

Graffiti

Desk-top Chaucers etch impressions in scrawling, scribbling anonymity

By ROBERT SCHEYER
For the Emerald

The lecture drones. The professor's words fuz into one another and his voice wanes. A gray mist engulfs the mind as the head lowers. Suddenly, a slash across the desk top reveals, "It's impossible to stick a Cadillac up your nose, it's just impossible."

Such is the methodology of the desk top graffiti writer. A frustrated individual who, when no one is watching, will imprint upon a desk, "Sex before finals, please."

The University's resident folklorist, Barre Toelken, says desk top graffiti is unusual because of the odd medium through which words are expressed. "It is one of the ways students can fight back against the anonymity of the University," Toelken says.

Graffiti writers do strike out at the very heart of institutions with, "Generally, fraternity members are insecure dolts," or "Greek freaks." Insulted fraternity members strike back by placing Greek call letters one-half an inch down into desk tops.

Toelken believes words are imprinted in desk tops in response to events. "Students either get bored or need to respond to political or campus events."

Graffiti writers seek to destroy our political system by asking people to "castrate Carter."

Everywhere is Richard Nixon immortalized with obscene caricatures and remarks like "Nixon's father pulled out too late too."

Budding young scientist seeking a response to nature's intricacies etch "I am confused," or "Growing old is great when you consider the alternative."

Fear often overcomes scientific

minds and simple responses are "Help, enzymes are eating me alive;" "Eat my polymer," and "Lake Erie died for your sins."

Toelken says the custom of "leaving one's mark" is as old as time itself. "It's important to make your mark in life. Graffiti has a lot to do with human psychology."

Perhaps this explains why desk top graffiti becomes more prevalent and perverse toward the back of classrooms. Person's names, phone numbers, hometowns, favorite rock groups, sororities, fraternities, sexual fantasies and "world shaking truths" multiply exponentially in approaching the back of classrooms. Are these vandals afraid of being caught? "I've never seen anybody do it," Toelken says.

QUIMP (Queers United In Mutual Perversions) claims number one desk top space in today's graffiti world. QUIMP can also come under the auspicious title of "Buster QUIMP Hymen." Desk tops suffer heavy damage under "The BeQUIMPing hour 9:30 M-F;" "QUIMP is a new breakfast cereal," and "QUIMP incognito." Editorial comment continues with "QUIMP isn't better than dope," and "QUIMP is here and has dirty ears."

University authorities have not stood still for such destructive student tendencies. In recent years they introduced the graffiti writers plague, formica desk tops. Particularly hard hit areas of the University are the law school and psychology building. In 180 PLC students remedy the situation by pen-pointing the fabric covered seats and wooded arm-rests. The conglomerate of students attending this classroom need "Boffo Burgers," and "Bed Power," to



Photo by Patrick Sullivan

University student John Crowley says he draws on desks for fun. But University Professor and folklorist Barre Toelken says students write and draw on

desks to "fight back against the anonymity of the University."

help them through class.

Journalism students are not limited in their expression. Everything that is made of wood gets stenciled. Journalists identify themselves as "Ozone rangers." What's on a journalist's mind? "Cocaine all around my brain."

Future businessmen scribble trite phrases like "Reality is an escape," or "Chaste makes waste." These graffiti writers touch on their purpose when they imprint "Sleep now, flunk later," or "Some

people have to be out on a limb before they'll turn over a new leaf."

Graffiti writers often realize desperate situations and call for help through this medium. "Help, Mr. Wizard;" "If boredom were a tree, this place would be a forest;" "Insanity is the ability to escape reality," and "Can this really be the end?" are last resort messages.

These persons' minds must search the deep dark depths of despair when they cut into desk

tops: "Boredom in the superlative" or "Less is more" or "Remember to wonder" and "Kiss my grits."

These villains of wood are insecure in their expression. The world must know, but must not know from whence it came. The twisted references to sex, drugs and political figures show an anxiety reaction to unpleasant events. Graffiti writers are on the bottom rung of literary expression.

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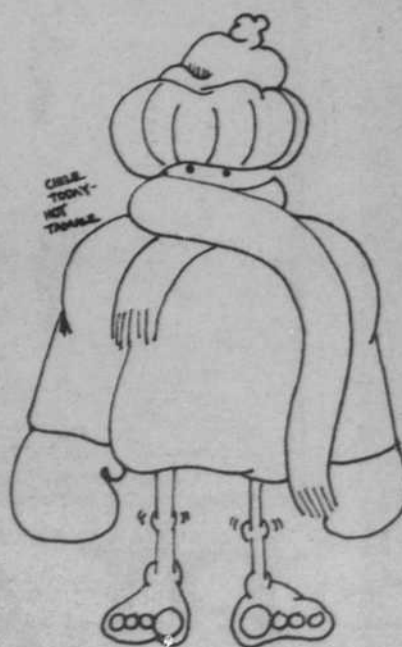
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