

# The Sacred Canopy

## The creation of an educational cosmology

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As the myth of education unfolds, the flower of independent thought is snipped to be used only as short-lived ornamentation. "Where have all the flowers gone?" The flowers have not disappeared, nay they have been enshrined in life-giving concrete.

Oh truly, give us of your scented wisdom, Murray Ross, "We at York must give special emphasis to the humanizing of man, freeing him from the pressures which mechanize the mind, which make routine thinking, which divorce thinking and feeling, which permit custom to dominate intelligence, which freeze awareness of the human spirit and its possibilities." Inscription uncovered on the portals of York University's concrete filing cabinet, more commonly known as the Ross Humanities Building. "Long time passing!"

Those flowers are our children. Our children are cut off. York University is the myth of education. There are those who create the myth. There are those who perpetuate the myth. There are those who just accept the myth. There are those who destroy the myth.

What is this pervasive and permeating myth? Who are those who live with the myth? "Don't talk too loud, you'll cause a landslide."

Ivan Illich says that school initiates the myth of unending consumption, that school initiates people into a world where everything can be measured, including their imaginations, and indeed, man himself, that school initiates the myth of packaging values and the myth of self-perpetuating progress.

York University has become not only a ritualized system where unformed yet highly structured objects (namely students) are run through ancient academic turnstiles, are swept along meaningless conveyors, are stamped out by an old grey mold, are jammed together along the bell curve, are closely watched and counted, inspected and rejected, are boxed into nice-looking, convenient containers and sent out to be purchased on the Canadian-American market, but also a burgeoning blossom of flower-powered, turned-on, tuned-in, dropped-out, anal-explosive, sexually promiscuous, fun-loving, freaked-out, fucked-up counter-culture members. "The Lotus and the Robot."

York University as an extension of Dominion Food Stores in the business of selling used, second-hand, wholesale education at new, original, retail prices. York University as Madison Avenue advertisement. (Presented by beautiful, blond-haired, mini-skirted, maxi-breasted girl) "Come up. Come all the way up to Toronto and far-out York University. Bask in the sunny

rays of over-warm liberal education, swim in the cold oceans of disciplined knowledge, play that fun-loving, competitive game, 'Get the Grade,' meet eligible guys and chicks, listen to the music of two, yes two, jive-time bands, 'The (New) York Administration,' playing their latest hit, 'Rock! Enroll!' and 'The Faulty Faculty,' playing that old favourite, 'You Got Me By The Balls!'

Guest entertainer will be Worse Versa discussing her latest book, 'The Ancient North American Art of Shit Eating.' York University, Toronto's answer to a vacation in education. "I read the news today, oh boy,

the most credits; he who racks up the most points.

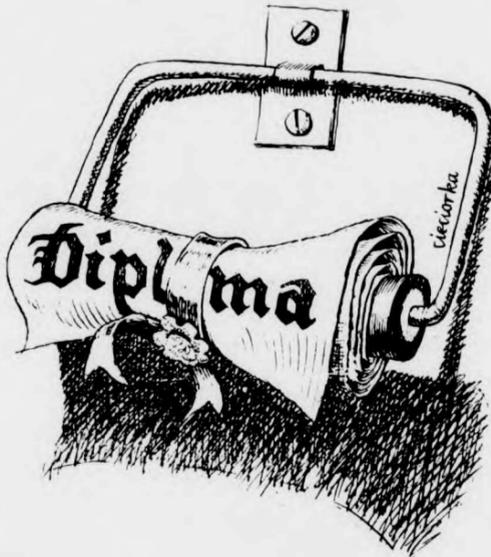
The game is defined by the rules. It's hard to change the rules under which the game has so long laboured. To play the sociology game, one must know the rules of sociology. Pay undeserved deference to older players. Pay fines of increasing failure for immature, unintelligent, subjective, passionate responses. Observe all theoretical lines. Do not pass over methodological departments. If you pass masters, collect your degree and advance token to doctor. In case of illness, you may drop out of the game. You also have permission to consult a doctor.

As a famous general replied when he was asked to surrender, "Nuts!" Objective reality being-what-it-is and I, trained in the honest sociological belief that sociology is the discipline which in strict structural-functional miasma permeates the observer's mind, thereby making him (hopefully her too, if we're not too down on the less academic, more creative sex) the most perfect medium to understand what-is-going-on.

Artistically speaking, however, objective reality being-more-often-what-it-is-not tends to inflict chaos and obfuscation, wild cravings and mad ravings, divine trajectories and sublime refractories upon this highly precise and erudite discipline making it an anonymous botch; which, of course, brings me to the depth of my soul, but sensing my upward mobility and ethnocentric pride, I ditch the depth and dive into Dahrendorf only to find a very lonely crowd.

While the real world of population copulation and gang bang, of depression oppression and bang bang, of education manipulation and ding dong, of civilization idiotization and ding a ling plods merrily through the floating opera of the bald soprano, intransigent objective sociologists at York sit, shit, dismiss, piss, rebuke, puke, grade, get laid, test, rest, observe, serve, sleep, peep, theorize, dehumanize and act so as to perpetuate what they are terrified of losing — their own fucking definitions.

More interested in social stagnation than social change, they bite their own feet to keep from walking unto new unpredictable situations where ancient formulations, Weber or not, it is Marx, the sad, Parsons, the mad, positively Durkheim, phenomenologically Goffman, epistemologically Mannheim, Mills of the military-industrial edifice complex, intellectually obscure Gouldner or cyclical Serokin and where reams of IBM print-outs, pieced together and exploded by Vroom, lie rotting or to be used to stoke the fires of new sociological imaginations. As R.D. Laing might say, we're all knots.



about a lucky man who made the grade."

These are my thoughts as I sit in a sociology graduate student's office, looking out of my wall and wondering if, as Einstein once said, there are two things that are infinite, the universe and human stupidity.

The sociology department like other departments is securely trapped in the education as testing-evaluating-selecting-rejecting-grading-molding-folding, reward-punishment, objective-pseudo-scientific, astringent game. All players are terrified of losing. The game can only be won by the player with



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