

A Word About Scientific Literacy

In the years bygone science was the learned dilettante's avocation or the leisure pastime of the intellectually elite. At best it was the "off-hours" activity for the mentally curious and did not play a significant role in the development or direction of society. For the most part people were too preoccupied with seeking out an existence and, thus, confined to the ordinary task of survival.

God's laws, not science, provided the primary basis for ethics throughout the course of Western history. The masses were more-or-less confined to the ethical and political jurisdiction of the few. Ordinary citizens had little opportunity to become informed on the issues of the day and, consequently, played no significant part in the determining the direction of the future. This state of affairs persisted up to and throughout the Medieval Ages in Western Civilization.

In modern times the basis of ethics has shifted, to a great extent, from God's laws to man's laws. Science, alas, began to seriously challenge ignorance and superstition on a large scale. Science was fast becoming a respectable and necessary endeavor; and as a result the appeal to truth was fast supplanting the appeal to faith and tradition.

As science progresses, technology progressed; living conditions became better and as a result the masses were not totally committed to immediate survival, but could now become informed and participate in their own course of direction. Science almost single-handedly

lifted man out this quagmire of ignorance and strict confinement to the task of mere existence, and provided him with the knowledge and technology to profit from and control his environment to a greater extent than ever before.

The modern-day world's tremendous explosion of technology can prove to be a boon or a bone for the future. With technological advances come the implicit assumption that mankind will be bettered. History has shown this to be true and, unfortunately, untrue. The point to be made here is that science and scientists today--especially in a democracy--do not determine the ultimate direction of our social order--this is directly determined by the citizenry. Science and technology are indirectly involved--they provide the means of fulfilling purposes once they have been defined.

The technological boom that we are experiencing and which will double in complexity and importance in the immediate years ahead necessitates a majority of scientifically literate citizens. People will have to be informed and knowledgeable of basic scientific principles so that they can accurately evaluate information and intelligently vote for (or against) things that will effect their lives. People must be able to decipher what is scientifically true and based on factual information from what is not based on factual information, or is far-fetched and distorted, or is based on incorrect scientific information.

The cultural lag--in particu-

Miss Phillips Receives Masters Degree

Miss Ka-Esbia Phillips of Farmville, N.C. has received her Masters of Arts degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education from East Carolina University, Greenville, N.C.

Miss Phillips is a 1972 graduate of Elizabeth City State University. As a student, she was active in many organizations. She was a member of The Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Editor of the Viking Yearbook and a member of Who's Who Among American Colleges and Universities.

This is her third year working as a teacher in the Pitt County School System.



KA-ESBIA PHILLIPS

lar with regard to scientific literacy--that exists in this country today is alarming. If this trend persists and the gap widens, then the future outlook will be ominous. Disastrous contingencies have resulted time and again from seemingly well-intended legislation. However, all the ramifications were not thoroughly investigated or thought through by the supporters of such legislation. In short, voting citizens can not depend on politicians to ascertain what is scientifically valid. Far too often politicians are concerned with the purposes of political statements first and their truthfulness second. Likewise, immediate ends to problems are commonly sought and result in disaster by overlooking possible long-term deleterious consequences.

Many other equally urgent problems exist today and must be evaluated and acted on, by us, the voters, before they become insurmountable and result in disaster. Perhaps the

one that looms biggest at present is that of pollution--pollution of the water, of the air and of the land.

Another burden that will increasingly be the responsibility of citizens in the future will be in deciding what is ethical. The world crises that exist today and will become even more acute in the immediate years ahead will force us to re-evaluate our ethical and moral positions. Perhaps a universal ethics in the future can be based upon an appeal to the truth as established by science. Science tells us that we are experiencing a population explosion and that unless massive birth-control efforts are enacted the population of the earth will double in approximately thirty years resulting in catastrophic famine. Is contraception moral? Who must decide this? Medicine has already reached the stage making it possible to detect mal-formed and mentally deficient fetuses. Is therapeutical abortion ethical? Who must decide this? Genetics has made it possible to identify lethal and deleterious genetic abnormalities in human beings. Is it ethical to practice eugenics? Who must decide this? Econo-

mists inform us that the United States has a gross national product of nearly 200 billion dollars annually and yet one-fourth of our population is suffering from malnutrition and insufficient medical care. Is it ethical to allow such an inequity of wealth and opportunity to exist in the most affluent and technologically advanced country in the world? Who must bear the burden of this decision?

These problems and many more like them are going to have to be confronted and resolved by us. The world has become too complex and too inextricably entangled in technology for the solutions of these problems to result from non-scientific bases. What is ethical or moral can no longer remain a philosophical or academic issue that is the responsibility of the few--namely theologians and philosophers. Everyone is directly confronted with these issues today and, thusly, it is the responsibility of everyone to come to grips with them. Science can provide us with what is true, and it is only by knowing what is true that we can best reassess our values from which our social goals can then be best formulated.

Campus Poetry

To You, Janine

You are away, but yards in few,
And I gaze upon your shadow as if I knew
That by some great miracle of God's will,
He would someday my heart steal,
And cast my love for you to see,
To in His own way, placate me.
He'd lay me in my grave to rest,
To take from heart the succumbed zest
That I once held for you in life
That went away, as came my strife.

And in my dark and deep sepulcher,
I could have leave of all false culture
That I had often tried to gain,
But now might of my soul obtain
To leave to all that wish have part
In these dark objects of my heart,
As tokens of my vain love were
That could not cause my love's recurr.

For in your life-long heart's demure
To accept my love for you, so sure,
I have no other cause of breath
And so, beseech God for sweet death
That, pray, shall steal me from my room,
so you, might in your life, resume

To laugh and love and live again,
And all these pleasures have that, fain

Would bury my deadened heart at sea,
While kin and friendship mourn over me.
And you could walk in fields and sky,
To watch the fledgeling, swan-birds fly
While your love I should never regain,
And you can love and love again.

Anthony Ballard

I resist belonging for fear of being rejected.

Is there anyone in society whom I can trust?

BECAUSE

I am Black and I walk the streets alone.
Life has taught me of its ups and downs.
Sometimes I see doubts before a frown.
The world to me has many faces
All hidden in different places.

Today I became glad.
Yesterday my world was sad.
So the world has its good and bad points, too!
So don't get discouraged, go along with it just as I do!

Gwen Scales

... CURRICULUM ...

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environmental problems will add to the contributions.

Elizabeth City State University is acting as a resource agent for the public school.

The Elizabeth City State University campus is situated geographically in an ideal area

for investigating the biological, chemical, geological and sociological aspects of environmental science. Students will have an excellent opportunity to participate in field trips designed to investigate the natural, industrial, and life style conditions of the outer Coastal Plain. Eastern North Carolina has a variety of natural environments that range from marine, littoral and estuarine, to fresh water streams and a variety of lakes and swamps. Each of these magna environments offer reserch possibilities unlimited for the ecologist, geologist, and chemist.

The program is interdepartmental in nature and therefore, all departments will benefit from it. It expands basic courses in science, thus affording the non science majors a wider choice of elective science courses. The course in General Environmental Science will be open to all students and serve to inform the concerned students regarding environmental problems. The course may be used as an education elective because of its usefulness to teachers in weaving environmental science into their various subjects.



A. Ballard & M. Blount

"When I Said 'go out and clobber 'em,' This isn't quite what I had in mind!"