

The Daily Tar Heel

77 Years of Editorial Freedom



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The Annual Christmas Selling Game

Every young man needs a hero from time to time, and lately mine has been Ed McMahon.

The fatherly announcer of the Tonight Show is an established opponent of the annual Christmas selling game.

He buys his presents on the 24th of December and not a day before. It may seem incredible to those of us who get peptic ulcers on Thanksgiving if all the yuletide bribes are not already wrapped and put away, but shopping can be done in one day.

When you get right down to it, Dec. 24 may be the only day of the year when nobody is buying. From Christmas day until the taxes are filed on April 15, the smiling gifttees are returning their booty for refunds or exchanges. And from April 15 to Dec. 23, the great push is on. But as far as I know, only Ed McMahon, in all the world, has the unmitigated machismo to wait until those last 24 hours.

If you don't think Christmas makes the greed flow out of us like sap from a newly sawed-down tree, let me tell you

an absolutely true little story.

Somewhere out in the great fortress of Americana that we call the Midwest, the town fathers got together and decided to put on a Christmas show that would wow the bejesus out of their kiddies.

They hired a portly and jovial young man to don a Santa outfit and parachute out of a helicopter, down to a supermarket parking lot where the town children would be waiting to get their hands on the toys in his giant bag.

And so, on the appointed day, there

were the townspeople and their beaming offspring. The helicopter passed over and down came Santa with quite a bound. He parachute never opened and he bounced several times.

One of the elders thought to stop the record that had been playing "Holly comes Santa Claus, here comes Santa Claus..." but he merely pulled the plug and the strains died out lowly, going deep and deeper as a slowing record will do.

Where do you suppose the self-proclaimed kiddies were all this time? That's right, out grabbing all the toys they could, perhaps giving an occasional thought to the dead Santa...

The Failure Of Education

The Faculty Council will consider today a resolution concerning the recommendations for the General College released last week by the Merzbacher Committee. That report, we feel, the result of over a year's work, is a poor contribution to the educational stagnation of this University.

The report approaches, rather cautiously, the symptoms of this educational mess without getting down to the basic problems to learning which exist here.

The problem, as we see it, is that the University does not really operate under the assumption that each individual has his own educational needs. Consequently, the education here does not seem to be able to cope with those needs.

Rather, the education UNC seems to want to provide is one which deals on a level which assumes vague generalities and truths about learning, and cannot, consequently, matter in the real world of human beings and their very human, very natural questions.

This is the University which sets up men with many degrees to map out how life is, or is supposed to be. Without trying to make such a vast generalization which does not apply to every academic, the tendency at this institution is for the presence of such a faculty.

And without trying to sound too idealistic, it seems that a faculty concerned more with the world and its problems would be a whole lot more beneficial to the students here than a faculty which makes no apparent effort to accept the arrival of problems that the old world never began to dream could exist.

Human beings today, especially human beings who happen to be college students, or of that age, are not interested in answers to questions which have ceased to exist. They are interested in the questions which they themselves happen to have, and those questions, obviously, are just as legitimate as the questions of the old world.

Indeed, it is rather bombastic, to say the least, of anyone who thinks he knows what the answers are, especially if he does not really understand the questions.

* * *

To explain: There are two basic ways of looking at education. Either the education should be made to adapt to the student, or the student should be made to adapt to the education.

The first method leaves plenty of room for the fact that humans are complex animals who can not be classified as anything other than living things. That kind of education is flexible and pregnant with the potential for aiding the

evolution of human beings.

The second method, the one which looks on students as merely fuel for the great machine which is the University, and the one which happens to prevail at this University, treats students more as part of the machine than as humans.

The University decides what makes an educated man, and what that educated man needs for survival. Well, says the University, the student needs such and such and such a course. And without that course, he cannot graduate. And without a diploma he can not "make it" in the real world. Because the real world is like a business corporation. It has to be efficient. It has to run well, like a machine.

And whatever happened to the human approach to things? What about a student who is more concerned with people, and life, than with meeting his academic requirements, because those requirements happen to be meaningless to him.

Well, say the cynics, such a student can go somewhere else.

Well that suggestion isn't acceptable to us. It seems that a student should not have to go searching out those oases in the dark to find a real education. It seems that this University should be viable enough to admit change and to allow within itself a growth which reflects the changes and needs of the world today and of the young people who are part of that world.

* * *

What this all means, simply, is that the Merzbacher Report moves from where it has been for a long time, which is nowhere. The world is asking for an intelligent approach to life, one which accepts the world and its problems as being nothing more than the way things happen to be.

And that acceptance leads us to suggest that an education concerned with the realities of that world, and the realities of the people in that world, be the kind of education we should see in colleges today.

The Merzbacher Report, however, is the product of a somewhat different view of the world. That is why the Faculty Council should use the consideration of the report as an opportunity to see that some real changes are made in the quality of education here.

We ask the Faculty Council to accept the possibility that there is more truth to the world than the combined knowledge which seems to be their own private secret, unbeknownst to the common man.

Agnew's Academy Award

The government is going to produce a \$20,000 biographical film about Vice President Agnew for viewing overseas.

The 10-minute film, being produced by the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), will be shipped to more than 100 USIA posts abroad by the end of January and will provide a sketch of Mr. Agnew, concentrating on his career prior to

his emergence as a national figure and glossing over domestic political controversies, such as his recent speeches on the press.

That is an incredible way to spend \$20,000... unless, of course, there is some real artistic value in the film. Who knows? Mr. Agnew may be up for an Oscar next year.

Why Complain?

About this problem of people being killed in war: Who are they to complain? After all, we're all going to die. They're just lucky in that they have a chance to be the first to go, without all the mundane worry

about when it will be, and about how to keep happy in the meantime.

Unless, of course, people actually exist who don't have to worry. And they may exist.

Johnny Kani

Check International Fantasies 'Do You Have A Pet Cobra?'

"Do you like it here in the U.S., Mr. Kaan?" As soon as you hear this familiar mispronunciation of your name, you already know that you are in business; for the next twelve or twenty-four months will be spent in clarifying innumerable fantasies and myths that the natives have about your birthplace.

These fantasies are both amusing and tantalizing. Largely, I take them as amusing, knowing very well that they have only recently started flying to the moon. From, "do you have elephant steak" to "do you have pet cobra," cover a pretty amusing range of topics that can be a worthwhile pastime. Looking back at those instances of mispronunciation, mispronunciations, and fanciful myths, it will probably be a good idea to establish a department of "International Fantasies." Your work as "correction" agent, however, is full of pitfalls, precisely because the natives have a hard time accepting civilized ideas.

You are confronted with a variety of attitudes as you settle amidst the Americans. First of all, you will get patronized. This is the easiest and most effective way to "make the foreigner at home." Obviously, after a flight of sixteen hours, the foreigner does look dazed, groggy and out of shape. What more, the Pan American tags on his suit cases, and his broken "Good Fud" English adds pathetic colour to his general spectacle.

The easiest thing to do is to patronize this ill-at-ease foreigner. There are two choices available to the foreigner to get out of this. First, he can let them do it and as a consequence, get invited to American homes for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and other occasions. The other alternative is to reject it. This can be done in various ways. One, isolate yourself and become a member of the already existing community of your own semi-assimilated countrymen on campus. This particular way will be boring because all you can do is to talk about politics back home, good old days, Series available at the ABC store in New York, and the price listing of Fiat versus Mini-Morris, and, on occasion, have "good-food."

Since you can't get trapped into this familiar circle of "Home Economists," you can resort to another way, i.e., tell everyone you are from Bronx and play their game along their rules. Since you are coffee colour, this gives your Broxian background a good deal of credibility. If nothing, it is certainly more fun than becoming isolated. At least, you will be immune to questions concerning "elephant steak" back home.

However, patronizing them in return is not without danger. As soon as they recognize or feel that you are playing their game, too, they will immediately make an expert out of you. Then you are really in trouble for a long time because you are asked intricate questions concerning "current affairs" and are expected to give scholarly answers. Needless to say, an expert is also a scholar by definition in the U.S. and as such, is immediately assigned a particular area (both geographical and academic) of competence.

Since they have assigned me Southeast Asia as my area of competence, the immediate question I am asked is "Why did Pakistan separate from India?" Knowing very well that an answer based on political-historical forces will only elicit semi-informed questions, my best answer is always, "Both the Indians and the Pakistanis lived for a long time and decided it was time to get a divorce;" you know, like two friends who hate each other's guts just because they have been together too long. Living apart helps. This really clinches it.

Your real trouble concerns Vietnam. "What do you think of Vietnam? My usual response, after a long period of

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Letters should be addressed to the associate editor, care of the Daily Tar Heel.

rather fruitless discussion, is that two universities should be established in Vietnam. It is obviously an unrelated response but its very unrelatedness is likely to turn the topic to something else. Usually, it turns their attention toward a current university-centered topic, "Hippies."

"What do you think of hippies?" "I think they should take more milk," is my general response. The native, being an avid verbal reasoner, will immediately pick it up and will ask, "Do you mean take milk, instead of . . . ?" "No, along with . . ." is my expert advice.

Obviously, this is a sort of quaint idea



Ken Ripley

The Fronts People Play

There once was a time when I thought a front was a nice piece of lakeside property that someone bought from an advertisement, usually in Florida.

Then I thought I was being sophisticated when I discovered that a front was a "cover" for an organization that wished to conceal its true mission—like Communist and CIA fronts.

I didn't even bother to worry about "front" as opposed to "back." Everyone knows that kind of front.

But then I discovered a new type of front. Since I have been writing columns and people have been seeing my name in a little bit larger-than-life type, a good number of people have shown me another example of a front.

This is the front one person wears towards another—that aspect of his personality he reveals to someone else to convey some kind of impression, generally favorable to himself.

This type of front, I have found, is the worst of all.

There are, of course, some types of "fronts" which are not harmful or dishonest—the "roles" we all have to play. Students, professional or career people, even blue collar workers, all conform to a set pattern to fulfill their function in society.

Where such roles are honestly filled, they are a beneficial necessity for the continuance and smooth operation of society. They provide order and stability without necessarily blocking the way for change, growth, and improvement.

But interpersonal fronts are of a different nature. They are thrown up for a variety of reasons, few of which are good.

For instance, there are the fronts people create to impress other people. The braggart, the exhibitionist, the bore—all seem to fit nicely into this area. People try to be something they are not—or to enhance what good qualities they do have—to impress someone else.

I know I tend to do this. I've found that wherever certain people I care for

which immediately prompts further question concerning the intake of . . . back home. Yes, they take it back home; as a matter of fact, they make an extremely refreshing drink in summer out of milk, cordimums, and . . . It is cool, homogenized and nourishing.

Some industry should explore the possibility of mechanically producing a brank of "Bhung-shake." It wouldn't be too bad for people's emotional health. Imagine, no ill effect on the liver that usually accompanies liquor intake, having similar toxic effect and generally invigorating. What's more, yet another start of industrial enterprise, more business, more dollars.

It is equally impossible to remove pine sap from the digital extremities unless you mix a potent blend of lye soap and cuss words.

Heaven help the woman who objects to the males in her family for their wicked tongues. She quickly learns that the more obscenities aired, the faster the tree goes up.

If you are one of the few weirdos who joins me in objecting to the farce that our Christmases have become, don't make the mistake of blaming the whole thing on greedy advertisers. The greed is an integral part of our fellow people, and the oft-maligned advertisers are only taking advantage of an overripe atmosphere.

What's the answer, you may want to ask. . . . Well, I have no quick solutions, but you might try what our family does. It's easy enough. Everybody merely tells everybody else how much money they want, and we exchange checks for equal amounts. It eliminates all that shopping and ensures that nobody outspends anybody else.

Or else you can give toilet paper spoils. . . . They come pre-wrapped, are inexpensive, and take a long time to open.

Then there was the man who has always liked Christmas until one year when fifteen of his friends gave him the same kind of hat as a present.

He said the immortal words, "Bah Homburg . . ."

come to expect me to be a certain way, I am more likely to be that way. If my girl friend likes me to be strong and take charge, the chances are I will, whether or not I am normally that way.

Then there are the fronts for self-preservation. People maintain an outward posture for self defense, or to conceal what they really feel. A few months ago, I met a girl for the first time, and though I tried to be honest, by the end of the evening both of us had adopted masks. I found myself saying things to impress her, and she adopted the role most likely to turn me off.

Then there are the "public image" attitudes. A salesman wears his sickly smile; the businessman acts a certain way in his dealings with others. I adopt a certain role as a journalist as opposed to those times I go to class, spend time with my girl, or attend a meeting of some group I belong to.

I suppose, just being objective about it, that there isn't much we can do about a lot of the fronts we put up. Probably many of them are attached to the roles we wear and are vital to our performance. Perhaps society isn't ready for complete honesty.

And yet, I can't help but be appalled at the way people are separated from each other because of their fear of exposing themselves to anyone. I can't help but see the hurt feelings, the crushed hopes and disillusionments, the hypocrisy, and the loneliness that arise because of the fronts we adopt.

I know the front that bothers me a lot is the one readers adopt when they discover that they are talking to me. Some seem trying to impress me, for whatever motive. I get a little annoyed and frustrated every time this happens, however, because they won't allow me to see them as they are.

Which is what we all need to do—to be able to see each other as we are. This demands a lot of us, I expect. It demands that we be able to accept each other for what the other is; it demands tolerance of

other viewpoints and personalities.

The ability to shed our fronts demands a certain sensitivity on our part, and a willingness to drop the act and "tell our brother like it is." It demands that we quit trying to fool others by impressing them, and it requires us to back off from our self-centeredness and show a little concern for the thoughts, feelings, and pain of another.

Come to think of it, looking over the ways we can drop our fronts, I see more demands of us than a militant list of grievances. It isn't easy to stop pretending, to quit "playing the game" with others.

Sometimes we like the fronts we wear. Sometimes we get hurt when we drop our mask for someone, and he won't drop his. When we drop our masks and our fronts, we expose ourselves—for good or bad, we "come clean."

But there's got to be some honesty in our relationships somewhere. There has to be a first time for someone. First step needs to be made.

But then, how can we live our lives without some honesty, concern, and compassion—dropping our fronts, hypocrisy, and sham?

Or can we?

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