

Bard College  
Student Newspaper Archive  
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# OBSERVER

[March 6, 1969]

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V. 12 no. 1





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# observer

## viewpoint: editorial

'Objectivity is the great American hoax.'  
-John Fahey

Good evening, the Observer suggests you start an argument. Bard College, "Innovative" and "experimental" in the catalogue, on arrival, turns out to be a traditional, even conservative, white middle class college with nothing in particular to recommend it. More than a few students believe the catalogue only to be a disappointed by the reality of Bard. This sort of thing could be called false advertising. The student, as consumer, is paying his money for something he doesn't get. The result, of course, is that the brightest, most creative students (not to mention faculty) leave Bard rather than put up with its traditional curriculum. Thus Bard finds itself with a phenomenally high attrition rate and apathy and frustration on campus.

Now, either Bard is going to have to change its catalogue, substituting "conservative" and "traditional" for "innovative" and "experimental" or overhaul the curriculum to be what it is supposed to be. The former is easy; the latter takes thought, energy, enthusiasm, and a lot of hard work. To take the former course will leave Bard floundering in the mire of meaningless education that plagues most schools. To take the latter could make it a meaningful community capable not only of survival as an institution, but also of living up to its ideal of producing students capable of independent, self-generated learning. The former course is sure-no questioning of goals or purposes required, just sit back and wait until no one bothers to come to Bard anymore. The latter is not so sure, involves risk, has no guarantee of success but the latter course involves the courage to change things when they aren't functioning well and the possibility of saving Bard from the scrap heap.

The beginnings of meaningful change are here. The curriculum conference generated both proposals and the means of implementing them, besides the enthusiasm and energy needed to get the job done. Unfortunately, it didn't eliminate opposition from conservative faculty members. DIALOGUE is the most effective tool we have for reducing opposition and encouraging change. As long as the dialogue continues, reason will sway opinions and modify ideas. Thus, we must see to it that the dialogue continues. In the classroom, in the coffee shop, down the road, in bed, never stop asking why. WHY is there such a difference between WHAT IS and WHAT IS SAID TO BE? WHY are some people so afraid to take a first, tentative experimental step? WHY are some teachers unwilling to listen to what students have to say? WHY is there such a lack of trust among us all?

Our cover hero this week is John Bard, founder of the college, when he was 19. Born in 1819 in Hyde Park, he's now as dead as his college might be unless there are a few changes made.

"How can we sift WHAT IS from WHAT IS SAID TO BE? How can we tell others WHAT IS? How can we prepare ourselves, inwardly and outwardly, to hear WHAT IS?"  
-El Corno Emplumado

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## dialogue: letters

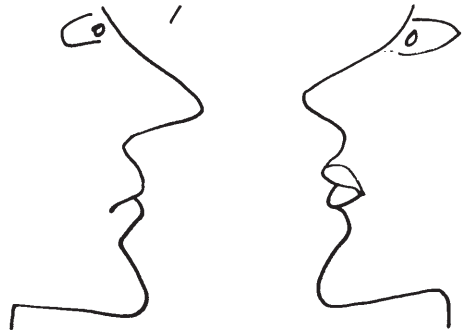
To the Editor:

I have just read the first issue of the Bard Observer written by its new staff, and I am very much impressed by the promise that the Observer will become 'the student publication for the Bard College Community'. Since this is a time for cleaning off slates, I felt I should write a letter expressing some long overdue thoughts of my own. The first of these is the fact that in the last several semesters, the Observer often wrote articles, critical of faculty or administrative actions or views, using grossly distorted or incomplete information. I cannot urge you strongly enough not to allow this trend to continue. My fear stems from the fact that in this first issue you state that, in reference to the report of the Curriculum Committee, the 'faculty didn't accept it in its present form'. The Committee never presented its report to the faculty for action. Indeed the printed report stirred many of the faculty (as it was meant to), and the Committee felt it needed reworking before presentation. Meanwhile, many of the ideas

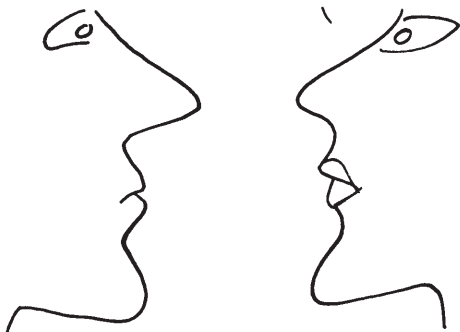
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## feiffer

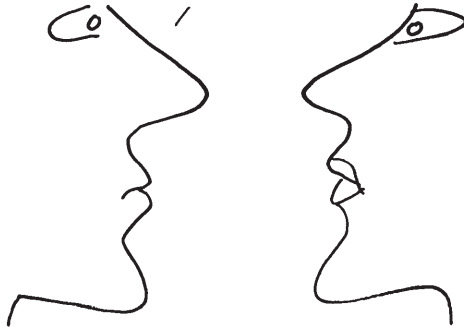
WE HAVEN'T BEEN INVITED TO A PARTY IN A YEAR.



WE HAVEN'T BEEN ASKED OUT TO DINNER IN EIGHT MONTHS.



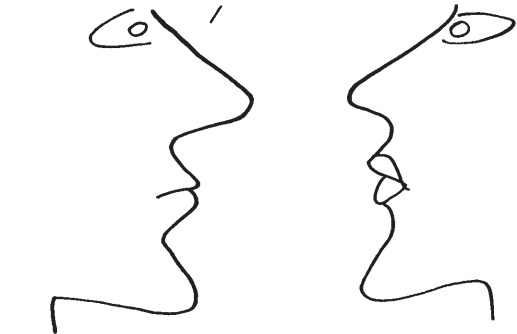
WE HAVEN'T GOTTEN ANY MAIL IN FIVE MONTHS



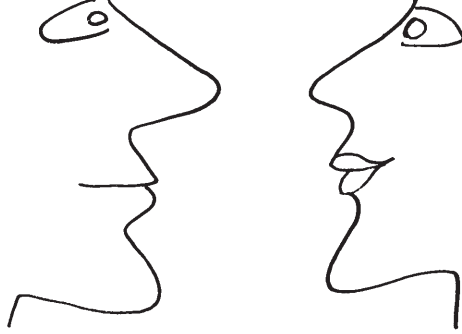
WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM OUR FAMILIES IN THREE MONTHS.



WE HAVEN'T HAD A TELEPHONE CALL IN TWO MONTHS



WE'RE FREE.



Don Publishers-Hill Square 1969

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## forum

Ethel Weiss, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
Department of Psychology

I am opposed to the concept 'student POWER'. This atrocious term attempts to legitimize unreason among the favored by imitating a slogan popularized by an oppressed minority. The concept of 'power' is totally inappropriate as a qualifier describing any group within the academic structure, implying, as it does, an opposition of aims and an antagonism over means. The term is contentless rhetoric, lauding force over reason, a goal totally antithetical to the essential nature of an academic community. I would like to suggest a less emotive but more appropriately reflective concept in its place, student rights and responsibilities, supplemented by the not irrelevant notion of faculty rights and responsibilities.

I see the university in a rather traditional role as a repository and transmitter of knowledge. I am less sure of its role as a social critic. In part, as an agent of the dominant society, it is a representative of that society, in part, devoted to truth and knowledge, it may be a critic of that society----however, clearly it is not, as an institution, a guerrilla army.

Rights and their necessary corollaries, responsibilities, must be considered within this context of the role of the university. For a university to be able to engage in its major activity, academic education, students must respect their faculty, while not being overawed by them and simultaneously the faculty must be open to students but not dominated by them. The responsibility of the faculty is to act as an informed guide to the student. It is neither our right nor responsibility to determine a student's goals (and not having a goal, is also a legitimate objective to be accepted). Within the framework presented to us by the student, we have the responsibility of making recommendations, demonstrated by reason and documented by data.

Assuming we are all men (and women) of goodwill I see neither cause nor necessity for a 'power' struggle. I look forward to more meetings with students and faculty in the open spirit of the Mohonk conference. I see promise of progress and accord through reason.

## campus

Senate, in its first meeting of the semester, had only four voting members present. Starting the meeting, Charles Clancy, in fine form throughout, began with his EPC report. EPC had not yet met, so Clancy discussed things to come. There is the possibility of the use of the computers at Vassar for educational purposes, called a time hook up, based on work being done at Dartmouth. Clancy then reported that he is working on a radical departure from the present form of faculty evaluations based on the type used at a teacher's college in Connecticut. This plan works on a graded point system.

The Observer budget, as planned, will be brought back into the convocation fund and then re-allocated in the manner of no more than 15% of convocation dues. Senate will have no control over the editorial policies of this paper, and so freedom of the press once more passes a critical test.

Wayne Gordon talked about vending machines on campus and such. At present, Slater food service takes a cut from all vending machines and is in on all negotiations for them. As the result of a Senate approved motion Bruce Lieberman will communicate to the powers that be that the student body will be part of negotiations for any and all vending machines and that only the student body will get funds due from the machines. It was brought up in discussion that machines dispensing food, soda, and cigarettes might harm student run concessions, but the motion provides for senate discretion in awarding vending machine rights, so conflicts will probably not arise.

To Ted Boli's surprise senate had designated him chairman of the entertainment concession while Ted was absent from a meeting last semester. Ted, in all humility, professed his lack of experience for the job, and so he was appointed chairman of the Orientation Committee instead. The new Entertainment

In a lukewarm debate, something was done about property damage on campus done by non and student alike. If a student destroys property (such as ripping up pool tables) and he is caught (that's the catch), he will be fined to the limit that Senator whoever is in charge of such matters recommends to the CAB. If a non-student, he will be turned over to the local heat and be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. If he is not caught, he is one smart assed cookie.

There is gonna be a lecture series this semester, hopefully for a long time (five times a semester) by faculty members, on a variety of topics, says Bob Melnick. He is getting money for programs to be printed up. As he said, Harvard, Columbia, and Cornell all print up programs for their lecture series. Yes.

Gene Elliott has been awarded the popcorn concession for the movies here at historic Bard College. It was stipulated that buttered popcorn must also be served. He will try this new approach to keeping your hands occupied at the theatre for one week, and if it works (if he makes money) it must continue for the duration of the semester.

### HABERMAN PROPOSES PROGRAM FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

In five years there may be a total of seventy-five disadvantaged (Black) students attending Bard with all expenses born by the college. Dean of Admissions Robert Haberman discussed the plan with a group of faculty, students, and administrators on February 18. Joel Fleishman, Associate Provost for Urban Studies and Programs at Yale, was on hand to lend expert advice.

Many possibilities were discussed, including taking students from high school before graduation. Haberman's proposal called for decreasing normal freshman enrollment by 45 and increasing total enrollment

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in the report have been implemented, others are being implemented, and others are being used as a basis for reevaluation. The report did have an impact and was not rejected. This was not conveyed to your readers. There are many members of the faculty willing and anxious to talk - are there no longer such things as reporters?

Another item I have strong feelings about is the term innovation. Let us not let the events at Columbia, Berkeley, S. F. State, etc. make us lose sight of what we want, a better living and learning experience. To do this it is our responsibility to constantly reevaluate our system. We do this in many ways - faculty Senate, student Senate, Moderation, faculty evaluation by students, faculty evaluation by faculty, community meetings, etc. When change is called for change takes place. However, change is not an end in itself - only a means to that end which we seek. Let us not confuse innovation with irresponsibility, irrelevance or allow self satisfaction to stand in the way of honest innovation. Let us retain our sense of balance. The important kind of innovation is not in courses taken or not taken, open or closed dorms, or whether to give grades or not. It is in what happens inside the heads of those here at Bard - and how much freedom is allowed in allowing and nurturing original and creative thought.

In closing I return to the Observer. The Observer is the most widely read document on campus. It can be a force for constructive dialogue or a wast of money and energy. I would like to see an Observer that is the leader in getting hold of the facts in a situation, that seeks out points of view and reports them, that recognizes both sides and all aspects of a problem before it editorializes on it, and that serves as the place where constructive dialogue between students and faculty can be aired. If the Observer can do these things it will truly become 'the student publication for the Bard College Community'.

Michael Rosenthal  
Associate Professor of Chemistry  
14 December, 1968

'If you believe in the Revolution, you must live as though it has already occurred.'  
-Mahatma Ghandi

**POWER STUDENT RIGHTS**

sions per year.

The big snag is where to find the money to finance such a program.

Kenny Johnson, on hand as a student representative, made the clearest analysis of the program. 'If you get these Black kids to come to Bard,' he observed, 'They're just not going to stay, because there isn't anything here for them. Why,



# CURRICULUM CONFERENCE

The Bard Curriculum Conference at Lake Mohonk wasn't meant to radically change the Bard curriculum, and it didn't. The 27 faculty and administrators, 17 students, and 8 guest faculty\* from other colleges met on February 23-25 to discuss problems in curriculum overhaul, exchange ideas, and just see what happened. It was highly successful if for no other reason than getting faculty and students together at a personal, non-authoritarian level and enabling a great deal of DIALOGUE. In this it showed the way for those concerned about the quality of Bard education. Through dialogue, conservative teachers expressed their hesitancy concerning change, progressive teachers and radically-inclined students expressed their disappointment and hope for the future. Viewpoints were exchanged, opinions on both sides were modified in the face of facts and rational analysis. Dialogue made the Curriculum Conference a learning experience for everyone concerned.

The last session of the conference produced an enthusiastic debate over student rights and their part (or lack of it) in the decision-making process. A summary of this session is being prepared from tapes and will be published as soon as possible.

Small workshops met to discuss particular areas of concern. Many produced rough-draft proposals for specific curricular changes. None of them were voted on by the conference as a whole, except one by Frank Oja that would grant credit for approved off-campus educational experiences (such as work directly related to a major field). This proposal was accepted by the conference as a whole. Other proposals and their sponsors were:

- Replacement of grades with a credit/no-credit system. (Wilson)
- Exploration of objectives and long-range goals for Bard. (Clarke)
- On-going curricular development to give students a clear voice in decisions directly affecting the academic environment. (Yarden)
- A freshman course proposal as an alternative to half-semester (mini) courses. (Pierce)
- Half-semester courses; and a degree program with and without required thesis (senior project).
- Student/ faculty co-ops to begin as a one-semester experiment in fall, 1969. (Kelly)
- A revised freshman orientation and advising program. (Domandi; Haberman)
- Possibilities for common-curricular, or core, courses. (Clarke)
- Freshman "reading courses" in which teachers and interested students would pursue subjects of mutual interest for academic credit without professional disciplinary limitations. (Pasiencier; Rosenberg; Selinger).

These proposals might have been nothing but wishful thinking were it not for a plan introduced by Dean Carl Selinger. The 'action-committee' plan for on-going curricular development is stated as follows:

"The primary responsibility for producing curricular change

at Bard, including the addition of extra-curricular academic programs, should be placed in the hands of Ad Hoc "Action Committees" consisting of those faculty members, students, and administrators who strongly believe in the merits of particular proposals. These action committees would organize themselves, and their members would participate as individuals, not as students, faculty, administrators, etc. The only qualification for serving on an action committee would be a willingness to work for the adoption of the committee's proposal, and, if appropriate, to work on the proposed offering after it is adopted."

Further, "Officials and official bodies within the faculty, student government, and administration would assume the obligation of dealing in good faith with properly organized action committees, and of expediting decisions on their proposals. This does not mean, however, that there would be an abdication of official responsibilities to use informed judgement in evaluating the proposed offerings on their merits, and in terms of available resources."

This was appended with a proposal by Ethel Weiss that a copy of every proposal from an action committee be sent to the faculty senate before seeking approval of the proposal by the general faculty. This does not mean, though, that one must wait for faculty senate approval.

Thus the action committees function within the existing framework. How and whether or not they work will only be seen when a first proposal is formally submitted. Then we will see the obstacles to be surmounted and the pitfalls encountered on the road to meaningful change in the Bard curriculum.

In the meantime, if you are interested in doing something about improving the quality of your education, get in touch with those teachers sponsoring "specific proposals."

\* Faculty: Heinz Bertelsmann, Carl Black, Richard Clarke, Fred Crane, Agnes Domandi, Christian Eissman, Thomas Green, William J. Griffith, Yury Karageorge, Robert Kelly, Mark Lambert, Frank Oja, Sam Pasiencier, David Pierce, Mr. and Mrs. Clark Rodewald, Justus Rosenberg, Peter Skiff, Bernard Tieger, Andrew Wanning, William Wilson, Elie Yarden.

Administration: Glenn Boynton, Aaron Fessler, Robert Haberman, Reamer Kline, Carl Selinger, .

Guest Faculty: Professor James Green, Dean Denis Cowan, Professor Efreim Rosen, Dr. James Rice, Professor Arthur Miller, Dr. Samuel Baskin, Dr. Goodwin Watson, Dr. Larry Porter.

Students: Bruce Arnold, Mark Barnett, Aleta Berger, George Brewster, Steve Brick, Toni-Michelle Chapman, Mary Cizek, Charles Clayton, Marcelle Clements, Pamela Fairbanks, Mary Moore Goodlett, Deborah Cook, William Gardner, Steven Levy, William Moore.

## news

### DUTCHESS COUNTY DRUG BUST

KARL JASPERS, humanitarian, philosopher, psychopathologist, died on February 26 in Geneva, Switzerland. A life-long friend of Heinrich Bluecher, he stressed the importance of the 'questioning spirit' in man and tried to stimulate the grandeur of discovering and experiencing the thoughts of the great spiritual and philosophical teachers of the past.

In the words of Max Weber:

'His life was an encouragement for all who enter the future without illusions, active as long as they can be, hoping as long as everything is not lost. He was the modern man who veils nothing from himself, who in this integrity finds the motive force of life, and allows himself no escape into despair. He suffered long periods of illness, and was dismayed at the onrushing current of history, but like reason itself he prevailed in the end and realized the best that was in him.'

(Adapted from a paper by Alexander Bazelow)

'A proper analogy to clarify the feelings of law enforcement officials might be the relationship of a suburban homeowner to his lawn. You know the grass is going to continue to grow, but you've still got to make an effort towards mowing it down and keeping it under control.'

...the Red Hook Observer

The biggest roundup of suspected drug users and pushers in the history of Dutchess County took place last weekend, as more than seventy youngsters were arrested. Charges ranged from possession and sales of marijuana, heroin, amphetamines, and hallucinogens, to 'loitering for the purpose of obtaining narcotics.' Most of the loitering charges were the result of a raid upon a Wappinger Falls hangout known as 'The Coffee Shop'. Thirty youths were arrested, as were the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Carmine Ross. Many of the youngsters arrested in the Coffee Shop, some as young as 14, claim that they had nothing to do with

narcotics, and that they were there to eat. District Attorney John Heilman Jr. plans to review the charges made by these youngsters, as well as the cases of all those arrested, to make certain that no one was arrested 'without basis or justification.'

Sheriff Lawrence M. Quinlan said in the Red Hook Observer that such massive drug raids are 'necessary as a temporary weapon in the war against drug abuse,' and that the only permanent solution to the problem, which is 'severe and getting more so' is to 'gain the complete cooperation of "everyone" in the county in education towards prevention.'

'it's hard to say what the "value" (of such raids) is', Quinlan said in the Red Hook Observer, 'just the fact that it's a violation of the law and we have to act in an effort to stamp it out. Some action has to be taken, and we in the police business have to take it.'

'We have to get to the young people and get their cooperation', the Sheriff continued. 'We've now got some young people helping us who realize it is a great problem, but we've got to get more and more young people

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ple aware of the dangers and futilities of using drugs and narcotics.'

Two Red Hook youths, aged 16 and 17, were arraigned before Justice Martin on charges of selling dangerous drugs, which is a first degree felony. Bail was set at \$5000, the highest of any in the county. Police officials indicate that ten to twenty more arrests may be expected shortly.

## THE RIGHT TO FIGHT

### THE STUDENT **NIGGER** Jerry Farber

Students are niggers. When you get that straight, our schools begin to make sense. It's more important, though, to understand why they're niggers. If we follow that question seriously enough, it will lead us past the zone of academic bullshit, where dedicated teachers pass their knowledge on to a new generation, and into the nitty-gritty of human needs and hang-ups. And from there we can go on to consider whether it might ever be possible for students to come up from slavery.

First let's see what's happening now. Let's look at the role students play in what we like to call education.

At Cal State L.A., where I teach, the students have separate and unequal dining facilities. If I take them into the faculty dining room, my colleagues get uncomfortable, as though there were a bad smell.

If I eat in the student cafeteria, I become known as the educational equivalent of a niggerlover. In at least one building there are even rest rooms which students may not use. At Cal State, also, there is an unwritten law barring student-faculty lovemaking. Fortunately, this anti-miscegenation law, like its Southern counterpart is not 100 percent effective.

Students at Cal State are politically disenfranchised. They are in an academic Lowndes County. Most of them can vote in national elections - their average age is about 26 - but they have no voice in the decisions which affect their academic lives. The students are, it is true, allowed to have a toy government of their own. It is a government run for the most part by Uncle Toms and concerned principally with trivia. The faculty and administration decide what courses will be offered; the students get to choose their own Homecoming Queen. Occasionally, when student leaders get upity and rebellious, they're either ignored, put off with trivial concessions, or maneuvered expertly out of position.

A student at Cal State is expected to know his place. He calls a faculty member 'Sir' or 'Doctor' or 'Professor' - and he smiles and shuffles some as he stands outside the professor's office waiting for permission to enter. The faculty tell him what courses to take (in my department, English, even electives have to be approved by a faculty member); they tell him what to read, what to write, and frequently, where to set the margins on his typewriter. They tell him what's true and what isn't.

When a teacher says 'jump', students jump. I know of one professor who refused to take up class time for exams and required students to show up for tests at 6:30 in the morning. And they did, by God!

Another colleague once caught a student reading during one of his lectures and threw her book against the wall. Still another lectures his students into a stupor and then screams at them in rage when they fall asleep.

Just last week, during the first meeting of a class, a teacher began by informing his class that he does not like beards, mustaches, long hair on boys, or capri pants on girls, and will not tolerate any of that in his classes. The class, incidentally, consisted mostly of high school teachers.

Even more discouraging than this Auschwitz approach to education is the fact that the students take it. They haven't gone through twelve years of public school for nothing. They've learned one thing and perhaps only one thing during those twelve years. They've forgotten their algebra. They're hopelessly vague about

## fact: news briefs

SHIT BY ANY OTHER NAME

WASHINGTON, D.C. (LNS) -- The infamous House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) will soon change its name to House Internal Security Committee. Representative Richard Ichord of Missouri, who is feeling insecure, requested the change in order to clear the way for the forthcoming investigation of SDS, which is pro-American in nature.

(SHORT-HAIRED) WYOMING 19 YEAR OLDS, MAY GET VOTE

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (LNS) -- If 19 year-olds get the vote in Wyoming, the Senate wants them shorn.

The Wyoming Senate amended a proposed constitutional amendment giving 19 year-olds the right to vote by tacking on a provision that 19 and 20 year old boys must have haircuts that 'conform to military standards.'

'When you accept the responsibility of a citizen, you should look like a citizen,' commented Senator J.W. Myers of Evanston, Wyo.

chemistry and physics. They've grown to fear and resent literature. They write like they've been lobotomized. But, Jesus, can they follow orders! Freshmen come up to me with an essay and ask if I want it folded and whether their name should be in the upper right hand corner.

And I want to cry and kiss them and caress their poor tortured heads.

Students don't ask that orders make sense. They give up expecting things to make sense long before they leave elementary school. Things are true because the teacher says they're true. At a very early age we all learn to accept 'two truths,' as did certain medieval churchmen. Outside of class, things are true to your tongue, your fingers, your stomach, your heart. Inside class, things are true by reason of authority.

Back in kindergarden, you found out that teachers only love children who stand in nice straight lines. And that's where it's been at ever since. Nothing changes except to get worse.

What school amounts to, for white and black kids alike, is a 12-year course in how to be slaves. What else could explain what I see in a freshman class?

They've got that slave mentality: obliging and ingratiating on the surface but hostile and resistant underneath.

As do black slaves, students vary in their awareness of what's going on. Some recognize their own put-on for what it is and even let their rebellion break through to the surface now and then. Others - including most of the 'good students' - have been more deeply brainwashed. They honest-to-God believe in grades, in busy work, in General Education requirements. They're pathetically eager to be pushed around. They are like those old grey-haired house niggers you can still find in the South who don't see what all the fuss is about because Mr. Charlie 'treats us real good.'

The saddest cases among both black slaves and student slaves are the ones who have so thoroughly introjected their master's values that their anger is all turned inward. At Cal State these are the kids for whom every low grade is torture, who stammer and shake when they speak to a professor, who go through emotional crisis every time they're called upon in class. You can recognize them easily at finals time. Their faces are festooned with fresh pimples; their bowels boil audibly across the room. If there really is a Last Judgment, then the parents and teachers who created these wrecks are going to burn in hell.

So students are niggers. It's time to find out why, and to do this, we have to take a long look at Mr. Charlie.

The teachers I know best are college professors. Outside the classroom and taken as a group, their most striking characteristic is timidity.


Just look at their working conditions. At a time when even migrant workers have begun to fight and win, college professors are still afraid to make more than a token effort to improve their pitiful economic status.


Professors were no different when I was an undergraduate at UCLA during the McCarthy era; it was like a cattle stampede as they rushed to cop out. And, in more recent years, I found that my being arrested in sit-ins brought from my colleagues not so much approval or condemnation as open-mouth astonishment. 'You could lose your job!'

I'm not sure why teachers are so timid. It could be that academic training itself forces a split between thought and action. It might also be that the tenured security of a teaching job attracts timid persons and furthermore, that teaching, like police work, pulls in persons who are unsure of themselves and need weapons and other external trappings of authority.




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