

LETTERS

of organic illness and certain types of medicine. I would be delighted to know if professor Rahman has in fact established that there is such a relationship.

If he has and if he will inform me of it. My job could be made so much easier. In the meantime we all have our favourite books, books we would be delighted to recommend to our friends. (2) About the Philosophical: I do not know how professor Rahman has come to know with such certainty what the goals and 'proper' objects of philosophy are. I would however, in denial of what I interpret the professor to be implying, assert that there has been every bit as much interesting and useful philosophy

generated out of the Hegelian Absolute (Tower of Babel?) as the Wittgensteinian fly-bottle uncorked. As an empirical assertion this seems no less (or more) arbitrary than the professors.

Does too much high flown philosophy ruin the Cadre?

What about a little low blown psychology?

I am at a loss to discover how the professor determines sense and why he feels he can term the premises of what appears to me to be a mixed hypothetical conditional argument. 'Major' and 'Minor' ? More fundamentally, I am distressed that the professor seems unable to



penetrate beyond the linguistic and logical aspects of Mr. Dalton's confused presentation to what I see as the genuine philosophic preoccupations it attempts to express.

Ken Butler

Dear Editor,

Mr. Pridmore stigmatizes me first as a "lax utopian liberal" and second as a "reactionary conservative apologist" before casting me into the pit with those misguided wretches who believe that man is intrinsically good. (He is quite wrong in this latter ascription. No one has a dimmer or darker image of human nature than yours truly.) Then he ends up agreeing with me completely -- almost.

Mr. Pridmore thinks that "the grading system has many demerits" and that exams "measure only how well one can cram." He urges "cutting down on exams," "encouraging student research," "increasing contact of teacher and student," and "making our grading system more flexible." No argument. This is what I preached, by name or implication in my article. This is what I have been trying to practice in my own courses. I also agree fully with the need, on the part of both students and teachers, for "stated and implied commitments" and the setting of "concrete goals."

Where Mr. Pridmore and I part company is his conviction that because "the flesh is weak" students must be bullied, by various egregious carrot-and-stick devices, into doing what the academic Establishment thinks is good for them. He misses one of the main -- and best documented -- points of my article, which is that these coercive techniques certainly do not contribute significantly to learning. Learning, I have always supposed, is

the fundamental reason why we are all here at the university.

No amount of lamentation about the laziness, dishonesty and general depravity of mankind will alter the obvious fact that the orthodox system of university evaluation is a dismal failure, both as a measure of educational attainment and a predictor of career success. Mr. Pridmore concedes as much, although he waffles by suggesting that cramming and "other student survival tactics" are a good introduction to the business world. It could be argued with similar logic that campus politics was good training for the Watergate conspirators.

In his obsession with authority control, and external discipline, Mr. Pridmore assumes that student centered courses have to be "bird-courses". He takes it for granted that unstructured, non-competitive courses "give (students) nothing to do and no reason to do it" and that a course employing self-evaluation must by definition be a "do-nothing" course.

My own reading and experience leads me to a quite different conclusion: that in the final analysis, a learning situation or "course" will be just as meaningful to each individual student as he or she wishes to make it. The plain lesson of educational psychology, as evidenced by the work of B.F. Skinner, Jean Piaget, John Holt, Jerome Bruner, and other, is that a student must be receptive to learning if it is to be implanted. Coercive learn-

ing of material of any degree of profundity will never take hold, because the inner man will resist it. To paraphrase the old rural adage, "you can lead a student to the waters of knowledge but you can't make him drink the stuff."

It is not easy for Canadians, trained to believe in original sin and the sanctity of the work ethic, to jettison these time-honoured but psychologically inadequate concepts. Yet they are going to have to make this difficult readjustment if universities and other schools are to give students the educational experiences they must have to cope effectively with an increasingly impersonal, exploitative, and predatory society.

Don M. Creiger

Dear Editor,

I'm not sure why I write this - I guess I'm mixed up and I figure that you should be able to help and maybe if some other people feel this way, they might use your paper to help me and other people like me.

I consider myself average but I guess I'm different because I see my fellow students and life as superficial. I, like you, have questions. My biggest question and disappointment is, why isn't there a response to what you're saying? We have Christians on campus, DON'T WE? We have people who live democracy, DON'T WE? We have people who are happy, DON'T WE? We have people who fi-

con't. pg. 9