and thier were thousands of peopl just like you and wanted to see him up close would you fight yer way in?

Another shows an even keener sense of values; he gives us the very numbers by which we can reconcile ourselves to death in Cincinnati: "People die every three second. What would you do if you paid \$15 for a ticket?"

Eichmann must have said as much in the still watches of the night, if he ever *did* say anything to himself. Jews die anyway, don't they? And Eichmann had even more than fifteen dollars at stake.

You can be sure that the humanisticists in our schools will make a profit from that last letter. They will transform it into a "values clarification module": You have paid for a ticket to hear a concert by the Walking Dead, whom yer look up to. How cheap does it have to be for you to decide that getting to your seat just isn't worth the hassle of trampling a few people to death, people who

may in any case die every three second? The ensuing rap session will be quite long enough to provide yet another day's respite from the tedious and dehumanizing study of language and thought.

The children who wrote the Royko papers are juniors and seniors in high school. They are probably from sixteen to nineteen years old. They have spent eleven, twelve, or more, years in our "humanistic," "values-oriented," schools. What their teachers have praised as "creativity" looks remarkably like anarchic self-indulgence, which is what creativity must always be in the want of discipline and skill. Their much-encouraged "self-expression" cannot be distinguished from dissolute libertinism, a virulent form of self-expression where there is no self-knowledge. Their "enhanced self-esteem" has blossomed into an arrogant narcissism, a perversion of self-esteem where there is no idea of what is estimable.

Can we hope that Maszak's few students are unique, or at least unusual? We cannot. We know that there are millions, millions of children who have in effect been *dehumanized* by the "humanistic" education that smugly dismisses the mastery of knowledge and skills and the discipline of the intellect as elitist adornments accessible, if they *will* have them, only to the few, and eagerly peddles to the many the mindless claptrap of environmental awareness and career orientation and ethnic sensitivity and doing your own thing and letting it all hang out.

Human beings only, of all living creatures, can know what Hannah Arendt has described as "the claim on our thinking attention that all events and facts make by virtue of their existence." She said of Eichmann "that he clearly knew of no such claim," although she does not say of him, as we might have to of Maszak's students, that even had he known of such a claim he would have proved incapable of paying it *thinking* attention.

Thinking attention can be paid only in skillful language. And, for those who want to be humanistic, there is no more distinctly human attribute than the power of language and no more distinctly human accomplishment than thinking attention.

Go and learn *those* things, you humanism-mongers, before you presume to instruct our children in values. And do it fast. There isn't much time. We have read the Royko papers, and

we know what you have been doing. We have seen the future that you have fashioned for us, and, in words that even your victims will understand, it sucks, humanisticists, and all the *young* farts are the same.

An Enemy of the People

THERE is weeping in Wales, Wisconsin, where the school board invited teachers at the local high school to dream up proposals for some new courses. Fifteen teachers did so.

So the curriculum committee of the school board read the proposals, and one member, Robert W. Geweke, did exactly what a good citizen should do. He told a reporter for the local newspaper that “the spelling and grammar and sentence structure in twelve of the fifteen proposals were unbelievable.” And he cited chapter and verse.

Every school board in America should have at least one such member. If we had some award to give for exemplary service in the war with the nerds, we would give it to Robert Geweke, of Wales, Wisconsin. (Local papers, please copy.)

And what have they given him in Wales, Wisconsin? Flak. Parents and teachers, especially teachers, are accusing him of trying to ruin the lives of innocent children by discrediting their high school, thus making it unlikely that they will be accepted at the colleges of their choice, where, we presume, they can always take remedial courses in the skills that were thought not important enough to fuss about back home in Wales. Teachers can be expected, of course, to excuse themselves, but you would think, wouldn't you, that parents might object to having their children taught by ignoramuses. Apparently not. They object only to having it *known*.

Stick in there, Robert Geweke. You have done the right thing. But we do have one little suggestion for your school board: you do need *something* in your high school; but, although those new course proposals proved useful in an unexpected way, something you obviously *don't* need is a mess of new courses. We think you ought to fire the ignoramuses—who are *always* panting after new courses—and find teachers who can teach the *old* courses.

The Nonredundant Interactive Relationship of Perceived Teacher Directiveness and Student Personological Variables to Grades and Satisfaction

Recent research has shown that a number of student variables — authoritarianism, dogmatism, intelligence, conceptual level, convergent-divergent ability, locus of control, anxiety, compulsivity, need for achievement, achievement orientation, independence-dependence, and extraversion-introversion—may moderate the relationship between teacher directiveness and grades and satisfaction. There is a fair degree of moderate intercorrelation among these student variables and such intercorrelation suggests that some of the found interactive relationships may be overlapping or redundant. The purpose of the present research is to develop multivariate mathematical models of the interactive relationships using stepwise regression strategies. Such models should facilitate a more parsimonious interpretation of the interactive relationships which are . . .

We were going to show you *all* of that mess and even give you the name and address of the chappie who made it, but we can't. Before our typesetter was able to finish, a member of our staff borrowed the original (and only) copy and took it to Texas. There, while fumbling for his entry permit at the Immigration Control Office, he lost the evidence. Maybe it's just as well. There's no telling what those Rangers might have done had they caught him with a smoking dissertation abstract. They don't cotton much to that kind of stuff down there.

We *can* tell you, at least, that the original came from Calgary, Alberta, and we have to hope, if justice is ever to be done, that the Mounties don't want any of this stuff in their country either. They shouldn't have much trouble getting their man—and his sidekick—in this case. The author and his dissertation adviser were so proud of themselves that they had their photographs printed right on the page with the evidence. Perfectly decent and respectable young fellows they seemed, too. Who would have thought it?

Since personology must be too subtle a science for the likes of us, we cannot explain how “personological” variables might be different from differences in persons. We would guess, though, that *student* variables are young variables studying to become teacher variables. And we’re a little disappointed by that list of student variables, a measly twelve items. In the better teacher academies, you’d never get a doctorate for such a skimpy, or “parsimonious,” elaboration of the obvious commingled with the incomprehensible.

The most instructive thing about the passage is that its pretentiousness is eloquently, although inadvertently, undone by its timidity. Notice that all those nifty variables *may* “moderate the relationship.” Educationists won’t take chances, even on the obvious and simple. After all, how can we be sure, without multivariate mathematical models of the interactive relationships, that different people feel different about different things?

Of course, should this research achieve its goal, we might have to change our opinions. A “parsimonious interpretation” of a *fair* degree of *moderate* intercorrelation is not to be sneezed at. Before such an awesome discovery, we’d just have to back off, treading cautiously in our best stepwise regression strategies.

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Neither can his mind be thought to be in tune, whose words do jarre; nor his reason in frame, whose sentence is preposterous.

**The Underground
GRAMMARIAN**

Volume Four, Number Four April 1980

The Flight of the Bumblebee

He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars. General Good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite, flatterer; for Art and Science cannot exist but in minutely organized Particulars. *William Blake*

The flight of the bumblebee used to give aeronautical engineers fits. From what they knew then, they had to conclude that such a silly contraption would never fly.

The tale may be apocryphal, but it doesn’t matter. The other “Flight of the Bumblebee” will *always* be a mystery.

An exhaustive and scrupulously scientific study of all that goes into the playing of the violin would conclude, after many years, that (a), the research would never be completed, but also that (b), it was already obvious that no one could ever play the damned thing.

Violin playing requires stupendous skills of mind and body perfectly controlled and meticulously synchronized by some amazing coalition of consciousness, judgment, will, knowledge, reflex, and who knows what else. But good violin teachers don’t care. They don’t worry about a lack of “empirically based studies” in the “field.” Nor do they pursue rationales or theoretical frameworks, or experiential modalities of transpersonal instruction enhancement. They just teach. And students learn.

Playing the violin is, in a sense, just not natural. It is a cultured act, exclusively and distinctively human. That is why we cannot *know* it completely. Nevertheless, somehow or other, through an effect of the will combined with some diligence, intelligence, talent, and maybe a little bit of luck, lots of people do learn to play the violin.

Teaching school is different from playing the violin in only one important way: it is a bit easier

to learn. It isn't exactly an art, but it isn't exactly a science either. Like science and art, however, and like violin playing, it does require the mastery of minutely organized particulars, a mastery that can in fact be achieved through an effort of the will combined with some diligence, intelligence, talent, and maybe a little bit of luck,

Teaching happens in a *performance*, and an exhaustive study of teaching will discover no more than a similar study of violin playing. Thoughtful people, especially those who actually *are* humanists, might conclude that teaching is just too uniquely human to be explained in any important respect by scientific study, and that such study, therefore, is probably of little use in the making of a teacher. That, however, is a conclusion so sensible and sane that, if it were to catch on in the schools of education, it would signal the beginning of the end of teacher-training as we know it.

That won't happen. The teacher-trainers call themselves humanists, to be sure, but only because they imagine that humanism has to do with being nice and always supporting the cause of the General Good.

They fancy also that humanism is the logical opposite of elitism, which is *opposed* to the General Good and arrogantly in favor of the meticulous (or persnickety) organization of Minute (or trivial) Particulars.

However, they have also heard of science, an unaccountably respectable form of elitism in spite of its obsession with Minute Particulars. So how can the teacher-trainers win the respect that is given science and its mastery of Minute Particulars and still claim the love they deserve as humanists who are above all that and champions of the General Good?

Easy. They just invent a science that is as scientific as their humanism is humanistic. Of thin air they brew conveniently pliable particulars and proudly announce that they have quantified, in their empirically based studies, such things as Self-Regard and Existentiality. (See, alas, the next essay.)

And thus they contrive to correct the deficiencies of Nature and provide us with bees that *really* can't fly, and violinists who think that they know all about violin playing but can't make music, teachers whose talents have been stunted by the "findings," and in whom expert knowledge

and skill have been discouraged as *nyet* humanistic and replaced with a copious supply of Minute Generalities.

The Most Unkindest Cutting Edge of All

IN March of 1979, we printed some gabble by a then-unidentified doctoral candidate at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. It was about "a short extrapolation to the prediction of transpersonal innovations from self-actualization traits." Ten months later, the writer was identified as Robert D. Waterman. The man who fingered him was a colleague, James Dyke, who wanted not the handsome reward we had offered, but rather to rebuke us for our treatment of Waterman.

Having pointed out, as though it made a difference, that Waterman's degree was not in guidance but in Educational Management/Development, Dyke said further:

I hold little faith in your critical abilities with respect to Bob Waterman until such time that you can demonstrate that you can handle the cutting edge of the exploration of ideas without bleeding.

And he even sent along an actual *piece* of the cutting edge, Waterman's complete abstract and a thin slice from Chapter II of the dissertation, "Value and Philosophical Characteristics of Transpersonal Teachers."

We admit that we have no "critical abilities with respect to Bob Waterman," but Dyke may have meant something other than what he wrote. The critical abilities that we *do* seek are those that enable us to write *exactly* what we mean. They would also find "until such time that" a silly inflation of "until," and an example of the thoughtlessness so common in freshman compositions.

Well, no matter. Dyke doesn't claim to *be* the cutting edge. So let's take up his challenge and try to handle the edge itself. We'll start with the very *edge* of the edge, Waterman's first paragraph. Mind your fingers:

Though an increasing interest on the part of the educational community is being shown in transpersonal teaching, the literature reflects a lack of empirically based studies concerning the

teacher characteristics associated with its adoption. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to attempt to identify characteristics (values, attitudes, and teaching philosophy) pertinent to transpersonally oriented non-public school teachers and to compare and contrast those characteristics to those of public school oriented teachers.

We expected some incisiveness out there on the cutting edge, but the first paragraph is clouded by uncertainty and imprecision:

☞ Like other educationists, Waterman evades clear declarations and active verbs, as though he were afraid to take any chances even on a bland generalization like the assertion that somebody is showing interest in something. He retreats into an awkward and periphrastic jumble, saying that increasing interest *on the part* of somebody is *being* shown in transpersonal teaching. (Let's get to *that* later.)

☞ The timidity of educationistic prose is not simply a stylistic twitch. It expresses an uncertain mind and the fear of challenge. That "literature" named by Waterman either lacks something or it doesn't, but he will say only that it "reflects" a lack. Likewise, he assigns himself not exactly the task of *identifying* but only of *attempting* to identify something or other—just in case.

☞ In what way, we wonder, is a characteristic "pertinent to" some teachers different from a characteristic *of* some teachers? What can we suppose about the mind that prefers the former to the latter?

☞ Are those "public school oriented teachers" actually teachers in public schools, or could they be teachers *anywhere* who just happen to be obsessed with thinking about the public schools? Could they even be teachers who face in the direction of public schools?

Enough. The cutting edge in New Mexico is indeed blunted and ragged, and probably septic as well, and it was thoughtful of Dyke to warn us of the horrible wound it might inflict. Let's get out the long tongs.

Educationists feel secure, or as secure as they *can* feel, when they can prattle about the unmeasurable. If you natter about attitudes and values, no one can prove you a fool by pointing to

some facts. However, while the retreat from the measurable provides comfort for the educationist, it makes it hard for him to claim, as he would so dearly love to, that "education" actually is a body of knowledge and that his Faculty Club card should not be stamped: "Valid only when accompanied by an adult." What a dilemma.

Many doctoral candidates in education just head for the nearest exit. They bestow upon us "conclusive findings" as to the efficacy of yellow traffic lines on the cafeteria floor and the number of junior high school girls in the suburbs of Duluth who elected badminton rather than archery.

For those who want to do *serious* research way out there on the cutting edge, however, a trickier dodge is needed, and the education academy is quick to supply it. Most D. Ed. programs require of their candidates no competence in foreign languages, which makes them attractive and accessible to those whose verbal abilities are meager. It assures that those abilities will *remain* meager, too, lest the teacher academies hatch out some thankless bird capable of seeing, and telling the world, that the teacher-training professors just can't make sense. The teacher-trainers, therefore, make virtue of necessity by claiming that an educationistic scholar doesn't need verbal skill anyway, but a one-semester course in statistics instead. And that's why their "research" bristles with commensurate model analyses and stepwise regression strategies.

Now we can look at Waterman's "transpersonal teaching." In the pages that we have, there is no definition, but we know that

the personal characteristics related to transpersonal teaching are: (1) a view of man as essentially and inherently good at his core, (2) that the locus of power and authority in one's life is within the individual, and (3) that when dealing with life situations it is most effective to apply one's values to a solution with flexibility, and free of preconceptions or prejudice.

We already know how Waterman writes, so we're not surprised by redundancy or jargon, or even that disconcerting violation of parallelism. What does surprise us is that the work of the mind way out there on the cutting edge of the exploration of ideas sounds so much like a

mimeographed prospectus for a nondenominational Sunday-school class to be taught by some amiable but slightly addled addict of popular self-help paperbacks and magazine articles about the cutting edge of the exploration of ideas in Marin County.

Waterman's values, quasi-theological and pseudo-philosophical, can become objects of "research" only to educationists. First they circulate questionnaires, either homemade or, as in Waterman's case, prefabricated by other educationists. Then they tabulate the "answers," which are usually spaces filled in or numbers checked by captives eager to finish a stupid questionnaire. The answers reveal, of course, only what the answerers have chosen to say, which may or may not reveal what they feel or believe. In fact, it probably does not, especially in this "research." Even nontranspersonal teachers know enough not to give straight answers to prying busybodies.

Most of us can see a difference between a study of angels and a study of testimony about angels. Waterman sees that the R^2 of Self-Regard is .0123, and, of Inner-Directed, a hefty .4544. Existentiality's R^2 is a modest .0460. Yeah. And next year he's going to whip off Weltschmerz and Ennui, and we'll know *exactly* how we feel about the cutting edge of the exploration of ideas in New Mexico.

In the meantime, though, we are going to cook up a little "empirically based study" of our own. We're just dying to find out some nifty data about the R^2 of Hubris.

Brief Notes

UNDERGROUND GRAMMAR guerrillas are everywhere. Our agent-in-place at the United Nations reports that functionaries there are investing barrels of petrodollars in what they call. "Prefeasibility studies." We join him/her (we never snitch) in wondering what they'll do when they discover that some enterprise is, in fact, prefeasible.

In academe, where the preposterous has always been prepossible, we will soon appoint task forces to preconsider the prefeasibility of preplanning. We already have mind-twisting inanities like "preassessment" and "pretest." However, while

we do offer preprimary education, we have not yet come up with a way to enhance anyone's prepotential. Just wait.

This mindless and self-serving pre-prefixing isn't always funny. Sometimes it reveals what we would prefer to hide. Here at Glassboro, our hapless teacher-trainees take two kinds of courses, "professional" and "preprofessional." The merely *preprofessional* courses are those that might actually have academic content, dilettantish stuff like history or science. It's only in the *professional* courses that they learn teacherliness through breaking up into small groups and rapping about preplanning their pretesting preassessments.

Teratology

HERE is a sentence from an abominable administrative edict recently exposed to public view by a tax-supported apparatchik at the headquarters of the Philadelphia School District, where, naturally, we also have agents in deep cover:

"During the 1980-81 school year, the project will provide teachers and administrators with education and support designed to optimize the behaviors and conditions in the school which support student learning to the extent that at least two thirds of the teachers receiving training and support in Expectations will report, on a specifically designed survey, changes in at least two school related operational characteristics that have been identified as critical elements of the network of expectations that support learning."

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The Turkey has Landed

WHILE President Crater was entertaining the King and Queen of Belgium, a wild turkey, the very bird that Benjamin Franklin wanted for our national emblem, came to dwell on the White House lawn. While columnists and anchormen made jokes, our resident bird augur brooded on the doomful omen. Turkeys merit attention, but the heedless President, within days, sent forth an eagle that turned turkey in midflight.

Exactly one year ago, we urged you to consider the part played by the National Council of Teachers of English in the mishap at Three Mile Island. We suggested that decades of contempt for meticulous workmanship, in the silly cause of creativity and self-expression, had brought upon us growing swarms of the automatically careless and inept. We quoted from *College English*, in which painstaking attention to small details was dismissed as “emphasis on trivia,” an impediment to “presenting ideas” and “appreciation,” and a merely “utilitarian” constraint under which only “little humanistic education can be provided.”

We will probably never know what befell thirty-seven and a half percent of those helicopters, but we have some dark suspicions. A helicopter, like a nuclear generator, must be a complicated system of devices, but it must just as certainly be a *finite* system of *finite* devices. The human mind can know it completely and operate it perfectly. The questions that we can ask about helicopters *can* be answered accurately and objectively, which is not the case with “humanistic” questions. If the teachers of our children could walk confidently among the not unreasonable demands of objective knowledge and skillful accuracy before they run amok among the mysteries of humanisticism, dragging their helpless wards behind them, perhaps we could expect *better* than sixty-two and a half percent of possible efficiency from the

multitudes who must know and operate all of our complicated systems of devices.

Had the raid into Iran been devised by our humanistic educationists, others of the same persuasion, promptly hired as evaluation consultants, would be pronouncing it an almost unqualified success. They would be claiming that, while numerical grades are only archaic vestiges of an authoritarian elitism, sixty-two and a half percent *is* a perfectly respectable passing grade in most schools—and A minus in most teacher academies. They would tell us that the men (who *related* to each other quite well indeed) *tried* very hard, which *is* what really counts. Why, they actually found themselves in an experiential learning environment, and coping, hands-on, with self-directed problem-solving activity in a real-life situation. And, somewhere down that long line of cause and effect, somebody, probably several somebodies, did indeed manage to avoid the educationists’ bane, the “emphasis on trivia.”

Contrary to educationistic doctrine, children *like* to learn, and *will* learn, no matter what we do. When we neglect to teach them knowledge and skill, they just go right ahead and learn *that*—the neglect of knowledge and skill. And then they grow up.

The Future Lies Ahead!

Early in the Fall, the Needs Assessment Task Force was asked to study the process of Academic Planning as it presently exists at Southwest Texas State University and determine whether we should implement a different process. (From the works of Joseph Caputo, VP for AcAff.)

AS the time for dinner approaches, the standard American amateur looks in the refrigerator. He notices some food. He takes some of it out and cooks it. Then he eats it. It’s so crude; any savage could do it. Here in Academe, we are *professionals*, and we have better ways of doing things.

First we establish a committee to consider whether or not there should *be* any dinner, and, if so, whether or not it should actually be eaten, and, if again so, where, and when, and by whom. Then we form a subcommittee to decide what, if anything, to cook, and how. Now we discover that we need a study group to consider whether or not

dinner-planning is, in fact, all that simple, and to establish its parameters and to explore the implications of fiscal, curricular, and societal restraints that may be perceived as existing. Or maybe not. But the study group cannot do its work until we have definitive findings from the Needs Assessment Task Force, which is “to study the *process* of Academic Planning as it presently exists . . . and determine whether we should implement a different process.”

The Needs Assessment Task Force down at Southwest Texas State University, where the squirrels *also* rush around the brush, has done its work. Here’s some of it:

An Academic Planning Model must involve a futures planning component. Goals should be set for some time in the future. These goals should be translated into shorter-term objectives for which the degree of detail and concreteness varies inversely with the lead time. There should also be reasonable suspense dates for implementation of plans and a definitive methodology for evaluation and feedback. The interfacing of long-term . . . and short-term planning should result.

So, you thought that only a herd of nerds would set themselves to wondering whether or not to plan how to plan, eh? No siree! It takes some of the sharpest thinkers in Academe to discover and announce that plans are about the *future*, not the past!* They’re even smart enough to call for the involvement of a component, which would never occur to an ordinary human being, and a definitive methodology, where any simpleminded taxpayer would have settled for a mere method.

That’s not all, of course. The Task Forcers also urge “update features,” prudently left unspecified so that yet another task can be forced on yet another task force, and warn against the “counterproductive hurdle,” the worst kind. One of their main conclusions, solemnly pronounced, probably after much deliberation and searching of heart, is that an Academic Planning Model (they always capitalize it) should actually *work*, or, as they put it, “be functional.” They further opine,

* They may have taken a hint from the STSU slogan: “The progressive university with the proud *past*.” One of them may have noticed that the past was over. So they looked around, and there, by golly...

cutting right to the bone, that any plan that will work, will in fact work: “Any Academic Planning Model to be considered . . . would positively impact [*wham!*] our decision-making process to the extent that it accomplishes its designed purpose.”

To proclaim the obvious in language that is odious is, of course, the regular practice of the educationists, who love to serve on task forces (they put that kind of stuff in their resumes and grant applications), and have no moral or intellectual objections to writing at length about nothing. However, at least one member of this task force was not an educationist, but an *agent provocateur* and a subtle ironist. On his backward colleagues he foisted the one sentence that says it all: “An Academic Planning process must not become viewed by the participants as activity to be finished so that they may return to the real business of the university.”

Strictly for the Birds

WHERE the carcass lies, there the vultures gather. When you see a flock of hopping and flitting educators preening themselves at workshops and darting forth their beaks in those bold, innovative, grant-grabbing thrusts so characteristic of the species, you can be sure that something nearby is dead.

Educationistic scavengers, unlike the vultures, provide their own supply of dead meat by seeing to it that students learn as little as possible. Then they wax fat on programs for the identification of whole legions of the “learning disabled” and on the devising of remedial sequences and learning enhancements.

Now they’re out to get those stubborn brats who *will* persist in learning even in transpersonally values-oriented nondirective learning environments. These children, once thought merely normal, have become the “gifted/talented” and have been delivered utterly into the care of the educationists, who have dominion over anything spelled with a slash.

Below you will find some evidence about the work of the intellect as it is practiced (and apparently applauded) among those educationists who have eagerly appointed themselves mentors to our few surviving children.

Forging out, from a very pluralistic Dynamic and Deficits wrapping around a Core, the Criteriology of the Maelstrom of Matrices in the Field at Hand

Also sprach a certain Virgil S. Ward, a professor of education (what else?) at the University of Virginia. We lifted all that neat stuff from a snappy little article called “Washington Policy Seminar,” Ward’s rhapsodic reflections on a synod of so-called “talented/gifted” educationists.[†]

Ward is not without a tiny gift of his own. He lurches with ease into astonishing figures of speech. He tells of the smoldering welter, the subjugated clarion call, the seed in the scenario, and the maelstrom in the field, in which, most unaccountably, special interests *demand* a place. But such snippets do him less than justice. Here’s the real thing.

Thus, in conclusion, let it be said plainly, that in the perception of this observer, for what the thought of any one individual may be worth, our conceptual foundations have deteriorated to the point that action is now occurring in a virtual void of theory. Theory, it can be reasonably noted, is the intelligence of practical action. And science—*i.e.*, that ordered array of the firmest understanding available in any given era or short term period, inviolable logic of inquiry and observation spelled out in the deepest possible constructs of semantic and quantitative symbolization, precluding the elective judgment and behavioral alternative which does not meet the requirements of the most fundamental criteriology which philosophic thought can produce—the particular science of Differential Education for the Gifted is the critical need now still more than in the 1940’s and 1950’s when its rudiments might have been forged out but were not.

That, alas, *does* do him justice. His blithe blurts of primitive poetastasy are all too rare, like flies in the farina, repellent maybe, but at least worthy of comment. He is more often laying waste his

[†] You really should have your own copy of the complete text. It’s splendid for reading aloud at parties. Write to *Gifted/Talented Education*, 97 Mill Plain Rd., Branford, CT 06405. Ask for the issue for December, 1979. The “editor,” Rudolph Pohl, Ed. D., will be proud to send you a copy.

powers by distinguishing a *virtual* void from a mere void and inventing really neat stuff, like fundamental criteriology and the deepest possible constructs of semantic and quantitative symbolizations. That last bit, of course, is the “gifted/talented” way of saying “numbers and words,” or, to be precise, the deepest possible numbers and words. And “available in any given era or short term period” is the deepest possible gifted/talented construct of semantic symbolization for the word “available.”

If you are thinking that Ward’s writing would merit a fat F in freshman composition, you’re right, of course, but you’ve revealed yourself ungifted/untalented. You have fallen into fallacy, not realizing that “articulated developmental experience at the transcendent plane of complexity” cannot waste time on clear writing and thought, which can only be “intra-personal [*intra*, you got that?] peaks of performance potential.” But who better than Ward himself to explain?

Are our alliances in the political process and the preserves of power, such that we can withstand subtle but consequential *misunderstandings*, *e.g.*, that DEG is bent upon the evocation of intra-personal peaks of performance potential among the general school-age population, regardless of comparative status of these peaks. And dare we even raise the question and risk important misunderstanding on our own part, whether the time has come firmly to insist that education in the arts among the general populace, while supportive of the rarer talent, does not comprise the necessary objective of quintessential experience brought into the service of distinctive aptitude and performance potential on the part, now as ever, of the rarer few. [No, he *doesn’t* use question marks.]

Ah yes, the *rarer* few, of whom there are even fewer than there are of the merely *rare* few. How lucky they are to have Ward & Co. to disregard the comparative status of their peaks and to provide for them the necessary objectives of quintessential experience in the service of aptitude and potential. The larks will be lucky, too, when the dodos return among us to teach the silly twitterers to fly and sing. Then larks, now merely

rare, will soon be a *rarer* few, and we'll all get more sleep, won't we?

WE now say goodbye until September. Please keep watching for examples of dreadful English and send them in. We will never reveal your name, but we do ask that you reveal, whenever possible, the name, rank, and serial number of the miscreant. We see no point in protecting the guilty.

*Neither can his mind be thought to be in tune,
whose words do jarre;
nor his reason in frame,
whose sentence is preposterous.*

The Underground GRAMMARIAN

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The Necks and Minds of the People

THIS month in Belgrade, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization will meet to blather about the report of its commission on “the news media.” That report suggests, among other outrages, that the press ought to promote, and perhaps ought to be *required* to promote, the “social, cultural, economic and political goals set by governments.” We’re not the least bit surprised. That’s exactly the kind of idea you can expect from an outfit calling itself “educational.”

“Education” once meant liberation, a condition available to those led forth (*educati*) out of some restraint or captivity. We once assumed that ignorance and unreason, although natural, were fetters that might be broken through the accumulation of knowledge and the practice of logical thought. We imagined that this trap of

reflexive twitches might be transformed into the examined life.

Now it is otherwise, and “education” can be best understood as an inoculation, which, if it takes, will protect you from something much worse: *reeducation*. But it usually takes. Where once a tyrant had to wish that his subjects had but one common neck that he might strangle them all at once, all he has to do now is to “educate the people” so that they will have but one common mind to delude.

Even in its less malevolent forms, education has become a process intended not to increase knowledge and foster thought but to engender feelings. Sellers see no absurdity in claiming to “educate” buyers. Politicians are eager to “educate” voters. And our schools have taken up institutionalized apologetics in the cause of values clarification and social adjustment through consciousness raising. In short, American public education is *exactly* what UNESCO wants us to promote, one of those “social, cultural, economic and political goals set by government.” We will decline.

We hear noises from educationists, and especially from unionists in education, about the “duty” of the press to stop knocking and start boosting, by running, perhaps, some cheery articles about boldly innovative (relevant) bulletin boards and the latest test scores, which *may* suggest that many eleventh graders are now only *three* years behind in reading. Now is the time, we hear, to “restore public confidence in the schools.” That invitation is the same as UNESCO’s, and, considering its source, nakedly self-serving as *well* as ominous. Again, we decline.

Public education, no less than the Marine Corps or the Internal Revenue Service, is a creature of government and an instrument of its policies. Its meager remnant of “civilian control,” the elected school board, has been effectively disenfranchised by the mandates of government, which leave little uncontrolled. Public education serves one master, and that master is rich and powerful. Those who clamor for the restoration of confidence in the public schools can, with the mighty resources at their disposal, and not money alone, but the power and prestige of officialdom, easily provide that for themselves. They can easily “educate the public” into warm feelings of respect for the schools, especially since those whose values stand in need

of clarification are mostly victims of the schools, unskilled in thought and poor in knowledge.

When they do that—indeed, *as* they do that, for they are always at it in one way or another—it is only the press that can put weights in the other pan of the scale, citing facts and exploring meanings.

“The functionaries of every government,” wrote Jefferson, “have propensities to command at will the liberty and property of their constituents.” Is that any less true when the “functionaries of government” just happen to be bureaucrats in some department of “education”? Have they not commanded our property, in countless billions, only to squander it on fads and gimmicks and nonsensical “research” and lucrative consultancies for others of their tribe? Have they not commanded our liberty and our very persons in the cause of ideological adjustment? How long would we bear such intrusive and manipulative behavior in other functionaries of government, in the Coast Guard, for example, or the Motor Vehicle Bureau?

How long? Only so long as we remain ignorant of what they are doing and thoughtlessly uncritical about its meaning. Jefferson went on:

There is no safe deposit for them [liberty and property] but with the people themselves; nor can they be safe with them without information. Where the press is free, and every man able to read, all is secure.

It is noteworthy that the people who want the press to promote the schools, thus mitigating the first of Jefferson’s conditions for the security of all, are the very ones who have so egregiously failed to provide the second: universal literacy.

On the other hand, of course, Lenin opposed freedom of the press. Why, he asked, should government that is “doing what it believes is right allow itself to be criticized?” His *values* were clarified.

The Turkeys Crow in Texas

TIME magazine reports that schoolchildren in the USSR, by the end of tenth grade, have been ruthlessly deprived of their right to a language of their own and subjected to ten years of learning grammatical *rules* and as many as *seven* years of

some *foreign* language. And there’s worse. Those godless communist tykes have had their creativities and self-esteems *destroyed* by geometry, algebra, and even *calculus*, for God’s sakes! And not *one lousy* mini-course in baseball fiction or the poetry of rock and *roll*! You talk about elitism? Now *there’s* your elitism. Those commies want to make just about *everybody* into some kind of elitist. Why just about the only thing an American kid would recognize in a Russian school is the values clarification and social adjustment stuff. Probably swiped it from us in the first place anyway.

Still, let’s hope we don’t have to fight with those Russians, an anti-humanistic crew all hung up on mere skills. In fact, if we have to fight, let’s see if we can’t arrange to fight with the Texans.

Down in Texas, the school folk are mighty proud of the results of their new state-wide competence tests. You might not believe this, but it turns out that *ninety-six* percent of the ninth graders in Texas can *correctly* add and subtract *whole numbers* three times in four! (Stick *that* in your samovar, comrade!) And that, friends, means that the teenager in the diner on Route 66 will give you the correct change ninety-six percent of seventy-five percent of the time, or *seventy-two* times out of every hundred chili dogs. And in Russia you can’t even *get* a chili dog.

And if you’re worried about writing, forget it. Fifty-four percent of the Lone Star State ninth graders have “mastered” writing. And that beats hell out of the whole *New Yorker* crowd, of whom more than ninety-nine percent still have to worry about stuff like whether or not “ambient” is really the best word.

At the end you will find the topic assigned for the writing competence test and the essays of two ninth graders, one of whom has *mastered* writing. See if you can figure out which—and why.

Keep in mind, as you cogitate, that it was not the schoolteachers of Texas who scored the essays. The scoring was to have been done by the Educational Testing Service, but the canny Texans decided that they wanted no part of holismism. So they gave the scoring contract to Westinghouse, naturally, and the Westinghouses, naturally, hired some two hundred residents of Iowa City and a certain Paul Diehl, who is a porseffor of Eglinsh. (See The Porseffers of Eglinsh.) at Iowa University. These combined

forces, some aiding, some abetting, gallantly resisted the indecent allure of holistic scoring and devised instead an austere discipline, “focused primary trait holistic scoring.” Naturally.

It is the special virtue of focused primary trait holistic scoring that it rewards exactly that kind of competence that we have chosen as the goal of our highest national aspirations—the *minimum* kind. It takes upon itself, in the best Christian tradition, the work that God seems to be shirking. Focused primary trait holistic scoring exalteth them of low degree, and, by ferreting out and punishing pretensions to elitism, putteth down the mighty from their seats. That’s the American way, and if the Russians would just go and do likewise, we wouldn’t have to worry about them anymore.

And thus it comes to pass that, on a scale from 0 to 4, Essay B gets a 2, witness to mastery, and by far the most common score. Essay A, however, is not up to the standards of focused primary trait holistic scoring. It gets a 1.

How so? Simple. Writer B gave *two* reasons for his choice. That is mastery in the “organization of ideas.” What is more, his prose style suggests that professors of education and superintendents of schools won’t feel too *déclassé* in his company.

Writer A gave only *one* reason for his choice. However, even had he given fifty reasons, he would not have earned a better score. Focused primary trait holistic scoring is *not* intended for the encouragement of wiseacres like that snotty A kid, and it provides that no score better than a 1 can be awarded to any writer who “challenges the question.” You have to nip that funny stuff right in the old bud. You let that once get started and the next thing you know some of those brats will clarify some of *our* values and that will be the end of life adjustment as we know it.

Well, maybe if we make focused primary trait holistic scoring a state secret, some Russian spy will steal it. It’s our only hope.

This story is told in gritty detail in *Texas Monthly*, June, 1980. If you still fancy that competence tests are part of the solution rather than part of the problem, you’d better ask *TM* for a reprint of “What’s the Score?” They’re at 1600 Austin National Bank Tower, Austin 78701. While you’re at it, ask for Gene Lyons’ horrifying piece (Sept. 1970) on the unspeakable practices of teacher-training academics.

The Topic

Suppose that your school is short of money and can keep only one of the following: driver education, school athletics, art, music, or vocational programs. You and other students have been asked to write to the principal and tell which *one* program you most want to keep. Be sure to give the reasons for the *one* you choose. Remember, you can choose only *one* program.

ESSAY A

“You have proposed an illogical situation, but I will do my best to give you an answer. I choose driver’s education over the other classes on my own special process of elimination. School athletics is out because I can’t stand the class and have no wish to inflict it on others. Art and music are really unfair electives to leave out, but they are certainly not as important as driving unless you plan to make a career of them. In that case, I’m sorry but life is hard. Vocational programs were the toughest of all to leave out (and it is the subject your mythical school will probably keep, despite this recommendation), because you *do* make a career of them, but look at it this way: Driving is almost essential to a person’s life, and although one could learn to drive elsewhere, it would be much more expensive. Actually, my whole rationale doesn’t have to make sense because your question didn’t in the first place.”

ESSAY B

“I think you should keep Athletics. Because its good for the Body. And it can Help you if you would like to Become a pro football player.”

Teratology

HERE is one of those thumbnail self-portraits that teachers have to write for academic advertizing brochures. The trick is to make yourself sound like a consummate scholar who is nevertheless *innovative*, and therefore doesn’t give low grades. Our example is from a brochure aimed at graduate students in geology. We don’t have the name of the school, but the author is:

Frederick P. DeLuca, A. S., 1956, B. S., 1960, Western Connecticut State College; M. A., Fairfield University; M. N. S., 1967, Ph. D., 1970, University of Oklahoma. Assistant Professor.

Dr. DeLuca is currently studying the application of Piagetian Psychology to concepts in earth science, the criteria for interdisciplinary study, and the interrelatedness of perspectives on Iowa coal.

So. Let's start with the easy part. How many criteria can there be for an interdisciplinary study beyond the one that gives it its name? And what's to "study"? One might as well "Study" the criteria for dead fish. Maybe he meant something else.

And what, *exactly*, does he *do* when he studies the *application* of Piagetian psychology (a darling of educationists) *to* concepts in earth science? What might we expect of such "study" as we consider the formation of igneous rock?

That last bit utterly passes understanding, Well, maybe not quite utterly; "Iowa coal" might mean just that. But what can a perspective *on* it be? Is interrelatedness" to be distinguished from simple "relatedness," or from "relationship," or perhaps from its implied (and mind-bending) alternative, "intrarelatedness"? Is this stuff science?

We have to suspect that DeLuca may be what they call a "science educator" rather than a geologist. Geologists, like all scientists, seek statements of fact subject to public verification. Science educators can't afford to take that risk.

Hufstедler Speaks!

“Due to changing demographics and stagflation, the synergistic impact of the education system flowing into the industrial system is breaking apart. . . . The private sector has to intervene with a number of interventions beginning in junior high school. . . . If we are going to have synergism continue, the private sector has to get into the business of developing innovative structures and assist in a variety of joint-venturing.

AND here's the beast that lies in wait for those whose schools have become agents of the state

and promoters of the "goals set by government." The generalissimos who run Argentina have banned the study of the new math. *Extra*, an Argentinean journal doing exactly what UNESCO would have us all do, explains that

...modern mathematics introduces procedures distinct from those taught by Aristotle ... this encourages doubts about his logic and promotes a lack of confidence in the authority of traditional ruling figures, thus favoring subversion.

Extra also pointed out that certain words used in the new math are typical of Marxist ideology, for example, "vector," "matrix," and "set." How long do you suppose it will take those generalissimos to discern the Red Threat in air traffic control, type founding, and tennis?

All governments, and especially tyrannical governments, worry a lot about language. Not only must they "defend the indefensible," as Orwell put it, but they must also provide themselves with a citizenry in whom the skills of language are not good enough to penetrate that defense. When they can, as in Argentina, governments diminish the power of language by fiat; but when they can't, their best hope is an established educational system in which it is a policy *not* to worry about language.

We are a long, long way from tyranny, but from here, on a clear day, you can see the path.

Page Five

**An Occasional Supplement to
The Underground Grammarian
Guarding the Guardians of the Guards**

WE have been hearing both from and about groups of citizens who have organized themselves as guardians of education and monitors of texts and techniques. Those who have written to us have praised our efforts, claiming a common cause and expecting that we will praise, and promote, their efforts. We will not. They are decent and well-meaning people disturbed about the obvious disorders of education, no doubt, but their understanding of 'education' is as thoughtless and self-serving as that of the self-styled professionals of education who brought those disorders upon us.

These guardians of education, while they differ in some ways, all seem proponents of the back-to-basics frenzy, in which we find no merit. We champion mastery, and we mean mastery, not minimum competence, in language and number not because it is the goal of education but because it is absurd to imagine an educated person who lacks it. Having that mastery, we can make of knowledge the raw material of thoughtfulness and judgment. Lacking it, we can make of knowledge nothing more than the substance of training and the content of indoctrination.

The back-to-basics enthusiasts, who never fail to note the paramount importance of being able to read want-ads and to write letters of application, treat the skills of number and language as subdivisions of vocational training to be imparted and done with, as though reading a micrometer and reading a paragraph were acts of the same nature. In one sense, literacy is a trivial skill, easily acquired and neither more nor less valuable than those darlings of the schools, the ‘life skills,’ things like shoe tying and crossing at the corner. In another sense it is an endless and demanding enterprise that is also the ground of our knowledge and understanding, but an enterprise little likely to entice the minds of those taught literacy as a life skill.

All unwittingly, therefore, the guardians preach the same degradation of literacy that the educationists have so long practiced, and, strange as it might seem at first, for the same reason. The greatest mischief done in the schools is the attempt to inculcate certain presumed ‘values,’ but the guardians understand that less than perfectly. They fancy that the mischief lies not in the inculcation of values but in the inculcation of the educationists’ values rather than the guardians’ values. All would be well, they imagine, if only the school would foster the ‘right’ values. And that is why they must make of literacy a ‘basic’ life skill rather than a way of life. If you want to foster in children certain values and preclude others, you must take care that they do not develop an appetite for knowledge and the skill to make of it the raw material of thoughtfulness and judgment. Jefferson’s words are an assertion of faith, not fact; fact may be ‘self-evident,’ but ‘truth’ is not. If it were, earth would be fair, and all men glad and wise.

There is a momentous difference between coming to believe what we have often been told and deciding, as Jefferson did, out of knowledge and thoughtful judgment, to ‘hold’ something true. The former is a kind of slavery and easy to achieve; the latter is difficult, for it requires knowledge and governed intellect, in other words, an education, but it is freedom.

Freedom is, to be sure, frightening. There is no telling what values free people will choose to hold. Decent and well-meaning guardians of values were horrified by the monstrous principles of the Declaration of Independence. It is, of course, out of fear that the guardians preach the inculcation of values, fear of knowledge and thought.

Most of the guardians urge things like the study of history and economics ‘emphasizing the benefits of the free enterprise system.’ We wholeheartedly share the guardians’ devotion to the free enterprise system, but they obviously don’t share our equal devotion to the study of history and economics, which will inevitably bring the knowledge of some facts, events, and ideas that are not at all conducive to our wholehearted devotion to the free enterprise system. When we study history from a certain point of view, we do not study history. If our students some day discover, as in fact they will, that we were sometimes mistaken in our knowledge of history, they will probably forgive us. But if they discover as in fact they do, that we have misrepresented or omitted knowledge in the service of some values, they will learn to distrust both us and those values, as indeed they should—and apparently do.

If our values are grounded, as we usually imagine they are, in evidence and reason, then those who can see the evidence and who know the ways of reason are likely to adopt them. However, if we find ourselves tampering with the evidence and tempering the power of language, the medium of reason, then perhaps we ought to re-evaluate our values. Should that prove unacceptable, we should at least be able to see that our interest would be best served not by asking the state to promulgate our values but by forbidding the state to promulgate any values at all. If the state can espouse some value that we love in spite of evidence and reason, it can, with equal justice, espouse others that we do not love.

The guardians do differ in one important way from the educationists. The guardians have lost their nerve, while the educationists still have plenty. The guardians, although they often wave the flag, do not truly hold the most basic value of a free society: the belief that, given the choice, knowing and thoughtful people will choose to continue in a free society. Those who do hold that value must guard against the guardians. But not in the classroom.

*Neither can his mind be thought to be in tune,
whose words do jarre;
nor his reason in frame,
whose sentence is preposterous.*

The Underground GRAMMARIAN

Volume Four, Number Seven October 1980

I'm All Right, Juanito

If the immigrant who comes here in good faith becomes an American and assimilates himself to us, he shall be treated on an exact equality with everyone else, for it is an outrage to discriminate against any such man because of creed or birthplace or origin.

But this is predicated upon the man's becoming in very fact an American and nothing but an American. If he tries to keep segregated with men of his own origin and separated from the rest of America, then he isn't doing his part as an American.

We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans . . . and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house.

Theodore Roosevelt

There's no one that can set himself up, really, and say you must melt.

Renaldo Masiez

WHO, you may ask, is Renaldo Masiez? Well, Renaldo Masiez is a functionary at our shiny new Department of Education, where the right hand, merrily stirring up the melting pot with "citizenship education," obviously doesn't know that the left hand is concocting a tangy gazpacho of truculent separatism, of which the flavor may prove uncongenial to the American palate when we receive (and translate) a Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Nueva York.

Masiez himself *has* melted, right into a good job in government, where he's supposed to do something about the Bilingual Education Program. The aim of that program, we were told, was to hasten the melting of some children less fortunate than Masiez by teaching them in their own languages *while* they were learning English so that they wouldn't have to be taught in their own languages anymore. That would not only fit them for life in this country, but it would also spare us the pain of teaching everything in seventy-two languages forever. It seemed a good idea at the time, but only to people who don't know the first damn thing about how public education works, notably a pack of congressmen, or to those who saw in it some payoff for themselves, notably a pack of congressmen. In its ten years so far, the program has cost about a billion dollars and has helped, according to Masiez, "less than one percent of those that were found to be limited English proficient." (His estimate is much too high. We make it approximately 0.0137 percent when you count in all the educationists and functionaries who don't, as Masiez puts it, "receive minimally adequate services" but are obviously, just as much as any schoolchild, proficient in limited English.)

Masiez said those things in a conversation with Jack Perkins on "Prime Time Saturday." Perkins also spoke with the Supremo Director of BE, one J. Gonzalez, who pronounced a newly discovered version of our history. The old way, in which children were taught some English as quickly as possible and put into regular classes where they could learn a lot more, was "very ineffective." When Perkins, flabbergasted, suggested that the evidence did not support such an assertion, and that the Supremo might just be talking through his sombrero, Gonzalez, visibly vexed, muttered,

“Well, you could always point to some groups where it has worked.”

Yeah. Some groups. Poles, Italians, Armenians, Hungarians, Swedes, Russians, Germans, Basques, Finns, Turks, Chinese, Portuguese, Ukrainians, Japanese, Danes, Bosnia-Herzegovinians, and maybe even a few Bulgarians. There may be more.

Although school work is now taught in seventy-two foreign languages, a great majority of students in bilingual programs are, like most of the people who direct such programs, Hispanic. If it weren't for bilingual education, we could expect that in a few generations those children, their children, and grandchildren, would be living all over this land and doing everything that there is to do, for such was the destiny of “some groups.” As it is, we are sentencing them to remain forever in the barrios and to wait on each other in the bodegas. Masiez and Gonzalez, however, will be all right.

The Department of Education has decided that teachers in bilingual programs, once expected to *be* bilingual, don't need to know any English at all. Bye-bye, bi. And children who *have* learned enough English to attend regular classes will be shot right back into the—lingual program should their work ever fall below average. That's a valuable lesson in humility for the students and a guarantee of steady work for all those—lingual teachers.

Imagine now that it was not Gonzalez and Masiez but Ronald Reagan who said that we should *not* require Hispanic children to learn English, and that what may have worked with “some groups” wouldn't work with *them*. Suppose that it was the mayor of Los Angeles who said that the Chicano children should be “prepared for life in the Hispanic community” where they can stay with their own kind and preserve their cultural heritage as much as they like. And try this, from the Grand Dragon of the KKK: “Well shoot, they sent no reason atall fer them folks ta melt. Reckon id be better they don't, an that's a fack.”

There can never be equality of opportunity in a land where class is labeled in language. Let's hope that the bilingual boondoggle never *does* find more than one percent of those who “need” it. Gonzalez and Masiez will still be all right (it isn't for *success* that they get paid), and legions of new

Americans may escape lives of involuntary servitude.

Gschmrubbers Appraised to be Good

*And everyone said, “How tall they've grown!
For they've been to the Lakes, and the Terrible Zone,
And the hills of the Chankly Bore.”*

We're happy to report, at last, a faint signal from Glassboro's very own epical, capital ship for an ocean trip, the recommissioned Bulgarian trawler, *Gschmrub*, now the flagship* of our latest bold, innovative thrust into the stormy sea of excellence in teacher-training. Well, the signal isn't actually *from* the *Gschmrub*, which has maintained a prudent radio silence since last year's one transmission calling for would-be excellent teacher-trainees who had gotten through all their remedial courses, but it is *about* the *Gschmrub*. It's from the “Trustees Visiting Committee,” which must have lost its apostrophe in an offshore gale.

The TVC's report includes no list of members, and it's not going to be easy to track them down. They say of themselves only that they don't have “a detailed grasp of the context in which the College operates” and that they “do not know the full meaning and consequences attendant to [*sic*] the resolution of the issues.” While that does explain why these people were given the task of assessing our epical teacher-training program, it doesn't help us in trying to guess *which* trustees did the deed.

They did it as you would expect. They asked the Gschmrubbers: So how's it going? Peachy-keen, the Gschmrubbers replied. And sure enough, the TVC found that the teacher-training crew, “decreased in its uncertainty and greatly increased in enthusiasm and in feeling of excitement,”† had

* We can't understand it. They always *used* to call it their flagship, but now they're calling it their POD, as in one of those creepy things you find in the cellar after the Alien has taken over Grampa. They're probably just being modest. While there is no one to whom modesty is more appropriate than to teacher-trainers, we still like to give what they earn.

† In academic disciplines, the remedy for “uncertainty” is “knowledge”; in pedagogy, it's “enthusiasm and feeling.”

actually become “ego-involved” and had even “substantially sharpened its skills in the development of instructional modules.” The “ego-involved” business we could have guessed—the *Gschmrub* was always meant to “protect the troops” from declining enrollments in the teacher academy, but those sharpened skills are truly amazing. Who would have dreamed, having heard about real neat stuff like “Practitioner as Individual/Self,” that there were still new frontiers to be conquered in module development?

The TVC itself is no slouch at module development. Here’s its Punctuator as Individual/Self as Creative Module, which teaches that trivial comma faults, bless your heart, will neither dilute your liberal education component nor exclude you from boards of trustees in higher education outfits:

Inspection of descriptions of new courses and [of?] the Pattern of required general education coursework, revealed several interesting and appropriate new courses, which together with established courses in the pattern, produce an excellent liberal education component in the program.

(While we must certainly demand *more* than the ability to punctuate from those who are to judge the excellence of the “liberal education component,” it does seem strange that we will settle for *less*. The comma faults in that sentence aren’t just failures of convention; they are violations of logic, which has lost its place in the liberal education component to one of those “new courses,” more “interesting” to some, no doubt, and surely more “appropriate.”)

Here’s the TVC’s Naming of Parts Module, for incipient educationists who want to enlarge their vocabularies without actually going to the trouble of distinguishing things from one another:

This feature of the program has three facets. Among them [they mean “of them”], the use of computer technology and video recording in the instructional modules has been implemented and promises to spread to other aspects of the program. The use of technology is appraised to be good . . .

(When you say that a use has been implemented) you have obviously been hanging around with the Gschmrubbers. When you say that the use in modules of a feature’s facet among the facets has been implemented and that it promises to spread to aspects, presumably to be distinguished from features and modules, and even from facets of features, you have become a Gschmrubber. “Who lies down with turkeys,” as the familiar Bulgarian adage puts it, “gets up gobbling.” And “appraised to be good,” a recurrent form in this document, is probably the closest possible translation of an obscure but useful Bulgarian idiom, a convenient form for those who prefer to avoid the moral and intellectual commitment of a mere active assertion: “It is good.”)

And, especially for the oldtimers who remember when teachers gave grades for Posture—“Needs Improvement,” usually, here’s the TVC’s Posture as Implemented Posture Module:

Other alternatives may undoubtedly appear. The point is that a posture toward these alternatives needs to be formed, and if appropriate to the posture, implemented.

(The comma troubles are the usual, and the logic of a posture appropriate to a posture is common to baffled freshmen who just can’t seem to remember the subjects of their clauses, but the most revealing device in the passage is the astonishing mesalliance of the timorous “may” with the magisterial “undoubtedly.” This writer either knew what he was doing, or he didn’t. If he knew, he has cunningly contrived to pound one hand on the lectern while using the other to cover his ass. If he *didn’t* know, then he was thoughtless and neglectful. It’s a sad choice, especially when we realize that whichever we choose must apply equally to *all* our trustees. Their devotion to excellence is unquestionable, so they must have studied and approved this report.)

But let’s look on the bright side. Here’s one we like: the Practitioner-Producer as Individual/Self (Assisted) Self-Promulgator:

The EPIC program is now developed to the point that systematic descriptions of it, papers, small research studies, evaluations and the like should be routinely appearing locally and nationally. What plans and what assistance to

faculty are projected to increase the dissemination of information about the project?

Yeah. We applaud. We cheer. We can hardly wait. Up to now, the only descriptions, evaluations, and the like to appear locally and nationally have been our own. And we will, of course, continue to do our part. But this is, after all, a *community* of scholars, and we'll be *delighted* to pay the closest possible attention to whatever the Gschmrubbers can manage, with "plans" and "assistance," to be sure, although we would have thought enthusiasm and ego-involvement incentive enough, to write.

And God saw everything that He
had Made, and He appraised it
to be Good.

Spinach

WE have been reluctant to take an editorial position on the vexatious question of sexism in language. It is true that language is both a display and a generator of attitudes and values, and that certain conventional devices of our language do suggest that our species is made up of men and special cases. (This suggestion is even more emphatic in languages that show gender in plural pronouns, so that the addition of one little boy to a band of a thousand Amazon marauders turns the whole pack into a masculine "they.") It is just as true, however, that most proposed remedies have been either illogical, ugly, or silly, and sometimes all three. What to do?

Now to our aid comes a faithful reader who has sent us the June 1980 issue of *The WS Quarterly*, a flacksheet all about the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District in Wallingford, Pennsylvania. The only article in the issue is "Grade Repetition....." (Those fourteen dots are *sic*; maybe they're symbolic?) The piece is said, perhaps with exceptionally fine editorial discrimination, to have been "prepared" by one Rose Alex, a "reading specialist" at large in the Wallingford Elementary School.

Rose Alex is a preparing specialist too. She has prepared her article in the form of a hypothetical (let's hope) conversation between a bewildered and remarkably unobservant parent and a confident, patient, knowledgeable reading

specialist—a real pro. The pitiful parent asks questions like this:

My child's teacher has suggested that he/she not go on to the next grade this coming year, but repeat the grade. How can I be sure that repeating the grade is the best thing for my child?

Rose Alex replies, in part:

To try to make a child believe he/she is achieving by giving him/her tasks at a slower pace does not fool him/her when he/she sees his/her peers moving ahead of him/her.

That does it. We're ready to take a stand. We say it's spinach, and we say the hell with it.

Teratology

THIS little piece, from a dissertation abstract, is said to have been written by a man who is now teaching geology. That seems unlikely, but, in the nutty world of education, you never know:

The findings suggest that psychosexuality constructs of agency/communion can be meaningfully operationalized to reflect the degree of psychosexuality integration, with different modes of manifestation and different correlates of interpersonal behavior associated with varying levels on the integration continuum.

That "wtih" may be just a typo, but, in the nutty world of education, you never know.

WHERESOEVER manners & fashions, are corrupted, Language is. It imitates the publicke riot. The excesse of feasts and apparell are the notes of a sick State, and the wantonnesse of Language, of a sick Mind.

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The Sound of One Eraser Clapping

Every Monday I listen to sundry administrators lecturing the faculty on how we must employ the various aspects of curricular media to enhance the quality of education within the context of modern techniques and facilities. . . . The faculty is thinking of asking for nap rugs and milk during the films. . . . Burn this letter! If my principal finds it, she'll make me clap my own erasers for a week and cut my audio-visual access for a month.

YOU have just read excerpts from a poignant letter—nine pages, with footnotes—written to us by a public school teacher somewhere in the United States. That's all we are willing to tell you about him, except, of course, for his name. His name is Legion.

We get hundreds of letters like his every year from schoolteachers driven to frenzy by jargon-besotted, half-witted administrators, the officious noncombatants of the school war. You may recall the type. Twelve miles behind the lines, in neatly pressed uniforms, they drank fresh coffee and told you exactly how to enhance operational outcomes through implementation of alternative modes.

The teachers in the trenches are not educationists. Some of the least able do, of course, want to improve their lots by taking more education courses and becoming either junior assistant curriculum facilitators or teacher academy deans, whichever comes easier. Most of them, however, know all too well that the battle in the classroom is only with ignorance, a beatable foe, while the enemy back at headquarters is armed with intransigent stupidity, the vast, dead weight of established educationism, pavilioned in jargon and girded in cant. Even more than the children in their classes, the teachers are victims

of an institutionalized anti-intellectualism, dazed and ragged survivors of the values clarification concentration camp. Some children, therefore, will have the inestimable advantage of having for teachers resolute dissidents devoted to the pursuit of knowledge and the practice of thought, which depend absolutely on reading and writing.

Those who write to us, of course, are dissidents. We wish we could help them all. We wish we could print and dissect all those documents they send us, the mindless maunderings of the ignoramuses who set standards and make policy in the schools. We wish we could tell every tale told us out of school, funny but excruciating accounts of that militant mickeymouery called teacher-training.* But we can't do it all. We do, however, have some advice and comfort for desperate dissidents.

Remember that you are not alone. The others are waiting for someone else. And even if they are slow to surface, remember that one working mind with a mimeograph machine can demoralize a whole platoon of superintendents and curriculum coordinators armed with bizarre mail-order doctorates.

Find that mimeograph machine, or make a deal with a friendly printer. Tell him Tom Paine sent you. The unspeakable acts of that rear echelon are detectable, as mental acts must be, *in language*, so publish abroad the very words, with brief, suitable comment, of those inane and ignorant memos and directives. Comment *only* on the words, for which the public has paid, but do name the wordmonger. Leave batches of broadsides in the faculty lounge while your colleagues are unconscious, immersed in hair care and motorcycle magazines. You will be amazed at how far and fast the word will spread.

Go to the public, who pays you, remember, for the work of your mind. Take a lesson from a high school English teacher in Philadelphia, one Ronald James, who is willing and able to do the work of *his* mind on the editorial page of *The Bulletin*. Here is what he says, for instance, about some visitation by one of those HQ wonders:

* Nevertheless, we do intend to print and circulate a little anthology of appalling anecdotes, anonymously or not, as contributors choose. Please keep sending them in. Stick to the facts—who, what, where, when. We have the other eraser.

The greater part of this specialist's presentation was devoted to providing teachers with . . . "accommodative strategies" for teaching students with reading and writing problems. He urged us to permit such students to "meet curricular objectives" (read: pass the course) with such "project activities" as charts, collages, mobiles, models and drawings. We were also instructed to provide our students with "alternative response modes" (read: don't insist that they write) including tape recording of lessons as well as oral tests.

One Ronald James, in one column, will tell more truth about the Basic Minimum Competence Hoax, or anything else, than the District Department of Information Services, busy "educating" the public, will disgorge in a decade. Go and do thou likewise. Pay no attention to your union, whining in chorus with administrators about the natural and proper appetite of the press for bad news about schools. Feed that appetite, and test your union's pious devotion to whatever it means by "quality" education.

At the very least, you can send a copy of this article to your favorite curriculum facilitator or superintendent of schools. He won't *understand* it very well, of course, but he will feel an enhanced awareness of doom.

Yet Another for the Gipper

"SPORTS," as Heywood Hale Broun astutely observed, "do not build character. They reveal it." And that gives a new insight, perhaps, into Vince Lombardi's penetrating analysis of the fearful danger implicit in the academic enterprise: "A school without football is in danger of deteriorating into a medieval study hall." And that, of course, would be the end not only of American education as we know and love it but probably of the Hula Bowl as well.

Well, it's high time somebody just said it straight out, so here it is, ready or not, as the case may be: In spite of Roger Staubach's terrific grade-point average and Howard Cosell's truly awesome vocabulary, and in spite of all that the Pacific Ten and the Football Mothers of Wellsburg, West Virginia, have done to show

their support for the American way of life, there still exists, in this great land of ours, a mean streak of *anti-athleticism*. And some of it, sad to relate, is *right in the schools*.

But don't you worry, because we can guarantee you that there's one place that *won't* deteriorate into some dreary study hall, not while Head Football Coach Paul S. Billiard is around. Now while we don't have the figures, we'd guess that Head Coach Billiard's Bruins at Brooke High School in Wellsburg must have some phenomenal record, for we have been privileged to read the coach's letter to the new football parents. He's a man who came to play, and right at the opening gun he tackles the dilemma of anti-athleticism by both horns:

Please impress upon [your son] that he is about to take a giant step in his young life, that of entering high school and participating in interscholastic athletics.

Now that's to lay it on the line, reveal character, and clarify values, all at once.

Coach Billiard has not, like some others we could name, knuckled under the mystique of intellectualism that still runs all too rampant even in some good high schools with very fine teams. Educator though he is, the coach does not flaunt his erudition around by talking over the heads of the parents and Football Mothers, which is just what happens all too often with guidance counsellors and curriculum facilitators and other such members of the higher-up intelligentsia in the public schools, who don't often seem to have the knack of finding easy words that laymen can understand. Even when he *has* to use the highly specialized technical language of the *professional* of education in order to describe something very subtle and complicated, Coach Billiard can find a way to make at least the gist of it clear to almost anyone of any educational level:

We have raised over \$12,000 to help improve facilities in our strength room. Our strength facilities are second to none, but facilities must be facilitated (used).

You see? *It can* be done.

And, unlike some academics who always seem to think that *their* subjects are more important

than any others, Coach Billiard recognizes that there's more to high school than just football. There may be basketball and baseball as well, and the coach favors the basics for any sport at all:

We are saying that the strength improvement phase is a very integral part of our total program. It is a fact that a stronger athlete is a better athlete regardless of what sport he is involved.

Athleticism, unlike such cold subjects as biology and algebra, teaches the warm human values. You don't see physicists patting each others' bottoms, and microbiologists don't even *have* awards banquets where they can express their gratitude to all the wonderful people who made it all possible. But in one sentence from Coach Billiard, a bright boy can learn some real human values that he might *never* pick up in your standard English course:

I would be remiss if I neglected to mention the outstanding cooperation and support that our program receives from our Principal . . .

Now can you imagine some math teacher writing to the parents of new students actually giving due and proper credit to the principal of the school for supporting the teaching of math? Probably not, because the people who end up teaching things like math, even if they aren't consciously anti-athleticists, do tend to be lacking in team-mindedness. They're off in their own little corners perusing esoteric special interests like history and literature.

Hardly anyone, of course, would deny that there is a place for such things in the high schools, especially for that certain kind of student. But we do have to remember that such studies do *not* tend to foster team-mindedness. Actually, they usually have the opposite effect. After all, we do have to admit that there is something basically selfish and unsportsmanlike about learning such things as trigonometry or French. Those things may be all well and good for the person who learns them, but can you imagine what would happen to team spirit if all the players wanted to learn things only because of what was in it for them?

Furthermore, many of those subjects are unrealistically difficult, and even a very good

player can find that the self-esteem that he loses in the French class doesn't always come back on the playing field. That's the sort of thing that brings on a bad attitude, the worst possible of all educational outcomes. And it is the Coach Billiards of this world, and not the teachers of French and trigonometry, who know exactly where bad attitudes come from and how to guard against them:

We discourage those individuals with poor attitudes to "shape up or ship out." A young man will not receive a bad attitude from participating in our system. If he is in trouble at home or elsewhere, his potential of carrying that characteristic into athletics is highly possible. Therefore, we are not about to base our program around individuals who are going to deter from the success of the team. (If the family can't handle the situation, don't complain when the coaches or school has to.)

And isn't that really *the* problem in so many of the non-athletic portions of a high school education, which are, in fact, based around individuals who do deter from the success of the team?

Coach Billiard hits the old nail right on the old head when he closes his letter with:

We hope that the preceding material has provided you with some needed information and supplied you with incite of the basic philosophy . . . of our program.

We'd like to believe that the parents were as incited as they should have been, but you know how parents are. Some of them don't even care who wins, so long as the kids are off the streets.

But if those parents will do just one little thing, there may be hope. Let them at least follow the advice in the coach's P.S.: "Please allow your son to read this letter so that all of us are speaking the same language." On that great day when we all speak the coach's language, there will be no deterring from success whatever sport we are involved, and anti-athleticism will trouble us no more.

Curiosity Corner

Innovative Thrusts for Professionals of Education

HEY there, professionals, here's some news you can use. Some pretty sharp colleagues of yours down in Texas, in what may be the boldest and innovativest thrust of the century, have figured out—now get this—that more than eighty-five percent of the words in the English language can actually be read by little children who've never even seen those words before! All it takes, as it turns out, is a little knowledge of the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they usually indicate! And these teacher-trainers at East Texas State, every one agog, you'd better believe, are telling the teacher-trainees, even agogoer, about it, and everyone's all excited. Now that's one *in* the old eye, by gum, for pointy-headed intellectuals who say that our teacher-trainers can't tell their A's from their elbows. So break up into the smallest possible groups, professionals, and interface this thrust, even if it takes barrels of new funding for an Aural-Oral-Aura Alphabetical Needs Reassessment Task Force, starting with "A is for Albow."

YOU should read *What's Happening to American English* (Scribners, 1978), a frightening book by Arn and Charlene Tibbetts, who are *personae* not even a little bit *gratae* to the National Council of Teachers of English—the people who discovered the student's right to a (coincidentally ungradable) language of his own. While their animosity should be recommendation enough for the book, there is more. This is hard core stuff. The much-traveled Tibbettses know what is actually *done* in schools, where silly pedagogy begets a sinister practice. You should know that too.

□ Frances Fitzgerald's *America Revised* has just been republished in paperback by Vintage. When you've read this book you will understand why it is that children who believe that the President appoints Senators have nevertheless due appreciation for Gay Rights. Fitzgerald's account of the manipulation of history in the schools makes 1984 look naive, and her description of the

Social Adjustment Alliance for Profit and job Security, a coalition of educationists, publishers, and legislators, will make you more tolerant of oil cartels and the Mafia.

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The Grossest of National Products

*Books will speak plain when counsellors
blanch.* Francis Bacon

THERE was a time when it was very easy to teach children just about everything they needed to know about sex. It is, after all, and especially for any *practical* purposes, a subject far more alluring than complicated. All a canny parent had to do was to buy one of those fussy but fascinating "marriage manuals" and hide it under the hankies. In two or three trices at the most, the nearest child would learn all about spermatozoa and fallopian tubes and even how to spell those things.

Well, you can try that if you please, but it probably won't work anymore. Unless your hanky drawer is big enough for a film-strip projector and a four-color chart on do-it-yourself childbirth as an experiential awareness-enhancement module, you'd better send your kids to the real sex pros down at your local schoolhouse. Those people have regular in-service, sometimes as often as once a month, so they're really up on the sex thing. What's more, they know, far better than any

parent can, that most of their students have a perfectly natural fear of the unknown, and are easily embarrassed and confused by any public discussion of books.

Functional illiteracy is not the bugbear you probably think it. Indeed, it is the grossest of our gross national products and one of the most consequential, if all too little understood, of those mysterious leading economic indicators. Just look at what it's done for the sex education industry in New Jersey, where they've decided to sex-educate every child every year for twelve years. If it weren't for New Jersey's outstanding production of functional illiterates, there'd be no market at all for sex education. The kids would just get books and read them. And poof! A whole industry disappears.

As it is, though, just think of all those jobs! Think of the co-ordinators and the facilitators and the secretaries! Think of the audio-visual devices and the teaching aids (really nifty little models) and the handsome kits of learning materials. We're talking big bucks here, and if you think we're going to let anybody come in with a couple of lousy *books* and queer this sweet deal, then you don't know a thing about New Jersey, a truly enlightened state with casinos and everything.

Besides, we're not just going to teach the plumbing. We're going to teach about values and attitudes and other humanistic stuff. You can't get that sort of thing out of *books*! Unless you can read, that is. Well, our kids, thank goodness, don't have to. They can get all the values and attitudes they need from a twenty-six-year—old divorcee who has just moved in with the real cool unemployed assistant welder who sold his motorcycle to pay for her abortion. Now *that* is experiential problem-solving in a real-life situation and none of that *Madame Borvary* la-di-da. And, anyway, if we teach sex in school, we'll soon be saved by widespread functional celibacy.

The Medium is the Massage

HERE at Glassboro we do *not* use the hideous and mendacious cant of the politicians, whose aim is always, as Orwell told us, to defend the indefensible. We're above that sort of thing. We see no need whatsoever to defend the indefensible.

Consider, for example, the utterly undeceptive prose of Mel Moyer, identified in the fall newsletter of Educational and Career services for Adults as “a humanistic psychology professor” who oh so freely shares self in his “perceptions of teaching non-traditional students”:

An interesting faction of the non-traditional student is the clergy of various faiths who are on campus. These people are so casual and open to what's going on around them, contrary to what many people might think. For instance, experiences in Humanistic Psychology include touching exercises and sitting on the floor, relating self to environment of people, etc. I find that members of the clergy are very open about self and comfortable in the touching experiences. They do not get nearly as uptight with group massage as the younger students, for instance. I also find that they are active listeners and comfortable with their sexuality and value systems.

Now what could be clearer than that? Why that prose is so far from mendacity that it wouldn't deceive an unremediated freshman or even an experiential continuum co-ordinator. It is the work, as Moyer himself puts it, of one who is “trusting enough to share self and be open to relating to others via improved communication techniques.” A touching experience.

“They are,” says Moyer of those non-traditional students, “interested in knowing what my role is as an instructor.” Yes. How true that must be. We're interested in his role too, but we're ready to assume that Moyer, in whatever his role may be, will do everything he can to overcome the stubborn and anti-humanistic reluctance of “the younger students” to share selves freely with that faction of casual clergymen via group massage. After all, where are those kids going to learn their improved communication techniques if not right here at GSC where *spes mundi* (and every other day of the week, by gosh, except Friday, of course, when most of the *spes* is in the parking lots) is good old-fashioned *eruditio*?

“Two of my courses,” Moyer unuptightly tells one and all, “emphasize intraspective (self) and interpersonal (self relating to others).” Now that is not the devious and cunning linguistic trickery of a skillful wordmonger who wants to defend the

indefensible. It is the simple language of one who just wants to communicate it via the most improved techniques.

And a good thing too, because even in Mover's classes, where all *sorts* of communications are exchanged, some people still need a lot of relating:

Two nuns in my (psychology and Human Relations) graduate class have shared with me their feelings about this class. The class stresses improved communication techniques and so forth.

These women are very inquisitive about what the main point of the lecture is. They freely share self and actively listen to others. They are not defensive.

Well, that's discouraging, isn't it. Two nuns, to be sure, do not a faction make, but you would think that such freely self-sharing active listeners, after sitting on the floor relating self to environment of people, and having heard about improved communication and so forth, would at least know "what the main point of the lecture is." They obviously need some more massage.

The Ballons Nodule

CITIZENS out in the real world, usually but not always parents of schoolchildren, write to us complaining about the bozos who run the schools. The complainers often send evidence, which we are delighted to have, of course, but all too many of them go on to whine about their supposed helplessness and frustration. That puzzles us. We thought *every* American would know what to do with evidence of official malfeasance, even when, as in the case of the schools, the presumed protectors of the public interest are themselves the miscreants.

We have, for instance, a letter from an irate father in Wisconsin. Although he was relieved to learn that his son had *not* in fact been put into a nodule, he found that his tolerance of typos did not extend to big black caps:

A handout (of material, of course) was given to my son in his kindergarten class. It was a picture of a clown holding a bunch of ballons. I

knew right away that they were ballons because the instructions on the top of the page said, "Color the Ballons." I had intended to send the original, but I can't bear to part with such a treasure.

And he asks, with this and other similar matters in mind, "What the hell should I do!!!!" (That's right: 4 !'s.)

Another irate parent sends *Update*, the newsletter of the Keystone Central School District in Lock Haven, PA, where the molders of young minds say:

All incoming seventh grade students will be tested during the first two weeks of school in mathematics and english. The purpose of this testing is to find out at what competency level the students are functioning. This will allow the teachers to pinpoint specific weaknesses a student may have and help him to improve it during the year. In order to determine the progress a student may have made during the year, they will be tested again in June.

OK. Here's what you do. Do not bother going to the schools. The people who make policy there are ignorant or negligent or both. How do you think such things happen in the first place? Besides, the school people lose nothing when you complain and gain nothing when you approve; they get your money either way.

But *do* go to your local newspaper. With any luck at all, you'll find there a gnarled editor who once learned to diagram sentences, or a smartass young reporter fresh from the minimum competence circus. Newspapers don't get tax money, and juicy stories about ignorant educationists are happily popular just now. So strike while the irony is hot, or shut up and color your ballons.

Teratology

[What follows is from a snappy little brochure from the Department of Communication at the University of Hawaii.]

"Communication is seen as a central and distinctive field in the study of human behavior and as *the* fundamental social process. . . . An eclectic field, communication has roots that

include, among others, extensions from psychology, social psychology, sociology, and political science. ‘Communicologists’ have attempted to cull the various perspectives to synthesize salient concepts into an integrated framework. Although their backgrounds and training are various and the orientations and foci are diverse, this community of scholars, researchers, and educators has established a distinct field of communication research with a multi-theoretical delineation of parameters and general orientations. The field continues to evolve; the diversity of theoretical approaches, methods of inquiry, and practices has produced a rich, multi-faceted identity.”

[And this is from the letter that came with an article submitted for publication to the “North Carolina Association of Educators Bulletin.” The author, alas, we don’t know.]

“Please find enclosed a fundamental quasipanacea in the form of two concepts. If implemented with creativity, consistency and fortitude, the objectional qualities and quantities present presently within our public schools will be abated greatly.

“Nevertheless, the firm acceptance and establishment of this efficacious technique will provide predictably the necessary self-evident factors for a fully developed successfully implemental probability of the matter enclosed. Good luck and great success.”

Brief Notes

WE are always amazed to discover that we have gotten out yet another issue of *The Underground Grammarian*. And just now, nothing seems less likely than the *next* issue. Nevertheless, we have now come to the end of Volume Four, and the end is not in sight. We can’t even see the beginning of the end. The wicked have not ceased from troubling, and we’ll just have to keep going.

Our task will be lightened somewhat by our new (*circa* 1935) letterpress with its automatic paper feeding system. And *your* task may be lightened, too, since we have dumped into the melting pot the eight point Caslon that we used in inset quotations and footnotes and replaced it with the nine point that you are reading now. It’s a bit easier to set, too.

We have also discovered, with this issue, *the* permanent format. Really. Those who have been muttering for four years about the difficulty of binding and filing can now make plans.

Once again we remind all readers that we *always* give permission to copy or reprint and circulate any part or all of this journal. In fact, we *encourage* disruptive behavior. You don’t even have to ask.

However, we must also remitted one and all that we routinely throw out purchase orders, forms to be filled out, and statist questionnaires about the disadvantages and deficiencies that we most prize in our employees. We and our readers make up a voluntary association of *individuals*.

*Neither can his mind be thought to be in
tune, whose words do jarre;
nor his reason in frame,
whose sentence is preposterous.*

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National Education Association

And its junior affiliate,

The Department of Education

the Basic Minimum Christmas Tree



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