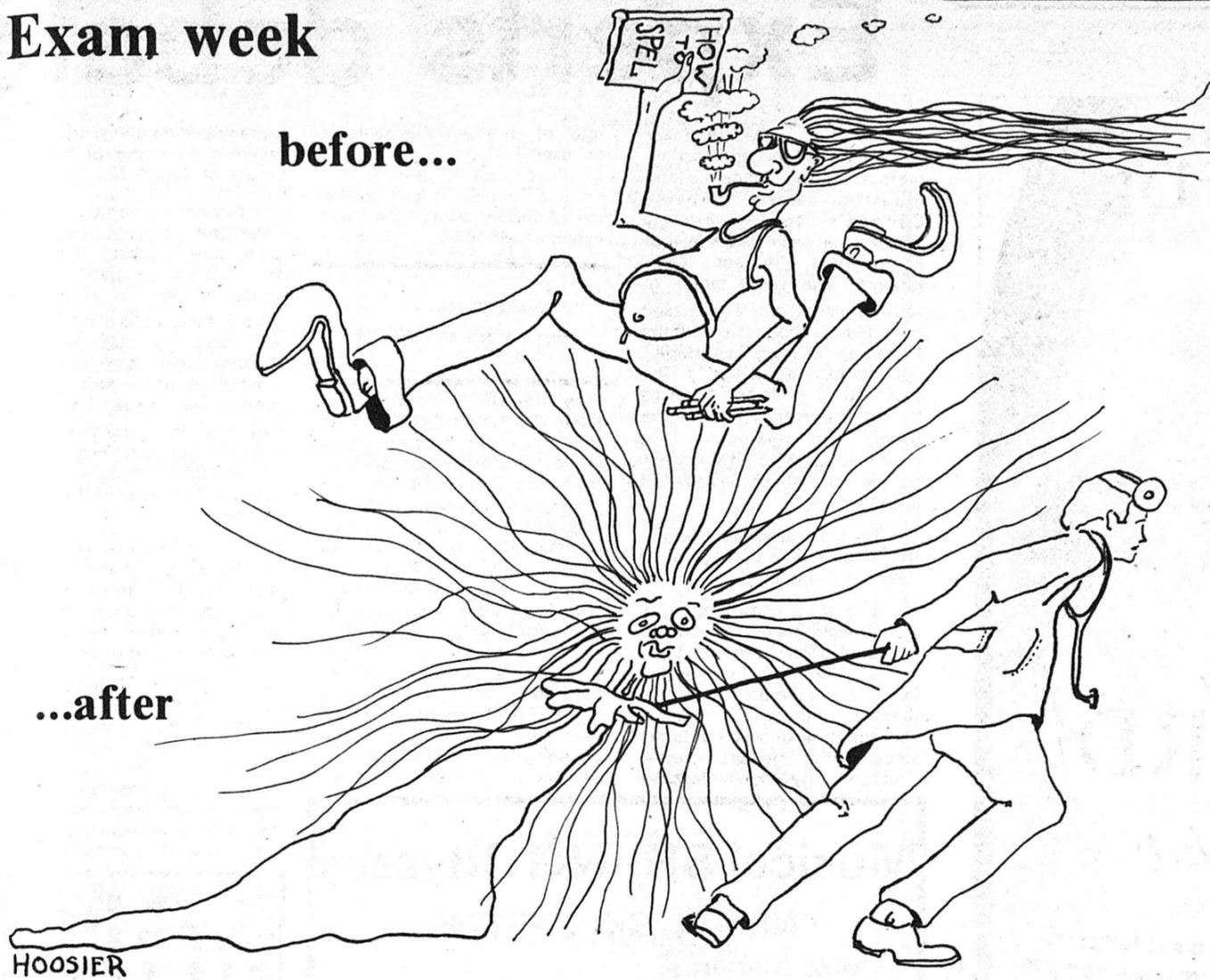


# Exam week

before...

...after



## The only thing you learn at university is that you don't learn at university

COMMENT

MICHIGAN (ZNS-CUP) - A psychology professor who claims he has studied college students for 45 years concludes that the average student learns almost nothing.

Professor Theodore Newcomb, teaching at the University of Michigan, says he has found that all college does for people is give them a degree which certifies that they are college graduates and enables them to find work.

Newcomb says that the average college student does not learn much - and quickly forgets even that.

\*\*\*\*\*

Considering the increasing amount of difficulty, college and university grads experience these days in finding jobs specifically linked with their educations, particularly with arts or general science degrees, it might be well worth some thought as to the use of going through with one's education.

When you come right down to it, very few people could care less about your education in history or literature when you're looking for a job. Very few students, according to an article in this month's Harper's magazine (entitled "Sis-boom-bah-humbug"), are finding that their educations can be applied to today's world or are relevant to what they will be doing once they leave college or university.

I'm not going to give a treatise on what the article states regarding students' goals, aspirations, or accomplishments following their sojourns through the various ivy halls of higher learning. You'll have to read the article for that.

But what I would like to get you thinking on are some of the comments raised by the article.

Here are bits and pieces of what appeared:

"When any scholar is able to read Tully or such like

classical Latin author ex tempore, and make and speake true Latin in verse and prose suo (ut aiunt) marte (without any assistance whatever), and decline perfectly the paradigms of nouns and verbes in ye Greeke tongue, then may hee bee admitted into ye college, nor shall any claime admission before such qualification."

Seventeenth-century Harvard admission requirement. Quoted in *Scaling the Ivy Wall*, by Howard Greene and Robert Minton, 1975

### Things I learned Freshman Year

1. Charlemagne either died or was born or did something with the Holy Roman Empire in 800.

2. By placing one paper bag inside another paper bag you can carry home a milk shake in it.

3. There is a double l in the middle of "parallel."

4. Powder rubbed on the chin will take the place of a shave if the room isn't very light.

5. French nouns ending in "aion" are feminine.

6. Almost everything you need to know about a subject is in the encyclopedia.

7. A tasty sandwich can be made by spreading peanut butter on raisin bread.

8. A floating body displaces its own weight in the liquid in which it floats.

9. A sock with a hole in the toe can be worn inside out with comparative comfort.

10. The chances are against filling an inside straight.

11. There is a law in economics called The Law of Diminishing Returns, which means that after a certain margin is reached returns begin to diminish. This may not be correctly stated, but there is a law by that name.

12. You begin tuning a mandolin with A and tune the other strings from that.

Robert Benchley, "What College Did to Me," 1921

\*"If I were founding a university I would found first a smoking room; then when I had a little more money in hand I would found a dormitory; then after that, or more probably with it, a decent reading room and a library. After that if I still had more money that I couldn't use, I would hire a professor and get some textbooks."

Stephen Leacock (1869-1944)

\*"All my life I'd told myself studying and reading and writing and working like mad was what I wanted to do, and it actually seemed to be true. I did everything well enough and got all A's, and by the time I made it to college nobody could stop me."

I was college correspondent for the town Gazette and editor of the literary magazine and secretary of Honor Board, which deals with academic and social offenses and punishments - a popular office - and I had a well-known women poet championing me for graduate school at the biggest universities in the East, and promises of full scholarships all the way, and now I was apprenticed to the best editor on an intellectual fashion magazine, and what did I do but balk and balk like a dull cart horse?...

For the first time in my life... I felt dreadfully inadequate. The trouble was, I had been inadequate all along. I simply hadn't thought about it.

The one thing I was good at was winning scholarships and prizes, and that era was coming to an end."

Sylvia Plath  
The Bell Jar, 1971

### Remarks found on essay papers

Perhaps the only thing worse than the style of this peice is your proofreading job. Then there was your style - wooden, choppy, insolicitous use of language, all manner of

dangling and split flora and fauna. Generally it sounded like you had glued this prose together. (And then left the paper out in the rain.)

Christine Heyrman, English

\*You write better when you don't think.

Tom Leitch, English

\*This paper is a joke. Score: Playboy 7  
Esquire 3  
Science 0

Robert Cook, Biology

\*Crock of shit.

Anonymous  
-The Yale Daily News Magazine, March 5, 1975.

\*Selected remarks of Yale professors on student papers: You're a fascist.

Robert Wyman, Biology

\*Bullshit, crap, this is ridiculous.

Edward Mendelson, English

\*Grade: F. If you had given me only 15 pages of bullshit I could have given you a C. But for 55 pages I have to give you an F.

Anonymous, Philosophy

\*Where did you get these ideas? From Sesame Street? An illiterate high-school teacher?

Edward Mendelson, English

\*You will realize that I am but a minor divinity and am under the force of fate as mentioned by Zeus-Kagan which has ordered that ten points be subtracted from your grade for lateness.

TA for Donald Kagan, Classics

\*This is very badly written - incorrect, inexpressive, lumbering, repetitious, with no sense of proportion, no regard for the assignment. Do not do this to me again.

William Wimsatt, English

# Gateway

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