



# **The daily cardinal. Vol. LXXIX, No. 146 May 24, 1969**

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# EDUCATION

## JUXTAPOSITION

The educational system in this country has recently come under fire. Students have protested ROTC programs, grading systems and the involvement of universities in war research. Faculty members have lashed out at outmoded administrators who demand that classes be taught in conventional style. And legislators have cut millions of dollars slated for the University because of their disdain for student disruptions.

Many people are now questioning the purpose of the university, what role it plays in society and how should its educational function be implemented.

According to a University regent, Walter Renk, the purpose of the educational training this institution offers should be to fill certain jobs in this country. Grades, he adds, are important because they effectively place students where their competitive ability lies. The University, therefore, is superlative in its present form. Renk believes the educational complex, while not always providing students with a rounded education, is healthy because it tends to sift the competitors, the fighters, those who will "make something of themselves in this society," and place them into better positions. Renk, an administrator of this system, summed up his position on the students' ability to do well in college by stating: "Getting through this University isn't based on intelligence, though it helps to have it."

In opposition to the regent's belief, many educators have expressed concern and dismay over the educational experience universities offer. A noted economist at Columbia University believes the education many are now receiving leads to a series of false goals. Dr. Robert Theobald, at a University symposium, expounded the idea that the grading system restricts man's ability to think. He says to get a good job one needs good grades.

(Continued on page two)



Robb Johnson

**REGENT RENK**  
" . . . getting through the University isn't based on intelligence."

## JUXTAPOSITION

(continued from page 1)

To obtain good grades, one as to be proficient at answering multiple questions. Theobald condemns this "multiple question" system as an inhibiting agent which programs a student to do a task that a computer can do more efficiently. Theobald has called for universities to open their doors to the community, thus making education a community project.

He believes that by abolishing hierarchy differences between students, faculty and administrators, universities would be less likely to be run by what he terms "janitors." According to the economist, the ideal educational institution would be run by computers, programmed by the community with the community's information, and not by the ruling elitist or the propagandists. Without the normal student-teacher relationships, the courses would last for as long as the applicant wanted to gain knowledge from the computer. He argues, "why make all courses four months long?"

While Dr. Theobald's suggestions for changing the University are utopian, they are not impossible. Many students, faculty members and organizations have expressed ideas that would change the University along the lines that Dr. Theobald has outlined. Other groups, including Educational Policy Studies 900 and the New University Committee, have expressed the intention to change the University from within, by restructuring course and programs, by presenting seminar situations for undergraduates, and by grading courses pass-fail or some by A-fail, without the consent of the administration. This issue of the Cardinal will deal with some ideas that have been developed by University faculty members, their plans for implementing these ideas, and their pessimism or optimism concerning the future of American education.

\* \* \*

The major problem with education today is that it is administered by the same people who implement our foreign and national policies which shape the destiny of our society. Administrators, regents, legislators and taxpayers, those who do not have a firm understanding of educational needs, all have their hands in the structuring of our educational institutions. As Dr. Theobald deftly pointed out, this hierarchy tends to put "janitors," the people who are least equipped to handle the running of a University, in charge.

The University, which should be a center of knowledge, a hub of intellectual endeavor, and an independent body of communication, thus becomes the focal point for group demands. In this system, students are subjected to the same demoralizing force that has ruined our society. The horrors of Vietnam are reflected at the University by the research it is forced to carry on (i.e. the mathematics research center). The corruption in government is displayed by university administrators (i.e. Regent Renk's conflict of interest as brought out in Profit Motive 101).

The totalitarian leanings of our society is demonstrated by the granting of credit for ROTC courses. According to David Siff, assistant professor of English, the university is immersed in a corrupt society; the artist, the scholar, the researcher, and the critic cannot shut this out. He says, "It poisons the purity of research, the precision of scholarship and the pleasure of aesthetic sensibilities." Siff made these comments in an article which appears in this issue analyzing the recent police rioting on Mifflin street in relation to education in this society.

The problem is not whether the university can exist in the climate of this society, but how educational institutions can effectively shut their doors to the power elite which runs this country. Once this is effected many of the reforms and radicalizations that educators have been opting for can be realized. Grading, the cause of some dissension between educators, students and administrators, without the present outside forces, would be changed or hopefully eliminated.

The whole process of education, from the lowest grades to the graduate schools, would be altered to meet the needs, the desires, the intellectual wants of the students—not the red tape of the hierarchy. Courses would be created to enrich a student's life, rather than burden him with an abundance of worthless names, dates, equations and confusion. Frank Battaglia, associate professor of English, states in an article that appears in this issue, "Any student who manages to work out something vitally important to his own life in a classroom is a Houdini."

The fact is that the education most university students now receive is boring. It is required by the university and the family's social status in the community; it is open to little curiosity by the student. Rolf Panny, German, has some insights into the problems of contemporary American education. In an article in this issue he says, "The grade is the goal of the course while the acquisition of knowledge and understanding seems secondary."

Higher education has literally closed its doors to learning. The grade point, we are told, will direct much of our future life; either we make the grade or we are doomed. The point is that the grading system does not measure true education. The student who acquires good grades isn't necessarily better off than the student who receives poorer grades but continues his interest in the subject after the course is completed. However, many students never realize this. Their preoccupation is with grades because we are living in a highly competitive society. Hence, the only way to change a student's attitude toward his education is to change the society which nurtures this attitude. As Panny says, "Man is the most radical issue today. Without changing him first, there is no hope of changing his policy."

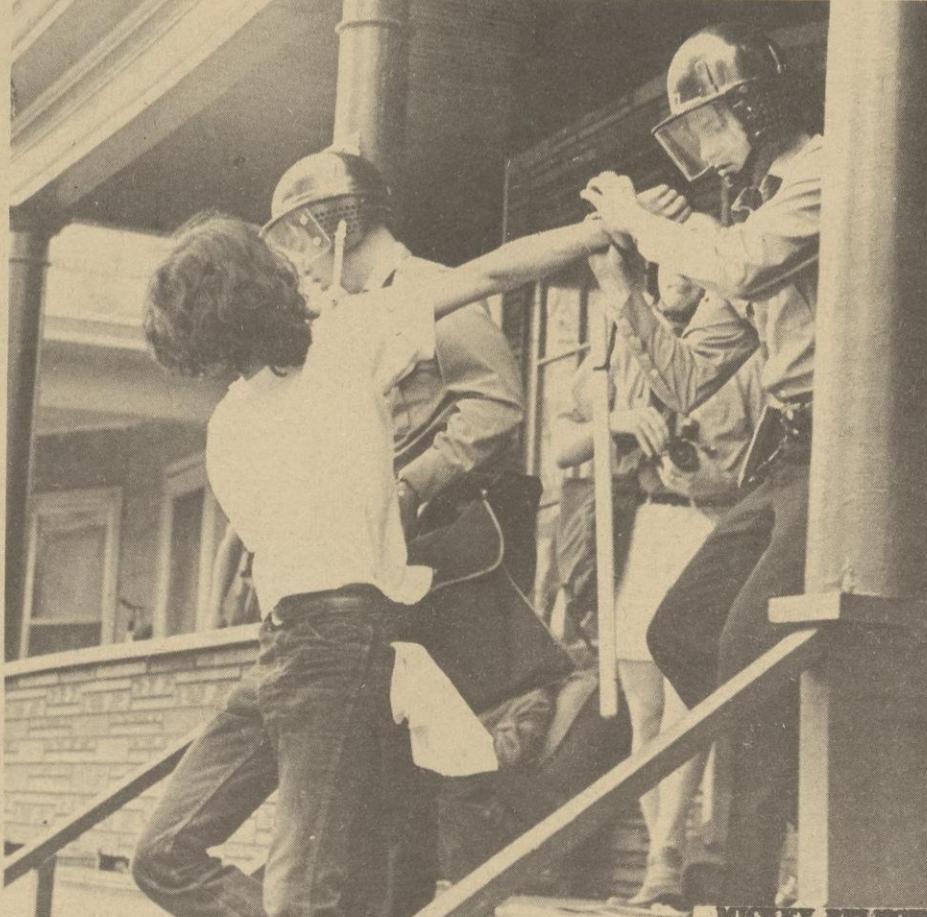
Allen Swerdlow  
Associate Editor



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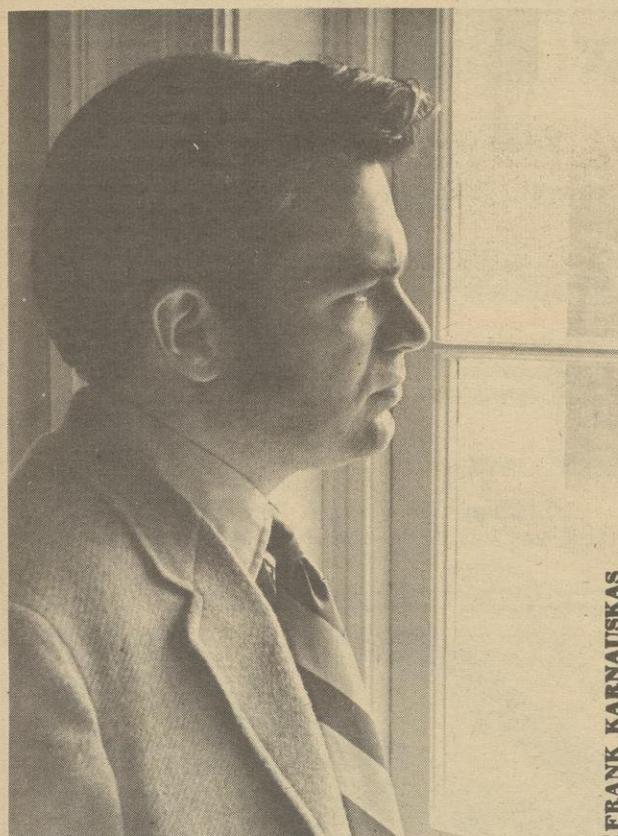
# Disconnections

By DAVID SIFF  
English

Editors note: David Siff, who received his degree at NYU, conducts sophomore honors sections in literature survey, and also is a teaching assistant for a course in 19th century novels. He is engaged in writing several articles and books.

The single most compelling fact in our lives is that this country as it is is not worth saving. You can atomize that statement in any way yet it still comes back at you. It comes back at you if you are a cop breaking heads, a student in the streets, a poor person in the ghetto, a liberal administrator sinking ever more helplessly into positions that have neither practical nor moral authority.

It is there, to be sure, in the classroom, in the minds of students and teachers alike. It defines both the needs and very real limitations of any approach to education, whether radical or traditional. The question of "relevance" seems to me to be one of the current coins of obfuscation, a cliche that appeals to many while satisfying no one. The fact of the matter is that an interesting teacher is a relevant one. Yet it is fairly clear that to be interesting or relevant does not necessarily involve changing the world.



FRANK KARNAUSKAS

DAVID SIFF

"... reading Marx and Marcuse on the way to work at IBM is an all too foreseeable possibility for many of today's college students."

Sunday: 11 p.m., we left the courthouse, where we had been picketing. Going towards Bassett we saw cops in riot gear sitting in unmarked cars parked along the streets. At the corner of Mifflin you could see people half way down the street trying to pile up a barricade. Suddenly, cars pulled up. The cops were out, firing gas bombs at anything that moved. We ran into a house. The room was full of people we didn't know.

Changing the structure and even the curriculum of courses has only limited value, I think. If you abolished grades, if you ideally could knock down those huge lectures to seminar-sized classes, if you substituted Malcolm, Mao, and Che for Hemingway, Faulkner and Dos Passos, you would still be no closer to changing this country.

That doesn't mean that one shouldn't look for ways to change the structure and content of the classroom. It seems fairly obvious that grading, for example, is a convenient tool (or weapon) for administrators and faculty but is of dubious value in determining the intellectual character and performance of students. In fact, the competitive nature of grading probably does tend to set students against one another, to actually keep them from experiencing anything like community in their academic lives.

So, too, reducing class sizes, encouraging group rather than individual projects, making curriculum changes and so forth can be useful both in terms of making the classroom a more lively place and a more intellectually enriching one. Ultimately, course content is more important than anything else, but it still does not change anything. The ghettos remain; big firms get rich, GI's die. What we learn is kept apart from the hard pain and longing of our lives, at best a harmless shadow of our wasted talents, at worst a tool for social control.

We watched the cops break into houses across the street. We heard glass shattering. They stood on the corners looking towards the house we were in. We talked very little. No one would say it, but everyone knew everyone else was scared shitless. The cops looked like men from Mars in their gas masks, padded coats, helmets and clubs. God Almighty, stay there, don't come across the street! Passers-by walked under our window. One of the Martians let go a gas bomb. The people disappeared.

We've been working on the assumption that there should be a connection between formal academic study and social change. The professed traditions (at least those most recent) of the academy, however, sharply challenge such an assumption.

I say "professed" because academia, like many American things, has a peculiar susceptibility to good looks and bad breath. The applicability of learning to social change is, in many University departments, perfectly clear. Scientists, social scientists, historians, professors of law, medicine, economics, engineering, agriculture have all found ways to the top of not only academic but governmental ladders as well through the applicability of their particular disciplines to problems of social change.

The real question in this regard, however, is not social change as such, but what kind of social change is involved. I think it can fairly be said, for example, that whatever changes for good have accrued from the massive subsidies of science by the federal government have been far outweighed by changes that have brought us ever closer to militarism as a permanent way of life in this country. The penetration of American universities by the ruling elite of the nation is complete and profound. If we can expect a cure for cancer to come from one of our universities, so too we can expect ABM or MIRV or the latest in nerve gasses. Problems of urbanization, poverty, land reform, foreign relations, too, will be solved but in accord with the special political needs and prerogatives of American capitalism.

Here at the University, the Army Math Research Center, the Land Tenure Center, and the Poverty Institute, are just three of many programs in which serious and legitimate academic disciplines have been organized to provide the American government with the means for more effective social, political and military controls. Universities today, as the president of Michigan State University said in a recent speech, are as much a bastion of defense and national security as intercontinental ballistic missiles.

At State and Gilman a crowd of several thousand had gathered. Riot cops were lined across the intersection and all down State towards the campus. The mood of the crowd was, curiously enough, both ugly and gay. Ugly towards the pigs, but gay nevertheless. We were crows, vultures, waiting on curbs, on ledges, on rooftops, waiting as the stench of putrefaction grew. The cops began advancing towards the crowd near us. We walked away. Then the bombs came, we ran. But only till we were clear of the gas, then we came back. A police ambulance with its side and rear windows smashed in passed by and stopped up near Rennebohm's where a trash fire was smoldering. The cops got out and loaded on one of their fallen comrades. There was cheering.

But the university, we are assured, by many (among them Herbert Marcuse) is not a wholly pernicious institution. The fruits of its intellectual life are, finally, too varied to be defined exclusively in terms of political, military, and social control. The life of the mind can be its own reward and truth belongs to no faction or party. In an increasingly totalitarian society, the university, it is further asserted, is a last stronghold of free enquiry, of rational discourse, of democracy itself, in short, a place of hope in an increasingly hopeless world.

There is some truth in all of this, but it is of a kind that needs testing rather than asserting. The taste of such fruit is sweeter in the moment of eating than anytime else and we should by now have learned to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge with some caution.

"Pure" research does go on in the sciences; so does applied research that is directly beneficial to mankind; not all history, sociology, anthropology is exploitative; the study of literature, of music, of painting, yet harbors real joys. Yet it is fair to say, I think, that none of these positive virtues have substantial bearing on the overwhelming question of whether or not we are going to survive as a nation or as a people.

One objection indeed may be that there need be no such bearing. The problem with such an objection, however, is that it disregards the context in which learning of any kind takes place. It is like summoning up the mirage of a water-filled oasis in the middle of a killing desert. The feelings roused are lovely but they are emanations of death. At peril to our conscience, our intellect, finally to our feelings themselves, do we shut out the horror show of daily life in America.

The fact of the matter is that any scholar, critic, researcher, artist worth his salt cannot shut it out. It poisons the purity of his research, the precision of his scholarship, the pleasure of his aesthetic sensibilities. Stendahl declared that politics was like a gunshot in the middle of a concert. How, finally, can one avoid the distraction? Study divorced from its social context is like a madhouse fantasy, one more disconnection from reality in a disconnected world.

This time they came with something like a Dutch-elm spray machine, spreading clouds of Mace through the entire area. We were standing half way up the hill between State and Langdon on Lake when we first heard it. We heard it, for minutes it seemed, before we actually saw it. The sound it made was weird, other-worldly, a Martian Hoover vacuum. People began to run. Some were screaming. The pig chased them, busy with bombs and clubs. I had never felt Mace before. It burned on my face, in my mouth, down my lungs. I felt myself getting sick as I ran. Fortunately we got inside a building and there was an apartment open to us, filled with people I had never met before. I washed with cold water and in a few minutes I was better.

How then does one teach and what "philosophy" of education does one hold? There are, I know, no really sensible answers. Not now. One offers the commonplace of joining action to thought (not the less valid for being a commonplace) but what kind of action to what kind of thought?

A year or so ago a group of professors and students at MIT and Harvard took it upon themselves to offer sanctuary to a draft resister. Setting up their sanctuary, they held classes—not exactly as usual, but with the sense that the classroom itself could exist in the context of direct social action. The usual physical departmentalization and compartmentalization of classes was removed and in one large area, people could move from class to class according to their various interests. The mutual sense of providing sanctuary, far more than anything else, gave the participants, probably for the first time in their lives, the sense that they belonged to an academic community. Primitive and insignificant as it was, they themselves had, for a brief, brief time, built a microcosmic academy out of the moral and intellectual needs of their lives.

But this suggests no more, really, than that it is in the mutual interest of professors and students alike to, as much as possible, break down those artificial barriers of caste and class which serve to perpetuate elitist and authoritarian divisions in the classroom and which render virtually hopeless any possibility of sharing and together acting upon the day to day experiences of the American nightmare. At best, however, an academy—no matter how enlightened—will never be able to take decisive action against a social system which sponsors its existence.

On the other hand the very limitations of university life suggest that the real priority for students and teachers alike should lie in matters of course content. In the humanities, for example, we labor against enshrined intellectual orthodoxies which tend to blunt rather than sharpen our critical sense of the world.

In the study of literature, history, sociology, philosophy, we are confronted in the classroom with particular methodologies which render harmless the vast treasures of our cultural heritage. Those methodologies systematically need to be challenged until we have had the kind of cultural revolution which will enable us to once again think of culture, in Matthew Arnold's words, as a criticism of life.

Quite specifically, we need to understand the historical basis of culture, to apply to those works we study not only knowledge of a particular age but a critical sense of their knowledge as well.

Monday night—Bassett, Mifflin, State, Gilman, Langdon, Lake, looked like separate battlefields. There were trash fires, broken glass, bricks, stones, makeshift barricades everywhere. People walked the streets holding vinegar soaked handkerchiefs to their noses. Yet, somehow, there was a sense of routine, of everyday. The old Yankee genius for adaptation still alive. Cop cars, almost all with their windows smashed, some with their hoods and sides caved in, prowled every street. Occasionally bombs came from them as they passed. More frequently, however, projectiles, bottles, bricks, stones, were hurled back at them. At the bridge going over Park at State I saw someone drop what looked like a pillow case full of rocks through the front windshield of a passing cop car. Couples passed to and fro, it was spring. Occasionally a squad car of riot cops would appear, throw bombs, then split; then the couples, between rents of pepper-gas fog, would continue on as though nothing had happened. The sense of surrealism would have appealed to G.K. Chesterton.

There is the nagging sense that even major reforms in the University will, in the end, change nothing. Radical teachers in particular should bear in mind that they, perhaps more than the Father Hesburghs of the world, have a socially useful function to serve so long as they provide students with an intellectually and emotionally satisfying experience in school, so long are they providing an outlet for emotions, ideas, ambitions that need to be directed against the continuation of capitalist rule in America. Reading Marx and Marcuse on the way to work at IBM is an all too foreseeable possibility for many of today's college students.

What the police riot of last week demonstrated clearly was that what is happening off campus has a direct relationship to life on the campus. If we begin to see that militarism, racism and repression are all reflected in the University, so, too, we should see that their principal loci lie off the campus—in the communities, the cities, the states that surround them.

If we seek to truly educate, to ourselves become educated, we will not allow ourselves to make false connections in the context of a university environment, to find whole solutions where only partial ones exist. Much more of the world lies beyond the gates of a University than lies within it. It is a shambles of disconnections waiting to be put together.

Tuesday night—hundreds of people down on Mifflin street, waiting for the cops to come. They never did. One kid said to me, "You know why they didn't come? Not because of those guys in white armbands. But because Sunday and Monday cost them too much. Man, the pig took a beating, he really did. You should have seen the parking lot at Washington School last night. It looked like a fucking automobile graveyard. There were at least 50 cars we put out of commission. We won, you dig, we won!"

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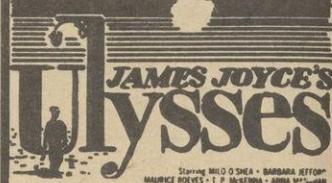
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By FRANK BATTAGLIA  
English

Frank Battaglia received his degree at the Davis Campus of the University of California. Besides lecturing on contemporary literature here, he also holds classes on college literature at the Wisconsin state Correctional Institute at Fox Lake.

The grading system is a horror. The best that can be said for it is that it doesn't measure what is most important in education. The worst that can be said is that it vitiates the learning process and causes psychic disorder in the students who work under it.

### The Best

Whatever good can be said about the grading system, one of the things that can't be said is that it works. The grading system is not designed to, not expected to, measure the most important factor in education--self-realization, the development of personal abilities.

In the humanities this is perhaps more easily seen than in the sciences. Everyone grants that there is an immense difference between being able to articulate on cue appropriate statements of Plato or Luther or Goethe, and knowing the work and importance of these men. Real understanding, however, is still one step away. It entails more than being able to explain the work of a philosopher or historian or poet; it consists in knowing what they mean, in having the truth of their work come home, take root, in one's own life. Is it possible for a teacher to frame an exam question in such a way that a student he doesn't know very well can convincingly demonstrate in a test answer how much his life has been affected by coming to "understand" Plato or Luther or Goethe? And even if the teacher could ask the question, and the student answered it, could the results be at all accurately represented by a letter or number grade? No. Clearly no. The grading system is not designed to, not expected to, measure true education.

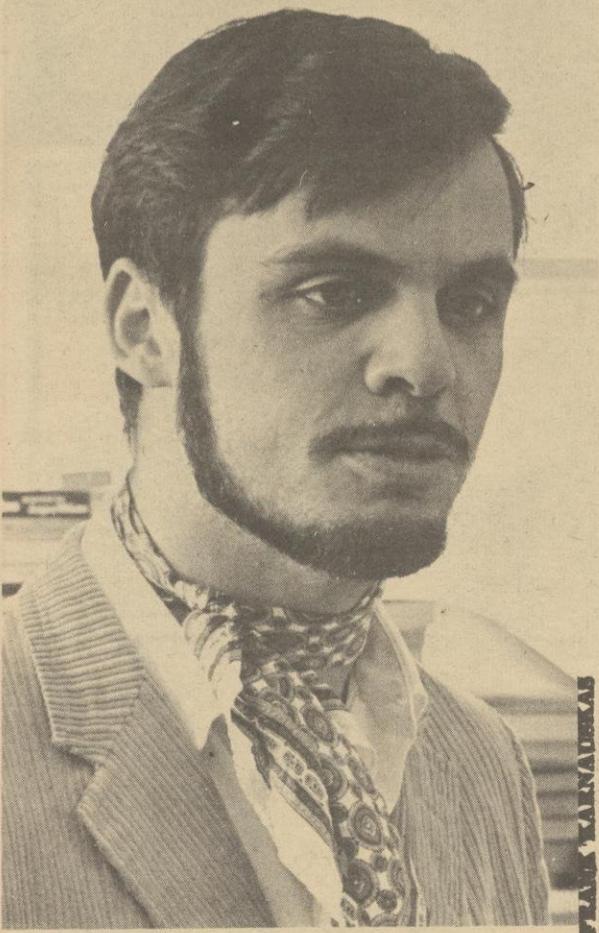
This is so not just in the humanities but in the sciences too. An exam can test how well a person recalls data, can allow an individual to show his ability to analyze and solve a problem. But what test can measure a student's full grasp of his discipline, his ability to conceive on his own of applications for the methods he has learned, his ability to ask new questions? In any discipline a numerical or letter grading system can at best only provide an approximate record of the acquiring of skills and necessarily ignores the totality of a student's response to the material.

### The Worst

So the grading system has been shown to be an imperfect instrument. But so are a lot of other things. The most important objection to the grading system is not that it isn't good enough, but that its effect on the process of education and on the lives of students is actually pernicious.

In his first years, if not days, in school a student begins to respond in a naturally defensive way to the authority structure in which he finds himself. The most salient feature of this structure is readily enough grasped: the student does not have as much authority over his own life as the instructor does. There is a body of material to be covered and a teacher to cover it; whatever the response of the student to the subject, it will be recorded for posterity as well as school officials and eventual employers only by a grade. The grade can be and is used as a goad "to learning." Since the instructor's authority in grading is near absolute, many of the possible responses by the student to the instructor-subject matter combination are not only inapposite but dangerous.

Who hasn't, on a given day, not felt up to it--but what if the teacher requires strict attendance? Who has not had boring teachers?--teachers who, however, might well feel that some lack of appreciation of the subject matter was entailed in someone's saying he found the class boring. And a lack of appreciation of the subject, of course, should be reflected in the grade. Who has not had arrogant or petty teachers, against whom an individual student can employ no corrective nor have reliable defense because of the teacher's near absolute discretion over grades.



FRANK BATTAGLIA

"... any student who manages to work out something vitally important to his own life in a classroom is a Houdini."

Saturday, May 24, 1969

THE DAILY CARDINAL 7

Saturday, May 24, 1969

THE DAILY CARDINAL 5

# Schizoid Conditioning

## A Through F

or

### How To Learn To Vote Like a Faculty Assemblyman



WILLIE PELIGER

No reliable defense, that is, except emotional withdrawal. To the extent that a student does not feel as entitled to his own response to the situation as the instructor does he will distance himself emotionally from it. In a no-win position you allow as little as possible to be at stake. To the extent that a situation is distasteful you do not engage yourself in it and try to keep from exposing yourself to it.

The student's reaction to the material is subject to a normative judgment by a not necessarily amenable teacher in the terms of an inherently short-sighted grading system. So the student naturally responds to this arbitrary and Procrustean situation by taking the material less than seriously. The institutional structure is usually constrictive, and often oppressive. The student is not free to respond fully, to involve himself entirely, in the process of education; and so he doesn't. As a result any subject dealt with in the authority structure of the traditional classroom--where grades are one of the principal instruments of control--will be understood "academically." A student who manages to work out something vitally important to his own life in a classroom is a Houdini.

The normal situation is less than droll. A student may have been getting A's in arithmetic and math, but when it comes to rearranging the furniture in his room, the odds are that he doesn't measure the available space and the size of the pieces but instead just shoves the things around until he finds another arrangement that works. Arithmetic and math are, after all, school subjects. Because of the circumstances in which they have been "learned" they have little bearing on the out of class life of the student, i.e., they are probably not really learned at all.

The WORST OF THE WORST, the ultimate horror of the grading system and the authority structure it supports is that it trains people not to do anything about things that bother them. Willie Whatsisname learns to be physically confined in his proper seat, learns not to have expressions on his face that the teacher won't like. Ah! but his mind is free. And so he slowly learns to experience himself in terms of a bifurcation between his manifest

self and an inner (seemingly realer) self. He is trained to be schizoid.

After Willie stops overtly resisting the processing and begins to develop mechanisms that will enable him to live with his divided self he will acquire a deep habit of not initiating action, especially against institutions, about things that bother him. He will get used to regarding his discontents as "personal problems," because his schizoid training cuts him off from his fellows--who don't look discontent (any more than he does)--and locks him into his own individuality.

The consequences of this schizoid conditioning deserve to be the subject of a longer analysis. One such consequence is especially noteworthy: the conditioning trains a person to divorce thoughts and values from action.

A statement passed by the University Faculty Assembly on February 26, 1969 illustrates rather perfectly the tendency, produced by long exposure to formal education, to dissociate thought from action. The members of the faculty assembly were reflecting their years of processing--through grade school, high school, college, and graduate or professional school--when they affirmed that "the use of force as a way of achieving change is wholly incompatible with rational inquiry."

Were they condemning the American Revolution, or just ignoring it because that was something they learned about in school? Were they unable to conceive that violence in self defense can be perfectly "rational"? Or had their training developed in them so deep a habit of not initiating action against things that bothered them that they were reluctant to imagine that a decision to use force could be the result of rational inquiry?

Considering their statement in the sense they were thinking of rather than some of the senses they weren't, does it mean they will stop giving grades, setting course and degree requirements, etc.?

### Conclusion

Abolish the grading system.

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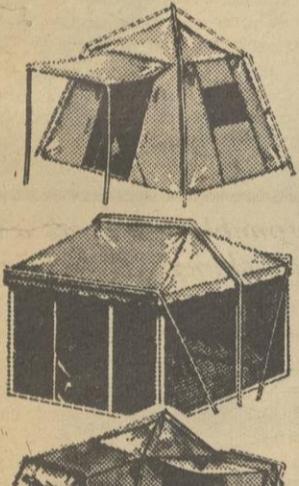
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### Letter to the Editor

Dear Elliot:

Your analysis of Bergman's "Shame" is excellent. I am disturbed to say that of the six or so reviews of this movie that I have read so far this is the only one that gets to the point that Bergman has so painfully tried to make. Perhaps the critics (and I regard critics as artists!) have deliberately chosen not to get at the heart of the issue.

Enough blame has been placed on the shoulders of scientists for all the shit that humanity finds itself in today. Indeed scientists have made crime out of reason in their relentless struggle to make "The Machine" which seems to be pulverizing us underneath it. Let us, therefore, thank Bergman for showing us the other side of the coin. A whole new chapter, the questioning of the artist's complacency, has been opened. Let artists now finally come down from their ethereal utopias and admit their guilt. They have greater opportunities in trying to bridge the apparently huge gaps that exist between mind, soul and body. This is the ultimate in creation.

My dear Elliot, congratulations!

Sincerely,  
Mohammed Ashraf Aziz  
Graduate student, Zoology

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# Undergrad Education:

## What Can We Do?

By ELAINE REUBEN  
English

Editors note: Elaine Reuben, an instructor of English did her undergraduate work at Brandeis. She is now finishing her PhD in English at Stanford. Among other things, she teaches an honors course in sophomore literature.

What can be done to improve undergraduate education at the University? (Shall we laugh?) What can be done to improve undergraduate education? (Shall we cry?) What can be done! (Shall we scream?)

My first year in Madison opened with the "Peter Pan" Affair, a satyr play for the tragedies to come. How long ago and innocent that episode seems now, yet how prophetic and damning.

It defined the University: a University which will not protect its own students, but aids in their harassment (so much for *in loco parentis*); a University which will not foster experiment, but grudges, or mocks, or ignores, or expels those who would try anyway (so much for Alma

*"In times of crisis the powers that be in this University do not call a convocation, they call the police."*

Mater); a University which will not teach and lead its community, but leaves its alumni, regents, and legislators secure in their banks and go-go clubs and then wonders why no one appreciates what the University is about (so much for the Wisconsin Idea).

This University lacks the will, not the means, to improve undergraduate education, lacks the energy, the courage, the imagination and the leadership.

Can you imagine a Wisconsin equivalent to the recent Amherst convocation for self-examination? Can you imagine the University, like the University of Southern California, really meaning what it says about experimenting with pass-fail by making that the procedure for the entire freshman year? At Stanford young faculty members may be appointed "university fellows," relieved of all normal departmental assignments and devote half time to university service, advising and consulting on the development and evaluation of new educational programs, and half time to their own development as teachers and scholars--can you imagine such a program here?

In times of crisis the powers that be in this University do not call a convocation, they call the police. Experiments like Educational Policy 900 are not applauded, encouraged or investigated, they are threatened. Faculty concerned enough to act on their dissatisfactions with the grading system are not sought out for advice or consultation; they are warned to sin no more.

It is unreasonable to expect any institution to undermine or overthrow itself, and those of us who would wish for a truly radical restructuring of the University realize

that nothing of the sort will happen without equal changes in the larger society. But it is not unreasonable to expect a university to be a vital, changing, responsive institution. This one is not.

In more stable times it would not really matter so much. But we do not live in stable times. Business as usual will lead to bankruptcy. The issue, as one of my senior colleagues pointed out, is not whether we will change, but what the rate of change should be.

It should, as the fading rhetoric says, be possible for changes to be proposed and tested in an orderly way, and it would be--if the actuality of this University were anywhere near the ideal rational and humane community which some claim to be protecting. What is really being protected is an illusion, and protecting it is dangerous. What we need from bodies like the Faculty Assembly are not statements of rededication to our traditional liberal goals; we need reexamination of what those goals mean in the real lives of real students and faculty, in America 1969.

Some are getting, and giving, an education here worthy of the name--some always will. Some are turning shrill, which is the sadly necessary price they pay for survival. Sadder still, however, some are turning off, turning into themselves, turning away from this institution as a source of meaning in their lives. And many are simply leaving or would if they could.

I doubt that there can be any meaningful improvement in undergraduate education in this University until there has been an honest, and not merely pro forma, public and pronounced acknowledgement that improvement is necessary. At present the acting assumption of the institution is that all is well, working smoothly (if only those crazies would be quiet); at present those with changes to propose are forced to assume the burden of proof that change is necessary, and then to assert that their proposals are certain of success. And nothing happens anyway. Rigidity and distrust continue to create a stasis of frustration.

Once the acknowledgement had been made, the real questions could be asked, explored and maybe even answered. Questions about course content, classroom structure, grades and degrees have been raised repeatedly, and must be raised again, but there are others as well, radical only when no one asks any.

What quality of undergraduate education can we expect in an institution where policy decisions are increasingly the business of men whose business is not education? (Surely the relationship with the regents and the legislature needs to be named for what it is becoming, then evaluated and acted upon. Who shall speak for this University, and for the people it is supposed to serve?) What quality of undergraduate education can be achieved in an institution where no one is specifically charged with the function of undergraduate teacher? (Many issues to explore here: One would be whether the departmental system, with its professional concerns, is the only way to appoint and retain faculty, let alone plan curriculum.)

What quality of undergraduate education is being provided when students are taking courses because it suits



ELAINE REUBEN

"... those of us who would wish for a truly radical restructuring of the University realize that nothing of this sort will happen without equal changes in the larger society."

the computer, and taking too many of them anyway? (Are there other ways to deal with these felt problems than the current system, and could we talk about the question in educational terms before someone explains why it can't be done?) Where and how does the undergraduate's education intersect the rest of his life? (Should we be teaching in living units or in the streets, rather than in the classroom? In projects rather than courses? Shouldn't we at least know where and how our students are living?) If education is partially a matter of role modeling, should we ask what kind of role models are

*"It is not unreasonable to expect a university to be a vital, changing, responsive institution. This one is not."*

being provided? (One such discussion might ask why there are so very few women of tenure rank in this university. Others might ask where the student can see thought and action combined?)

One can speculate and ruminante, fantasize and free associate. There are studies and reports, articles, papers, pamphlets and panels. At some point there must be something more. Those who speak for the University must speak about what really is and what might be, or those who wish to speak that language must find a way to speak for the University.



MICKEY STANLEY

Saturday, May 24, 1969

A Critical View

# The Grading System

By ROLF PANNY  
German

Editor's note: Rolf Panny was born in China and did his graduate work at Berkeley in 1961, where he was an assistant professor. He now teaches intermediate German. His current interests are the relationships between movement, imagery and rest patterns in lyrical poetry.

American society has placed high priority on the education of scientists, technicians, and skilled social functionaries to run its comfortable polity. It expresses this priority by granting lavish financial support for scientific research and training. This one-sided and pragmatic concept of human learning has perverted the university. It is no longer an educational institution but a skill center. For example, the College of Letters and Science says that it is in business "to teach you (the students) to earn a living in a socially useful manner." (University Catalog, Part I, page 2!)

To the degree that the sciences have assumed a superior role, the humanities have been reduced to an inferior role in virtually all aspects of teaching and research. Human values are basically noncommercial. To stay competitive with the sciences, however, the men of letters have adopted some of the techniques scientists have developed in search of funds. The professor has become an entrepreneur in the educational business. His research is often purely promotional industry; to win the respect of the sciences he has become tough in teaching required courses to students who do not want them in the first place. He relies on grades rather than creative teaching to achieve so called standards. The effort is to turn out a marketable and "socially useful" product.

In the making of skilled humans, the grading system measures by its five letters the objective quality of the

motivation once they are released from the pressures of the grading system. Let's face it: very few students could handle a sudden and extreme measure of freedom. And as long as state universities are still granting degrees qualifying students for their future professions, by what standards can such degrees be earned? How can our grading system serve this end without its present and obnoxious abuses?

The proposal to divide the university into a skill center and an academy—here a training ground under a plastic dome, there the pine groves of academe—does not answer any of these questions. Such division will merely put more miles between the scientist and the humanist than separate the two already. One redeeming feature of this division would be the termination of the breadth requirements for students who were to be exposed to the facts of life or to the finer things of the mind and who find themselves hounded by their anxieties over grades. What a perversion of a good intention!

Clearly, the choice must be on the side of a quality education of men and women as whole and moral individuals to whom it is given to change our society from an aggregate of consumers to a community of unalienated individuals. Man himself is the most radical issue today. Without changing him first, there is no hope of changing his polity. To be sure, genuine social change needs a mass basis. However, society can change only to the extent that individual members living in it will change. Individuals will change because the desire and energy for change in them is nourished by the very process of change in society.

The governing law of change can therefore be stated simply: the momentum of change increases as individuals initiate personally the process of change. Or inversely: the greater the social momentum of change, the more individuals will join that process. It is two-way street, a movement, but not a program. How many of our students, and how few of our professors, are beginning to sense the need for change—individually?

Yet, changes of any historical significance are painfully slow. That makes it hard for most young radicals who do not understand the very slowness of the process. "What do you want?" FREEDOM! "Whendo yo want it?" NOW! — these are great and driving slogans putting the patience of youth to an extreme test. All too often they ask what they can do this day, this moment. A revolution we must answer, was never the work of one season, no radical change the work of one generation. The dream of a new society in their minds, radicals can only act around small and limited issues, one at a time.

Take a look at the accomplishments of one year at this University. They seem small, yet the effectiveness of open resistance against establishment, habit, and tradition ascertained the right and duty of conscientious individuals to act upon rightful principles,—ascertained also the correctness of a radical political analysis viewing the American university as a basically reactionary institution.

But more importantly, radicals have gained through actual experience an awareness of their strength and the know-how of translating their thoughts into meaningful acts, despite the smallness of their number. That a few windows were broken—regretful as it may be—only tells us that this storm has passed. The issue this year is the Black Studies Department and the organization of our teaching assistants. Next year it may focus on the ROTC or the grading system. Each issue raised will gradually transform the institution.

The attacks upon the ailments of the present grading system will no doubt be an assault on the authoritarian nature of the university. The nature of this fight will largely depend on the responsiveness of the institution. Optimally, it will offer an enabling legislation to free individual faculty and individual departments from the present strictures of the grading system on human learning.

Experimentation with the grading system should be the order of the day. Students must secure the right to choose their teachers and, more importantly, to reject others who cannot teach. They can vote with their feet, with empty lecture halls, with boycotts. Students must also regain a larger measure of self-determination for their course of study and not cripple their broader interests by keeping an eye constantly on the profession they will enter. For it is these narrow-gauge professionals on whom we can put the blame for the sickness of society. To encourage learning as self-fulfillment, a simple certificate of attendance should be offered in all courses not directly related to the student's professional preparation.

Eventually, a fundamental reform of the "multiversity" aimed at decentralizing the educational processes must be undertaken. It is my thesis that any reform of the grading system can only be part of a radical remaking of the academic community as a whole. I happen to believe that the present lines of division running through this community are designed to cut off personal and human ties its members may wish to develop. Stowed away in monstrous towers or in cracker boxes, we work apart and live apart and turn our backs upon each other to take refuge in the privacy of which we own precious little. We are at cross purposes with one another and do not know how to repair the damage done.

The only way I can see out of our dilemma is by the creation of tutorial colleges, whether such colleges be established on out-lying farms available to the University, or whether they be placed at the heart of the institution itself right here in Madison. Here is not the place to design a blue-print for such colleges. It is my intention, however, to offer workshops on such tutorial colleges in the fall in order to develop the idea itself, and to commit individual members of our campus community to the implementation of the idea. Only determined and committed minorities can effect change. And change is badly needed lest we suffocate under the antipile of academic, if blind, industriousness.



FRANK KARNAUSKAS

ROLF PANNY

... students must have the right to choose their teachers and reject others who cannot teach."

individual commodity. Testing devices have been invented to ensure objectivity. And the students submit to these devices. They never knew, and we—the faculty—have forgotten that in times past the testing of knowledge and the judgment of an individual's work were educational functions to aid and benefit the participants in the learning process. From the Blue Exam Book to the IBM test batteries, students have mastered the art of taking examinations with a minimum of effort. "We have taught them that this is our concept of education.

The grading system has, subsequently, become abusive in numerous ways. To mention a few: the grade itself is the goal of many courses while the acquisition of knowledge and understanding seems secondary; grades are often used to coerce physical attendance of students; grades tend to create competitive attitudes which are not conducive to actual learning; and in many cases, grades erect barriers between teachers and students, since poor teachers especially use the grading system to intimidate students; cheating and dishonesty are encouraged because they are considered a natural part of the grading system; there is even a competition for the highest "gpa" among living groups on this campus; and finally there is this nightmare, the Selective Service System, using the grading of students as a leverage on their future.

Given these and many more evil uses to which the testing and grading systems have been put, increasing numbers of faculty and students are looking for change. Some such changes have been proposed, even tried, and proven impracticable in the existing framework of our institution. Eliminating grades from certain parts of the curriculum or in certain courses, or introducing a partial pass-fail system seems more feasible than, say, giving mass A's or no grades of any kind.

The implications of these changes are numerous and beyond the scope of this critique. All these proposals avoid the realistic appraisal of the need for educational structures upon which students can depend for direction and



# Education Now

By STANLEY KATZ  
History

Editors note: Stanley Katz, associate professor of history, teaches a History 291 seminar in American history. He will spend next year as a professor at Harvard.

Undergraduate education as it presently exists at the University is a sham. If the issue were intelligently presented to the public it would appear that a taxpayers' revolt was indeed justified, but the rebellion would be against the university's educational program rather than against its budget.

If students are concerned with working immediate changes within the university, they should take their case to the people, for it is the in-state undergraduate who is the victim of the existing institutional structure and educational conceptions.

As things stand, undergraduate education is largely determined by what remains of faculty time and interest after the graduate program is staffed. Educational decisions are mainly in the hands of the departments, and the primary function of the departments is to train professionals at the graduate level.

This creates three kinds of problems: 1.) professors are hired and promoted in accordance with their ability to do research and to publish the results of their research, 2.) priority in using teaching time is given to seminars and other types of graduate instruction, and 3.) fields of knowledge are divided into courses according to the supposed needs of graduate students. This may or may not lead to the best possible training at the graduate level, but its consequences are unfortunate for younger students.

The ability of professors to be effective undergraduate teachers is left entirely to chance, although Letters and Science has made efforts to force the departments to consider it. The University has large numbers of superb teachers, but they are retained for their scholarly ability rather than for their aptitude as pedagogues. It is surely a matter of common knowledge that the assistant professor who devotes too much of his time to undergraduates and too little to his typewriter or test tube is not long for this university. The Economics department, among others, has provided proof of the fact this year. This is not to argue that good teaching is distinct from good research--it is surely related--but that copious publication is not the only outlet for research and contemplation.

Furthermore, too little faculty time is available for undergraduate teaching. The teaching load in many departments of the University is much heavier than that in comparable institutions, but the benefits accrue to graduate students, although undergraduates constitute nearly three-fifths of the student body. Surely this is unfair to undergraduates.

More important, the courses offered to B.A. and B.S. candidates are determined by the character of the graduate program in each department. We prepare courses so that graduate students can pass preliminary examinations for the doctorate, and then we tell undergraduates that they can choose among a variety of course offerings. The result is that the undergraduates receive, for the most part, the left-overs of a graduate education.

Fundamentally, the problem is that we have no alternative model of what an undergraduate education should be. It is instructive of the purposes of this university that the term "college" should be used to describe the largest categories into which the university divides knowledge: the College of Letters and Science, the College of Engineering, and so forth. Is it surprising that the ideal of "collegiate" educational endeavor escapes us? Thinking now of Letters and Science, what do we propose that students learn? How do we propose that they learn it? The only answer suggested by current practice is that undergraduates should be "mini-professionals". One does not have to be an historian to recognize how far removed this conception is from the historic idea of the university. We have departed from the liberal arts model and have subconsciously substituted an ill-considered, narrowly professional ideal.

The University has of course made some effort to cope with what are thought of as special problems of undergraduate education. The Faculty Advising Service, the Honors Program and Integrated Liberal Studies are attempts to liberalize the chaotic environment.

**"Fundamentally, the problem is that we have no alternative model of what an undergraduate education should be."**

ment of the College of Letters and Science. At the risk of offending friends and colleagues, I think I must say that I find it hard to decide which of these institutions is the least effective.

The Advisory Service is understandably treated with indifference by most students, the Honors Program is not a program in any meaningful sense of the word, and ILS is an out-of-date imitation of general education programs which have long since been altered or abandoned by the institutions which pioneered in their development.

In spite of a number of sincere but uncoordinated efforts to improve the situation, the undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin is still confronted with what amounts to a supermarket education. The student can pick and choose from among the goods, and one of the managers (if he can be tracked down) will help him select a brand. There is even a gourmet section for those who know better than to be satisfied with the standard fare. But the canned goods buyer isn't talking to the meat man, the general manager is in Milwaukee, and the bewildering number of choices confronting the customer are not easily combined to form a balanced diet.

The irony is, of course, that such a system favors the out-of-state student, accustomed to coping with the

cannibalistic conditions of education in a big city. Most often it is the student from Minoqua or Black Earth who subsides into confusion and inactivity, and he is the one about whom I am most concerned.

What can be done to improve the quality of undergraduate education in Madison? I am tempted to say that the dilemma is insoluble, and that committed teachers and students had better find places in smaller private colleges explicitly devoted to a liberal arts education.

Despite the problems of provinciality, homogeneity, and limited resources in such institutions, they are still in good measure educational communities with shared goals and values. What they lose in diversity they gain in common purpose. Many of us who feel that the current atmosphere within this university is hostile to those who wish to make serious changes in the educational structure would doubtless find life more pleasant elsewhere. Harrassment by deans, chairmen, and colleagues is conducive neither to one's teaching nor his research. The advantages of expatriation, for undergraduates are even more obvious.

I hope, however, that an exodus will not take place--at least not until we have made a serious effort to correct what is wrong at the University. The compelling fact is that the future of American higher education lies in the state universities rather than the private colleges or universities. The boy from Minocqua deserves to be educated, and he probably cannot afford to go to Yale or Oberlin, even if he were admitted. If an ever-increasing proportion of college-age men and women are to

mediate and intensive study of undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin, with a view to mending changes in its curriculum and structure. I know this will sound timid, but I know we have never stopped to examine what we are doing or to ask what we might be doing. The liberal university is sick, perhaps dying, but a faint pulse is still to be detected, and we ought to see whether the patient cannot be helped. Reborn, if you like. In order to change the university, however, we must decide what our goals are, for the determination of goals ought properly to precede a determination of methods.

The self-study ought to be conducted by representatives of a wide spectrum of the faculty and student body--

**"The Faculty Advising Service, the Honors Program, and Integrated Liberal Studies are attempts to liberalize the chaotic environment of the College of Letters and Sciences."**

not by deans, departments, or Vilas professors. One of our difficulties has been that the faculty has surrendered too much responsibility, President Harrington's protestations of "faculty power" to the contrary. In a liberal university the slogan should properly be "all power to the students and faculty." Certainly this is not too much to ask where matters of curriculum and educational policy are at stake. (And if it is, then the situation is hopeless, and we had best decamp with haste.)

I have in mind something analogous to the current Study of Education at Stanford, although for all I know there are other and better models.

My hope is that faculty and students would agree on common goals for the college. If we came to such agreement, I believe it would then be much easier to discuss more practical problems: the structure of the college (including the function of the departments); the shape of the curriculum (or curricula); the role of students in institutional planning and government, learning, and teaching. There are surely a number of possible institutional arrangements which would permit us to achieve the goal of a timely liberal arts education, and I think it would be a mistake to impede discussion by dogmatic insistence upon any particular program.

What I do insist upon is that we need a thoroughgoing change if we are to create an undergraduate program. Piecemeal reforms, such as we are generally offered (and such as are generally produced in departmental student-faculty committees) are ineffective because they do not reach the basic structural defects. Departmental reforms, in particular, are insufficient because they are unlikely to decrease the arbitrary divisions of subject and emphasis to which professionals grouped in departments are committed.

In terms of curriculum I would hope that we could achieve a richer and more flexible undergraduate program. Ideally, we would do away with courses altogether, but even on the traditional course-basis the curriculum should be constructed according to what teachers and students feel constitutes a humane education in this age. The program should proceed from what we perceive as the needs of students--not from what our own research specialties happen to be. Interdepartmental and interdisciplinary courses ought to be the rule rather than the exception. The concept of the "major" is surely in need of rejection or revision.

Structurally, I would hope that the departments would give up some of their power over undergraduate education to a college-wide coordinating organization of some type. At the very least, the college should use its resources to negotiate with the departments for faculty time to be used in the program. And why should there not be summer leave time and/or reduced course loads for teachers who are willing to develop new types of undergraduate educational experiences?

The danger is that my stance will seem too liberal to many students and too radical to most of my colleagues. What I am trying to argue is that we have the wherewithal (in spite of our budgetary position) to develop a meaningful undergraduate education at Wisconsin--so long as we are willing to establish new priorities. We must insist that one of the primary functions of a state institution of higher learning is to educate the young people of the country, and that the University must be willing to devote an increased proportion of its existing resources to the task.

If we are to take seriously the University's historic pretensions to do "service" to the state, this is the time to demand that the University confront the problem of adapting liberal education to the needs of today's youth. To do less would be to forfeit our national, as well as our state, responsibilities.



FRANK KARNAUSKAS

STANLEY KATZ  
"... the undergraduate receives, for most part, the leftover of graduate education."

be given further education, it is only the public institutions which can do the job. The question which confronts us is, quite simply, what sort of education should it be?

I have suggested what I think is wrong with our current undergraduate education--chaos, professional orientation, lack of considered goals--but of course it is much more difficult to know what ought to be done. Generally, however, I am concerned with preserving at least a corner of public higher education for what I shall call a timely liberal arts course. Call it relevant liberal arts, if you prefer. There is room in a huge university for innumerable alternative undergraduate courses, ranging alphabetically from agriculture to veterinary science, but let us not forget that the largest single group among the undergraduates is enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences, and it is there that the battle for humane education must be fought.

My principal suggestion will be greeted with hoots and jeers by my radical friends: the faculty of the College of Letters and Science ought to undertake an im-



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# Technique Unimportant In Teaching

By MICHAEL FAIA  
Sociology

Editors note: Michael Faia, assistant professor of sociology, did his graduate work at the University of Southern California and the University of Chicago. He was not granted tenure at this University this year; consequently, his term of appointment expires June, 1970.

Several weeks ago The Daily Cardinal produced a slight twitter among several notable faculty members by calling to their attention a recent booklet--"The Teaching-Learning Paradox" by Dubin and Taveggia--that purported to show that different teaching methods do not make any significant difference in how much students learn.

To those who have read Coleman, Henry, Friedenberg, Astin, however, it comes as no surprise to learn that what takes place in the contemporary American classroom often fails to produce the intended results. The evidence on pedagogical technique, gathered over a period of several decades, is not highly compelling, and after reviewing the original data (as opposed to the conclusions, which are alleged to be unreliable) presented by no less than 74 independent comparative studies of teaching methods, Dubin and Taveggia conclude that "the results of this research are unequivocal--no particular method of teaching is measurably to be preferred over another when evaluated by student examination performances."

This conclusion is not entirely unassailable, as the authors themselves concede. For example, it appears that the vast majority of comparative analyses of teaching techniques have used the final examination as the sole indicator (as opposed, perhaps, to the soul indicators) of student achievement, and one might well question, on that basis, whether the right outcomes have in fact been assessed. Proficiency in taking final examinations requires a very special kind of art; in addition to the immediate cognitive effects of a course, one could raise a number of serious questions about the broader, long-term effects, if any. For instance:

\* Do students have any fun in the course? Do professors?

Would they bother with the course if they didn't "have to"?

\* Are the participants working hard, in a steady, disciplined way? (This is not merely a sop for puritans.)

\* To what extent are students doing outside reading, tangential to the course itself?

\* How many students continue taking coursework, or doing other kinds of work, in this particular field? Do they develop an abiding interest in the subject? (Studies of Vassar alumni and doctoral foreign language examinations provide disappointing results on this criterion.)

\* How much of the content of this specific course will students retain, say, ten years from now? (Cf. Ph.D. language exams.)

\* What are the effects of various experimental conditions on the rate at which students discuss their special problems with faculty, TA's, other students, etc?

**"Technique . . . is just a means of achieving what is possible, and what is possible is what is truly significant."**

On the rate at which students form spontaneous study groups among themselves?

Where "values" and "emotional learning" are deemed admissible, the range of possible outcomes is wider still.

The point is made far more convincingly by analogy. Consider sexual intercourse, as opposed (?) to intellectual intercourse: no matter what techniques are resorted to among an ever growing catalogue, sexual intercourse tends to lead to certain immediate, predictable, invariable results:

- \* friendship
- \* orgasm
- \* exhaustion
- \* sleep
- \* all of the above

Virtually everybody--at least everybody over thirty--is willing to concede that, in this instance, technique is not the most important consideration. Technique, in fact, is just a means of achieving what is possible, and what is possible--the total range of possibilities--is what is truly significant. As for the long-term consequences (or correlates, for we cannot always distinguish) of sex--well, some are amorphous, unpredictable, and always delightful, like love; some are quite substantial, relatively predictable, and occasionally delightful, like babies; in other cases, of course, it is, as Dubin and Taveggia might say, all sound and fury, signifying nothing.

In other words, people who study teaching techniques have been the Masters and Johnsons of pedagogy.

And that is not the only problem, for the existing research literature on classroom technique confronts us with tremendous ambiguities and consequent difficulties of interpretation. When Dubin and Taveggia say that "there is no difference between lecture and discussion in face-to-face teaching," what they really mean is that among the approximately 56 independent comparisons reported in the literature over the past 40 years or so, about half favored the lecture method and half favored the discussion method. Far more intriguing questions, then, could be raised about the specific conditions under which one method is superior to another, on any given criterion. "Background" conditions worthy of being systematically manipulated would seem to include subject matter, characteristics of students (e.g., motivation, aptitudes, interests, past experiences), qualities and characteristics of teachers, the types of learning being sought, evaluation procedures, the general classroom environment, and so forth. At the end of it all, we would undoubtedly conclude, as I now hypothesize, that individual differences among students, teachers, classes, schools,

or other units of analysis are paramount and that the opportunity for experimentation per se is the really big variable (i.e., to paraphrase Percy Bridgeman, learning is the process of doing one's damndest with one's mind, no holds barred). We would then face the horrifying responsibility of having to spell out the policy implications of our findings.

On the matter of policy implications, Dubin and Taveggia recognize that, to the McNamorized mentality of the average legislator, trustee, regent, or administrator, the following sort of logic will appear to have the majestic quality of cold common sense: Increasing attention will

*"... it appears that the vast majority of comparative analyses of teaching techniques have used the final examination as the sole indicator of student achievement . . ."*

be demanded of college and university administrators to the cost-benefit analysis of various teaching methods. The usual prejudices regarding preferred college teaching methods are no longer acceptable as bases for alleging the benefits of particular teaching technologies (for) their respective benefits are equal. (Ergo) in making the costing decisions the obvious strategy would seem to be to pay out as little as possible for instructional costs. The more visible means for lowering per student instructional costs has been to increase the size of individual classes. Recognizing however, that the one characteristic that most common sense notions have in common is the fact that they are not very common, the authors develop an equally convincing rationale for a delightful set of "radical innovations" that we might well ponder, and perhaps even adopt. If, for example, self-study and educational TV are as good, on the whole, as face-to-face contact in promoting learning, "then the need for students to confront their instruc-

tors physically is materialized and radical innovation might involve dispensing with the campus entirely or modifying it in major dimensions." This is the "Wisconsin plan" taken literally; furthermore, nobody can shut down a university that is located, at once, everywhere and nowhere.

More realistically, if different instructional techniques do make a difference under specifiable circumstances, then it would appear that the wisest and most productive pedagogical strategy would be that of maximizing options for all participants. Uniformity of technique cannot be justified when no particular technique is consistently more effective than any other.

A far more cogent argument for uniformity, in fact, could be made if a single technique had consistently proven superior to all others. If the social structure, demography, and classroom ecology of a college or university are such as to preclude, or render extremely difficult, the free selection of pedagogical techniques by students and professors according to their own needs, predilections, biases, backgrounds, abilities, interests, and perhaps even whims, then that college or university is interfering with the process of free "sifting and winnowing," and it is incumbent on students and faculty members to seek ways of circumventing, if not subverting, the letter and/or spirit of official regulations, and to ignore, to whatever degree may be possible, the equally oppressive unofficial norms. Student-initiated courses are an effective means of circumvention, barely tolerated; "student-centered" courses, to which professors (outside agitators? apostates?) are assigned often tend to become subversive and are commensurately likely to be tolerated.

A wider diffusion of power that have tended toward oligarchy concentration is only a single dimension of "decentralization." What I am now arguing for is decentralization in the sense of abandonment of a rancorous stultifying uniformity. At present there is simply not a hell of variation from one classroom to the next.

## Whole Educational System Needs To Be Revamped

By LEONARD GLICK  
Anthropology

Editors note: Len Glick is presently teaching Anthropological Theory and Introduction to Anthropological Research. Social anthropology and religion have been his main interests since he received his graduate degree at the University of Pennsylvania.

My comments are directed to Letters and Science and are based on the (perhaps naive) presupposition that the principal function of this college is liberal education. It should be said at once that more autonomy for L & S may be an indispensable first step in educational reform. This is no minor consideration; but since it would carry the discussion too far afield, I'll come more directly to the point.

As I see it, our basic problems have to do with time and space: we're trying to do too much in too little time, and we're getting jammed in the rush. With this in mind, here are some practical proposals:

\* Two courses each semester; perhaps three for students who really like being pushed, but no more. Some students may want to explore two related topics, some may not; the choice should be theirs. But no one should be forced to take four or five courses each semester.

Of the two courses, at least one should be individually guided reading or research. The corollary to this is that one of the two courses taught by the professor should be such guidance for 15 or 20 students who want to explore his field of special competence.

Since a great deal hinges on this proposal, let me briefly elaborate the rationale. Crowding in classrooms is not simply a function of the number of students on campus; what counts is the number of student-courses (defined as one student taking one course) per semester. Reduction of "course load" (compare: "teaching load", "truckload") would relieve not only the time squeeze but the space squeeze as well. It would reduce the population of our crowded classrooms and would relieve classroom scheduling problems. From the student's point of view, it would help eliminate the rat-race environment and would free at least some people for exploratory learning.

\* No required courses. It is time to abandon the myth

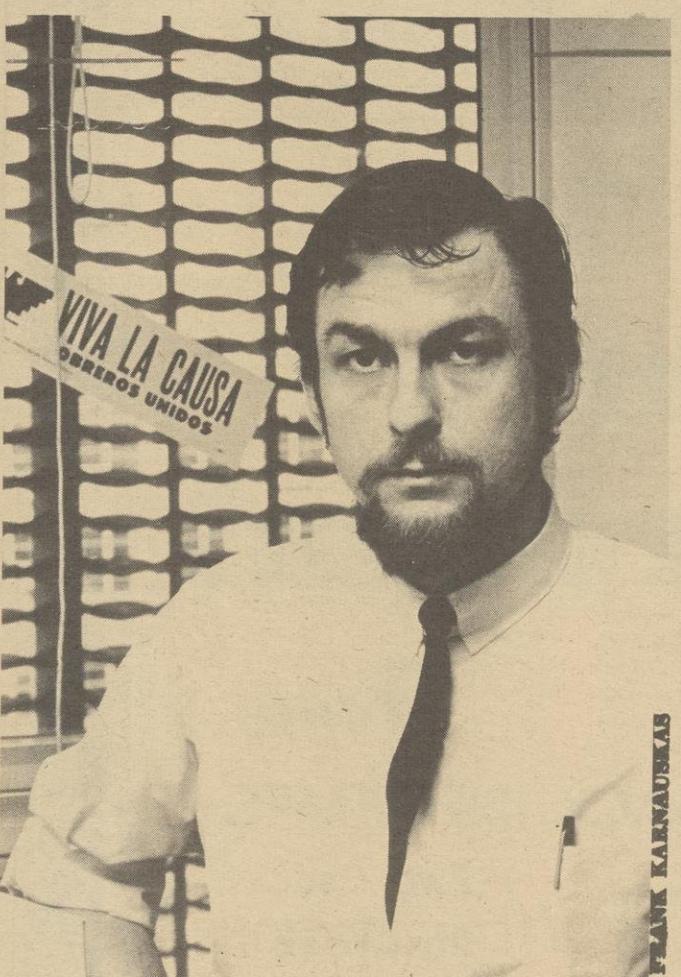
of the well-rounded education and to dispense with calculating how many more credits in this or that are required for graduation. Let students meet their own requirements rather than the university's and they may indeed come out more nearly well-rounded than many of their teachers.

\* Undergraduate major programs only for those who want them, and not so rigidly structured as to force people into channels from which little deviance is tolerable. Two or three basic courses (basic, not survey), guided reading, and an independently researched paper in the senior year, should be enough to certify anyone as a serious candidate for graduate studies. Graduate school is time enough for getting "on track" (a popular term nowadays, thanks to the Ford Foundation).

\* Students who want more tightly controlled programs should have them, but they should be encouraged toward learning to learn in an atmosphere of freedom and flexibility. In any event, all students, bold and timid alike, should have continuous guidance in the form of interchange with qualified, interested professors and graduate students. (This, by the way, is a highly necessary function that teaching assistants might perform, and be properly paid for, as one of their principal responsibilities.) I might add that interchange is not to be confused with the functions of an advisory service; rather, practical advice should come from persons with whom there has already been interchange.

\* Unless students explicitly request otherwise, most classroom examinations, and especially the final examination grind, should be eliminated. Students at all levels, including freshmen just out of high school respond well to opportunities for self-directed educational projects, in the form of loosely bounded "take-home" examinations, research problems lying within their scope and resources, and so on. Mass examinations graded by machines are the ultimate product of overloading, overcrowding, and regimentation.

In summary, reducing course requirements and program restrictions might enable us to escape from the time and space bind that is stifling education at the University. My proposals are not unworkable, they are not utopian, and they are not radical; indeed, I would maintain, they are more in line with the traditional idea of a university than are many of our present policies.



MICHAEL FAIA  
... what takes place in the contemporary American classroom fails to produce the intended results."

# Exam System Challenged

By JOSEPH HOFFMAN  
Art History

Editors note: Joseph Hoffman has been doing his graduate work here since he received a BA at Dickenson College. His research is concerned with 16th century Italian painting. He currently teaches History 102 and will soon leave for Florence, Italy to finish his degree.

Knowledge--names, dates, concepts--is in itself irrelevant. Its irrelevancy lies in the students' wish to understand the material--in short, to have a learning experience. Yet all too often this learning experience is hindered by the pressures of the grading system. Students have been conditioned to study only that which will be covered on the exam. The earsplitting drop of pens accompanying the professor's phrase, "You'll not be held responsible for so and so," is enough to drive any sincere instructor's ego into a ten foot hole. The system as it now stands results only in the professor "giving" grades. Rarely do students "earn" them. If not eliminated entirely, the grading system must be radically overhauled to the point where accumulation and consolidation of knowledge is each student's foremost concern.

I have discovered two such methods. The first is to give each student his choice of exam. He may take the written in-class variety, a take-home, or an oral. Each student hopefully will opt for that medium in which he feels he excels. Those who perennially "panic" at exam time are urged to choose the take-home while those who talk better than they write are welcome to take the oral.

The second method permits each student to take a re-test, or a series of re-tests, until he is satisfied with his grade. These re-tests are not comprehensive but cover only the material that the student did not seem to grasp well during the original exam.

These methods have obvious advantages. First, the professor need not worry whether or not his exam is 100 per cent "fair." He can give an exam that demands in-depth understanding, knowing that eventually the student, if he wishes, can achieve excellence through perseverance. Secondly, the students are under no pressure

to perform well only at one specified time. Thirdly, the students are not competing against one another. Ideally everyone should earn an A.

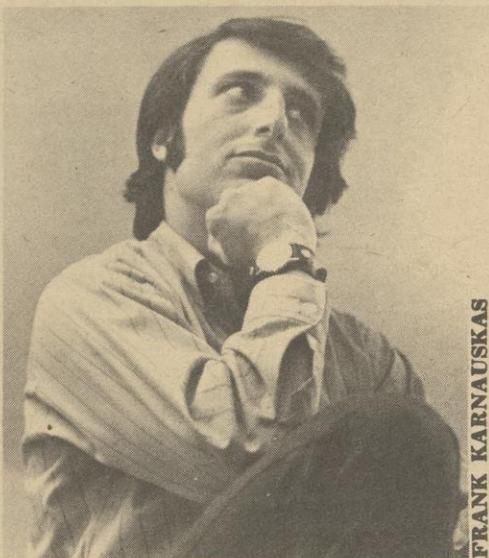
The drawbacks are just as obvious. Often the student chooses the wrong type of exam. With this method, how you say it is as important as what you say. Yet this disadvantage is easily remedied if the student's choice is motivated by "know thyself and thine limitations" rather than by taking the exam he feels will demand the least of him.

The second drawback can likewise be blamed on certain students, especially those who, one day before the take-home falls due, admit that they will hand in an ob-

viously deficient exam so that later they can take the re-test. Things always seem easier if they are postponed. This kind of insult was not what I had in mind when I devised the idea. However with a little conditioning the students would learn to take the exams in the spirit that they are given.

The third and final drawback is the University's policy of demanding final grades only 72 hours after the final exam is given. Re-tests therefore can be given only for the midterm.

I am not naive enough to believe that this is the final solution. Nevertheless, I have found this system manageable even in a class of 200 students and shall continue to use it until someone comes up with something better.



FRANK KARNAUSKAS

JOSEPH HOFFMAN

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## Book Reviews

# Lives of Gish and Tracy

THE MOVIES, MR. GRIFFITH AND ME. By Lillian Gish, with Ann Pinchot. Prentice-Hall, 1969. 372 pages. \$7.95.

By JOSEPH McBRIDE  
Fine Arts Staff

Lillian Gish's long-awaited autobiography is as charming and forthright as her acting. And if at first we feel disappointed because what she is giving us must be something less than the whole truth, by the time we are well into the book we respect, understand and admire the lady's insistence that we will get no more or less than she cares to give us. Her toughness will come as a surprise to many who are only dimly aware of her great ability as an actress. She is too often caricatured as a bouncy, frilly, twittering creature; even the advertisement for this book panders to the idea by displaying a rather cloying picture at odds with most of her other portraits and an inadequate representation of her timeless beauty.

Her movie career began in 1912 and continues to the present. She gave a delightful performance in this year's television production of "Arsenic and Old Lace." Her role in "The Birth of a Nation," the most widely shown of Griffith's films, does not do full justice to her talents. Pitifully few people today get the chance to see her great performances in, for example, Griffith's "Broken Blossoms" and "True Heart Susie" and Victor Sjostrom's "The Scarlet Letter" and "The Wind." In the delicate pastoral "True Heart Susie," made in 1919, she gives perhaps the finest performance by an actress in an American film. Her range is phenomenal; she reaches summits of tragedy, then breaks the mood with a bit of girlish comedy, then pulls the audience back with her again. As Andrew Sarris observes, "Only in film history is half a century treated as a millennium....When Richard Barthelmess first confronts Lillian Gish in 'Broken Blossoms,' the subtle exchange of emotions between the two players would defy the art of the greatest novelist, but the scene is almost invariably measured by the dime-magazine title that 'explains' it."

Her book begins with glimpses of her childhood, spent mostly in touring stock companies with her mother and her sister Dorothy. She faced conditions which were often appalling but came out of them with a good-humored resiliency that provides a welcome contrast to the self-pity Charlie Chaplin displays when discussing his quite similar childhood in "My Autobiography." Chaplin and his brother Sidney eked out a living in company with their mother, and arguably he did have a worse time of it. Still, Miss Gish delights in recalling instances in which actors and stagehands flattered her with attention, gifts and impromptu parties. Perhaps a charming little girl would naturally have it easier than a rough little boy, but the point is that Chaplin has continually used his childhood as an excuse for revenge and bitterness, while Miss Gish asserts intelligently that insecurity taught her self-reliance. She explains that "as a little girl, I wasn't much good at playing and I find that, try as I will, I don't play very convincingly today... I am not unhappy. I simply am not gay."

Without sentimentalizing, she presents striking support for her barely wistful contention that she may have matured too early. She recalls that during one of her walks through a strange town she came across a long line of people standing outside a church; she followed it inside and found a corpse at the end of the line. She ran out screaming—this was her first experience of death. However, she drove the thought from her mind when the curtain went up that night. Several times she notes that from her earliest days on stage she had been trained to "conceal my private feelings in public" and to always concentrate on the job at hand "and shut out everything else from my consciousness."

Her pride in her professionalism and her desire for personal privacy is strongly evident throughout. She does not mention any romantic feelings until page 337, when she states that "from the age of nine I was always falling in and out of love...I have always been much too busy to make a good wife... Besides, my mother had not been able to succeed in marriage, and I doubted that I could succeed where she, who was wise and perfect, had failed." This Victorian pronouncement is offered with no explanation or apology, no appeal for sympathy. If we are inclined to regret that she refused George Jean Nathan's proposal of marriage, she certainly does not encourage us to do so.

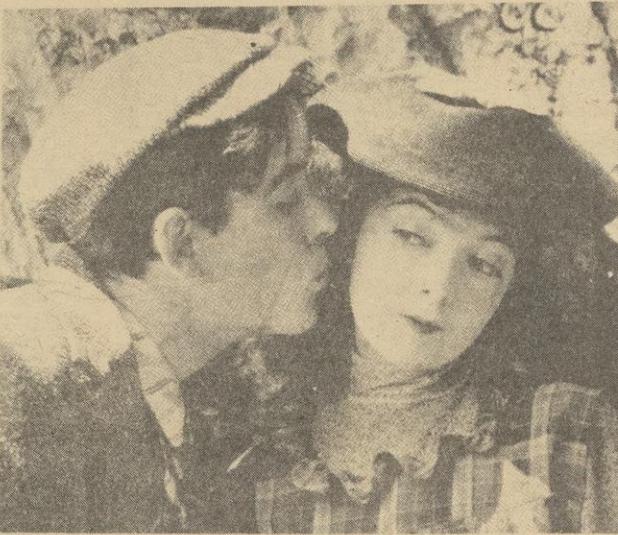
However, if we want to find psychological explanations for her actions, there are several hints offered. When her mother was rendered helpless by a stroke in 1926, Miss Gish had just undergone a highly traumatic lawsuit by a man who had almost persuaded her to marry him in order, it turned out, to bilk her of her money. After she had taken her mother to live in California, the man attempted to harass Mrs. Gish. The attempt failed, and soon later a male friend asked Lillian to a movie. She refused bitterly, and said to a friend, "I wish I never had to see another man." She gently rebuffed Nathan's proposal ten years later, and seems not to have suffered for it. Instead she devoted herself to her work, caring for her mother and helping indulge her sister, who "had never grown up" and finally lapsed into mental instability. It seems that during a period of extreme emotional distress, Miss Gish was able to resolve her maternal instincts by treating her mother and sister effectively as her children. The main reason that she refused to marry Nathan, she told him, was that he seemed to resent her love for her mother and Dorothy.

A striking parallel is given in the life of Emily Dickinson, who also was able to submerge her wounded emotions in caring for her invalid mother. However, Emily Dickinson was a recluse and Miss Gish continues to thrive on contact with the public. Again, this can be seen as a lesson learned in her childhood, when her mother prepared the girls for the many necessary separations by encouraging them—sometimes to Lillian's chagrin—to make their own decisions and conduct themselves responsibly on stage no matter what their physical or emotional state. Miss Gish makes few references to childhood experiences of horror or disgust; whatever she must have run across in the rough milieu she

was often in, she has come through it with a sense of humor which is prim but not prudish, lady-like but not overly genteel, cultured without being effete.

We learn nothing to substantiate the stories of a love affair with D. W. Griffith, though we do learn much about his directorial methods. At times the facts are tenuous or simply inaccurate, but the feeling seems correct at all points. Of D. W. Miss Gish states rather baldly that "he was in love with all his girls—or with the images of his heroines on the screen." We do find him addressing Miss Gish and other actors as "children" and note that she called him "Mr. Griffith" until the last years of his life, when he asked her to call him "David." He called her "Miss Lillian" or "Miss Gish." Whatever the actual truth of their relationship, the professional side comes across with touching candor. At one point, amusingly, Miss Gish berates Griffith for making her hop around so much, "as if I had St. Vitus Dance." "How else can I get the contrast between you and older people, if you don't jump around like a frisky puppy?" she asks and then hops about, "shaking his balding head as if he had a wig of curls. A stranger would have thought him mad."

Altogether a delightful book and one which adds to our rapport with an actress who combines an indomitable will with an almost supernaturally self-effacing femininity. When she is moved to exclaim, while remembering her childhood, "Oh, beautiful world, and how kind its people!" we are united with her in an innocence which is all the more precious for being so simple.



LILLIAN GISH in Griffith's "True Heart Susie."

SPENCER TRACY. By Larry Swindell. World Publishing Company, 1969. 305 pages. \$6.95. A SPECIAL KIND OF MAGIC. By Roy Newquist. Rand McNally, 1967. 156 pages. \$4.95.

By JOSEPH McBRIDE

Cary Grant once remarked that the reason he and everyone else in Hollywood considered Spencer Tracy the perfect film actor was that all of Tracy's actions seemed spontaneous. If the script called for him to take a drink of water or smoke a cigarette, he would do so at exactly the right moment, not obscuring the line, not making the action seem mechanical, just doing it. Grant emphasized that Tracy's naturalness was the product of great control.

Larry Swindell's new biography helps us a little in seeing just what "style" means in Tracy's acting. His off-screen life was not especially spectacular but for some drunken brawling in the thirties, an affair with Loretta Young, tiffs with the press, and his long relationship with Katharine Hepburn. His simple no-nonsense attitude helped him in his desire to act and otherwise be ignored. One of the moving aspects of his life was the fact that very few people did want to bother him and Miss Hepburn. Swindell's book establishes well enough that Mrs. Tracy at least did not try to hinder Tracy after their separation. (He does not include the rumor that the reason Miss Hepburn was given the "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" Oscar instead of Tracy was that Mrs. Tracy was planning to accept for her husband, a touchy situation for all concerned.)

Where the book fails is in not going beyond superficial reporting. It is a fairly good piece of journalism, but lacks the accumulated, forceful, reinforced veracity of Carlos Baker's "Ernest Hemingway." It hedges around central issues—Mrs. Tracy, Miss Hepburn, Tracy's childhood, the nature of Tracy's self-control—with inexplicably vague comments which show little evidence of first-hand research and devotion to the whole complicated truth.

For example, there is a revelatory quote from an actress Tracy worked with in his youth to the effect that the stage was the only place where he was completely natural. This strikes to the heart of the issue—the man's relation to his work—but Swindell fails to explore the suggestion except through cursory references to his irascibility on the set, his dictatorial attitude toward some of the other actors, his great chagrin over his son's deafness, his feeling of intellectual inferiority and his reluctance to discuss acting.

Certainly much more could be made of his oddly comic attitude toward acting as a career: at first he somewhat shamefully fought his father's objections, later felt guilty when he left the stage for movies, and in his last years, according to Miss Helburn, considered acting "a rather silly way for a man to make a living." However, nothing much is given us to tie the whole together; indeed, things are so vague that we must be reluctant to do so. Certain sections betray the author in their completeness, exposing the inadequacy of the rest: the comments by John Ford about his discovery of Tracy on Broadway (they didn't talk about movies the night they met—"Hell, no, we were having too good a time"), which we find in the Author's Note are indeed from a personal interview.

This kind of coverage is carried to a rather bewildering degree of inclusiveness in a curious book called "A Special Kind of Magic," an unctuous affair in which the director and actors of "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," Tracy's last film, are interviewed by someone named Roy Newquist, who spends most of his time encouraging them to pat each other on the back for being great artists and engaging such a "daring" subject. Anyone who has seen the movie knows that it is the usual Stanley Kramer brew, and as Andrew Sarris points out, it's not really fair anymore to keep flogging Kramer for his self-righteousness: the point is that he has never learned how to make a movie. But the movie is worth seeing for Tracy and Hepburn, however handicapped they are by it. (The book contains a beautiful picture of Miss Hepburn brushing Tracy's hair before the shooting of a scene.)

Tracy seems a little more befuddled over the situation than the script calls for him to be. It is as if his great instincts are trying to tell him something that his more conventional brain is not aware of. Tracy always had a weakness for the "liberal" subject, the big theme: he was excited by "Fury," directed by the master Fritz Lang, but also by "Bad Day at Black Rock," directed by the mediocre John Sturges, because both had themes of social injustice. Even in his late years, when he could pick his directors, he worked with Mervyn LeRoy, Edward Dmytryk (twice), Sturges (three times), and the lamented Kramer (four times). We find Tracy stating that Kramer is "as good as any director I've ever worked with." It is as if he had no idea how forceful both he and his movie could be when he worked with a director of genius such as Ford, with whom he made "The Last Hurrah," one of his finest films and a performance that summarizes everything there is to learn about screen acting.

It is a shame that Tracy could not have appeared in two other films he and Ford were going to do together, "The Plough and the Stars" and "Cheyenne Autumn," for their methods are strikingly similar. The effects they achieve on the audience are meticulously precise and economical, perfectly orchestrated and articulated, but done with no pretension, with a seeming spontaneity. Perhaps we should go outside theater and movies for a comparison. Ted Williams was a hitter of utter poise and consummate grace; off the field (and once in a while on it) he was violently bad-tempered. It was well known that his psychological concentration and physical discipline were prodigious, but it seemed from the earliest days that he had never been anything but a great hitter. Ford says that Tracy in his first feature, "Up the River," acted "as if he didn't know a camera was there, or as if there had always been a camera when he acted before." What the audience didn't see was the integrity that had made Tracy attempt to engage the audience in the rankest of potboilers he had done in stock theater, and the instinct that made him act honestly even when the script and director he had picked were phony.

Tracy's final speech in "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," in which he summarizes his feelings for Katharine Hepburn, is one of the great moments in screen history. Like William S. Hart in the introduction to "Tumbleweeds," he bares himself, drops even the pretense behind his lack of pretense. Newquist's book is unremarkable but for the interviews with Miss Hepburn and Tracy, the most complete of the few they have ever granted. Tracy's approach is gruff, simple, unaffected: "They talk about Method, overacting, underacting, style, all that. It's all a lot of crap. What any good actor does is crawl into the part he's playing and play it as completely as he can. He catches the character and is that character completely." A little aside in Swindell's book illustrates the point well. Speaking of another actor whom Tracy had claimed was without mannerisms, George M. Cohan more or less describes the mature Tracy: "He doesn't do anything, he only suggests. He doesn't pick his nose, doesn't even scratch it, for you'd notice that. He just gives it a quick rub you can hardly spot, and all those little touches add up to total characterization, and you are aware of that."

The question-and-answer form of interview, which Newquist follows, is a form of drama. What is between the lines is half of the story—the evasions, the odd excursions from the point, the anecdotes that pop up at unlikely places, the intellectualization or joketelling, the degree of insistence. I think that the ten pages of unencumbered Tracy interview which Newquist gives us is much more revelatory than the whole of Swindell's biography, interesting though many of his facts may be. Consider one little point, amusingly illustrative of the Tracy-Hepburn relationship as we see it on screen. Miss Hepburn, whom everyone from Tracy to the prop man affectionately accuses of over-intellectualizing, explains that Humphrey Bogart and Cary Grant make you conscious of their acting, but that Tracy is simply the man functioning. Later in the book we find Tracy on the same subject: "To talk about the difference between personalities and actors, and the nuances of personalities and actors, bores me stiff. I don't believe in the differences because I don't think they're important. And I agree with Laurence Olivier that it's a crashing bore to talk about acting. Who the hell knows anything about it?"

Even in his Kramer extravaganzas, there was Tracy standing there, frowning, growling, rubbing his nose and staring down the jerks pretending to be Nazis or con-men or noble black doctors. This guy is no fool, you could see their faces saying—the phoniest of them. You could see Sidney Poitier lose a little of his vaunted cockiness and other-worldly heroism when he talked to Tracy. He was a little on edge because he was trying to measure up, and he and we knew that Tracy knew

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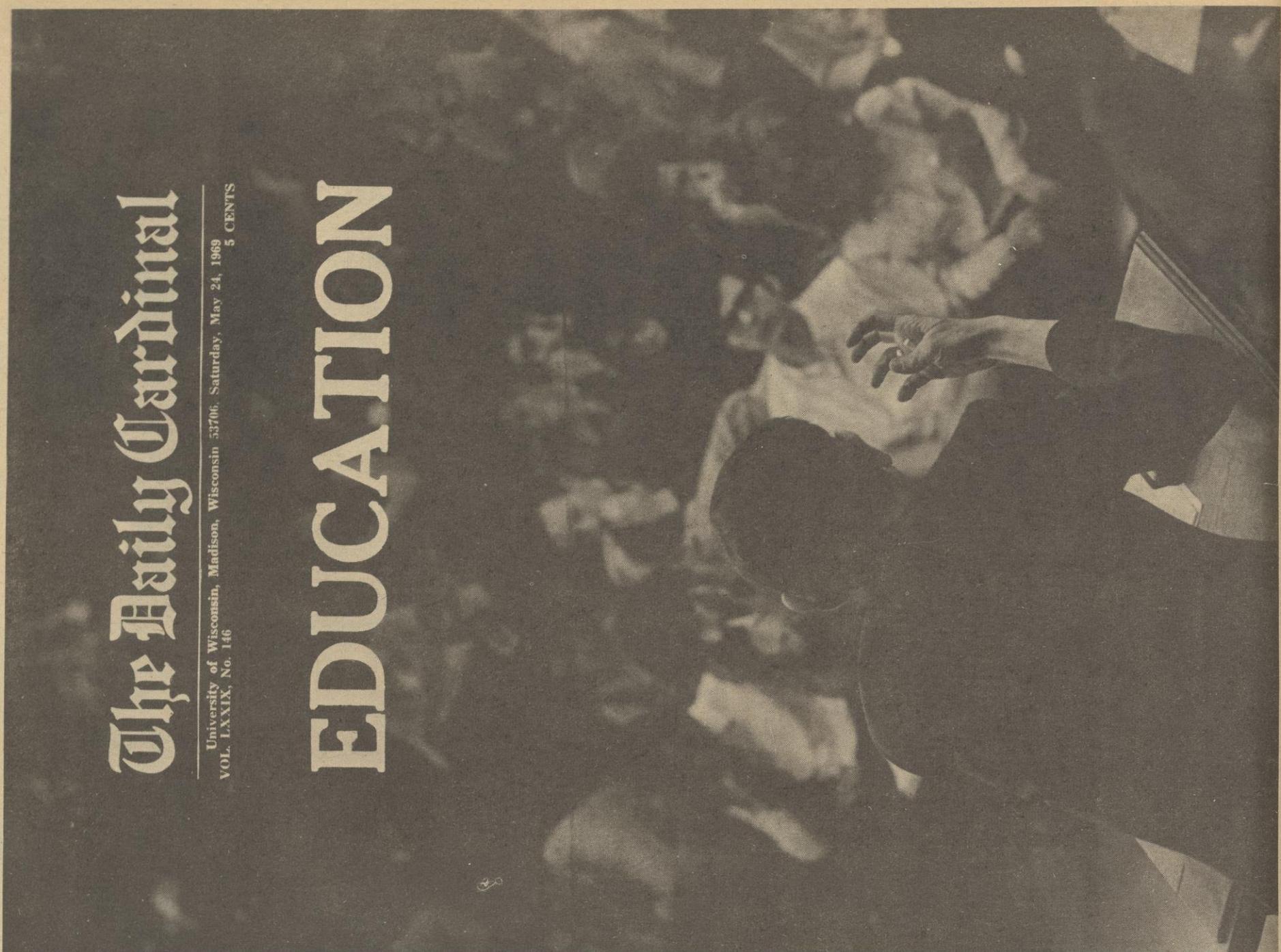
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University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, Saturday, May 24, 1969  
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## EDUCATION



## HARVEY

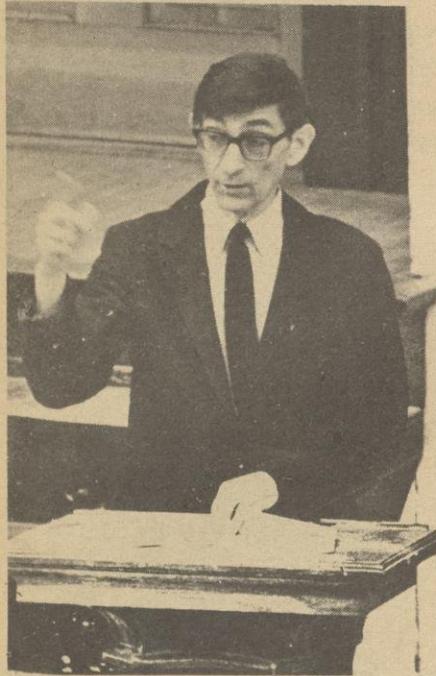
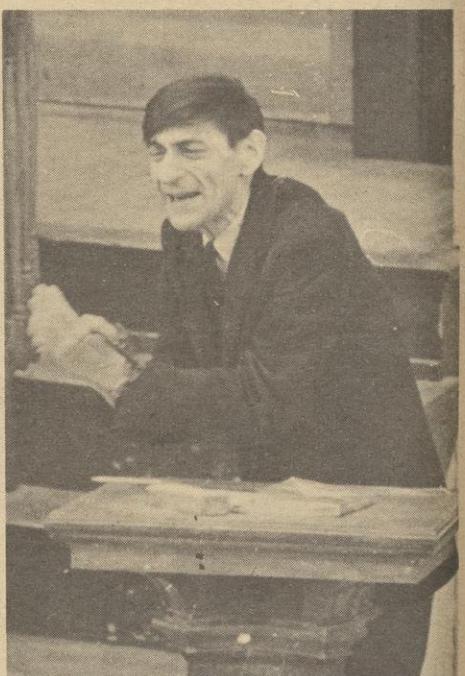


Photo essay by Ellen Lewis.



*"So long as our universities are agencies of the productive system, forming the technological cadres for public and private enterprises, genuine education can stand only in a critical and tense relationship to their programs and purposes. Like a state within a state, education must rest upon its own experimental pedagogy-free of that discipline for docility which is the hallmark of the beaten bureaucrat; it must create its own radical substance, forged in the furnace of the relevant and insistent human experience."*

Harvey Goldberg