

EDITORIAL

Age of Uncertainty

If economist John Kenneth Galbraith wrote from a student perspective, he might be tempted to assign the title *Age of Uncertainty* to the situation confronting today's University graduates.

Many students are entering faculties that were once considered too technically based or professionally-oriented for the goals of a "traditional" university. At the same time, other students are taking liberal arts courses, I'm told, because they have nothing better to do.

The uncertainty of these students is reflected in the discontent with the university. Some expect their Bachelor of Arts Degree to be a ticket to employment but don't realize such an expectation defeats the philosophy behind the BA.

You're here to learn about the world, remember? Pretty naive, you say? Perhaps those putting employment as their top priority should transfer to NAIT or SAIT or Grant McEwan. This is not to say that all university graduates should stand in the unemployment line to prove their worth; to prove they went to the U of A for the sake of bettering themselves through higher education.

Granted, taking Biology 297, Classics 352, Industrial Relations 403, might make you seem well-rounded to a potential employer; however, they don't quite qualify you to become vice-president of General Motors.

The purpose of taking an eclectic array of courses is not to prepare a student for high level positions. The BA, BSc, and even the B Com are intended as introductions into more challenging areas of study. The use of universities in modern times as a holding tank for the unemployed seems to be a violation of that challenge.

The fact that there are more people studying here could be interpreted as a predictable result of the recession. And that's exactly how the government views it.

I mean, why would anyone go to university simply to get an education?

Brent Jang

Arts vs. Engineering

One of the more classic, yet tedious arguments that springs continually from the university community is the never ending debate between the proponents of education-for-itself (typified by the arts student) and of education-for-a-purpose (typified by the engineer). This argument is often obscured by its self serving nature.

The engineer feels threatened by any exposition of the fundamentally repetitious rote learning process espoused by his faculty. He reacts violently, in a philosophical sense, to any attack on his chosen path.

The artsy finds himself threatened by a similar exposition of the materially useless nature of his education.

Who is right? The question itself is ridiculous. There is certainly a place in our society for both approaches. No rational being is going to question the beauty and value of the arts, and, in the same vein, no one can question the incontrovertible necessity of practical considerations - like the end to drudgery and disease provided by machines, modern architecture, sewage disposal and medicine.

However, the false dichotomy applied to these approaches has blinded our practical and mystical friends to certain realities. An engineer, narrowly trained and specialized, with an extremely limited exposure to any of the classical elements of higher education, is bound to awaken to the facts one day - that a life bound by existential concerns is devoid of meaning and purpose.

On the other hand, the average artsy, with virtually no exposure even to the philosophical implications of cybernetics, biology, physics, or math, is going to find his hard earned knowledge ridiculous in light of a menial job - all he is suited for in our society.

The answer to this problem lies in a re-evaluation of educational techniques. The Arts Student, pursuing a general education, needs exposure to the hard sciences. Conversely, an Engineer with a philosophical outlook would be a boon to his profession. Thus the argument is resolved.

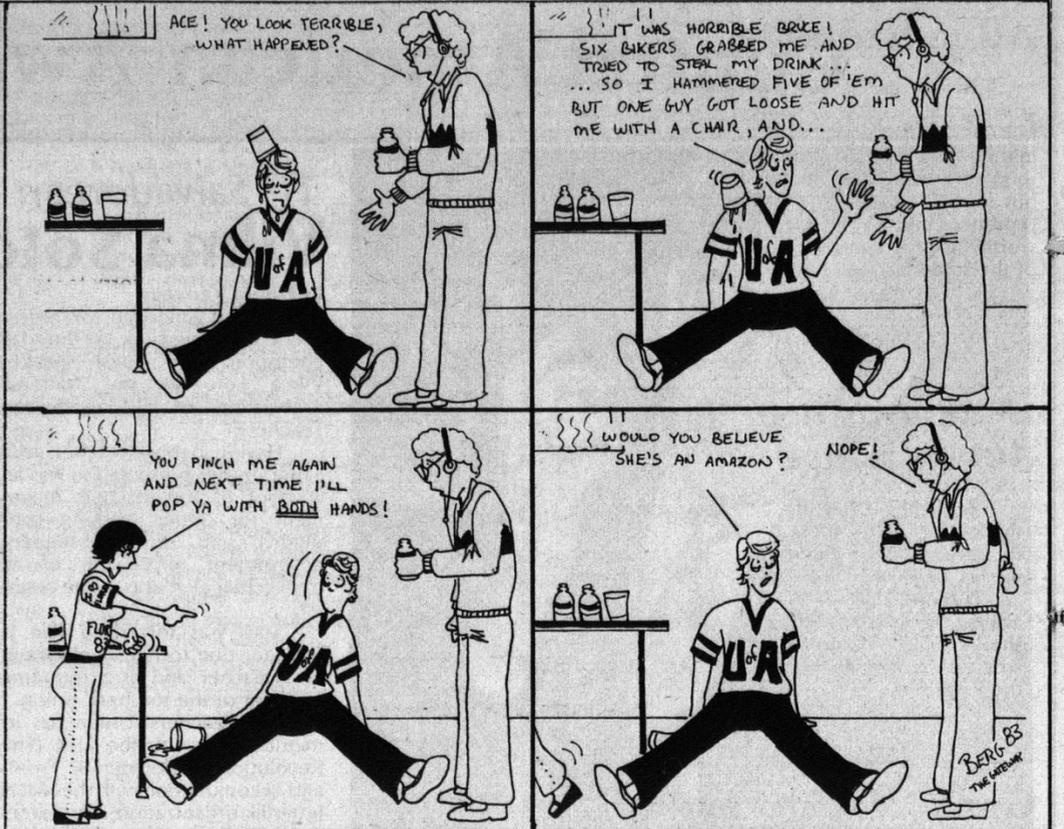
Jordan Peterson

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This evening's creative crew included the following Gilbertologists: Brenda (Aces) Waddle; Zane (Zapper) Harker; Dwayne (Spout) Chomyn; Martin (Flash) Shugg; and Nate (Nifty) LeRoi. Although considered to be lower on the evolutionary tree, several misanthropes and mischievous persons are also here: Ninette Gironelly, Gunnar Blodgett, Martin Beales and Ron Cabana. And of course, the scourge of the sports department, John Quincy Algard. Meanwhile, Jordan Peterson needs new finger tips, Louisa Vermeer dropped by; Shane Berg kept his cool; Neal Watson lost his bowler, Neil Fenna and Patricia Struyk hung around the newsroom; George and Christine Kock walk the street in the body of Mark Lane, and Stewart Lemoine seeks the truth in the writings of Robert Cook.

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« LETTERS TO THE EDITOR »

Canadian aid to Nicaragua cut

A recent announcement by Economic Development Minister Hugh Planche to cut off matching grants to non-governmental relief agencies with projects in Nicaragua cannot pass without comment.

The minister claimed the province "had no way to authenticate whether aid was going to where it was designated." The fact is there are Canadian representatives of the various relief agencies in Nicaragua whose responsibility is to insure aid reaches those it is intended for.

Relief agencies such as Oxfam, Cansave and CUSO are credible organizations working without any ties to any government. The insinuation that the funds are being misused is unacceptable. Furthermore, the implication that the government of Nicaragua is involved is outrageous.

The government has insisted on maintaining Canadian representatives in Nicaragua so there is never any doubt as to the authenticity of relief projects that are needed so badly.

The decision made by the minister should be reconsidered since it goes against the wishes of many Canadian individuals and organizations working in Nicaragua today. Let us not tarnish (any more) Canada's reputation in Central America by demonstrating that Canada does indeed have policies not guided by U.S. pressure.

We ask concerned people and organizations to write to Economic Development Minister Hugh Planche urging him to reassess his position.

Oscar Amar
 Central American Campus Committee

Satire falls flat on face

Was it humour? Surely even sick humourists would draw the line at "napalm mutants". Possibly satire, then? No, there was just too little social comment buried in the offensive content of "They Need Your Designer Jeans" (Sept. 27 Gateway) to redeem it.

Tasteless and disgusting were the most frequent descriptions voiced to me by others who read the "ad". In my eyes it is more than tasteless, it is despairingly unhumanitarian. In addition to the blatant racial and minority slurs, the form of this "ad" takes a shot at aid organizations and the concerned individuals involved with them.

I for one feel that the efforts of development programs should be applauded for the change, albeit small, which they have been able to catalyze in the lives of poor people in many countries.

And further, that we could learn from individuals in our "rich" countries who recognize the pain and suffering which our dominance has produced in poorer nations. Any change in the distribution of world resources will indeed be slow in coming unless we of the "North" are willing to acknowledge the role which our overconsumption plays in causing underdevelopment.

If anywhere, an educational environment should provide opportunities to share out cultures and promote racial tolerance and humanitarianism. Each of us can participate in this to whatever degree we choose. I hope, that as it has in the past, the Gateway will choose to exclude the kind of material which further demeans the human condition in favour of that which shows a higher social conscience.

Terry Hadford
 Nutrition IV

An uplifting letter

An elevator hit my elbow today. It really hurt. I hate it when they do that.

Who do we complain to? Vicious, wild, elevators are all 'over this University; growling, snapping and biting at students. They have no training and often don't come when you call them. Something must be done!

David Paterson
 ED. AD.

SU plays Big Brother

I feel the Students' Council went a bit further than they should of with the withdrawal of Playgirl, Playboy and Penthouse from the bookstore.

As I do not support pornography, I do not care whether they carry these periodicals. My only concern is taken from the student body (no pun intended).

Even though one can buy this sort of magazine at many other outlets on campus, the bookstore, being a representative of the students, should not infringe upon our rights as adults.

Personally, I find it insulting to see my body on display. I think it is very discriminatory and exploitive. But it is also discriminatory to restrict one's choice of literature. What's next, a ban on cable T.V. in Lister Hall?

My suggestion is to take these magazines (and other magazines which exploit sexuality on their covers, such as Cosmopolitan) behind the shelves, out of our line of sight. If someone wants to buy pornography or erotica, that is their free choice, but please, spare me the insult.

Tina Gilkes
 Home Economics I

Elections creep up on us

Civic elections are less than three weeks away! Plan on voting if you have been an Alberta resident for the last six months and will be a City resident on voting day. Students living on Campus and voting here will be sworn in at the polling station in regards to that information. Students living at their parents' residence should vote at the station serving their area. Polling station locations will be announced in the city newspapers on October 3 and 11, so watch for them.

There will also be a mayoralty forum on October 12 at Noon in SUB Theatre. Watch for further details.

Kim Boehme
 Housing and Transport Commission Member