

ADVICE and DISSENT

#13

15 October 1968

A Semi-Publication for the *live* Faculty of San Diego State College

BOARD OF EDITORS: Michael J. Carella (Philosophy), William Cheek (History)
Charles F. Dicken (Psychology), Karl Keller (English)

TWO VIEWS OF THE NINE-HOUR TEACHING LOAD:

AGAINST: A CONTINUING EFFORT

We will continue our effort to find an articulate defender of the twelve-hour load on campus, but we are up against the wall.

FOR: IDEALISM AND DISILLUSIONMENT: A MEDITATION

A young historian once was invited to dine at the home of Allan Nevins. Naturally thrilled at the opportunity to sit at the feet of the giant, he mentally composed enough dazzlingly brilliant remarks to last through ten such evenings. But when the night finally arrived, and he found himself among the guests in the Nevins household, the great man himself was nowhere to be seen. All during the cocktail hour, and even when the company filed into the dining room, he still did not appear. Finally, as the guests were sitting down, they were startled to see, like a passage from a Gothic novel, a panel at one end of the room swing open, and Mr. Nevins step out. When the meal was over, he left by the same way. For the remainder of the evening, the young historian thought he could hear in the distance the faintly muffled pecking of a typewriter. And he suddenly knew how Mr. Nevins had been able to write all those books.

Were he confronted by the twelve-hour teaching load and the crowded classes at San Diego State College, one suspects that even the persistence of an Allan Nevins might falter. Certainly those of us who are somewhat less dedicated and less well endowed with energy and intellectual ability--that is to say, most academicians here or anywhere--find this situation discouraging both to scholarship and to teaching.

Let us consider the typical young faculty member, carrying his newly struck Ph.D. diploma, who comes to seek humanistic refuge in his new life at San Diego State. Although wearied from the strain of mastering mountains of mind-bursting bibliographies and historiographical essays, and by the concentrated effort at completing a research assignment (which he confidently expects to rework for publication in the near future), the young man enters his new job full of plans and expectations. He is pleased to hear the faculty, students, and administrators, each with a minimum of self-consciousness, salute the school's virtues. He listens attentively as they tell him in happy chorus that the college is really a university in all but name. He attends meetings where with one part rhetoric and romance and one part happy realism, the Grover Whelans of academe fill him with impressive statistics about the college: the "famous firsts," the pathbreaking research done in Departments Eureka and Behold, the exciting teaching of Drs. Show and Tell, who inspire their students to commit themselves to learning and life. The young man savors these good tidings, innocently unaware that his physical and, more importantly, spiritual debilitation is about to begin. Classes open. He has his first experience with 150 students and four three-hour classes per week. Early on, he is forced to conclude sadly that the teacher-scholar ideal must remain only an ideal.

In time, the ideal itself may all but disappear under a thick encrustation of cynicism, rationalization, and self-deception. From its beginning as a physical hindrance,

the twelve-hour load can grow to be a psychological crutch: the excuse for all kinds of academic sidetrackings and shortcomings. For, once he decides he cannot do a good job of teaching, not to mention research and writing, under the given conditions, the faculty member is as subject to temptations as was Eve. He may assume the role of civic booster or of ubiquitous committeeman, so busy that possibilities for scholarship are completely eliminated. Or he may (with some justification) reason that "my family can use the money," and "I might as well teach 15 hours as 12, I can't get any work done anyway," and so slide into the routine of teaching night courses at other institutions. As for his regular course work, how easy it becomes to retreat to old lecture notes or to lean on superficial but readily available summaries. And he may find himself more and more often sprawled before the magic lantern or under the golden sun, and less and less often seeking out the magic sciences and golden humanities.

This sad transformation of eager young scholar to academic drone, with too many hours and too many students cast as the villains, may seem overly melodramatic, and indeed, as with all parables, it is greatly over-simplified. (For example, it doesn't consider the possibility that the young man will neglect his teaching so that he may produce the scholarly work that will enable him to flee the twelve-hour load forever.) Yet I think there is truth in it.

Certainly, if man's life is to be sanely and productively and decently lived, society must have its teacher-scholars, men who are given precious, uncluttered Time, to reflect, to study, to write, to prepare for their classrooms. Nine units of teaching (and small classes) are minimum requirements if the college truly expects its faculty members to make a scholarly contribution now and then and to be good schoolteachers. Only under such conditions can master and pupil even begin to ponder man's imperfections, to chase after the human heart, to celebrate man, to wonder about it all.

- William Cheek (History)

WHY THE FUSS? A NOTE ON THE "MARCUSE ISSUE"

Under the guise of moderation and reasonableness, some of my colleagues dismiss or denigrate the concern over the political attacks on Herbert Marcuse and the gross pressures to deny him a continuing appointment at the University of California, San Diego. Those colleagues tell me "it is the university's problem, not ours." But that confuses allegiance to an educational bureaucracy (UCSD or SDSC) with our intellectual and human obligations, which should hardly be determined by those parochial and mediocre institutions. They also tell me that "the administration and faculty of the university took a strong and effective stand in defending Marcuse." Just how effective, and honest the spokesmen of UCSD have been remains to be seen. However, none of the statements I know of were very forceful in countering the vicious and still continuing attacks on the essential nature of higher education and intellectual integrity. But I am then told, the administrators (and their faculty equivalents) can't really be expected "to take positions of strong principle." If that is so, what are they doing around universities and colleges? Their only relevance, beyond bookkeeping, would be to find and foster and defend a number of Marcuse-like faculty.

The arguments I hear from some colleagues ignore the central issue of the absolute necessity of radical critics to the intellectual activity of any academic institution. Instead I hear "academic freedom" qualified into meaninglessness by "grave doubts" about "Radical extremism." Since these self-defined "moderates" seem, like the local rightist politicians and press, both ill-informed and incompetent to discuss Marcuse's views, it becomes difficult to argue with them. "Radical extremism" is a slippery measuring stick. (I better admit that I am probably disqualified from using such a club since Professor Marcuse once criticized *my* views as a bit extreme.) Surely Marcuse's arguments deserve intense debate, including his rather traditional--almost neoclassical--views of philosophy, art, tolerance and political force. In an authentic institution of higher learning, they would be so discussed, and I can well imagine a libertarian critic objecting to Marcuse's conservatism.

But of course we don't have many authentic universities or colleges. They would be places primarily dedicated to teachers and students with developed critical views that go to the roots of our society and culture. Which is what Marcuse attempts. At this historical juncture, no faculty of half a hundred (much less our one thousand) could consider itself engaged in serious and relevant intellectual activity if it did not

overtly include several neoMarxists, not less than three divergent anarchists, an avowed nihilist, and a psychedelic guru, among others. This assumes, of course, that academic institutions should be intellectually pertinent and alive (and that more appropriate custodial situations can be found for the now dominant technicians, antiquarians, and time-serving faculty bureaucrats). Granted, our hired education reveals other, non-intellectual, functions, such as games, vocational training, keeping late-adolescents in custody, indoctrination for corporate competition, supporting you and me, etc. But the serious issues we should concern ourselves with center on our intellectual engagement, or its absence. At least our local bigot combine, in spite of the militant stupidity of the Copley-Legion-rightist-Republicans, can raise, upside down, the question. What does puzzle me is: Are they so incompetent, or is UCSD so deficient, that we only have *one* Marcuse case? Sadly we must suspect that the university's tone and quality must be almost as flat and mushy as that of the state college.

Marcuse, then, is to be defended not on the weakly negative ground of "tolerance," and not on his undeniable eminence as a social philosopher and teacher, and not on his odd celebrity in current dissent (partly a trick of the titillating mass media), but because *the Marcuses are what higher education is really about*. Or should be. We define and defend our intellectual commitment, our better academic aspirations, when we support a Marcuse.

Our self-interest at San Diego State in the Marcuse issue also takes narrower forms. For the threat happens here, as well as in our suburbs. Yet one of my liberal colleagues assures me that "these isolated threats against academic freedom don't spread, as we know from the past cases here." I hope he is right that the assassination threat Marcuse received remains isolated melodrama, though given the pathology of our society, violence seems likely to appear almost at any time. But on the more general conditions of freedom at San Diego State College my colleague is, at best, ignorant. I suppose the past case he has in mind goes back to the "McCarthy purges" and the firing of a state college professor (partly by the efforts of the same people and press as with Marcuse). True, when I came here a decade ago there were no overt firings, but I hadn't been around long when a sardonic comment of mine on the local political atmosphere brought this advice from an administrator (finally, I am pleased to note, retired): "If you get in any trouble for your politics, you'll get no help from us. You'll be out." And that threat was in excellent accord with the dominant political atmosphere of San Diego State College and most of its faculty.

For what is called "academic freedom" turns out to be less a matter of striking "cases" than a pervasive atmosphere and attitude, the intellectual spirit of the place. That has never been very good at San Diego State College. The repressive tone and temper, of course, rarely appears evident to those who never test it. The glitter looks warmly bright on a distant cold sea. Since most of our colleagues never get near any controversial waters, those who do must try to splash them into a bit of academic and political awareness.

As Marcuse astutely argues in his books, much of what passes for moderation and reasonableness in our society simply provides another, and more shrewdly dangerous, style of authoritarian repression. When it doesn't work, out come the threats and clubs which it disguises. It is not moderation but stupidity to refuse to see threats to our own freedom when attacks are made on it next door. It is not reasonableness but anti-intellectualism and repression to refuse to create the conditions and atmosphere which would give radically critical views the place they merit in any serious intellectual community.

As well as energetically defend Marcuse, we need to find and foster more such critics. Nothing less will do; otherwise, the college only deserves to be abolished. That, as I see it, is what the fuss is really about.

- Kingsley Widmer (English)

RECRUITMENT FAILURE: REFLECTIONS OF ONE WHO DECLINED TO SERVE

[Professor Teichner, an able psychologist in the field of perception, was offered a Professorship at the College. He has given us permission to reprint his letter declining this offer. - eds.]

Dear Dr. Love:

As you know, I have been seriously interested in San Diego State College, but I have come to the conclusion that I cannot accept the position offered. There are a number of factors which have led me to this decision, none of which have anything to do with the Department of Psychology. I am impressed by the very high quality of the staff and its dedication to research and teaching. I can see that both of these functions are carried out at a very high level of accomplishment and, as I commented to one of its members, the department is more qualified to offer the Ph.D. than are a number of institutions which do offer it.

The reasons for my decision are both personal and as reactions to certain conditions which exist. On the personal side, it is really much too late to resign from my present position as this would place Northeastern in the position of not being able to replace me for the coming year. Also, on the personal side, it would be unrealistic to set up courses and a laboratory while still maintaining my Harvard research even if only for a year. Both would suffer as a result.

In terms of existing conditions--well, it is hard to know what to select to say. From what I can gather from discussions both at the college and with others outside of it, the California system of higher education is presently in a state of financial and administrative crisis. Even when this was not so, the state college system appears to have been treated as of a secondary importance as compared to the university system. Whether this should have been the case is not the main issue in my thinking. What is at issue at the moment is that at a time when the entire system is having serious difficulties, it can be expected that the state college system will suffer even more than usual as compared to the universities. Thus, were one to move into the system, he could expect less increasing interference and more support in the university setting.

I am quite convinced that your Department of Psychology should be offering the Ph.D. I am also convinced that you will not be able to do this. But even if you should, there will be heart-breaking problems. In particular, since it would have to be a collaborative offering with one of the universities, it would mean that the equivalent professors at the two institutions would be receiving different salaries and other forms of support. This inequitable kind of situation could become intolerable. In fact, it is intolerable as things are now. Related to this is the fact that while I am flattered by being offered the highest possible salary, I am appalled at how low that is compared to the University of California and to other institutions with which I am familiar whose programs are comparable to yours. The fact that your highest salary is less than my present one is of less concern to me than is the fact that it is your highest salary, whereas I still have a long way to go before I will reach a ceiling in my present job, and, in fact, I am not really sure that there is a ceiling in a sense.

You already have a fine graduate program through the master's level and because you are operating at a graduate level, I find it hard to believe that your professorial staff has a twelve-hour teaching requirement. I have not had to teach more than six hours in years and years with or without a grant to provide "release" time. Graduate faculty should be doing research as part of its academic responsibility and under the worst circumstances should be allowed at least three hours of credit for this purpose. In addition, with increasing rank comes increasing responsibility to the institution so that at the very least full professors and associate professors should not be expected to carry those additional responsibilities and teach the exorbitant twelve-hour load. While I recognize that released time is provided when specific extra responsibilities are assigned, I object to the lack of recognition of the many "non-line item" responsibilities.

An associated fear on my part concerns the rotating chairmanship, which is a good principle in one sense but which cannot but fail in providing consistent quality of administration. Even more important, however, is the fact that a rotating chairmanship cannot provide scientific direction and leadership to the department. This is not a criticism of the present chairman but of the fact that he is not in a position to develop more than a federation of some sort and as a result the shaping of the department really falls into the hands of the division chairman, who cannot be close enough to it or to the field of study

to provide meaningful leadership. Your system should work admirably in a four-year undergraduate program but I cannot see its success at the graduate level excepting as the graduate program may be forced to remain as an extension of the undergraduate program rather than as the preparation of professionals. Furthermore, your department is of such size that I think it should have both a department head and an administrative assistant. I marvel that you have been able to keep things going at their present efficient level and assume the chairman is doing this at great cost to his own professional activities.

Again I wish to thank you for your offer and for your patience and that of your staff with me while I was considering it.

Sincerely yours,

Warren H. Teichner
Professor of Psychology
Northeastern University

SOYBEANS DON'T MOO

Chemists and nutrition experts recently have demonstrated that soybeans, when they are variously processed, substitute successfully, yes, even tastefully, for beef, poultry, and seafood -- promising variety to American diners and life to starving countries and communities whose agricultural facilities and/or religion prevent them from consuming the "real thing." Most important, soybeans produce a delicious milk which more than meets the protein and vitamin content standards set by the USDA. Soybeans, furthermore, are much more economical than cows, yielding ten times as much protein per acre as does damp-nosed, cud-chewing, soft-brown-eyed Bessie, who plucks a clover here and an alfalfa there as she winds her haphazard way over the lea to deliver herself of her two-and-a-half (Jersey) to five (Guernsey) gallons of milk.

Soybeans, then, are tasteful, nutritious, economical, and efficient, and, it seems likely, will replace cows altogether--to the delight of small boys who find driving home the herds a chore, of ancient Irish crones who eke out a bare subsistence selling the product of "dewsilky" kine to penniless customers, of young, subsidy-minded farmers who would rather put government dollars into a new tractor than into another milking machine. (The dairy business lost 4000 farmers to other enterprises last year.) But--one cannot scratch a soybean between the horns, or curry its flanks until they gleam, or listen at dusk to its bell counterpointed by muted inimitable lowing. Alas! Shall we be forced to give up cows for soybeans?

Graduate students and their teachers -- especially in the humanities -- face a comparable dilemma. The soybean professors urge that graduate courses be taught by those who guarantee a maximum yield per acre--their guarantee based on that which seems to be clearly demonstrable: their list of publications in scholarly journals (most of which--I hasten to add my vote to Edmund Wilson's--are unreadable), of books published, their spines bearing the mark of elite publishers (many of these also unreadable; e.g. the works of the eminent M.I.T. Professor Noam Chomsky, whose scholarship and politics I wholly applaud, but whose style, curdled with passives, neologisms, clichés, and jargon, is as rank as a pot of beans left standing out too long.) These lists, like soybeans, are only as reliable as their grades. Some are fully formed, providing the greatest possible nutrition and flavor; others, crabbed, runty, indifferently cultivated, out of barren soil, give up barely a fibre or a drop of whey. To be published is creditable only if the works have something to say and are gracefully styled. One *Feeling and Form* (Langer) is worth a dozen *Sources of Value* (Pepper); one *Marat/Sade* is worth two dozen *Tiny Alices*. The late Charles Williams, if one can measure his dramatic output against his teaching record, was a much better teacher. And that delightful critic, essayist, motorcyclist, and playwright, Dorothy Sayers, was, according to one of her students, a dour, altogether formidable presence in a classroom.

The cow professors urge the more leisurely, whimsical, inefficient meander across the meadows of tradition--an attractive, but certainly less predictable and less secure method of obtaining results. Some milk will be wholesome and full of flavor, its yellow cream deserving to be poured over a compote of strawberries; and some milk will be so garlicky it can only be thrown to the pigs!

Perhaps I extend the metaphor too far. Simply, the need is for change--a more efficient and at the same time more humane method of graduate study. And perhaps the cows are only a fence away from the soybeans after all.

Graduate courses should be disputatious and contentious--a condition impossible if the protein content is low; the disputants need a knowledge of the past by which to measure the present. I certainly do not believe that the professors recommending the "problem" and "issue" course intend that it be based on unsupported irresponsible opinion; the approach to the material is obviously what they are examining. To have some knowledge of tradition surely presupposes a study of philosophical, literary, or historical periods. But the study of any period means only a study of an abstraction of it. Even that conservative upholder of tradition, T.S. Eliot, acknowledges that the material of art changes as it comes down to the present, accumulating different audience reactions and various critical comments along the way. Neither a Jonson nor a Coleridge can recreate for us the yeasty excitement and richness of the Elizabethan theater; neither a Swifitean haggis nor an Addisonian hasty pudding, even under the keen knife of a Dorothy George, will give up one tenth of the contents of the eighteenth century. And neither a Robert Brustein nor a Jan Kott can reproduce for us exactly a performance of *The Investigation* or of *King Lear*.

What to do, then? It seems almost too elementary to suggest that we supply the study with a carefully selected bibliography for each course and enough know-how to send him looking further in the libraries on his own. (If each instructor did this conscientiously we could eliminate the burdensome bibliography courses.) We can certainly accommodate our approaches to content to the contemporary scene. Some interesting parallels can be drawn, for instance, between Sainte Marherete's vision of the dragon and Burroughs' nightmares in *Naked Lunch*; between Boswell's *London Journal* and *Ulysses in Nighthtown*; between *Juliette* and *The Beard*. A little reflection reveals that hippies and Transcendentalists have much in common. Give students more say-so in the curriculum and more participation in the classroom. Such practices, I realize, are very demanding of the professor, for they force him to be even more diligent, to exercise the greatest intellectual integrity--he must suggest to students the extent of the curriculum, and he cannot do that without knowledge of the field; he must learn during class discussion to keep his mouth shut and not rob the student of the exquisite pleasure of discovering relationships (no matter how obvious they may seem) to his classmates. And isn't it possible that our students may turn up something valuable that we have missed altogether? The current worldwide revolution indicates that students are thoroughly dissatisfied with and find wholly inadequate the narrow, authoritarian, historical or specialist focus we have given them. Yes, Gen. William Booth's Army, Woolwich Arsenal, and Davenport Docks served Shaw as source material for *Major Barbara*; but what good is this knowledge to the student who is wondering what to do with his draft card? Far better for him to recognize that Sir Andrew Undershaft is as outrageously immoral to 1968 Americans as he was to 1905 Britons.

Who should conduct the graduate classes?

1. The Ph.D. (which, as Wilson puts it, should have been scrapped at the end of World War I with other German atrocities) is not a sufficient recommendation. All of us have known those who consider it simply another ID card, a "ticket" looted from some academic pentagon after a required number of pedantic strategies and skirmishes. There are some people on the State College faculties who don't have this loot who are better qualified to conduct graduate classes and seminars than some who do.

2. A list of publications is not sufficient. Even the dissertation does not qualify, its topic chosen sometimes with an eye to its value as a future test or at the suggestion of a committee chairman who pointed out that a study of Old Icelandic would enable a man to pick his own school and name his own salary. To add to comments made above, even if all articles and books are first rate, they do not make a good teacher. Some scholars simply cannot generate empathy, an ingredient essential to classroom communication.

3. Student testimony, even from competent graduates, is not sufficient evidence. A student squirming from the recent humiliation of a C or an F can often cancel out the evaluation of one who received an A. Graduate students have a number of problems made acute by the prejudices and predilections of the very instructors they are sometimes asked to judge.

4. Testimony from one's peers or superiors, unless they sat in on not just one or two but a considerable number of classes, is not sufficient evidence. And this practice has many drawbacks--the time involved for the observer and the damage to the equanimity of the instructor, to mention but two.

5. One possible way to determine the qualifications of a newcomer who wanted to teach at the graduate level (and it should be at his option) would be to schedule during the academic year a series of three public lectures on the topic he proposed to offer in his course or seminar. The quality of his lectures, the thoroughness of his bibliography, the liveliness of his post-lecture discussions would, it seems to me, more than determine his fitness. The benefits from such a procedure are obvious. It is conceivable that a person may skim the cream in one or even two lectures, hardly in three. The instructor, if he saw fit, could refine, revise, or alter his material according to how it was received. Students who attended these lectures would have an opportunity to discover whether they wished to study the subject more intensively in a seminar with the professor. Other faculty attending might discover ways to revise or refine, to implement, or make more lively, their own courses. And most important, this way of judging a man's worth would be infinitely more honest and just than the present methods stooped to.

To sum up: the most pressing need in graduate courses is to make them more efficient by humanizing them; i.e., don't warp the student to the content, rather adapt the content so that the student can cope with present issues, so that he can experience the literature as part of his life, rather than sacrifice his life to the literature. The person who wants to teach graduate courses should be given public opportunities to demonstrate his ability to do so; he should not be selected or rejected by hints and slanders gleaned from some student register or whispered innuendo in the faculty lounge or wash-room. He should not be selected solely on the basis of his publications or lack of them.

This way, we can all drink our soy-milk punch--and still hear Bessie moo.

- Jacqueline D. Tunberg (English)

THE PERIPATETIC PROFESSOR

Bumper sticker on a state car parked in front of the Administration Building this summer: "Love America or Leave It"!

Faculty parking stickers this semester are in the shape of a policeman's insignia!

Planners of the New Campus at San Diego State have been careful to leave no space for Free Speech or Riots. What kind of planning is that?

We would like to know the name of any member of the faculty or student body who has ever been invited to the home of President and Mrs. Love.

We have been informed that the most distinguished graduates of San Diego State are Art Linkletter and Gregory Peck.

Laws that were meant to be broken: State law minimum hourly pay is \$1.75; San Diego State pays its readers \$1.50.

Wow!