

CREAM RISES TO THE TOP?

M. DIBDIN

English 210 Section 01 Essay #1 Due October 28th.

ANSWER ONE OF THE FOLLOWING (Approx. 750 words)

- 1) In his preface to *The Estuary of Rita Joe* Chief Dan George writes "The message of Rita Joe is true - this I wish to make clear. The manner in which the author got his message across is another matter." What distinction is the chief making here? Is it relevant to the play?
- 2) Describe in detail the metaphors of Kofi in *The Tomorrow-Tamer*.
- 3) Both *The Estuary of Rita Joe* and *The Tomorrow-Tamer* deal with the problems that arise at the interface of two cultures. Do you think either work offers any satisfactory solution to these problems?
- 4) Explain, with examples, how you would turn *either*
 - (a) *The Estuary of Rita Joe* into a short story
 - or
 - (b) *The Tomorrow-Tamer* into a play or film-script.

Try and evaluate what would be gained and lost by such a transposition.

ANY FORM OF PRESENTATION WILL BE ACCEPTED (TYPING, LITHOGRAPH, ENGRAVING, SELF-SCREEN, ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT, COMPUTER PRINTOUT, SCRAM, ETC.).

SUBJECT ONLY TO INSTABILITY.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO WRITE ON BOTH SIDES OF THE PAPER AT ONCE.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
Department of English
EDMONTON 7, Alberta

MEMORANDUM TO: Marion Norman

Sony this is late

M. D. D.

1. Mr. Dibdin's essay assignment. The memo at the upper right was attached to the copy he sent to Marion Norman.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

TO: Mr. Michael Dibdin
Department of English

DATE: October 6, 1971

FROM: J. W. Bilisland, Associate Chairman
Department of English

Dear Mr. Dibdin:

You will find attached hereto a zerox copy of the first essay assignment which you distributed to your section of English 210, and with this a copy of the memo which accompanied it when you turned it in to Sister Marion Norman. Sister Marion has asked me my opinion of both of these.

I am afraid, like Sister Marion, I am disturbed by the note which follows the four essay topics: I suppose that you intended it to be amusing, but it seems to me that it is both pointless and entirely misleading in tone. If I were one of your students I should assume that the essay counted for very little in your eyes. I strongly urge that your instructions henceforth be to the point and so couched that your students will have good reason to take their assignments seriously.

I am equally disturbed by your memo, and must ask that henceforth you address members of the faculty by their customary titles. I should have thought that this word of caution was unnecessary.

Yours sincerely,

J. W. Bilisland

JWB/js
Attachment

cc: Sister Marion Norman

2. The letter Bilisland sent to Dibdin after receiving a complaint from Norman.

October 7, 1971

Dear Dr. Bilisland,

I have received your letter and considered your comments on my essay assignment and my memo to Sister Marion.

With regard to the former you seem anxious that the students "will have good reason to take their assignments seriously." In my experience of 210 essays the dangers of flippancy are far outweighed by those stemming from an attempt to be solemn and unoriginal in the belief that this will produce good grades. It was to counter such an attempt that I included the note. I quite understand your not being amused by it since it was not intended to amuse you but the students, in which aim it succeeded. Concerning your remark that "if I were one of your students I should assume that the essay counted for very little in your eyes", I must point out that if you were one of my students you would have attended my class on Tuesday when I explained in great detail what kind of performance I expected from them in their essays, and consequently would have no cause for such an assumption.

Referring to the matter of the memo you write: "I should have thought that this word of caution was unnecessary." I totally agree with you on this point. I am sorry if you and Sister Marion were disturbed by the omission of her title. I had no idea that any university person would allow himself to be disturbed by such things. Since this is apparently not the case I shall be more careful in future.

Yours faithfully,

M. J. Dibdin

3. Dibdin's reply to Bilisland.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

TO: M. J. Dibdin
Department of English

DATE: October 12, 1971

FROM: E. J. Rose, Chairman
Department of English

I am in receipt of several communications between you and Professors Norman and Bilisland. Please don't make the mistake of answering this letter, but read it with care.

I suggest you make an effort to grow up and put an end to your flip, sophomoric, discourteous, and sarcastic behavior towards senior members of this Department who are charged with the unenviable task of supervising your teaching (God help them). Be odd on your own time. Originality never dwells with silliness. You are not immune to the inevitable.

EJR:sm

cc: Dr. J. W. Bilisland
Dr. M. Norman

4. Rose's letter to Dibdin after receiving a complaint from Bilisland.

The above series of letter was brought to the Gateway office by Michael Dibdin, an ex-PhD (English) candidate and ex-GTA (English 210). Mr. Dibdin (no relation to Professor Thomas Dibdin) has just dropped out of the Department of English, giving as his reason a profound disgust with just the sort of bureaucratic hassling illustrated in the letters.

The initial cause of the paper debate was the requirement that Graduate Teaching Assistants submit to a faculty member copies of the essay topics which they have assigned to their classes. Mr. Dibdin had a few interesting questions to raise about the exchange of letters:

Why wasn't the initial complaint dealt with by the offended faculty member personally? Each reply comes from an even more senior faculty member.

What would have happened had he answered Dr.

Rose's letter?

Why does an attempt to ease the tensions of a freshman English class and encourage creative essay production merit, in the end, a more-or-less public reprimand from the Chairman of the Department?

Mr. Dibdin told Gateway that he feels such experiences tend to "radicalize" even the meek, in reaction to the bureaucratic process. Mr. Dibdin's motives for bringing the exchange to Gateway's attention may be questioned, but certainly the letters are self explanatory.

When asked by Gateway, Dr. Bilisland had no comment to make about Mr. Dibdin or his resignation from the PhD program. Dr. Rose was not available for comment (he was at a meeting) before press time.

Any reactions to the letters may be addressed to Mr. Dibdin c/o The Gateway or to the Gateway for publication.

Dr. Rose, do not make the mistake of answering this. You are not immune to the inevitable.