

LIFE IN THE IVORY TOWER

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

by: George Barry.

So here we are at university, learning all kinds of wonderful things about protazoas and digestion, Shakespeare and Chaucer, Andre Gunder-Frank and John Locke, debits and credits, Sharps and flats, quantum mechanics and Mazlov's hierarchy etc., but just what the hell does all this crap have to do with real life? Child prostitutes roam the streets of our major cities, the poor die any number of horrible ways throughout the world, old people are forgotten by modern society and the general slime and vomit of a corrupt civilization spews forth over us all. And here we sit being taught the intricacies of Einsteinian physics and the Romantic movement. What price do we pay for our supposed quest for knowledge? Well, we forget that for most of the world life is still a tooth and nail struggle for survival. Reality becomes distorted in the intellectual sepulchre and we begin to conveniently forget about such things.

But then there will be those who will jump up and down and shout "But, gosh, golly! Hey there fella! We are being kept abreast of reality! After all, isn't that part of a LIBERAL education." Horse excrement! I think it was John Kenneth Galbraith who said it best when he candidly admitted that the prime motivation for his achieving such heady academic heights lied in his overwhelming desire to escape the manual labour of the farm.

And that's it, isn't it? Enough of this "we're here to be enlightened" bullshit. We're here because we want to put as much distance between ourselves and the sliminess of

life as we possibly can. I definitely believe that it is the lot of young people to rebel. In the 60's they rebelled by attacking the problems of society and attempting to destroy them. The motto of today's youth might well be "Ignorance is the better part of Valor". We either wrap ourselves in our world here at the university and bathe in the glories of a LIBERAL education, or we wander aimlessly about in a semi-comatose state which even the academic fantasy land can't penetrate.

But all of this ranting solves nothing. It distorts the problems to a greater degree than they are already distorted. In many ways it too is crap. The importance of Einstein, the importance of Shakespeare, the importance of knowledge in general is simply too great to be totally obliterated by any system of education. And while it is true that we are all more or less victims of a kind of ivory tower syndrome, it is not the fault of the system, entirely, but also of ourselves as students. We are the ones who ultimately decide what we are going to do with what we've learned. When we go crawling out of our intellectual womb into the garbage heap which has been left us by the preceding generations, we will carry with us some of the ideas of some of the great minds of Science, Art and Philosophy and hopefully that will help us to do something constructive. Just because we may not have learned how to balance the books or split the atom or conjugate whatever the hell it is we're supposed to conjugate, does not mean that we will be swallowed up in the abyss of our own stupidity. Even the semi-comatose ones among us will, hopefully, have had something hammered into their heads and will look at the world in an ever so slightly different way than before.

Maybe when the Vet College comes and people start stepping into cowpies on their way to Philosophy seminars or Policy group meetings, reality will seep into our little world to an even greater degree. Who knows? More importantly, who cares? I know you don't, dear reader. You poor insignificant glob of meat and bones. The closest you've ever come to an intellectual experience with reality is listening to the little moral at the end of "Mork and Mindy". Say, I'll tell you what. I'll give you a chance to tell me what you think. Simply write me a nasty letter. Here's my address:

His Royal Highness, the Right Honorable, Lord Grand High Poobah. -27, Frozen Nuts Street, Inuvik, North West Territories, Canada.

- hope to hear from you soon!



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