Exclusive! Wit & Wisdom of Sample Pitman See P. 6

TIGER PAPER

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Prez Fouls Coach

Last Spring, Robert Lipsyte, the man many people on the *Times* considered the paper's best analytical reporter, got together with Howie Jones, the man many people consider the country's best small-college basketball coach. The reason for their meeting was the national publicity aroused by the confessions of a number of athletes about the use of drugs in competitive sports. The result of their meeting was a Lipsyte column on the sports pages of the *Times*.

Jones comes through as the man we know: honest, intelligent, warm and dedicated. The players too are familiar figures: talented people struggling to find themselves amid the frustrations of a racist society that would exploit their athletic ability and then cast them aside.

But the column, for all its integrity and good sense, created a storm in the administration. Taken together with the press conference called by the Puerto Rican faculty, a lot of public attention focused on the drug problem at MCC.

The administration reacted in angry panic. In public it denied the existence of a problem. Despite evidence to the contrary, it asserted that stories of widespread drug use at the college were lies invented by "hard-core revolutionaries" (read "Student Government") and vindictive Puerto Rican faculty trying to get even for their dismissals.

There were, the administration claimed, only 15 drug addicts at MCC. It developed later, by Dean Pittman's own admission, that the information, originally attributed to "careful investigation by reliable sources," came as a result of bribes to campus drug pushers. The fact that the administration now cooperates in a broad and expensive drug education program is itself an admission that drugs pose a more serious problem than it will concede publicly.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, the administration acted to punish the "guilty" and to create the kind of tight central control that could smother unfavorable publicity before it leaked out.

- The administration refused to accept Puerto Rican Studies' own choice for Coordinator unless its own candidate was accepted as Co-coordinator.
- The administration removed the Coordinator of Black Studies and tried unsuccessfully to dismiss him from the faculty.
- The administration sabotaged the Student Government elections in the Spring and Fall. To this day the administration maintains that the Student Government Association is illegal and functions only so long as the administration sees fit to permit it to do so, a hostage to the administration's ideas of "good behavior."
- The administration harassed and then blackmailed Coach Howie Jones.

After the *Times* interview, Dean Pittman attempted to place derogatory material in Jones' personal file. This Fall, when the Faculty Council elected Howie and Pete Fazio as its two representatives on the BMCC Association, the administration pressured Professor Mayer Rossabi, who had originally nominated them and was their department chairman, to get them to resign. The administration advanced the argument that the two coaches were party to a "conflict of interest" since the Association paid a small part of their salaries and provided the entire athletic budget.

Since neither before nor after has the administration worried about the "conflict of interest" inherent in its *own* participation on the Association, and since it chooses to ignore the "conflict of interest" involved in student participation (both groups receive money from the Association in various ways), it seems clear that the effort to single out the coaches stemmed from a desire to warn others about speaking out without first getting administration clearance.

When this tactic failed, Draper, without prior consultation with the Association, simply withheld Jones' letter of appointment as coach and, therefore, his coaching salary. This, despite the fact that the basketball season was half over and Jones had led the Panthers to a 12-1 record.

At this point the Association met and decided that, according to its right to be the first interpreter of its own Bylaws and according to its own sense of their meaning, the conduct of Jones and Fazio had been correct and that no "conflict of interest" existed. If Draper disagreed, the Association declared, he had the right to take the matter to court. The Association would abide by the decision of the judiciary.

But the administration continued to withhold Jones' letter of appointment. And to top things off, Pittman began coming to basketball games and leaving with piles of notes, presumably evidence of Howie's "lack of concern for the well-being of students and the reputation of the school." When Jones refused to crumble, and when it became clear that the BMCC Association and Third World Coalition would back him up, the administration changed tactics. On January 5, at a meeting of the faculty to examine plans for the new campus, Draper suddenly tried to call a meeting of the [illegible]lty Council. The sole purpose of the meeting was to browbeat [illegible] into recalling Jones and Fazio and electing new representatives to the BMCC Association.

Unfortunately for the administration, members of the Association showed up to contest Draper's interpretation of the situation, and Professor Norman Horowitz arose to announce that the Legislative Conference was filing a grievance over the refusal to pay Jones his salary. The administration was saved from a stunning defeat when it was "discovered" that a quorum of the Faculty Council was not present and no vote could legally be taken.

Since then the administration has partially retreated: Jones' letter of appointment has come through, and with it his back-pay. But rumor has it that the administration still hopes to manage the removal of Jones and Fazio from the Association. They have called a Faculty Council meeting for February 16, at which the matter is expected to come up. The meeting will be at 12 Noon in room A393. The *Tiger Paper* urges all members of the Faculty and student body to attend.

Chamber Of Horrors

–Maybe one out of three students got correct grades for the Fall. The computer fouled all the others up. People were notified of academic dismissal or probation whose grades in fact were fine.

–Hundreds of people completed their mail registration but were never notified by the school that they had in fact been registered. They received no bursar's receipt, no nothing.

–At least half the people *supposedly* registered through the mail found out that in fact they were not registered or only partially registered.

–"Schedules of Classes" were sent out late or not at all.

–"Schedule of Classes" was printed with incorrect rooms, incorrect times, and courses–like Comp I–omitted altogether.

–Classes were scheduled at night for the "D" and the "M" Buildings. But these buildings are not open at night. Students and teachers arrived the first day of classes to find the doors locked and the lights off.

–The English Department was forced to cancel 40 sections of Comp II. No students. Disappeared. But other courses had more than 50 students jammed into each classroom.

–Hundreds of students were told by mail to come and register at 7:30 PM on Friday, January 28. At 7:00 PM they locke; the doors.

–Black woman, mother, works full time: I'd like to register.
White Secretary: It's much too late dear. Registration was last week.
Woman: I was here last week. Every day. They told me since I didn't have the $47 I'd have to get financial aid before they'd let me register. They told me in Financial Aid that they couldn't give me any till I registered. They sent me back and forth all day. Every day. All last week.
Secretary: I'm sorry dear. You get everything straightened out now, and everything will be fine in September. You can register then.

–"You want an English course? Sorry, all the English courses are closed. Why did they tell you to register so late if all the courses were going to be closed? You have to understand that registration is very complicated. We're only human. Mistakes are occasionally made. You're human too? Oh, well, yes, of course. Why don't you register for 'Social Welfare Programs and Policies'? You'll love it!"

TWC Wins

All eighteen candidates of Third World Coalition swept to victory in the student government elections of November 1, 2 and 3.

In taking every seat but one on the fifteen-member Student Government Association, and capturing 70% of the total vote, TWC compiled majorities ranging from three-to-one to five-to-one. Four TWC candidates, running unopposed, won seats on the Student-Faculty Disciplinary Court.

Third World Coalition's election victory brought to an end six months of uncertainty as to whether students would have any voice at all on campus. The closing of *Prometheus* the scheduling of last spring's regular SGA elections after classes ended, the constant postponement of new elections this fall, and their final scheduling to coincide with Black Solidarity Day and a College Discovery payday, made it seem that the administration was determined to rule student affairs by itself.

In the end, the administration proved incapable of preventing the thirty percent vote required to legalize the election. The election turnout at Manhattan was the third highest of any branch of the City University in the past year.

The Children's Center Has Room

The Manhattan Community College Children's Center at 1595 Broadway and 48th Street, 2nd Floor, has room for more children. The center is open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. If you want to bring your children (any toilet-trained child is eligible), come to the center immediately.

NOTICE . . . . . NOTICE

ALL NON-MATRICULATED STUDENTS

Any *non-matriculated* student who registered for English Composition I and paid four credits, four contact hours, or $60 tuition for the course, please note: English Composition I is correctly 3 credits, 3 contact hours; you were incorrectly overcharged at registration and should have received a $15 refund.

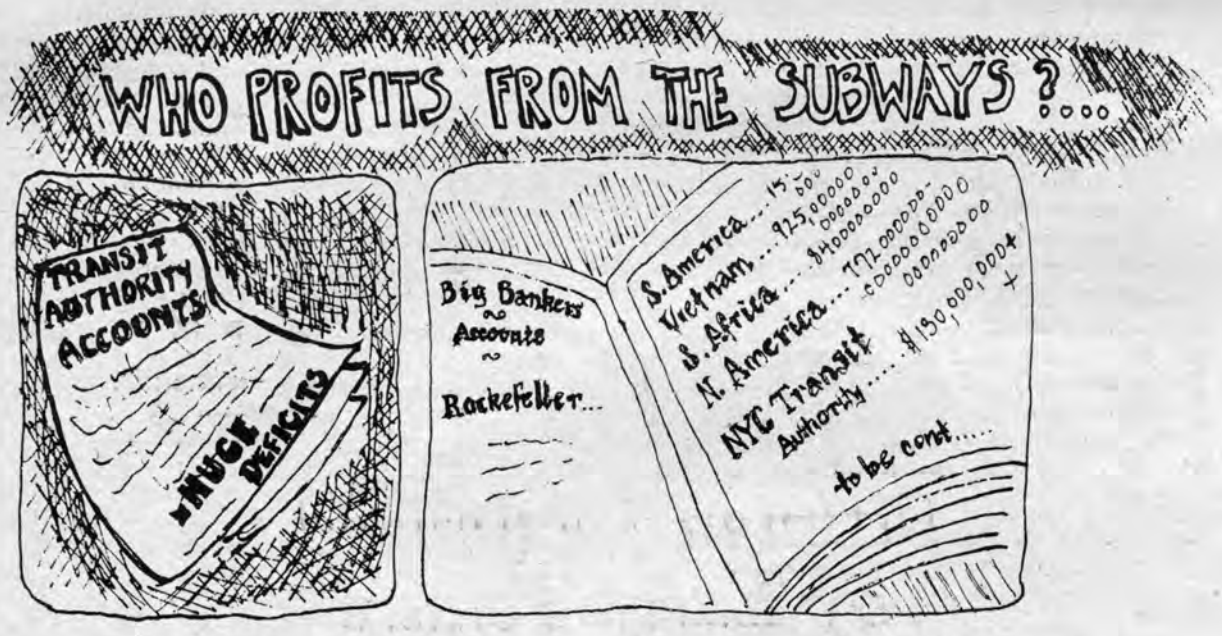
Similarly, any *non-matriculated* student who registered for the following EVENING Secretarial Science courses: Stenography I Gregg; Typewriting I; Stenography I Pittman; Stenography II Gregg; or Stenography II Pittman, and paid five contact hours or $75 tuition for the course, please note: all the above courses are correctly four contact hours in the EVENING; you were incorrectly overcharged at registration and should have received a $15 refund.

ALL STUDENTS

Any student who paid the $47 general fee to register for Fall 1971 and then through no fault of his own either could not register for 12 or more credits or who, after registering for 12 or more credits, had his credit load reduced to less than 12 credits because of class cancellations or schedule or scheduling errors, please note: you are entitled to a $30 refund, the difference in the general fee between those considered full time (12 or more credits) and those considered part time (11 or fewer credits).

THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY

This article originally appeared in *Strike Back*, the voice of the Bell Telephone Workers Action Committee, which is a militant caucus within the Communications Workers of America.



So the fare is up again on the subway. And they are blaming it on the transit workers again. So what's new? the con game goes on, a few bankers get richer while the working people of New York get poorer and blame other working people. Here is how it works.

When the subways were first built, the city spent $355 million to dig the tunnels, 60% of the total cost. The city raised the money to do this by selling tax-free bonds, which were bought by the big banks. These same banks then formed the private subway companies (for example, the IRT was run by Rockefeller banks). The agreement was that the companies were guaranteed a profit before any money would go to the city to repay the debt. But the city never got anything, every year the money taken in was always just enough to cover operating costs, maintenance and profit. (Strange coincidence). That meant that the taxpayers had to pay the interest on

But this deal wasn't good enough. During the Depression the subway companies cut maintenance to maintain their profits. By 1940, the subways were ready to fall apart, so the companies sold them to the city. To raise money to buy and rebuild the subways, the city again sold bonds to the same banks. The banks no longer had the headache of running the subways, but they were still guaranteed a profit. By 1940 the city had spent almost $1.5 billion to buy and rebuild the subways. To do this bonds were sold which committed the taxpayer to pay $1,853,000,000 in interest alone.

And it didn't stop there. In 1951 a $500 million bond issue for a Second Ave. subway was passed by the voters. But after the bonds were sold (to the same banks) the city decided not to build the new line.

In 1953 the city handed management of the buses and subways over to the Transit

[illegible] fare and [illegible] double guaranteed annual profit to the banks: 1) their profit on running the subways, and 2) the interest from the bonds.

[illegible]ority. This was supposed to make transit [illegible]staining on fares and to economize through business-like management. In reality, the subways never have been and aren't now self-sustaining—paying interest on the huge debt makes that impossible. The city pays for all transit bond debts out of our taxes. It also pays for capital costs, that is, new cars, and building new tracks and stations all through taxes or new bonds. Because of this the Transit Authority lets equipment deteriorate. The TA saves money and the city has to replace equipment that much sooner. Meanwhile, New York's subways are probably the worst and most dangerous in the world. It all adds up to an expensive and dangerous ride for us and lots of money for a few bankers.

The TA and the city try to cover up this robbery by blaming deficits, fare hikes, and bad equipment on the transit workers. (Ma Bell does the same thing to us.) Like the rest of us, they are struggling to keep ahead of inflation and also like the rest of us, they are losing. In real wages (what their pay can actually buy) they have lost 8% since December, 1967. It is unlikely that their current contract will cover inflation in the next two years. But in any case, it is not the raise in transit workers wages which causes the problem. The fare has gone up 700%, from 5¢ to 35¢ in the last 25 years, but wages haven't gone up that much.

It's time we stopped paying for the subway—we've bought it several times over already. The subways should be run as a public service.

The recent 29% rate increase that New York Telephone got is a similar situation. None of the new money is to be used for wages, no matter what kind of contract we get. The money is all to be used to maintain the company's rate of profit so the company will have a higher credit rating and will be able to borrow more money. And of course, later there will be another rate increase to help pay that loan back. And of course it will all be blamed on us and our strike.

We, together with all workers, should oppose the phone company's rate increase, as well as the subway fare increase, and all other attempts by big business to keep up their profits at our expense. In the long run, they will have to answer to us!

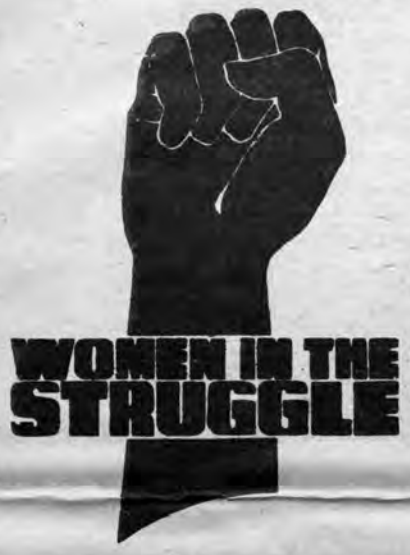
The Women's Union

Sisterhood Is Powerful

No one, not even MCC's administration, denies that the function of a community college is to meet the needs of the City Fathers for hard-working, low-prestige, low-paid industrial and civil *servants.*

So it is not surprising that MCC dutifully meets governmental and industrial needs for data processors and medical emergency technologists, nurses and secretaries, while ignoring the needs of people—its own students, staff and faculty members.

It is for this reason that we struggled for more than a year for a children's center. And it is for this reason that a Women's Union exists at MCC. As women, we must try to recognize and define our own needs which have been so grossly distorted for us by the media and the educational system, and we must come together to struggle with the administration to meet the special needs of MCC women.



First we must sit down together and make friends with one another. We must examine and dispel the piles of myths which have been heaped upon our heads by men (and women) from every institution in America, the myths that split us from our men, from ourselves and from one another: the myth of the blessedness of self-annihilating servitude; the myth of the joys and rewards of passive obedience to husband, boss, priest and president; the myth of the castrating Black matriarch joining the white man in oppression of the Black—a myth exploded by Angela Davis in her examination of the role of the Black woman under slavery (*The Black Scholar*, Vol. 3, No. 4, Dec. '71). These are the myths which still pervade our lives and corrode our effectiveness as human beings and as participants in all liberation struggles.

But the Women's Union exists not simply for self-examination, but for action: Thus far we have defined three areas of need. The first, most far-reaching and important of the Women's Union projects is the establishment of a Health Information Center at MCC where women and men can get on-the-spot, accurate and comprehensive information about birth control, abortion, attempts at genocidal sterilization by gynecologists and obstetricians on Third World Women, venereal disease prevention and cure, drugs, and other health-related problems.

What, it will be asked, has health care to do with education? It is a very narrow view of education that says "learn to type but learn about your body elsewhere." (No one ever says where). Even wealthy women in this country have been misinformed and badly taken by the medical profession, but the health information and health care available for poor and Third World people has been abysmal. We are women and we are here: we demand that our need for health information be met by what calls itself an educational institution.

The MCC Health Information Center will, of course, be for men and women, but it is a primary struggle for the Women's Union because the need for this information is most urgent among women. The burden of misinformation or *no* information about contraception, abortion and sterilization practices very obviously falls on women. But there are subtler concerns: a woman may have VD for years without knowing it, resulting in contamination of others as well as irreparable and extremely serious physical damage to herself. Furthermore, women annually spend millions and millions of dollars for doctors (male) and pharmacists (male) to handle minor, easily detected and easily treated vaginal infections.

Another major concern of the Women's Union is how secretaries are treated. The [illegible] ment of the women's movement in America, especially in colleges around the country, has focussed on getting more jobs, more money and more promotions for professional women. Often, too often, these women have ignored the extreme plight of their working-class sisters. But working-class women must struggle for secretaries' rights to take courses at school during lunch or in other hours, for a place where they can go to relax for a coffee-break or lunch hour away from the chaos of MCC offices, and for a cafeteria where they (as well as all students, staff and faculty) can find healthful food at tolerable prices. And we will in every way possible promote and support their struggles to increase their meager salaries.

The third area of immediate concern is course and curriculum content. Both racist and sexist attitudes still prevail in the courses MCC gives: the Women's Union has, for example, begun to struggle with the Health Ed department about the content and form of its courses. We want a Women's Studies Program. It is time that a working-class feminist perspective replaced the white, male, middle-class value system foisted on us in every class, under the name of "scholarship."

So it is the function of the Women's Union to help us recognize and define our own needs and to struggle with the MCC administration and faculty to see that they are met. Until we, as women, become full-fledged members of our community, there will never be a true struggle for liberation. As Angela Davis puts it:

> "According to a time-honored principle, advanced by Marx, Lenin, Fanon and numerous other theorists, the status of women in any given society is a barometer measuring the overall level of social development. As Fanon has masterfully shown, the strength and efficacy of social struggle—and especially revolutionary movements—bear an immediate relationship to the range and quality of female participation."
>
> (*The Black Scholar*, pp. 14-15)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
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WOMEN'S UNION MEETING
WED., FEB. 23
12-2, A 226

Around The College

Left to Right: Secretaries Doris Freedman, Mollie Schindle, Betty Harris, Linda Grosso, and Ruth Rudnick.

Pittman Victimized by Early Tenure

Misfortune has its rewards, but only if you have friends in high places who have a need for the kind of work you do.

Last semester, the Personnel and Budget Committee of the Student Life Department, by unanimous decision, denied reappointment to Dean Sample N. Pittman. However, upon appeal to the College-wide Personnel and Budget Committee, a body comprised of departmental chairmen, deans and the president, the decision was reversed. Professor Irving Wechsler, chairman of the Business Department, assumed the leading role in Pittman's defense.

In an unusual expression of concern, President Edgar Draper bestowed early tenure upon Dean Pittman so that in the future he would not have to suffer such anguish and uncertainty. Normally, Dean Pittman would not be eligible for tenure until 1975.

As a further gesture of his confidence in Pittman, Draper subsequently promoted him to the position of Acting Dean of Administration.

In a taped interview with a reporter from the *Tiger Paper*, Dean Pittman said, "I am opposed to tenure." Asked if he would turn down tenure should it be granted to him, he replied, "I suppose you would say that I am a victim of the system."

The moral of all this is that nothing succeeds like adversity, particularly if you are a dean.

[As we go to press, we learn that President Draper has vetoed the promotion of Mike Rosenbaum, a member of the *Tiger Paper* collective. Rosenbaum had been approved by both his departmental and the College-wide Personnel and Budget Committee. The reversal of unanimous departmental recommendations in both the cases of Rosenbaum and Pittman dramatizes only too clearly that advancement in the college is not determined so much by ability and the judgement of your peers as it is by political considerations and who you know.]

Nursing Education: Teaching

The young woman just entering nursing school faces her education with great apprehension. Her most pressing questions are: Will I be able to learn how to give the best possible care for the sick? Will I be able to learn how to work most effectively with the doctor, my fellow nurses and the non-professional workers? Will I be able to learn how to be "a good nurse" and help change nursing to be better? After only a few short months in nursing school, however, the student nurse no longer sees these questions as relevant. Instead, the most important questions for her have become: Will I do everything exactly the "right" way, i.e., the way the supervisor wants them done? If I make any changes will I be doing something so hideously wrong that the patient will die? Will I express the right attitude toward my work so that I can stay in school?

The student nurse and the young nursing graduate have been molded through their education to see themselves not as important workers or decision makers in the health world but as minor cogs in the health system wheel. They can only do what they are told and cannot make decisions because that is not their assigned task. Though the elite in nursing like to think that nurses have major responsibility for patient care, this is largely illusion. For the most important message communicated to potential nurses and nursing students is "don't rock the boat." Even in the most limited sense, individual imagination and initiative in providing nursing care is out of line. And any nurse who challenges the basic structures and relationships in the health system is considered a heretic by the women who dominate nursing leadership: the educators, the supervisors and the administrators.

The roots of this conformity, this passivity, this fear of change stretch back as far as the recruiting programs for potential nurses and continue through the whole educational process. This article will try to trace that development.

The recruiting process must steer women into one of three kinds of registered nursing program: the baccalaureate (B.A.) or four-year college degree programs; the Associate Degree (A.D.) or junior college program; the Diploma or hospital school program (a three year course granting a certificate in nursing). Even though nurse educators say there are differences in the various programs (academic emphasis in the baccalaureate programs and technical emphasis in the other programs), in practical terms there is not really that much difference. Nurses from all three programs perform identical duties (although opportunities for specialization and advancement vary with the program) and relate to doctors, patients, and the health system in similar ways.

Very few women who decide to become nurses know the differences among the various programs. They are subject to seemingly haphazard recruiting techniques. The messages about nursing come from many different sources: books, magazines, high school guidance counselors and advertisements. Haphazard though it may seem, however, there are several underlying purposes of the recruiting that serve the interests of the leaders of the existing health care system. The task of the recruiting is to procure enough women to be trained for each of the types of nursing, and to ensure that they will be women who can be appropriately molded in personality as well as properly trained technically.

Perhaps the most blatant examples of recruiting for self-serving interests originate from hospitals and hospital schools. They try to draw women into hospital-based "diploma schools." One advantage of this to the hospitals is that students trained in hospital schools are directly "educated" to serve the hospital's needs, which, however, frequently conflict with the individual's expectations that nursing will be a way of helping people. Hospital nursing schools are also a convenient mechanism for insuring an adequate supply of nurses for hospitals: The student nurses themselves provide nursing care for patients during their education. And they often remain at the hospital at which they were trained after graduation.

At hospital schools, a prospective student is frequently told that she will be taking some courses for which she will receive college credit. This is sometimes true; more schools are linking up with colleges so that their students can go on for their bachelor's degree. But in most cases this is a lie; the courses may be given by college teachers but the students receive *no* college credit for the course, making it impossible to go on to higher educational levels without starting all over again. Hospital schools are closing down rapidly, in part because of the growing unpopularity of such dead end education, and some schools seem to feel forced to use any method they can to attract students.

The recruiting for A.D. programs is very similar to the misleading recruiting used for

Diploma Schools. The prospective students are told that they will have two years of college work which they can then use to transfer to a regular school for nursing. However, this is often not true. For example, the New York University catalog states: "Courses in the baccalaureate degree nursing major are at the upper division level and have substantial prerequisites in the arts and sciences for admission to them. Courses in nursing taken in associate degree and hospital schools are not equivalent in level or complexity of these requirements and may not be accepted for advanced standing credit."

Another mechanism for selecting women for the various types of nursing programs is the high school guidance counselor. One nurse who was interviewed related the fact that her guidance counselor told her that she was too smart to be a nurse. This is a typical statement which is often repeated to white middle-class students. If such a student does persist in choosing nursing, invariably she will be shepherded into a collegiate program. Black or poor white students by contrast are typically guided into diploma schools or A.D. programs, even though there has been a great deal of money available for scholarships to collegiate nursing programs. Often guidance counselors brief visiting nurses about the programs they should stress when talking to a particular group of prospective students. If the counselor determines that the group of students is not "college material," the nurse is told to gear her talk to Associate Degree and practical nursing (P.N.) programs. Typically, when there are many black students in the group, the A.D. and P.N. programs are stressed.

The conception that nursing is a woman's task has led to sexist and sex-biased recruitment for the field. Guidance counselors never suggest a nursing career for men. Any boy who might consider nursing is frequently frightened away by the oft-made association of homosexuality with the male nurse. One way in which men do get into nursing is via the army medical corps. Some black men enter nursing, especially practical nursing, because it is a relatively secure, fairly high paying job for blacks who are excluded from many other skilled jobs. However, few men consider nursing itself as a career; rather it is often seen as a stepping stone to some other job, such as hospital administration. Nursing educators contribute to the perpetuation of the sex-biased image of nursing. As one nurse so coyly stated, "Many students lighted the lamp in adolescence when the feminine consciousness began to awaken."

The Armed Forces, in their nurse recruiting, also take advantage of the fact that nursing is mainly a women's profession. They utilize overtly sexist propaganda to entice women into the service. Their pamphlets allude to the availability of marriageable men and illustrate their point with alluring pictures of nattily uniformed officers embracing attractive blue eyed, blond nurses. These pamphlets also describe the excitement and glamour that await the prospective military nurse. To make their programs even more attractive, the various programs, whether they are sponsored by the Army, Navy or Air Force, offer to pay for two years of schooling in return for two years of service.

Traditionally, the registered nurse has been white and the practical nurse has been black. But now, nursing manpower needs require recruiting more black women for registered nursing to staff inner city hospitals. Since this recruiting campaign has been waged by the white, professionally oriented nursing leadership, there are often racist notions behind their recruiting drives. Major campaigns have been started in urban high schools to get black and brown women to train in A.D. programs. Besides school visits by nurse recruiters who explain the opportunities for black women in nursing, pamphlets and brochures have been prepared to circulate in inner city high schools.

One such pamphlet, printed by Ex-Lax Corporation and prepared with the cooperation of the American Nurses Association, features many pictures of black nurses and nursing students in the hospital setting. On the surface the pamphlet seems to be an honest attempt to recruit black women into nursing. But the thematic undercurrent of the pamphlet is that nursing is a good way to make it in the white world and to fit into the value system of white middle class America. To appeal to the image of the black women as perceived by recruiters, the text of the pamphlet is supposedly hip: "Think about being a nurse. It's really where the supercool action is. You'll wear a smashy dress." The conclusion is clear: "When you become a 'R.N.'—you're somebody." Become a nurse and get out of the rut of being black.

But nursing recruiting serves more functions than just producing enough bodies for the various programs. The chosen women must also have a personality that can be

Women To Know Their Place

molded into the traditional role of a nurse: self-effacing, subservient, and willing to take orders without asking questions. In part, this personality screening is the recruiter's job. But self-selection also plays a role. Only women who identify with the mass image of nursing portrayed by the media are likely to want to become nurses. The prevalent image of the nurse is gleaned from books, movies, television programs that depict her in the most traditional roles. For the pre-teen there are heroines like *Cherry Ames, Student Nurse*, who is depicted as the self-sacrificing, hard-working, dedicated angel. For the older girl, there are the thousands of pocket books about seductive nurses and their sexual exploits. On TV, the doctor stories show the nurse as a beautiful, dedicated, handmaiden to the masterful (and sexy) doctor. The "good" nurse is the silent helper who gets her reward by marrying the doctor.

Often the expectations of nurses-in-training still do not jibe with the needs of the medical profession. Surveys show that many women enter nursing because they want to help people. Students think of nursing in terms of dedicated service, care and concern and improving health care. But what the incoming nursing student thinks is of little importance. What matters is whether she can be fitted into the mold prepared by the decision makers in nursing. For them the important values are order and routine, meticulousness, hard work, emotional control and restraint.

The education of the student nurse, whether it be in a diploma, associate degree, or baccalaureate nursing program, is essentially a "desocialization" process. Throughout her nursing education, the student is exposed to a multiplicity of experiences which evoke fear, guilt, and humiliation and which ultimately undermine her personal value system, alienate her from her common sense, and stifle her desire to create and experiment. These experiences in effect program the student who will later, as a graduate nurse, be expected to fit smoothly into the existing health care system without rocking the boat.

One of the first things the nursing student learns is that there is a "right way" of doing things. There is a "right way" to do trivial things such as making a bed, and a "right way" to do critical things such as treating a patient who is hemorrhaging. "If you make a mistake," the student is told, "the patient might die." When evaluating the student's performance, the nursing instructor fails to consider the relative importance of various tasks. The student is taught to think that deviating from what has been taught, no matter how unimportant the task, will have serious consequences. One graduate nurse, considering her experiences during her freshman year, recalled: "My instructor came into the room to inspect a bed I had made. She was angry and disgusted because the sheet was wrinkled. I felt like I had done something really horrible . . . like I had done something that might really hurt the patient." Another student tells of being severely disciplined for failing to wake a patient in order to change his bed linen. Her explanation that the patient had not slept for several nights and that he needed undisturbed sleep more than clean linen was judged irrelevant.

It is certainly true that mistakes could cause injury or death to a patient; there are many procedures for which there is indeed a "right way." Many other tasks performed by nurses, however, could be improved with imagination, innovation, and flexibility. But the use of personal judgement is discouraged in nursing school because the function of nursing education is to produce a nurse with predictable, unimaginative behavior that can always be molded to fit the needs of the medical profession.

The "right way" is a theme which permeates all of the student's classroom and clinical experiences. Its roots, of course, lie in the many medical tasks for which the "right way" may indeed be a life-or-death matter. But the use of this theme to stifle individuality in less critical tasks originates, in part, in the nursing educator's desire to standardize the kind, quality and level of patient care the nurse will later provide. The "right way" is also rooted in the educator's fear that the young student is lacking in common sense. Often the educator assumes that the student has had little life experience and few personal values, or perhaps the wrong kinds of experience and values. Consequently, the educators see their task as an enormous one. They must first inculcate values and then show the student how to perceive, interpret, and respond to each and every situation, keeping these values in mind.

Most students diligently attempt to follow the instructors' orders and values, however absurd. It may not ensure or even be relevant to patient care, but it certainly is necessary to her own survival as a student. In time, she internalizes the rigidity she has been taught.

Having been taught that the patient is a person and that every person has dignity and

worth, the nursing student proceeds to learn how to do things to him. She is drilled in the arts of making his bed, taking his temperature, bathing and bandaging him. In laboratory settings which are simulated hospital rooms, the student performs these functions over and over again until she "gets them right." Only then does she move on to the "real patient," who now, for the student, begins to take on the appearance of the dummy she practiced on in the nursing laboratory. One student explained: "I had heard so much about the 'patient'—what he likes, what he needs, how he feels—that when I was confronted with him, somehow he didn't seem quite real."

The effect of this kind of education is destructive to both student and patient. A recent study of nursing students' experiences in a nursing program reveals that "students reported having symptoms of anxiety, nervousness, depression and restlessness, very often." Another study reveals that "students do not appear to value independence of action to a great extent." A third study demonstrated that in the course of their education, students, who originally saw themselves as providers of care, came to envision their roles as those of supervisor, administrator, or nursing educator.

From these findings one might infer that for survival, one of the student's primary needs is that of keeping safe, i.e., reducing her own anxiety and "making it" through the educational system. She can accomplish this through strict adherence to the rules, engaging in ritualistic behavior, and by avoiding ambiguous situations which necessitate creative thinking. When the young nurse leaves school she will find that she must behave in exactly the same way to "make it" in the health system.

One way in which the student can combat her feelings of powerlessness is by allying herself with her oppressors: the nursing educator and the physician. One study revealed that bonds between nurses and doctors were stronger than patient-nurse bonds. Feelings of powerlessness are also reduced by exerting power over ancillary staffs—practical nurses, nurses aides, and the like. One student recalls being told by her instructor: "The workers under you are the bottom of the barrel and it's your duty to teach them."

The attitudes and work habits the student learns in school, the allegiance to the doctors and the supervisors, the exploitation of non-professional personnel are all the things necessary to maintain the health system as it now exists. Baccalaureate nurses see themselves at the top of the heap in relation to other nurses. A.D. and Diploma nurses in turn see themselves as separate from and more important than the non-professional staff but still subservient to nursing leaders.

The process of nursing education fails to prepare young men and women to challenge what they will later experience when they enter the health care system as full-time workers. They learn that it is safer to perpetuate the existing health care system than to challenge it. For the student, any intention of being the patient's advocate is lost somewhere during the beginning of his or her education. Having had little opportunity to explore her own values and ideas or the discrepancies between the ideals she had about nursing and what really goes on in the ward, the student loses contact with her personal values. She loses confidence in her own judgment and common sense. Compliance, dependence and lack of initiative and creativity insure her survival.

Despite the elaborate efforts made to ensure their docility, more and more young nurses and nursing students are beginning to challenge the traditionally passive role of nurses. Recently there have been several events that point to a new direction for insurgent nurses. At the American Nurses Association 1970 convention, nurses from all over the country formed the "Society in Crisis Committee" which challenged the direction of the A.N.A. as a professional organization. They demanded that nurses begin to take an active role in re-shaping the health system. They also demanded that nurses take part in finding solutions to the more general social problems in America and the world. Their demands dominated the discussion and business of the entire convention. Several of their resolutions were adopted, and they intend to continue their activity.

Nursing students are also beginning to stir. Many nursing schools participated in the national student strike following the Kent State killings. For the first time, nursing students joined with other students in protest around a social issue. One such protest activity was sponsored by "Nurses for Peace" in New York, which staged a march of some one thousand nurses and nursing students to protest the expansion of the war into Cambodia. In a number of nursing schools, groups are forming to work to change the nursing educational system, as well. Although the actions and critiques have thus far come from only a minority of nursing students and nurses, it is clear that the dissatisfaction is growing.

—Vicki Cooper, Paula Balber and Judy Ackerhalt. Paula Balber and Judy Ackerhalt are nurses who have both experienced the training process and worked in various nursing settings.

This article originally appeared in the *Health Pac Bulletin*.

Think About It!

The Wit and Wisdom of Sample Pittman

Through the medium of a ninety-minute taped interview and a four-page statement written specially for *Tiger Paper* we have collected the wit and wisdom of Sample N. Pittman, associate dean of students and currently acting dean of administration. Since both the interview and the statement are much too long to reprint in their entirety, we have taken the liberty of excerpting assorted gems from both.

ON LAST SPRING'S ARRESTS

Dean Pittman was questioned about the events of last Spring. He claimed that a number of students were trying to "destroy" the school. What follows are his replies to a number of questions on the subject:

TIGER PAPER: Were you ready to deal with this "threat" by any means?
PITTMAN: The question was, was I willing to deal with this threat by any means. Yes, absolutely yes!
TIGER PAPER: Were you willing to arrest students even though the charges might be shaky?
PITTMAN: Yes!

* * * *

TIGER PAPER: The whole business of criminal trespass, at least as it applies to the school, is rather vague. At least the definition of it is rather vague. And this leaves you with rather extensive discretionary powers. I assume that you were willing to use these discretionary powers if necessary to have radical students arrested, to get them off the campus.
PITTMAN: Yes!
TIGER PAPER: So you could say that while the charges certainly were not fabricated, they did not necessarily apply directly to crimes committed by the students.
PITTMAN: Yes, I agree with you on that point. . . .

ON HIS SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

WITH THE COURTS

TIGER PAPER: . . . Is it true that in a number of cases you tried to intervene to get the judge to assign high bail?
PITTMAN: In all cases—*in all cases*—in which I participated in the criminal court, I recommended that the maximum penalty be handed out to students and I was lucky enough to get a conditional discharge on all of the students that were brought before the court, which simply means that any of the students now who are picked up for any reason—for infringing on the rights of other students or disrupting the college in any way, the conditional discharges stand and not only will they be given a sentence . . . I mean they will not be carried to trial, they will be given a sentence right away. As a matter of fact, the judge said, if they are brought before him, in which I must bring all students—Judge Klein I believe it is—he would not have a trial. He would sentence them right to Rikers Island—any of the students who are currently under the conditional discharge and I am pleased with that.

ON THE RIGHT OF FREE ASSEMBLY

TIGER PAPER: As I remember it, a number of the students who were arrested were not disrupting the activities of the school. They were simply standing in the hallway. Now it seems to me that you made an assumption, the assumption being that they were going to cause trouble. On that basis you told them to move on and they didn't. It seems to me that this raises some questions. You can assume that most any student is going to cause trouble and ask him to move on. What restraint is there on your power?
PITTMAN: That's a fair question. Whenever students congregate in masses, as many of them did, there was a danger and a hazard to not only the students themselves, but to others around. Often times mob action can trigger off behavior which under circumstances, if they weren't congregated around, would not endanger the life and limbs of students or endanger the life and limbs of faculty people. I think that a person in a position which I occupy and faculty people have a responsibility to the young people by saying to them, especially where they congregate and can cause a danger, that they must disperse and in that sense, not only are you dispersing them for reasons of security, but to also safeguard their rights as students. What I mean by that is that sometimes students are suggestible. If other students do things, they will follow without thinking. If you can disperse that, you have a better chance to improve the situation. . . .

ON DOUBLE JEOPARDY

Dean Pittman was asked whether or not he was subjecting students to double jeopardy by seeking to deny them work-study funds through a federal technicality whereby the college can withdraw funds from recipients who have arrest records. Since Dean Pittman was responsible for signing the complaints upon which these students were arrested, it was suggested that he was exercising unusual zeal in punishing them, particularly since he was assuming direct responsibility for cutting off their funds.

In response, he said, "The answer to that question—putting the students in double jeopardy—appears to be true. I think that if they were arrested and then we seek out a way in which these people would be denied federal funds, it seems to me does not contradict the pattern of stabilizing the institution—it is part and parcel of it. . . ."

"It would be my sole purpose to remove those persons from this institution who are committed to destroying it and I would use every weapon at my command. . . ."

"I felt very strongly that if the activist students who had voiced an opinion that they wanted to destroy the college, if they were given work-study programs in strategic positions in the college, then they could in fact destroy, because there would not be a system. And I felt that by denying the radical students strategic positions then we would in some way safeguard the position of the college."

Pittman cautioned, however, that he "would only use the withdrawal of funds in instances where there is persistent aggressive behavior on the part of students who willfully, with malice, attempt to engage in an effort to destroy the college."

ON THE THREAT OF TWC

". . . today I don't believe that there is a threat [from radical students] at all. I think that we have sufficiently demonstrated to the students that we do not have horns growing out of our head and that there is a channel for communication and I feel perfectly at ease and really I think that it is commendable to the students, even the activist students, that they have come around now, and they see for themselves that they can communicate, that they can address themselves to some of the indifferences which they feel the administration and faculty have toward them. They serve on committees now, they are involved more and I am looking for a beautiful successful school year from here on in."

* * * *

"Their whole purpose is to destroy the American system, the capitalist system, to overthrow the government and I suppose they're using the community college as a training base."

ON IMAGINARY THREATS

Dean Pittman made it clear that he was not constructing imaginary scenarios of radical students destroying property, disrupting the school and in general wreaking havoc. "If I had this visionary thing in my mind," he stated, "I think that I would ask the president to call the nearest nuthouse and put me in fast. I think that it is improper for any person to impose an imaginary threat upon other people. . . ."

At different points during the interview, however, Pittman said that certain students "want to bomb the college" and that they had been guilty of "burning up" the school, "stomp[ing] faculty," "turn[ing] on the water hoses" and "kicking the president's door down."

When pressed, he backed down on several of these accusations. He admitted that "they have not really attempted to bomb the college in any way. I don't think that they are capable of doing that. Matter of fact, I think

they are nice young people. . . ." He also conceded that no faculty had been physically assaulted and that the president's door had not been knocked down. He still maintains, however, that there are students who are trying to burn up the school and who have turned on fire hoses. We have not been able to find any corroborating witnesses to these incidents.

ON HIS MISSION

PITTMAN: . . . in my position as a dean, if I can safeguard this precious item called education in face of adversity, at the risk of being thrown out of the college myself, at the risk

of not having tenure [he does have tenure], at the risk of being disliked, if I can safeguard education which I conceive to be a precious thing, then I would do anything in my power to see that it stands and I would do it whether it was activist students who were out to destroy it, whether there were activist faculty out to destroy it—I would be equally aggressive to block the ways of either one of these groups if it appeared that they were going to destroy education for hundreds of thousands of young Black and minority group people. . . .

TIGER PAPER: Would you say that you're prompted by a sense of mission?

PITTMAN: Mission, yes. I would say a mission . . .

ON RADICAL STUDENTS

At various points during the interview he characterized the Third World Coalition as "mob action students," "radical outlaws," "the Third World Coalition mob," "little revolutionary activists," "little activist student[s]," "children—irrational and immature," "vicious and violent," "beautiful people," and "nice young people."

ADVICE TO RADICAL STUDENTS

"I say to them, do this for me—tear down the damn school if you like and I'll help you tear it down, but before you embark on this destruction project, put an AA degree in your hip pocket and if your ideology fails and if you fall back, you'll fall back on a cushion and there will be an AA degree. . . ."

"That's why Angela Davis, I believe, is such a model for the activists. I believe that she is a Ph.D. If Angela Davis' ideology fails and she cannot get her revolution moving she can say, I am no longer a communist, I'm a straight person and with that Ph.D. she can go anywhere in the country with it. Amen to that. . . ."

"She . . . can put that Ph.D. in front of her chest and march to any university in the country and she will be a $20,000 or $25,000 wage earner."

Asked, if this was the case, did he think "BMCC would be ready to hire her," he replied, "If Angela Davis would reverse her communist ideology [laughing] and confess that she was in error, I don't see any reason why BMCC should not consider that applicant."

When questioned about how radical students would acquire an AA degree if he persisted in arresting and suspending them, he did not respond directly to the point, but said "I feel that I have the responsibility to challenge their ideology if I feel it is going to endanger their lives. And I think that I have the responsibility to say to these young people, at this point your salvation is the AA degree first. Your ideology is later in life because at 18 or 19 I feel that they do not have the experience to make that decision and they can throw away a magical life if they make that decision now."

ON THE GRIEVANCES OF RADICALS

"If they had legitimate complaints about the educational institution, of course we could work with that, but that isn't their purpose. . . ."

* * * *

"In many instances I agree with a lot of things that they would like to see done. . . ."

* * * *

"I think they have been influenced by some of the frustrations that they have been accustomed to and some of the inept operations with lack of organization which they have been exposed to at the college and because of this they want to redress these grievances, but they want to do it right away. . . ."

* * * *

"I'm for the things these radicals are for. . . ."

ON SELF HATRED

"In the deepest sense, the Manhattan Community College radical student is clearly psychologically in trouble in several components of his personality; one being self-hatred. Being a member of a downtrodden reference group, he tends to despise other Blacks and also hate himself for being a member of the Black group. This self-hatred has resulted in hostility toward associate dean of

students]Pittman] and the president. It can be seen that psychologically these Black radicals are in conflict with themselves."

ON REASONING TOGETHER

Throughout the interview, Dean Pittman maintained that the problem with the Third World Coalition was essentially one in communication. If only the students would sit "in some conference room and hammer this out to a reasonable conclusion," he argued, all the parties could resolve their differences. It was pointed out, however, that maybe they could not sit down and bargain as equals, because he had the power to arrest and suspend them when he thought they were acting unreasonably. He was asked if the students have the same recourse. " . . . Do you think that they have the same working relationship with the 18th precinct that you do? [He claimed that he had an excellent working relationship with not only the 18th precinct, but the fifth precinct, federal authorities and the district attorney's office]. Do you think that they can simply call the 18th precinct and say, 'Hey look, Pittman is misbehaving and we want him arrested.' " In reply, he said, "No, they don't have that recourse, and maybe that's unfortunate. I don't know what the answer is, but by George maybe we can sit down and come up with an answer."

Notes on Madhatter Community College

by Alice

Worser and Worser

At York College students and teachers get free bus transportation between their widely separated buildings. What about us?

Somebody should offer a $1,000 reward for any student who received an accurate grade transcript for last semester.

Alice hears that on Dean Pittman's desk are 100 single dollar bills entombed in lucite, a Christmas present to Sam from Dean Lester Weinberger.

Budget Crisis note: the administration had walls built in the A building auditorium so that students couldn't hold rallies there . . . Now they pay fortunes to New York's fancy hotels like the Americana and the City Squire to hold student conferences and faculty meetings.

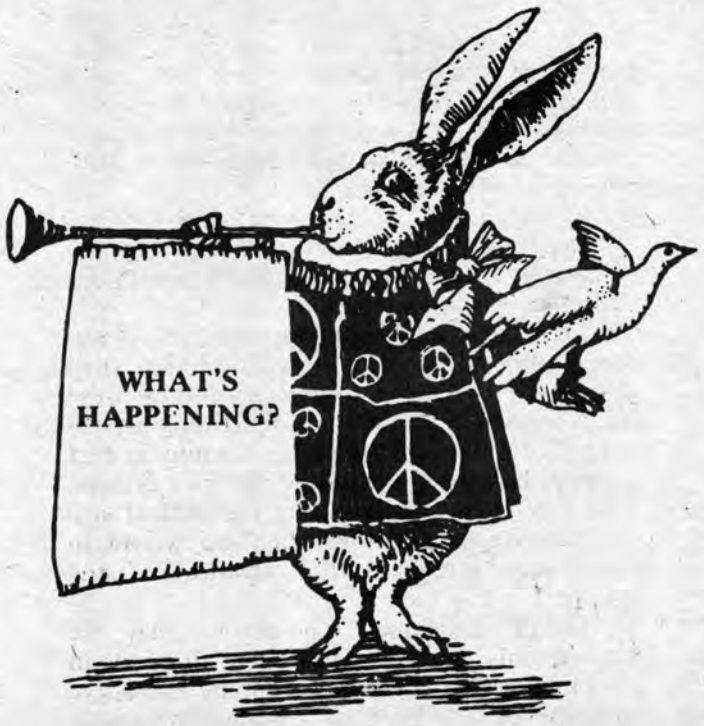
These days faculty members must fill out a special form and have it signed by their chairman in order to have something stapled in the mailroom.

The biggest scandal of last semester might be the drop-out rate.

The Sample Pittman Award for Vigilance goes to (surprise!) Sample Pittman for tippy-toeing around the "B" Building until 4 a.m. so that he could spy on maintenance men. He claims to have found three catnapping, and he had them all suspended for five days without pay.

Freudian slip of the month, overheard at an English Department meeting: "We are all destructors of English."

Let's have faculty and student evaluations of administrators.



VERSUS VERSES

Solomon Grundy
Smiled on Monday,
Registered on Tuesday,
Class cancelled on Wednesday,
Hours changed Thursday
and buildings on Friday,
Was teacherless Saturday,
Wept all day Sunday.
Is there a class for Solomon Grundy?

A letter to Harry Hope, Assistant Registrar, Assistant to Nobody (Since There Is No Registrar), from the students, staff and faculty of M.C.C.

Ah, think, Harry Hope,
As we fumble and grope
Through this spring registration chaotic
That you're getting ahead
And you're making good bread—
And it's we who are driven psychotic.

Tiger Paper

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Tiger Paper *is published whenever possible by an editorial collective of Manhattan Community College faculty.*

Tenured members of the editorial collective: Kathy Chamberlain, Bill Friedheim, Jim Perlstein, Mike Rosenbaum, Naomi Woronov.

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Letter To The Editor

EVALUATIONS

Where are they? Some time ago, the colleges in the City University were directed to establish a method by which students could add input to the process of "constructive criticism" of teachers so that teaching effectiveness could be improved. Students as well as faculty were to have a voice in the preparation of forms to be used toward this end. I wonder if such a form is in preparation at M.C.C. There were rumors of it during the spring semester (1971) but nothing so far this year. A task force for evaluating teacher effectiveness was created, but rumor has it that the group was far from effective itself, and despite efforts to actually find out, rumor is all that can be turned up.

Is this another case where student and faculty prerogatives have been usurped by the Administration? Will some form dictated by the Board of Higher Education be sprung upon us at the last minute with no chance for consideration or comment by the faculty at large, or are we to accept a form devised by some other unit of City University, or is the entire question being ignored completely at M.C.C.?

I have little argument with the idea of "constructive criticism." I would like to pose a question to all members of the M.C.C. community. Is a student evaluation of teachers the only type of "constructive criticism" needed at our institution? Would not other members of the college community profit equally from evaluation of their performance? Could not members of the Administration be evaluated by students and members of the instructional staff? Why not allow student majors and instructional staff within each department to evaluate Department Chairmen and Division heads. The entire college experience is a learning process for teachers and students: why exempt the Administration from this experience? Shouldn't those who make decisions affecting others i the community ultimately be responsible to those whom their actions affect? Wouldn't this type of process help establish the kind of communication desperately needed at M.C.C.?

Carol Brandon
LC Grievance Chairman, M.C.C. Unit

Editorial

DRAPER SPILLS THE BEANS

Unless otherwise noted, every quotation in what follows comes directly from the President's inaugural address.

A lot of people got upset about Draper's inauguration. Once again, the rich played and the poor payed. But that was months ago. The money's been spent. Why bring the subject up now? Because few people heard, and fewer still have read, the President's inaugural address. It tells us more about what we can expect from this administration than anything else we have available.

First of all, we know that Draper is a mouthpiece for the Board of Higher Education. He doesn't even consider himself an educator, but rather an "educational manager," to use his own unhappy phrase, or a bureaucrat, to use a more honest one. He has *never* been an advocate of our needs; he has *always* been an enforcer of the Board's will. So when he speaks you're hearing not only the President of Manhattan Community College but the Board of Higher Education too.

And what are they saying? That the students at M.C.C. are enemies of society who must be pacified before they make big trouble. The value of the college resides in its ability to do the job. Let Draper tell you in his own words:

> It is . . . significant that thousands of young people who would have been on welfare, in prison, or in organized revenge against what they view as a hostile society, are gainfully employed. Herein lies the great value of the urban community college. . . . If we do our job well, there will be fewer welfare recipients, far less unemployment, and the need for prisons will greatly diminish.

Now, criminals and terrorists may not be the people *you* see when you come to school, but these *are* the people Draper sees. Last year, at a meeting in his office he told us, "Quite frankly, I fear for my life when I walk the halls."

Draper thinks he knows the reason why. "They (the students) do not have the cultural sophistication and the technological skills to be integrated into the economic stream of an industrial society." Lacking Draper's eloquence, Archie Bunker might have said it more directly: "M.C.C. is full of crazy, dumb Niggers, Spics and Polaks." Different from the establishment and alienated to boot, they are a threat to the status quo.

But M.C.C. is way out:

> In addition to being employed, out of prison and off the welfare rolls, the college graduate can contribute to the tax revenues of the city. As the community college expands its enrollment toward the lower level of achievement among high school graduates, it is bringing into the inner society the young people and the disadvantaged who have been on the periphery. . . . This will reduce the area of ideological conflict and help institutionalize democratic progress."

Graduates will be more " 'liberal' and tolerant in their attitudes," and "more satisfied with their jobs."

Now what does all this mean? From the point of view of Draper and the Board:

- —Thousands of people are fed up, demoralized and angry. They end up in prison, on welfare, or in "organized revenge." They're not consumers, they're not producers, they're becoming revolutionaries. That's dangerous. So . . .
- —We open up community colleges. We establish a phony "open admissions" policy. We cram their heads full of upper-class, white, anglo-saxon protestant values.
- —We train them for meaningless, unsatisfying jobs that will hook them into a materialist culture and will keep the corporations happy.
- —We pay the bills by gouging *them* with taxes.

The President and the Board have it all down pat. There's nothing wrong with America, there's something wrong with people who are poor. Draper *does* talk in his inaugural about individual "fulfillment" and the value of a "satisfying life," but you *know* he's not talking about the poor controlling their own destinies. What he's saying is that bureaucrats know better what's good for people than the people do themselves. And what's good for people is to swallow the idea of their own inferiority, of the superiority of an elitist, W.A.S.P. culture and an exploitive economy. Accept it. Applaud it. Live in it. Reinforce it.

Intentionally or not, the President's inaugural typifies the racism of the entire educational system. The people who run it see themselves as missionaries bringing "The Word" to the heathen. And the word they bring is that there's a little something for you if you're humble enough.

Once upon a time, a lot of oppressed people did believe that if they "behaved" they would no longer be excluded from the capitalist harvest. But now they know better. There cannot *be* a capitalist harvest *unless* the oppressed are excluded.

And so, if people are in prison, on welfare, on the street, if they're inclined to take what Draper calls "organized revenge," it's because they've heard too many speeches like the President's. And their experience tells them that these pious speeches reek of fraud. People are not seeking "organized revenge." They have the hope and the will to create a new society. Draper and the Board, at best, want to patch the old one. The contradiction is fundamental. The conflict is intensifying.

Rapping With Sonia Sanchez

The poet Sonia Sanchez is an Assistant Professor of English in the Black Studies Program at Manhattan Community College. She has published three books of poetry: *Homecoming* (1969), *We a BaddDDD People* (1970), and *It's a New Day* (1971). A fourth book, a long narrative poem, is coming out in March of this year—*A Blues Book for Blue Black Magical Women*. Another book she's very proud of is *Three Hundred and Sixty Degrees of Blackness Comin at You*, an anthology of the Sonia Sanchez writers' workshop at Countee Cullen Library. Tapes of the poet reading from her own books are available from Broadside Voices. Folkways just released her first record called "Sonia Sanchez: A Sun Lady for all seasons reads her poetry."

In view of this varied experience as a writer, her reputation as a poet, and her dedication as a teacher, it is astonishing that there should have been so much hassle and delay recently over Sonia Sanchez' reappointment on the part of the College-Wide Personneland Budget Committee. The *Tiger Paper* staff made inquiries about the committee's reluctance to rehire Manhattan Community College's most famous poet. Reliable sources told us that the trouble was caused by misunderstandings about her methods of handling the material she was teaching ("too emotional"!) and ignorance about her work as a writer. "Most of us didn't know anything about her poetry. Or even who she was," confessed one member of the august committee. Fortunately two Black members of the P. and B. Committee did know who she was and argued in her favor. Sonia Sanchez was finally reappointed by a vote of 10 to 6.

The following interview was taped between telephone calls and conferences with students in the poet's busy office in December, 1971.

TIGER PAPER: One thing that I just heard a student say that has been on my mind to ask you about is that your books are very unavailable. Some students of mine wanted to read them for a course and we ended up last semester having to mimeograph some of your poems that we used in our class. I just wondered why you think this is?

PROF. SONIA SANCHEZ: I don't know. Many book stores on the college campuses don't order books by Black people unless they come from the big publishing companies. I'm at Broadside Press, which is a Black press, and my books got out to students all over the country through my traveling and selling, because after reading you sell your books; you know, Langston Hughes used to do that. He traveled from state to state, from place to place, and after reading and selling his books he got more money to go on.

But a lot has to do with messages. For instance, my book was banned by the New York Public Library last year, the first book, *Homecoming*—they haven't even dealt with *We A BaddDDD People*—and that was simply because someone down there didn't approve of it.

This little old white-haired woman got up and said she wasn't going to have my book in her library. Period. Because she didn't want the young adult reading it. You see, because the majority of the people would be young adults in this country. And so they banned it. They didn't put an ad in the *New York Times* that they were going to ban one of Broadside's books; they just did it quietly, they didn't buy the book for the whole library system. Someone happened to have been there who told me, and we got Conrad Lynn to write the library a letter saying, "My client's book has been banned by the New York Public Library and we want to know, why would you do this? Answer, please." And they didn't answer for a while and then Conrad called me and he said, "Sonia, we've heard from the New York Public Library." This was some months later. They said, "Of course, we have her book." But they had ordered the book in the meantime because, you see, they didn't want any publicity on it.

TIGER: So when they got the letter they did go out and buy the book for the library? To avoid bad publicity?

SANCHEZ: Right. You see, America does that. But America does nothing if she can keep it quiet. Or if you say, "Well, I can't buck the system," America says, "Well, that's good; keep thinking that, fool." And so she continues on her merry way.

Reading is very important, and books are very important. And if you can control the books that young people read, you've got a whole lot going for you. **That's what this whole school system is about: control.** And that's why Black studies is not a wanted thing. No one can say that Black studies teaches hatred; all it's about is keeping a proper perspective: Black literature, Black history courses, things that relate, since we've got all white history courses in these places and everything else is white.

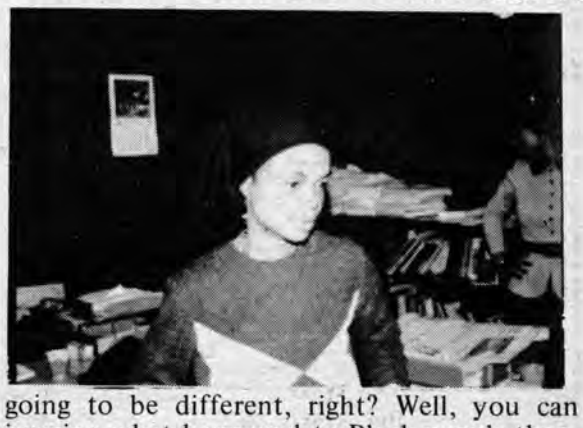
TIGER: Another question I wanted to ask was about your writing in dialect. The students who read the poetry last semester really loved it and responded to it very favorably, very strongly, and it really spurred them on to

Sonia Sanchez reads
FEB. 18, 10 p.m. at the Apollo
Benefit for the families
of Attica prisoners

try writing a lot of poetry of their own. However, I've heard some English teachers say that teaching poetry written in dialect is a very bad idea because we're supposed to be teaching our students standard, correct, grammatical English. And a lot of students did ask about the dialect—what your reasons were for writing that way.

SANCHEZ: Some of us call it writing the way we used to speak before we got educated. What that's about is, we spoke a certain way in our neighborhood and as we went to school, we were told that was incorrect speaking. And so we changed up—actually changed up as to how we were talking. By high school the final change came; we spoke very proper English and we were very happy about that and we always made a point to speak properly and no one ever said anything that was improper. And going on to college was the same thing. You see, what I'm really saying is that every people who have come to this country have had dialects or different languages. **You know, this is a melting pot, so they say, though the only people who have been melted are Black people.** And so we were not able to keep our language, you know, we lost our language. But when they taught us English as such in the schools, they didn't teach it well. They taught it like, here's a word, and we didn't even hear it properly, so we said it incorrectly—and they laughed at us. And then it was passed on. This whole thing went down so we ended up with something called dialect, supposedly. But a lot of that dialect has a whole lot of Africanisms in it; a lot of the words we have, like the simple word "Okay," have been traced back to an African word. That's a pure American word now, as American as—what is it?—apple pie and ice cream? Right. We probably cut things down, shortened things; we left out words because we didn't hear them sometimes; you see, it has a whole lot to do with patterns—of how we speak and what we hear—which are African also. But also, in many ways, we were never "taught properly." We didn't go to any schools. In slavery times it was against the law to teach anybody how to read, or write.

Like, if you play a simple game with three or four people in a circle and you say something in the center, when it comes back it's



going to be different, right? Well, you can imagine what happened to Black people then. But those differences stayed with us. And we said things like "be." You know, we never conjugated that verb "to be" properly. And that's funny because now we use it differently, like "I be." Every educated person knows you don't say "I be." But except for those who might be educated today, we will still say "I be." Not because we're trying to be funny or smart, but because, you see, we recognize there's nothing wrong with it; that **the correct people who speak correct English are not correct.** There's nothing shameful about that history, that was part of us, and so therefore if you say it in the classroom there's nothing incorrect about it.

I write this way because a lot of people still speak certain ways. Some people say I write in slang. But that slang as such is in the Black community. The slang that we have phrased, or the slang language, or the Black language that we have used has filtered into the white language. And it's been a powerful language. So therefore you have a verb like "rapping." That's deep. You have it all on television now. That's very real. So people don't want to deal with the importance of the so-called dialect that we be talking or this so-called language that we be speaking. They'd want to call it inferior language. It's just something Black people have done out of necessity. And a lot of us still do it now to show the kind of heritage that's gone behind us. Not that we don't know how to speak properly or write properly.

You see, the reason the students respond to it is that they have heard it. So therefore it's very real to them. And a lot of them still speak it. Those who don't speak it heard it at some time or they still hear it today. So they respond to it. That's very real. It's funny that people don't say anything about many Jewish writers who write in terms of what they be, in their own patterns. You're talking about your culture when you do that. That's all that's about, you see. English departments, to me, are one of the most racist departments going. Always will be. Because, you see, they think we from the so-called ghetto can't speak properly. And if you don't believe that, just take some of the young children in elementary school, who are told that they talk incorrectly. You know, they're going to teach them how to speak properly—and they do it and it's really weird.

I coined something in San Francisco called "Black English." I used to teach what I call Black English. And one of the things that the English department said was, there's no such thing as Black English. But now, today, in this year 1971, they're teaching elementary school teachers, white teachers now, Black English so they can deal with the Black children. And you understand what America's about just from that.

TIGER: I was wondering how you view yourself as a poet and as a teacher and as a political and religious person. Do you see these as separate categories or is it all one?

SANCHEZ: It's all one package. You can't separate your life. You can't separate your politics from your life style, from being a woman. You can't separate being a woman from your religion, if you have a religion. You can't separate the cultural thing from being a woman or from being a religious person. It's all one package. I teach Black Lit here, quite often I teach creative writing and English comp (it's something to teach that, with all those papers you mark every weekend, right?). Anyhow, I was trying to say that I'm not just a teacher. Or I'm not just a poet, or just a playwright. But the first thing, you see me coming as a woman. And then you find out all those other things about me. And they're all part of me.

TIGER: I noticed that you just kept saying "woman" instead of "Black woman" or "being Black." And I wondered if you were making that emphasis on purpose.

SANCHEZ: No, no, no. I was just talking that way since most people would know how it was coming out. I most of the time say that I'm a Black woman first. And then all those other things, you know, follow.

I think that's very important, because, you see, **Black women have never had strong images to emulate. People don't understand why some of us go through deep kinds of pains and problems and troubles and sometimes sacrifice and a lot of work to give a positive Black woman image because America is constantly refuting that.** The only time you saw someone halfway positive maybe was someone in a Hollywood movie, and then you know what they did with that. Most Black women in movies were whores, or they were the good mammy who took care of all the kids and was constantly saying, "Yes, Miss Lucy, like you know you done have a nervous breakdown and your husband's left you and you're poor now and I got ten kids at home but I'm gonna take care of your six and then I'll go home to my ten at 11 o'clock at night." You know, that was us. Not even talking about the Black men, just talking about us, the Black women there at that time. And so you can imagine what it is to try to give out a strong positive image today, especially when again the movies are giving out such negative images of Black women. And the TV screen does it constantly.

One has to give out a positive image because we have to raise positive people. We're talking about trying to effect change in a very unrighteous world at this time. And you can't do it with negative images. **Flicks like *Sweetback* just wiped out, in a sense, anything positive that might have been said in the 60's, and it was a very successful flick.** And in that flick it says Black men have no power except in terms of being in bed with somebody. That's the only power, you know. And Black women were whores because anybody who ran in contact with Sweetback tried to take him right to bed.

TIGER: It surprised me that that movie concentrated on an individual man, when so much of the Black movement had recently been about groups of people fighting together—I mean, away from the Panthers' superman image.

SANCHEZ: Not many people mentioned that, you see. It was Sweetback coming back —what *he* was going to do. Sweetback can't do anything. It was the complete line that was told about Sweetback's escaping to Mexico. If you know anything about Mexico, it's a Fascist country and the moment he put his foot in there he'd be sent back, you know, one hour later, if you really know where I'm coming from. I mean, the lies that were told in that film! And yet people say *Sweetback* was a revolutionary film because it told people to wipe out some cops. Right? That's not a revolutionary act; I mean, people been wiping out cops for years, you know, and it didn't effect any change. They just brought bigger and better ones up. Right? And what's the difference? A cop is a cop, right? You know, long hair, no long hair. Although I have met some Black policemen recently because I have that poem in *Homecoming* about policemen and some people made a point to meet me. These policemen had a job but they refused to do underhanded stuff like spy, because you can refuse to do that.

But we've been trained to believe at this point in our life that *Mod Squad* is correct. You know, they're the stoolies, all of them. **They might be modern but all three of them in *Mod Squad*—that gal and that dude and that brother—they were all stool-pigeons if you're really ready for it.** It started back in Bill Cosby's *I Spy*, you know, which was a fun kind of thing, but they were still CIA people. But see, America didn't start that by chance. America started a whole series to program people to do things like that. So this was the early 60's when we had *I Spy*, right? But

watch that. It was the first; it was a Black man doing that. But see, we don't take the total picture: that they were CIA people! The possibility of a CIA agent being a Black man was started. Planted. Voom, voom, voom! That's deep, you see. And then along came *Mod Squad* in the middle 60's, right? And that was great because it was a brother playing again, but they were stool-pigeons, which told brothers, "You can be glorified cops," or, rather, glorified stool-pigeons.

And then you get all kinds of super-flicks like *Shaft*, unreal pictures of Shaft, and, if you're ready for it, the Black superstar detective, fantasy. The unreal picture. **But we tried to deal with *reality* all through the 60's, right? Then the *non*-reality came out with pictures like *Shaft*. I mean, the 70's usher in non-reality *on purpose*, you see.**

TIGER: Do you think there have been any very good Black movies recently?

SANCHEZ: I'm not really a moviegoer, you know. Because I teach, sometimes I have to make myself go. But I come in knowing that it will not be a good flick for Black people. The only good flick I saw during the 60's was *The Battle of Algiers*, which we used to show a lot in colleges. They talk about making good films but successful films are made to make bread.

TIGER: Did you happen to see the movie called *Burn* with Marlon Brando?

SANCHEZ: No. Some people have told me about that flick and I never saw it. They said they thought it was a very good film; I'll try to catch it one day.

TIGER: It's probably no accident you haven't seen it. United Artists tried to suppress it in subtle ways after it had come out and they found out what they had made and what they'd financed.

I wanted to ask you why, of all schools, you chose to come to Manhattan Community College, and also how you find teaching here, what you think about the students, what response you're getting, and so forth.

SANCHEZ: I came to M.C.C. because I was invited by some of the professors. I had been here for a couple of poetry readings and students responded to that. People said, you might be interested in coming here, firstly as a writer-in-residence. But I was turned down on that, you know.

TIGER: That's what I was going to say. It's a much more human job for a poet.

SANCHEZ: Right. But you see, they won't do that. They still say, "produce, fool," but you have to work four classes. I was going to be free to start things like a theater group here, because I'm a playwright too, or set up cultural things that should be here, or just be available to talk—like sitting here is different than being up in a class. Because if you try to be a good teacher, you give your all for a class and you go home and you're whipped. You're exhausted. And I teach a writers' workshop uptown in Countee Cullen Library. You see, the reality of being a Black woman and then a teacher and then a poet afterwards is that you have to deal with the fact that we have a tradiiton of Black writing in this country since the time of Phillis Wheatley, and we must keep it going. **But they make us write against odds. I don't get grants to sit down and just write for a year. I write a book in between semesters. Or you write them on planes, or you just write them the best way you can, or late at night. And so you get tired and you get sick quite often. But the juices inside have to flow.**

So I believe as a teacher I still have to teach. Creative writing is the thing I love to teach. I wasn't allowed to teach it here. They turned down a writing course, which is weird. I don't know why. They say now they're going to let me teach it next semester (spring '72), but they limit me now to just Black Literature. Their not allowing me to teach writing tells me a whole lot about the school. Because, you see, they're the people who think they can write, you know. I took writing at Hunter College and I'll never forget it because every time I wrote about myself I had all kinds of peculiar red marks on my paper. The person who was teaching the course used to say I was too sensitive. That was real. It turned me against writing for a long time. I just stopped writing at Hunter. I just stopped. Because when I wrote something that was stupid to me or some kind of crap that really wasn't about me, then they accepted it and said, "Oh yes, that's good!" —because they didn't have to deal with me, you see.

To teach a Black writing course, it's important for Black students to have someone there who understands where they're coming from. People don't ever deal with this. That's very real. And a person who writes should teach writing. I mean, that's what they know, if they're performing, if they're writing, right? Turning out books. But you tell them they can't have a course, it's unacceptable. I never was told why my writing workshop course was unacceptable.

Many people, from training in high school and junior high school, many Black people, don't really believe they can write. Period. And they're reluctant to put it down on paper, so it's a real hard session, each session, you know. I mean, like wow, freshman comp is unbelievable! They've been pulled down in that high school training; they can't write. So they're quite unable to put things down; you have to almost in a sense release them to do this. And it's really hard. It's the whole program, essentially, the educational system, which is what that is about.

TIGER: I want to ask you a big, heavy question. What directions do you see America going in, what kinds of changes would you like to see? I guess I'm asking, what is your dream for the next decade or so in America?

SANCHEZ: Well, I don't think America is going to do anything here in this country. I think that what's going to happen in this country is that Black people here will just have to deal with what has to be dealt with: that is, the time coming up will be a time for

many Black people to begin the long process of disciplining themselves and their lives and what they be about, their direction, you know. To move away from the jive that is being thrown out there for us. You know, the jive on TV, the jive in the movies, the jive in schools and in the colleges. They have to begin to deal with what they really feel about. Now, I feel that many Black people will have to get serious about their lives. They have to make serious decisions about what direction they're going to go in, about their studying. **You can't any longer come to a college and just play cards in the lounge. You can't any longer come to any college and have a room for getting high in, smoke pot in; you just can't do this anymore. America's not playing.** If you understand all the TV programs, you know, if you understand the school system, if you understand the English department and the history department, if you understand all this, America is not kidding around. She's very serious about keeping the status quo. And she intends to support the people who are no threat to her. That's what she's doing at this time; she's supporting the Black people who are no threat to her, she's out-and-out supporting them. **You understand the depression we're living in; America has poured a lot of money into Vietnam, to suppress Vietnam, and a lot of money into America among Black people to keep them treading water. I mean, she's done that on purpose, she's invested money. But like we still stay where we are, we don't move. That's very real.**

And so what we have to do at this time is understand that, you know, put that in some kind of perspective. Recognize that the school system perpetuates white racism. I didn't say it; the Kerner Report said it: America's racist and therefore all her institutions be racist. You know, like in the 60's we said, loud and clear, this is a racist country. America said, "No I'm not, no I'm not, no I'm not!" That's what the whole dialogue was between Black America and white America, right? And then finally, if you remember correctly, at the end of the 60's, when the Kerner Report came out, America says, "Yes I am racist!"—right? —"and therefore all my institutions be racist" —right? But the underlying question America asked is what are you going to do about it, nigguhs? And we haven't answered that question. We who try to educate people are about answering the question "what are we going to do about it?" **But we're not out there, you know, preaching hatred to the people. We are about educating Black people to who they be.** Knowledge of self. Giving positive direction.

See, it's very important for America that we Black people don't know our history. But most people in this country know their history and understand it fully. Right? And they learn it in the schools. We don't learn anything about ourselves, so therefore we're just like Topsy, we just grow. So when we study our history to know the kinds of people we've been, the kinds of people we can be, it becomes automatic, you see. A people who don't know their history can never become just anything. They have to be the something of the past, if you know what I'm talking about.

TIGER: In some ways I might—I'm teaching a women's studies course here and some of the things that are being published now are biographies of women, like some of the women who have been famous throughout

history, and the sense that I've gotten from that has been really very helpful in my own identity. I think I have some degree of sympathy because of that.

SANCHEZ: **Well, you see, America is funny in that she rules the planet, right? And then she calls people racist who do what she's done to get that rule.** You know, she had to perpetuate herself to end up being the ruler. I mean, you have to talk about yourself, believe in yourself and love yourself to get to that kind of power. And that's all we're saying at this time. You know, we're merely saying in the Black studies course or in any organization of Black people—the most important organization today being the Nation of Islam —all we're saying very simply is not that we're hating you, we're just saying, "Okay, look, you proved your point. You *are* the ruler at this time, and we just want to rule ourselves." That's not hatred. That's what's so funny about that. You know, whites rely on Black people for what they do and this is the relationship that goes down between Black people and white people in this country. They don't want you but they can't do without you. If we said, "Leave me alone," they'd say like "Wow, what's wrong with you? Don't you love us anymore?" It has nothing to do with that.

I give out newspapers to my students because you see most of the papers we have in the Black communities are very negative papers. And even though they try to update them, they're still negative. I give out *Sobu* —it's now called *African World*—and the Black Panther paper if it's available, and *Muhammad Speaks*. Those three papers give different ideologies but they're trying to speak to young Black people as to what they're about and the core of all the papers is about themselves, about Black people. The students get the other papers outside, they read all those other papers. So wherever I teach I always get a subscription to those three for about two or three months to in a sense get them accustomed. I give out *African World*, the *Black Panther*, and *Muhammad Speaks*, and say "Look here, here it is. Read it. Take it home and read it. Form some opinions, different opinions. Like what is the *Daily News* going to give you, right? What is even the *New York Times* going to give you?—although they only print the news that's fit to be printed, so they say." **But now read about yourselves and begin to love yourselves, because you have BEEN and will BE again!**

CAMPUS MISSIONARIES

THE LAYING ON OF CULTURE

John McDermott

I

About a year ago I accepted an invitation to speak "against the war," at, let's call it, the University of Dexter. It is located in the city of that name, one of the major manufacturing towns of the Midwestern industrial belt. Since Dexter is somewhat off the main circuit for anti-war speech-making, I read up on the university and the town, and what I found made me look forward to my visit.

The university tended to draw most of its students from the town itself. They came heavily from working-class families and were often the first in their families to attend college. Frequently English was not the only language spoken at home. More significant was the fact that the city itself had at one time considerable fame for working-class militancy. One of the great early strikes of the depression was fought in Dexter, and the issue was not settled in the workers' favor until they had fought the National Guard to a draw in pitched street battles. Before that the city had been a center of Socialist Party activity, and still earlier, a stronghold of IWW sentiment. Thus I looked forward to my visit as an opportunity to talk to the kind of students seldom reached by Movement speakers.

It wasn't. Attendance at the well-publicized meeting was spotty; those who came tended to be about evenly divided between faculty and graduate students, almost all of whom were from outside the state. And there were no students at the party to which I was taken later in the evening, though they had helped plan the meeting, for student segregation is the campus rule at Dexter, no less within the Movement than outside it. Perhaps it was that or perhaps my disappointment at the absence of "normal" students at the evening's meeting: anyhow, I deliberately forced the party to become a meeting. It had taken no great powers of observation to note that the anti-war movement at Dexter, and, by extension, its Left, was largely a preserve of the faculty and some fellow-traveling graduate students, and I was interested to discover why that was so. In particular, I wanted to explore the role these teachers had adopted to their "normal" students and to examine with them the contradiction between that professional role and their wider political aspirations. I have taught in several universities, I've suffered the same contradiction and was unable to overcome it.

The most prominent feature of the discussion which followed, and of all the subsequent ones I've started on the same subject in similar situations, was that the faculty, to a man, still aspired to teach in elite schools. Dexter, after all, is what is popularly known as a "cow" college. A state school, it gets those students who, for lack of skill or money or interest, don't go to the main state university and couldn't "make" the liberal arts colleges in the area, even if they wanted to. Its students are very much vocationally oriented and still tied to their families. Most of them live at home.

> "I asked a man in prison once how he happened to be there, and he said he had stolen a pair of shoes. I told him if he had stolen a railroad he would be a United States Senator."
>
> —Mother Jones, Labor Organizer circa 1900

Dexter is frequently under nuisance attack by some right-wing faction or other. It pays rather badly and is not in an attractive metropolitan area. Its library is inferior, it provides little research money, and the teaching loads are heavy. The administration is fusty and conservative, as is much of the faculty.

My faculty friends, obviously talented men and women, had not reconciled themselves to this exile. They deprecated the region, the town, the university and, especially, the students, even the graduate students. Loyalty and affection they reserved for the graduate schools from which they had come, and they reflected this feeling in their teaching and counseling by relating only to that one student in a hundred who might go on to one of those prestigious graduate schools. Those were the students who shared with them the culture of books and civility—and scorn for Dexter; who might by their success at a "good" graduate school justify the faculty's exile in Dexter.

Of course they didn't put it that way, and neither did I when I taught in similar places. They saw themselves as embattled missionaries to the culturally Philistine. They worked hard and creatively with the students who merited hope. As for the others, these men and women, in spite of their expressed scorn, nourished a vision, hesitantly expressed, of a society in which no student would be oppressed by cultural bondage to ignorance, vocationalism, anti-intellectualism and provin-

. . . CULTURE

cialism. In fact, that attitude and hope gave rise to and was expressed in their left-wing politics.

The guests at the party were woefully ignorant of the background of their "normal" students. They were vaguely aware that most of them came from working-class families, though what that might mean aside from greater resistance to formal education they had no idea. They had no knowledge either of Dexter's militant labor traditions. This was sad, for it penalized the faculty in a number of ways. To cite an apparently trivial instance, most of the faculty present were concerned over attacks made on the university by the right wingers in town. Respect for free speech and expression had an important place in their scale of values, and they tried to convey it to their classes, using all the familiar academic examples, from HUAC witch hunting and Joe McCarthy, to Stuart Mill, Milton and Sophocles.

Yet that they might relate the principle of free expression to the problems of Wobbly agitators in the 1910s or of CIO organizers in the 1930s (or of white-collar workers in the 1970s)—in short, relate it to the actual cultural history (or future) of their own students—never occurred to them. Instead, they were put off when the students responded to the alien and seemingly irrelevant world of HUAC and Milton and academic freedom with either passive unconcern or active hostility.

I believe this example successfully characterizes how the great majority of faculty behave in schools like Dexter, including, especially, the left wing of the faculty. Socialized like all their fellows into a rigid professional role by their university, graduate school and early professional experiences, they have neither the information nor the inclination to break out of that role and relate openly and positively to the majority of their students who cannot accept the culture of the university world as their own.

University professors as a group seem exceptionally uncritical of the limited value—and values—of a university education and the acculturation it represents. In their view, a student who is really open to his classroom and other cultural experiences at the university will, as a rule, turn out to be more sophisticated, more interested in good literature, more sensitive morally than one who is less open or who has not had the benefit of college. The student will also be free of the more provincial ties of home, home town, region and class. In short, most academics take it as an article of faith that a student benefits by exchanging his own culture for that of the university. It is by far the most common campus prejudice.

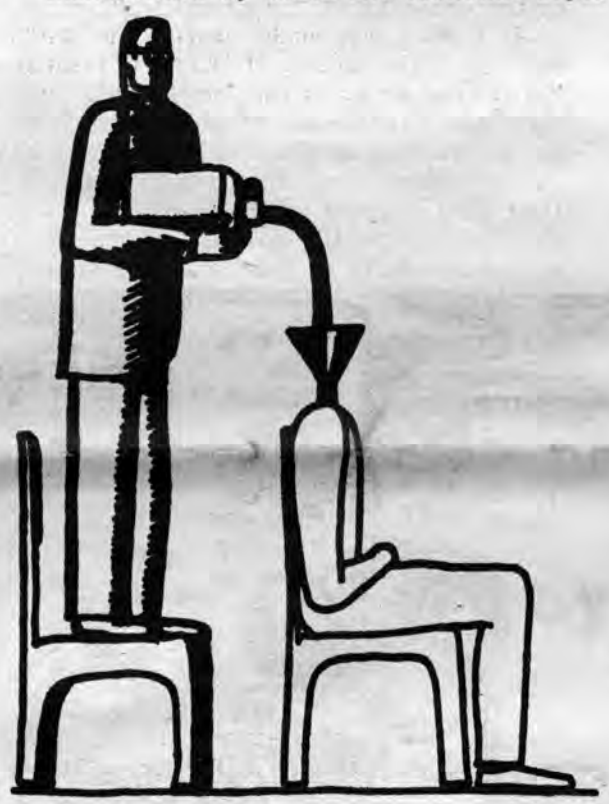
And it would be harmless enough if it were limited in its sanction to those students who allow their university education to "take," who do well at university work and will go on to graduate school and then to a place within the university world or, perhaps, into some other related profession. University attitudes and values are appropriate to that world. But what about the others, the cultural rednecks, the "normal" boy and girl at a place like Dexter? Do they really profit from acquiring the attitudes, values, life style, and so forth of the peculiar culture whose institutional base is the university? One way of attacking this question is to ask to what extent those values, attitudes and life style may be usefully transferred to other institutional settings—to little towns and big cities, to industrial or agricultural life, to life in a corporation or in government.

That was about as far as we went at that party a year ago. We agreed that we were part of a university system which was actively engaged at its Dexters in destroying whatever indigenous culture might remain among the American working class. We recognized that, consciously or not, we had assumed an invidious clerical relationship to our student laity. Like medieval priests or missionaries to the heathen, we dispensed a culture to all our students, despite the fact that a scant few could participate in it. For the others, the language of that culture, like Latin to the colloquial, was grasped largely in rote phrases, its symbols and doctrines recognized but only dimly understood. To the extent that this majority of students acquired the external trappings of the university, they seemed both culturally pacified and made culturally passive. Pacified because they were acculturated away from their own historical values and traditions; passive because they could at best be spectators of a culture whose home remained an alien institution. . . .

II

The most obvious political characterization of university culture is that it lives by, and presents to its students, the values and attitudes appropriate to its own upper-middle-class life style—a style that is part of the older, now declining, professional middle classes. As indicated above, a university education did once promise membership in the professional classes. This meant that university graduates could ordinarily expect a life of considerable social and economic independence, some measure of personal influence in local business and political communities, significant autonomy and initiative in carrying out their daily work, and thus the possibility of enjoying the pride that follows from personal accomplishment and craftsmanship.

Could it be clearer that no such life awaits the graduates of the nation's Dexters? Today a degree from a second-or third-line institution is a passport to a life style of high consumption and of reasonable job security. But it will probably be an industrial life style, characterized by social and economic dependence on a large institution, by little or no political or social influence, and by participation in rationalized work processes wherein one must try merely "to get by and not step on anybody's toes." Consider, therefore, how the professionally oriented values of the university's culture might function in such an industrial environment. High on the scale of university values, now and in the past, stands the virtue of tolerance—not only personal tolerance in the face of new or differing ideas, attitudes and values but the belief that tolerance itself is of greater personal and social value than the substance of almost any set of creeds. Such a value was useful in the professional worlds of the past, for it would normally help diminish conflict in a middle class made up of highly autonomous individuals. And in elite circles even today it diminishes the weight assigned to ideological differences and helps to harmonize the social and political relations of our pluralistic, semi-autonomous industrial, educational, government and other managers. It carries the advantage, too, that it opens managers to the merits of technological and organizational novelty in a political economy strongly oriented to such innovations.



But how does this belief function for the young men and women of Dexter, who will normally occupy the lower and middle levels of great institutional bureaucracies, and who may have reason to resist those very same innovations: speed-up, compulsory overtime, more and more alienating work processes, forced transfer to another city or region, institutional propaganda, Muzak and the other normal tyrannies of personnel managers? Is it a value that helps them to initiate or continue those collective struggles which are necessary to defend or enhance their interests; or does it rob them of the moral and ideological assurance which must support the beliefs of people who challenge the social legitimacy and retributive power of authority?

A second political aspect of university culture is its almost uniform hostility to the institutions of local and community life. Many churches, fraternities, veterans' associations, councils and boards upon which local and community life in America is built are havens of the narrowest sorts of provincialism, racism, intellectual baiting, babbittry and jingoism. For these reasons, and for reasons having to do with the demands of the national economy for college-trained persons, the tendency of university experience is to propel the young away from local and community life and toward national life and its institutions. A result of the university's liberalism, cosmopolitanism and technologism, this tendency is supported by the national culture, by the students themselves, and by their parents.

But it should be combated by those, like my friends at Dexter, who are interested in building mass resistance to the prevailing currents of American life. A young person from Dexter, unless extraordinarily gifted or fortunate, has almost no means of gaining influence in national politics. And to the extent that university culture directs great masses of lower- and lower-middle-class young people into the institutions of national rather than local and community life, it assists in disenfranchising them from political influence. Of course, the conventional representatives of university culture argue that the decline of local politics and local institutions is inevitable, given the institutional needs of 20th-century industry and government, the gradual nationalization of American life, and the march of technology—i.e., liberalism, cosmopolitanism and technologism. But we should begin to question whether this inevitability amounts to more than advantageous prejudice. For the kind of society which these university spokesmen describe as inevitable appears to be coincidentally one in which the Ph.D. takes its place with property and birth as a means to political influence and social status.

Similarly, the ignorance, racism and the like which characterize so much of local life should not put us off. Given the preoccupation of the Left, over the past epoch, with national rather than local concerns and institutions, it is not surprising that local America has become a playpen of unchallenged right-wing attitudes, persons and organizations. Of course, one could not expect, even under the best conditions, that the life style of local America will rival the faculty club in gentility, civility, humanist learning and other caricatures of university life. But that is not its test, any more than the theological elegance of the Dissenting Churches was the test of their usefulness to a struggling movement of ordinary Englishmen. Those who are today concerned about a different kind of economic barbarism and a similar kind of world-wide crusade should draw the appropriate lessons.

A third political aspect of university culture is its latent hostility to two of the more valuable and humane realities in current popular culture. One cannot move around this country without being impressed by its egalitarianism, that is the depth and vitality of the ordinary American's feeling that he is as good as the next fellow. And the other reality so important in our popular culture is the well-nigh universal belief among our people that they possess an extraordinary range and variety of substantive rights. Like the belief in "the freeborn Englishmen," the belief in substantive rights is often vague and contradictory. Nevertheless, the history of popular political movements is the history of ordinary people acting in behalf of what they believe to be their substantive rights.

It would be too much to say that the university's culture is uniformly hostile to these popular realities, for the situation is ambiguous. However, it is not difficult to identify important hostile tendencies. Thus in contrast to the normal American acceptance of the principle of equality, the professoriat strongly values formalized differences of age, academic rank, scholarly reputation and, it may even be, accomplishment. The effect of

. . . CULTURE

this sort of deference is somewhat difficult to gauge and it may be tendentious on my part to believe that it influences student attitudes on legitimacy, authority and equality. Perhaps the issue is instead that university men and women, by failing to provide a living example of egalitarian relationships, merely fail to make common cause with the American people in their resistance to the hierarchic tendencies implicit in the social and economic system.

A more secure case can be made against the disposition in the university world to identify right not with substantive but with procedural matters. Peter Gay expressed this position in the Summer 1968 issue of *Partisan Review:* ". . . democracy is essentially procedural and what matters is not so much (important though it may be) what a given policy is as how it is arrived at. . . ." Persons as fortunately placed as Professor Gay, whose substantive rights are well established in easily available procedures, have an understandable tendency to overlook the fact that, for example, tenure, sabbaticals, choice of hours, and freedom of expression on the job—are virtually unknown outside the academic world. Obviously there are other, important and thorny issues here as well. Without going into them at any length, note that the test of Professor Gay's remark is its fidelity to historical fact. From that point of view, it tends to obscure the fact that the great libertarian and democratic turning point in postwar American political history, a turning point with great promise still, came not from the narrow defense of procedural rights by academic and other liberals against Joe McCarthy in the 1950s but from the assertion of substantive rights in the 1960s by mass movements of students, blacks, professors and ordinary Americans.

The students at Dexter, and a great part of their countrymen, rightly view the liberal and academic preference for procedural right as a defense of privileges which they themselves are denied. Many view the principle of academic freedom, for example, as they view some of the laws of property. It is a tricky device which enables professors to do things, like criticize the dean or the country, for which ordinary people can be fired; just as the law of property is a tricky device which enables installment houses and loan companies to do things for which ordinary people can be sent to jail. The goal is not to do away with academic freedom, or any other hard-won libertarian procedure. A better approach would be to shape a university culture which would help to extend Professor Gay's tenure, sabbaticals, and freedom of expression on the job to everyone, on campus and off.

The existence of hostile tendencies toward egalitarianism and the primacy of substantive right is very much related to still a fourth political aspect of university culture. Even though the university is the home and source of much of the libertarian ideology within our culture, it is often the source of authoritarian ideology as well. I have two cases in mind. The first has to do with the extensive commitment to technologism found among many faculty members. A considerable body of university opinion believes with Zbigniew Brzezinski that the promises of modern technology demand for their social realization a society characterized by "equal opportunity for all but . . . special opportunity for the singularly talented few." The evasiveness of the formula should not be allowed to obscure the authoritarian social and political processes which are envisioned and justified by it—processes today best exemplified in the area of national security, where the equal voting opportunities of all are nullified by the special bureaucratic opportunities open to a singularly talented few. The second of the university's authoritarian ideologies I call clericism. To borrow from Brzezinski's formula, it is the claim to "equal cultural rights for all, but special cultural authority for a singularly scholarly few." I refer to the still widespread (but declining) academic belief that, whatever else culture may include, it also includes the Western Heritage, the Western Tradition, the Literary Tradition, the traditions of reason and civility, etc., and that these are most fully embodied in the profession of academe and the written treasures of which academe is priestly custodian and inspired interpreter.

This principle underlies faculty sovereignty over curricular matters, justifies any and every required course, oppresses first-year graduate students, and received its most prosaic formulation in the observation by Columbia's vice dean of the graduate facilities that ". . . whether students vote 'yes' or 'no' on an issue is like telling me they like strawberries." Clericism and technologism have their good points; no one wishes seriously to derogate either the social or the moral value of good scholarship or competent technology. But as principles under which to organize cultural or political life they are distinctly hostile to the interests of great numbers of non-elite students, the social classes from which they are drawn, and especially the social classes they will constitute when they leave the university. For clericism and technologism, like the doctrines of apostolic succession and of property which they tend to replace, transpose major areas of social concern from the purview of all to the treasure house of the few. Culture, no less than politics, is a critical factor in the nature of social organization; in the distribution of power, reward and status; in the infliction of powerlessness, oppression and despair. This is becoming increasingly understood with regard to politics, where ten years of war, urban decay and increasing social chaos seem to have been the fruit of the same decade's obeisance to technology's claims. But I am not persuaded that clericist depredations on culture are similarly recognized.

As I think was made clear at the start of this essay, the faculty at Dexter did not feel called upon to know the specific cultural history and experiences of the students they taught. Neither they nor anyone in the academic profession consider it their task to use their own superior symbolic gifts and wider historical perspective to identify the specific historical culture of their students, to clarify

its ambiguities, to criticize it, purging it of its moral (not geographical) provincialism, and thus to assist the students to develop a culture which is at once personally ennobling and politically self-conscious. On the contrary, at Dexter and elsewhere the faculty assume that it is their duty to replace the students' actual culture with an alien culture. Missionaries from these graduate schools, like clergy from colonial empires everywhere and in every time, feel confident that what they bring is good for the natives and will improve them in the long run. In culture, as elsewhere, this is manifestly not so.

Consider the matter of historical traditions. No acculturation worth the name should be permitted to block the transmission of Dexter's militant working-class traditions. Even granting, as is probably the case, that only a small minority of the Dexter students are children of depression workers or the earlier Wobblies, to assist, even if only negatively, in destroying these traditions is to minimize for most of the students the opportunity to discover the reasons for their attitudes on a score of moral and social questions, the reality of their social lives, and the possibility of rebuilding a more humane culture in Dexter for their own advantage. White intelligentsia recognize this danger when they peer across cultural lines at blacks or Vietnamese; why are they so blinded by the class lines of their own society? It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the anti-intellectualism of the students is often as deep and as bitter as the hatred exhibited by other colonial peoples toward foreigners and their works.

A university culture which related positively and creatively to the traditions and history of the working classes, blue collar and white collar, would find allies not only among the hippies and the leftists of Smith and Williams but from the squares of Dexter as well.

What is particularly disturbing about cultural pacification in the university is that it is not entirely an accidental phenomenon. At least since Herbert Croly's *Promise of American Life* (1909), America's dominant historians have been strongly nationalist, more interested in discovering and celebrating the American essence or character, the national mainstream, consensus or moral epic, or the peculiar quality of our national integration, than in emphasizing its divisions, especially those based on class. It has often crossed my mind that when liberal historians two decades hence write the chronicle of the Southern freedom movement of the early 1960s or of the anti-Vietnamese War movement of today, they will find imaginative and persuasive reasons to show that the first was really part of the New Frontier and the second of the Great Society. It was thus that their predecessors have managed to reduce the richness and variety of popular revolt in the 1930s to the bureaucratic dimensions of a Washington-based "New Deal."

Fortunately, some of the younger historians, such as Staughton Lynd and Jesse Lemisch, have begun to undermine the epic poetry of the Crolyites by reviving interest in the history of popular insurgency in America. Thus they have created the possibility that at least at some universities young people will be reacquainted with the real diversity and conflict of their past. More than that, and without exaggerating its importance or extent, this new scholarship provides a point of departure for a fundamentally different university culture than the one I have been describing.

III

Faced with the vast social diversity of America and in opposition to the variety and strength of its Populist traditions, the thrust of university culture is to pacify its working-class "natives" and thus, I believe, to help preclude any fundamental change in national politics and priorities. Because of the surge of rebellion on campus since last spring, it is likely that this is understood better now among faculty than it was at the time I visited Dexter. But many university men and women, comparing the university's cultural values to those of industry, the mass media and the military, or to the restless hostility of lower- and working-class America, remain partisans and priests of academe, convinced that for all its faults it is, at least minimally, a humane alternative to its rivals.

The analogy I began earlier to the work of Edward Thompson points in a more hopeful and, I think, more realistic direction. A survey of recent campus rebellions would show that it is no longer only the Harvards and the Berkeleys which suffer serious student unrest; some of the most interesting and militant activity occurs at the non-elite schools. In addition, scores of young men and women continue to be exiled by their elite graduate schools into a lifetime of work in the non-elite universities. The narrowest interests of these teachers and their most lofty professional and political aspirations lie in the same direction. It is to take up the task, in common with their students, of rebuilding the vitality of a popular resistance culture—that is, of a culture which will "enhance the capacity of ordinary Americans to identify their social interests and to struggle successfully in their behalf."

This is not a task which individuals can successfully undertake in isolation, nor one whose champions will be free of serious reprisal at the hands of university and political authorities. Nevertheless, there are already a handful of campuses where the work has begun, in critical universities, liberation courses, seminars in local and working-class history, student-taught courses for faculty, and research projects on local and campus decision making. It remains for others to add to these hopeful beginnings.

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Essay on Black Culture

The Art of Self Defense

(continued from the last issue)

Shucking, jiving, capping, coping, standing, kneeling, singing, screaming, we are, we are told/tell ourselves, soul people. But what has that meant as we have tried to move toward freedom?

Many scholars have tried to get at the question by writing about the importance of the Christian Church and religion in the lives of black people in the United States. E. Franklin Frazier, for example, has said that "an organized religious life became the chief means by which a structured or organized social life came into existence among the Negro masses."[1] LeRoi Jones has gone further, to point out that the Christian Church was also the house where the illusion of privilege in the midst of our oppression was made concrete:

> The house servants . . . were the first to accept the master's religion, and were the first black ministers and proselytizers for the new God. The Christian Church in slave times represented not only a limited way into America, but as it came to be the center of most of the slaves' limited social activities, it also produced a new ruling class among the slaves: the officials of the church.
>
> The church officials, the house servants, and the freedmen were the beginnings of the black middle class, which represented (and represents) . . . Negroes who thought that the best way for the black man to survive was to cease being black . . . and wanted more than anything in life to become *citizens.*"

We know from this and other writing that whatever the quality of religious life in Africa before the diaspora, "christianizing the heathens" was a popular activity during slavery. Religious instruction was the accepted cultural method our masters used to teach us enough English to take orders and enough fear of the conqueror's god to encourage obedience, to channel our emotions and frustrations, and put off our dreams of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness until after death. But we also know that in spite of our colonizer's intent and the schemes of the Negro middle class, the black masses have tried to give a shape to black spirituality that would serve our needs as an oppressed people seeking liberation in this world. That would help us survive as we defined ourselves *against* the American reality. That would save our souls from extinction and imitation. And we used any tools that were at hand.

If it was to our slavemaster's benefit to teach us to sing "Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel" and convince us to celebrate that "My Lord's writin' all de time/He sees all you do, hears all you say," fine. Once we learned his language, we also had a very practical

motive in identifying the promised land of Canaan as Canada when we began to "Steal Away to Freedom" and "Follow the Drinking Gourd" 'cause we were "So Tired O' Dis Mess." In the ante-bellum South, vocabulary didn't compromise us. Our enslaved condition made both the message and the objective clear, no matter what the medium was for conveying the Word to one another. We knew we had to find a better way to live. But we couldn't act on our knowledge very often. Today, we sometimes forget this. We are used to thinking of the way our people sang for our freedom over a hundred years ago in spectacular ways. We tend to evaluate our political use of Christian spirituals in terms of how intimately they were tied to inciting or masking specific acts of insurgency. We recall, for instance, the woman who became the Moses of our people, Harriet Tubman, who partially explained her success as a conductor on the underground railroad by telling how she used spirituals on the "middle passage." To alert parties ready to be taken North of her arrival, she would sing:

> Hail, oh hail, ye happy spirits,
> Death no more shall make you fear,
> Grief nor sorrow, pain nor anguish
> Shall no more distress you here.
>
> Around you are ten thousand angels,
> Always ready to obey command.
> They are always hovering around you,
> Till you reach the heavenly land.
>
> Dark and thorny is the desert,
> Through the pilgrim makes his way,
> Yet beyond this vale of sorrow
> Lie the fields of endless day.

If she sang these verses twice, they knew it was safe to come out of hiding; if there was danger, she would insert the following stanza in a slower tempo:

> Moses, go down in Egypt,
> Tell old Pharoah, let me go;
> Hadn't been for Adam's fall,
> Shouldn't have to have died at all.

Her tactics were useful because they reinforced the *myth* of the happy, child-like, singing slave who our masters thought was incapable of organized rebellion and then immediately moved us beyond that myth in *action.* Thousands of black people were literally carried to freedom by these methods.

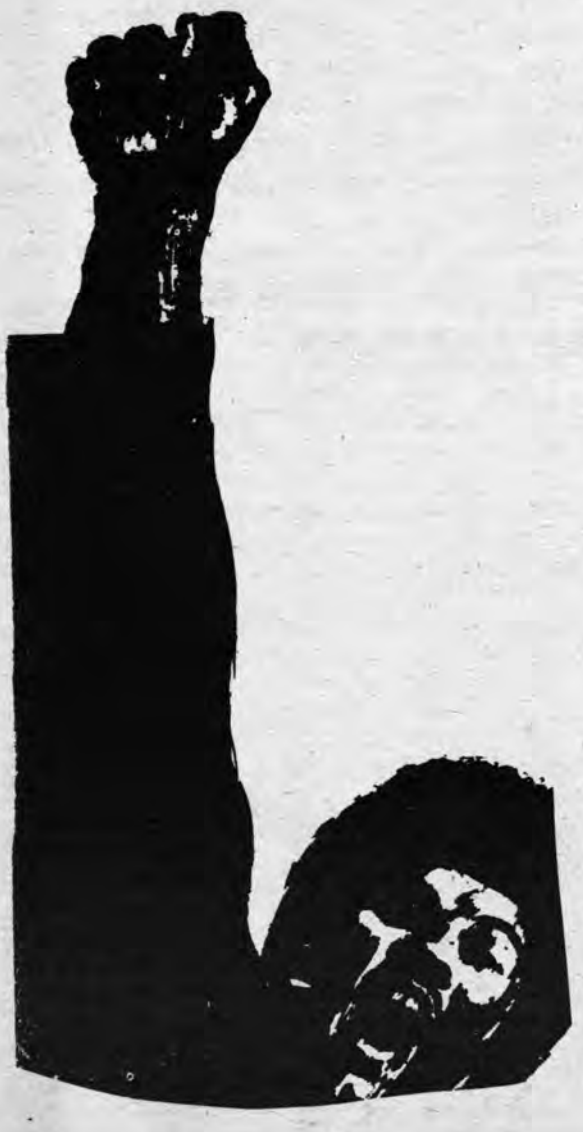
However, our deliberate application of colonial religion as subterfuge, as code, as cover for revolt, was only typical of the Civil War period. Before and after that time, *totemic spirituality* became the basis of our most sustained and elemental attempts to use religion to free ourselves from the Westerner's world. In the long stretches of our history where there was little or no opportunity for mass action against our rulers on the scale of the Civil War, we channelled our survival energies by becoming absorbed in the *metaphors* reality contained. We devoted ourselves to creating a self-defensive spiritual culture which allowed us to step to a different drummer in another country. We tried to deal with our captivity in part by interpreting our experience through signs, by immersing ourselves in a metaphysical harmony to counteract the social order constraining and brutalizing us. And though the defensive consciousness we developed hasn't led us all the way to liberation, it did take us way beyond the original boundaries of religion as it was taught to us in the New World.

Slavery made us a people uprooted and dispossessed. It defined us as domesticated beasts. It put us at the mercy of the irrational greed, lust, and cruelty of rulers from an alien culture and country. Severed from our land, with death always imminent and no possibility of sustaining the institutions that strengthen free people in times of crisis or of appealing to a human justice which included us, we were in a situation where survival meant *enduring* violence and dehumanization: struggling against them while appearing docile. We were caught between needing to lighten the yoke of captivity to live and realizing that open rebellion meant death. Under these conditions, the choices we had often involved the *way* we would supplicate divine powers for the justice that men denied us. We decided to sing out our grief, intone our desire for a return to harmony in the universe, our need to merge once again with nature as free spirits. And remembering our old culture, we sought deliverance through incantation.

> I got a home in dat rock,
> don't you see?
> I got a home in dat rock,
> Don't you see?
> Between de earth an' sky,
> Thought I heard my Saviour cry,
> You got a home in dat rock,
> Don't you see?

We chose to stress the fusion of ourselves with the world. Not only did we want to become part of it, but to make the spiritual force animating the world manifest through ourselves. We wanted penetration and activation, too. Deprived of the forms and artifacts of African religion, we tried to retain its essence. Early spirituals had an almost hypnotic effect. Our affirmations of "happy days" and "gwine away" took on the quality of command rather than refrain, as if, through concentrated will and repeated desire, reality would, in fact, be altered. Being possessed, we worked the stuff of our oppression out through our own bodily systems. We meant to exorcise it and thus free ourselves, at least psychologically. To get relief. We chanted:

> God's gonna set dis world on fire,
> God's gonna set dis world on fire,
> Some o' dese days . . . God knows it!
> God's gonna set dis world on fire,
> Some o' dese days.
>
> I'm gonna drink that healin' water
> I'm gonna drink that healin' water,
> Some o' dese days . . . God knows it!
> I'm gonna drink that healin' water
> Some o' dese days.
>
> I'm gonna drink and never git thirsty,
> I'm gonna drink and never git thristy,
> Some o' dese days . . . God knows it!
> I'm gonna drink and never git thirsty
> Some o' dese days.



Cults and all forms of recognizable tribal worship were outlawed, but as long as we were physically contained in the house of the Christian God, the Anglo-European didn't seem to care what we did. Less sophisticated than his French counterpart, he thought controlling our physical surroundings and our bodies would be sufficient to control our minds and souls. If he had witnessed what we made of his religion, he would have found himself in the midst of a scene where the only command obeyed was the one to "break down and let it all out." And he probably would have reacted with the same awe expressed by folklorist Clifton Furness during a visit he paid to a South Carolina plantation in 1926. The peak of a clack prayer meeting is approaching and:

> Gradually moaning became audible in the shadowy corners where the women sat. Some patted their bundled babies in time to the flow of the words, and began swaying backward and forward. Several men moved their feet alternately, in strange syncopation. A rhythm was born, almost without reference to the words that were being spoken by the preacher. It seemed to take shape almost visibly, and grow. I was gripped with the feeling of a mass-intelligence, a self-conscious entity, gradually informing the crowd and taking possession of every mind there, including my own.
>
> In the midst of this increasing intensity, a black man suddenly cried out: Gid right–sodger! Git right–sodger! Git right–wit Gawd!
>
> Instantly the crowd took it up, moulding a melody out of half-formed familiar phrases based upon a spiritual tune, hummed here and there among the crowd. A distinct melodic outline became more and more prominent, shaping itself around the central theme of the words, 'Git right, sodger!'
>
> Scraps of other words and tunes were flung into the medly of sound by individual singers from time to time, but the general trend was carried on by a deep undercurrent, which appeared to be stronger than the mind of any individual present, for it bore the mass of improvised harmony and rhythms into the most effective climax of incremental repetition that I have ever heard. I felt as if some conscious plan or purpose were carrying us along, call it mob-mind, communal composition, or what you will.

However, the "purpose carrying us along" cannot be understood through its medium (communal composition) the way Furness suggests. The command is in the content. To "git right wit Gawd" prescribed that our people purge themselves, that evil had to be driven from the midst of the congregation; and a belief in ourselves as conscious and active receptacles (even reservoirs) of divine power dictated that those assembled use their collectivity and "get the spirit" as a means of liberating positive spiritual force in the world. It was called "getting happy."

Looking back on these times, contemporary black writers like Robert MacBeth contend that the only thing about these incantations that retarded our struggle for freedom is that we were praying to "git right" with the wrong God and that if we could have focussed those same spiritual energies and perceptions on the spirits of our ancestors and the Black Gods of Africa, our ability to break colonialism's mental bonds on us would have been greater. Actually, we tried to do just this by extending our totemic reading of the world to all activities of life and adapting African rituals to New World contexts.

To Be Continued

in the Next Issue

Cutting The Faculty Down to Size

In December, the departmental and college-wide Personnel and Budget committees completed their annual pruning of the faculty tree. If in past years the process seemed a bit haphazard, a kind of chop-and-lop operation, this time the pruners aimed to be more scientific. They've introduced what Dean of Faculty Eric James, at a recent English Department meeting, described as a "more objective" basis of class visitation and teacher evaluation—namely, new observation and evaluation forms that list several dozen "fair, reliable, and valid" criteria to measure the strength or weakness of the untenured faculty.

Dean James admitted that precise definitions of what constitutes superior, good, average, or poor teaching have not yet been developed, but he is confident the matter of definition is in good hands. "Persons skilled in personnel management," he told questioners in the English Department, "a group of persons experienced in this sort of thing"—can he mean Top Administrators?—are mulling over these delicate questions. Dean James and the rest of the personnel managers won't object if the faculty does a little mulling of its own; teaching is, after all, our "business," as Dean James might say. *Are* the new faculty observation and evaluation forms a solid objective basis for assessing ability to teach and to carry out general responsibilities in the College?

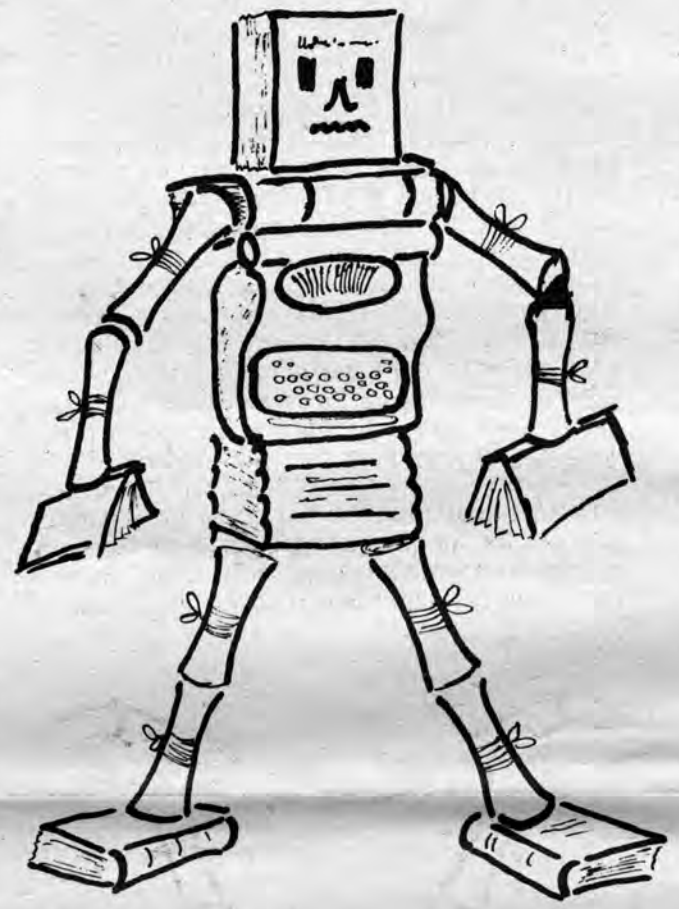
The MCC forms are based on sample forms sent out by the central CUNY administration. The several dozen items cover "personal traits" (e.g., appearance, manners, energy, enthusiasm, adaptability, willingness to accept direction), "classroom management" (e.g., punctuality, student discipline, atmosphere conducive to learning), "subject matter and teaching ability" (e.g., knowledge and organization of subject matter, voice and language, attitude toward bright and slow students, encouragement to thinking), "teaching methods and techniques" (e.g., use of lectures, student participation in discussion, use of visual aids, homework assignments, quizzes and exams, plus other categories duplicating items under "subject matter and teaching ability"). For each item the observer checks one of six boxes: Unsatisfactory, Average, Above Average, Superior, Not Observed, Not Applicable. (Note that "Average," being the next-to-lowest of the four qualitative evaluations, actually amounts to a negative judgment.) At a few points, the observer is asked to leap out of the little boxes and write a sentence or two.

The use of the forms assures that all the criteria are not only relevant to the quality of teaching but concrete enough to be measured on a 4-point scale. Now, maybe personal appearance, manners, voice, willingness to accept direction, and relationship with the Administration *are* relevant to good teaching, though we doubt it; but it's impossible to say for sure without knowing what these bland phrases actually mean. Some of the other criteria, superficially more pertinent, are just as puzzling, particularly when coupled with a quality-control rating.

What, for example, is an "average" amount of "tolerance of disagreement"? How much "opportunity to question" is "above average"? Under "encouragement to thinking," does inviting questions about details while rejecting challenges to basic assumptions of the course or to the teacher's social outlook rate "unsatisfactory," or "superior"?

What does a check-mark under "superior" for "student discipline" signify: flexible response to the style and mood of the students, or total teacher control over the dynamic of the class? And how does all of this relate to "atmosphere conducive to learning"? (The conduciveness to learning of traffic and construction noise, overcrowding, overheated or freezing classrooms, lack of equipment, inadequate study space is not measured on these forms. Maybe a teacher should be rated superior simply for overcoming any or all of these obstacles. One begins to see how "voice" and "manners" might figure in teaching ability at MCC: if you can't shout in a dignified and unterrifying way you may be unable to teach effectively in the B or L buildings.)

No need to belabor the obvious. Dean James's "fair, reliable, and valid" criteria are almost all contentless, empty; judgments based on them, far from being objective, public, challengeable, are in fact deeply subjective, reflecting the observer's own attitudes, abilities, and preferences for which the observer is not held accountable. One example should suffice: observer damns an observee with faint praise by marking him/her "average" for "knowledge of subject matter," he does not



have to explain what that judgment means, let along demonstrate his competence to make it in the first place. (And everybody knows how much dead wood has accumulated at the top of the faculty tree.)

But supposing the forms *were* as objective as Dean James claims they are: what then? The whole process of evaluation is *still* a bureaucratic farce. Evaluation of a teacher's performance is almost invariably made on the basis of one class visit per semester. (Some observers don't even stay for the whole hour.) Most observers walk into a classroom cold, not knowing what's happened in the course prior to the visit, or what will follow. How, then, can the observer judge the lesson's "continuity with course material in other class sessions" or the "organization of subject matter"? How can he rate "reasonable assignment of homework" or "encouragement to thinking"? Not knowing the specific needs of the students in a particular class, or the dynamic of that class (and every class is different, especially in a school so diverse as MCC), how can the observer evaluate the quality of student participation, the teacher's use of materials, his/her "ability to explain," his/her use of language? (Yes, "use of language" gets graded, too. Dean Pittman, MCC's very own protector of decorum, is no doubt gratified.) To be honest, an observer who hasn't bothered to confer with the teacher about the course would have to check many items in the "not observed" column. But since no observer mindful of his reputation (though unworried about his job) is going to be that candid, the fiction is officially perpetuated that a cursory, 50-minute-or-less, twice-a-year, out-of-context observation is an adequate basis for deciding whether a teacher deserves to be retained, promoted, or fired.

Unofficially, of course, cynicism is rampant among tenured observers and untenured observees alike, for there are few who are too naive not to recognize that reappointment, promotion, and firing at MCC are at best haphazard and at worst downright punitive, an exercise of power. One important use of the observation/evaluation forms, in fact, is to protect that power against appeal, e.g., by the unions. This point was glaringly clear in Dean James's September 16th letter to "Chairmen of Departments and Coordinators of Programs" where he suggested use of the forms as a means of "performance measurement" that could stand as legal evidence and sufficient reason for nonreappointment in union grievance proceedings before arbitration boards or in the courts.

According to the rhetoric, however, observation and evaluation are supposed to be used to improve the quality of teaching at MCC. Thus, both forms contain space for the observer to indicate "areas of need for development and suggested means of development." In practice, though, the observation is almost never the occasion for a serious discussion of an observee's teaching. The observee isn't even permitted to see the evaluation; he/she has a conference with the department chairman or his deputy, who reports what the evaluation says; the chairman then summarizes the content of the conference on another form, which the observee must countersign. It's rare that this report-to-the-observee is any less of a ritual than the observation itself was. More important, this kind of secrecy about the evaluation is clearly open to manipulation: while the observee can note dissent from the evaluation as the chairman reported it to him/her, he/she has no protection against the possibility that there may be statements on the form which the chairman does *not* report and which therefore cannot be challenged.

The point to be drawn from all this is not simply that we need more meaningful observation and evaluation forms, but that the whole process of evaluation needs to be changed. As long as administrators and tenured faculty have sole control of the process while remaining immune to it themselves, the process will be irrelevant to teaching. Were good teaching—and good administration—really important at MCC, or in CUNY generally, *all* college staff, not just untenured people, would be evaluated and advised of their weaknesses, and students and untenured staff would sit on all personnel and budget committees (CUNY by-laws presently forbid them to do so). Instead, as a sop, student "opinion" about untenured teachers will eventually be sought at MCC, probably via a form as meaningless and open to manipulative use as the faculty-observer forms. (Just when student evaluations will begin is hidden in the bosom of the tenured and administrative untouchables. Dean James, questioned by the English Department in December, said that "chances are that the next time the Faculty Council meets, this matter will *probably* be on the agenda"—his emphasis—and it's "likely" that student opinion will be solicited this semester.)

As teachers, we'll welcome having some feedback from our students. But we don't delude ourselves that student opinion will make much difference in personnel-and-budget decisions under the present system of school rule. What we do expect, rather, is that once students begin to experience how little their "opinions" matter when divorced from the power to make them count, they may begin to demand that power.

The majority of the faculty, meanwhile, has not even the fig leaf of consultation with which to cover its powerlessness over personnel decisions. As the economic recession continues and perhaps deepens, we can anticipate that observation-and-evaluation will become less a harmless-seeming garden exercise for the administrative pruners and more blatantly a means to cut the faculty to the system's measure. The "groves of Academe" will be thick with dangerous yes-men like Dean Pittman, whom President Draper has just regrafted onto the faculty tree, and autocrats like Dean James. It won't be an atmosphere conducive to learning.

But the personnel managers will love it.