

Turnabout

Criticism of Education

American education—primary, secondary and higher—has received much attention since the Russian Sputniks. Most of the attention has been criticism attacking the country's schools because they haven't produced enough qualified scientists. The criticism has since broadened into most other areas of public education, until now, as the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare said Saturday, "finding fault with out schools has become a somewhat popular pastime."

Secretary Marion B. Folsom said the trouble with education is that the American people don't respect it enough. He said Americans realize that all is not well in education, but they don't realize the fault lies partly with themselves. "Academic accomplishments and intellectual values do not seem to be as respected as they should be," he said.

We'll agree that academic accomplishments and intellectual values are not as respected as they should be, but we don't think that by not criticizing public education it will gain more public respect.

Much of the criticism of education has become a criticism of the American disrespect toward such academic values. This criticism, more than anything else, should, at the same time, tend to force educational institutions to better themselves and raise their prestige in the public mind.

We can hope that the criticism continues until educators—from grade school through college—stop the present emphasis on

simply turning out "well-rounded, adjusted" students. The kind of education which is geared to produce such students is the kind which exalts the status quo, which teaches that "it's nice to get along," and which teaches little of an intellectual nature.

We can also hope that the criticism filters down to the schools of education which have become so enamored of methodology courses that they have forgotten that the best teachers are those who know a great deal about, and are enthusiastic about the subjects which they teach. It is interesting to note that most college professors—supposedly the nation's best teachers—have never taken a methodology course. Rather, they have become skilled in the disciplines which they teach.

"What is needed most of all is a new emphasis by the American public on the pursuit of learning," Folsom said. "America's stake in good teaching is freedom itself." We quite agree. Maybe a new emphasis by the American public will result in a new and better emphasis by teachers and the teachers of teachers.

Footnotes

The unusual sobriety of Saturday night's house dances prompted us to ask if this was because fraternity men are becoming more mature or because none of them remembered that Saturday was Washington's birthday, a legal holiday.



Dave Cass

It's Difficult to be Moralistic When Alternatives Revealed

You know, it's harder than hell to be moralistic these days. Just when you think you have the Great Sin bared, you realize that this means support of some alternative. Thinking a little more, then, you discover that there many defensible alternatives, or none of the alternatives are better than the sin. And then, nobody cares. Or if they do, they don't count. It becomes much easier to poke fun and ridicule than to render serious criticism.

This was well illustrated in a letter that appeared in Oregon's greatest morning daily (five days a week) last week. Some fellows were righteously arguing that Oregon isn't a top-flight educational institution, much less a country club, and this is bad. Now seemingly, we have here two alternatives as different as cheating (which is bad) and universal love (which is good). But, rather than choosing, our writers propose that either is as good as the other as long as it's well done.

Using this as a starting point, I would like to suggest that such amorphousness of value, in both the University and these writers, is all that can be expected. To argue about the University on these grounds is spurious, as such status has nothing to do with the role of the university today. And let's not be awed by the myth of the Ivy League. This applies to all universities.

The possibility of a country club passed years ago. This is because it required two things which could no longer be obtained—money and its sophistication. Pseudo-sophistication and indiscriminating buying power will not suffice, though we seem to have our share.

For instance, the girlish sophistication of sororities is more akin to the satisfaction a baby gets from thumb sucking; both are permissible and natural. But, adeptness at bridge and coquettishness are only the forms; our young misses lack the internals of solid sophistication. The same is true of men.

The school's general inability to hold liquor, as well as its

pervasive women's rules, are symptomatic. These latter are either the result of some ludicrous time-morality assumptions or, more realistically, of an ever-present fear of anguished outcries by an assumed Victorian parenthood (who are either very loud or larger than common sense would lead one to believe, due to the curious fact that parents apply one standard to themselves and another to their children). You see, morality is still important, but because of public relations and not any inherent good.

That women's rules are enforced to promote education raises the obvious question as to why they refer only to the lesser half.

The educational institution as a depository of knowledge and learning, too, is a thing of the past. This was inevitable in a society where work is nasty, and where people and leisure are the thing. The subtle change of attitude toward the grind, which was never blatantly anti-intellectual, is telling on this point. Whereas the grind was at one time universally hated and admired, though the pace-setter, now we find he's the object of sympathy. "L. is sure smart, but he doesn't know how to live. Why, I'll bet he ends up in a monastery."

What we have now at most universities is an emphasis on broadguage education. Hence, you don't get your education out of a textbook, that's for sure. And so it must be. For how are we to leave our sanctuary for the cold world of leisure and sociability, but for practice beforehand?

And college life reflects the problems and inadequacies of real life. The absence of any strong inner satisfaction causes the time-orientation problem; life is lived before and after the fact. Of course, this often is necessary, as the "big" events are always the alcoholic ones.

That liquor and social life are almost synonymous points to the same difficulty. Entertainment is boring, and people aren't much better. Though, they could be. And they are, provided you're a little high.

Conclusions and judgements certainly would be easy, but then, that would be mawkishly moralistic. Besides, we're happy, aren't we?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Emerald Editor:

We read the letter written by George Brandt, jr. class president, with much satisfaction.

George was one of our finest students and we are so gratified that he has retained the high ideals which we, his high school teachers, admired so much when he was with us.

George headed my Latin Club in its finest year and was equally dependable in every activity in which he participated. No more sincere or genuine student could be found anywhere.

We enjoy The Emerald as an alumna of dear old U. of O.

Helen Epley Hoffman
Head, Foreign Language
Dept, Klamath Union
High School
Klamath Falls, Oregon

Emerald Editor:

In his feature article of Feb. 19, Jack Wilson describes a tenuous connection between free enterprise, advertising, and democracy, saying that "America is founded on capitalism and democracy. The two go hand-in-glove, and (mass) advertising is a bulwark of both." Asserting that mass advertising is preferable to art and need not be unethical, Mr. Wilson nevertheless defends the necessity for its blatancy, pointing out that "advertising often has to bypass beauty to reach the masses and obtain efficient selling."

The underlying assumption in "bypassing beauty" amounts to an outright insult to the masses, for it says, in effect, that the masses have no taste for art, or for that matter, have no intelligence. I fail to see how a democracy can be "bulwarked" by a practice that denies faith in the intelligence of the masses,

nor do I see any ethics in a blatancy which in effect assumes this.

I do not see, moreover, why advertising should be preferable to art. It seems rather absurd to believe that people can produce and appreciate great art after having their tastes dulled by the barbaric bombardments of Madison Avenue. I wonder if great art can be produced by a society that is told that looking at Marlboro ads, hearing brewery jingles, and marveling over the purity of Ivory soap are necessary to insure freedom.

Finally, I do not see a connection between democracy and capitalism. I do not see a connection between capitalism and free enterprise. I do not believe that Adam Smith invented democracy nor do I believe that free enterprise ever existed outside of the mind of Adam Smith.

Fred H. Stenkamp
Graduate, History Dept.

Emerald Editor:

On the subject of your Thursday's editorial, "We've got it made," I submit that to say there is too much apathy is the same as to say there is too much interest. Consider the following.

Specialization is a necessity. The wealth of modern activities demands that we specialize not only in our work, but in our sports, reading, cultural activities and hobbies.

Time is the scarcest commodity. The more time we spend on each activity of our choice the less time we have for all other activities. Even the process of making a time budget involves time-consuming research into what activities are available, which ones would give best value, and possibly which

would be the most socially desirable. This alone could be a life's work, although we don't have that much time for it.

Interest derives from knowledge. We cannot be interested in a subject unless we know at least something about it. But gaining knowledge takes time. The more we know about philosophy the less time we have for studying space travel, and the more about international affairs the less about music. Apathy is lack of interest. It follows that the more interested we are in certain things the more apathetic we are to everything else.

We shall become more Apathetic. On the assumption that social man continues the trend of recorded history by becoming still further specialized, we shall become more and more interested in less and less. Every day increases the number of subjects in which we can take an interest, and by the same token, creates whole new fields about which we can be apathetic.

Apathy should be a conscious choice. Apathy is a fact. It is neither good nor bad. The important thing is that we should appreciate the risks we take in deciding to be interested on one thing as against another. Apathy is a voluntary delegation of power in the field concerned. If a people becomes apathetic in politics it gets a dictator. Apathy to peace gives you war, to economic control—depression. If poetry were more important to me than the possibility of being exploded or exploited, I should be apathetic to international politics and economics so as to devote myself exclusively to poetry. If I didn't give a damn for poetry but wanted a whole skin I should probably devote my whole attentions to World Government or inciting a revolt in Russia.

C. R. Enever
Graduate Student in BA

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ALLEN JOHNSON, Editor

GARY CAPPS, Business Manager