

“A Shocking Start for a Freshman” by Dick West

1) Today's thoughts are about a fine young girl, who is entering college as a freshman, and a mother who understandably is concerned about her daughter's proper development.

2) Recently they went to North Texas State in Denton for the preliminaries of registration. Seated in a small auditorium for orientation, the Dallas girl had a crudely printed leaflet dropped in her lap by students of the radical left. Remember, this was her first impression of college which, at its best, should tell one how to live properly in the best interests of herself and her country.

3) On the leaflet, the eye--which usually strays to the left--first sees the clenched fist symbolizing communism. At the top was this question: "What part are you going to play in a world in revolution?"

4) Right below that, the freshman girl is told that at North Texas State she would be educated to play certain roles, among them:

"Sucker--paying high tuition while the fat cats get fatter."

"Whore--selling your soul for a grade or degree."

"Ostrich--spending time with your head in a book learning irrelevant garbage while the world is erupting."

"Smack freak--addicted to the heroin of white, middle-class values."

There is more such trash, but the pamphlet concludes by urging the freshman to "come to the park at 7:30 tonight to dig on some music and to rap about where we are and what we can create."

5) The Dallas girl has been brought up to love her country, respect her parents, and to be decent and moral in her personal life. She is a regular church member.

6) After this experience, she next had to buy her textbooks—so hold on for another few minutes.

7) The text for freshman English is called Phase Blue. The preface notes that the text is the first to offer a "systems approach" to freshman English. It also provides "behavioral objectives" for the course and a procedure for "recycling the student"--whatever that means.

8) The girl's mother brought both the leaflet and the text to the News editorial office.

9) This text has 10 chapters, and here are some of the headings: "Violence in America," "The Black Rage," "Dialogue Between Generations," "Religion and Philosophy."

10) Each chapter has guest writers. Under "The Black Rage" the first article is "The Fire Now" by Eldridge Cleaver. Another is "Message to the Grassroots" by Malcolm X.

11) The first article in the book's first chapter is "Why Students Seize Power," by Louis Levine. The second is "The Pill and the Modern Woman." The fifth is "I Am the New Black," by Thee Smith.

12) Under the chapter "Religion and Philosophy," the third article is "God is Dead in Georgia," by Anthony Towner. Others are "The Decline of Religion" and "Should God Die?"

13) All of this, we presume, is what modern educational innovators call a "systems approach" designed to provide "behavioral objectives" for "recycling the student."

14) The authors, no doubt anticipating criticism, inserted Nixon's inaugural address and a piece by conservative columnist Bill Buckley. But the overall tone of the text is cynical, and as you scan through it you get the feeling that nothing is right about this country.

15) No wonder, then, the Dallas mother is indignant; after all, her daughter is a captive student who must read it.

16) Oh, yes--we forgot to list another article: "The Hidden Trend in Psychoanalysis," by Herbert Marcuse, the controversial professor under whom Angela Davis studied on two occasions. An admitted communist fired from UCLA, Miss Davis is now accused of murder and kidnapping in the August 7th escape attempt from the San Rafael courtroom that left four dead, including a judge.

17) Maybe this text--just maybe--could be justified as optional reading in some sociology course. But freshman English?

18) Regrettably we seem to be producing a new generation of young people who will never know the epigrammatic wisdom of Shakespeare, the literary paths of Addison and Carlyle, Keats singing of the beauty of art, the conscience of Dickens, Gray's "Elegy," or the poetic alliteration of Swinburne.

19) No. Instead they will have Malcolm X, the pill and the woman, the death of God, and Thee Smith--whoever that is. The student must be recycled, you know.

20) The most durable foundations for a better future for humanity are to be found, as Dr. Bliss Perry of Harvard reminded, in the "time-tested" classics of history, literature, and religion.

21) Milton, Thoreau, Emerson, Wordsworth, Burke, Lincoln—are we to lock them out of the classroom and let their thoughts gather dust on the shelf of desuetude?

22) No wonder then the taxpayer and parent object to financing the elimination and degradation of everything they hold dear—the Anglo-Saxon concept of justice, the right of the individual to rise on his own, the value of hard work and thrift, love of country and the binding ties of family, home, and church.

23) Are we to rip and sever, little by little, that civilized fabric so carefully stitched for us by great minds of the past?

24) Everything goes down stream in time, except the words and example of a few great men who "lie like a rock in the bed of a river"—as someone said of Justice Holmes when he went to his grave.

25) But the modern trend in so many halls of learning is to let them float, with the amoeba and scum, to an uncertain destination in the sea.

26) We hope today's recycled students can build a better America and a better world. They should start with gratitude for their heritage. They must respect the past as they look to the future. No worthwhile task should be too foreboding, and into their work must go an eager sacrifice of love for which no money can pay.

27) Nothing in their dreams is impossible if they forge ahead, as Milton said of Cromwell, with "faith and matchless fortitude." But how much inspirational guidance will they get from Eldridge Cleaver or Herbert Marcuse?

(Reprinted with permission of the Dallas Morning News)