

# Letters to the Editor

Address letters to the Editor, EXCALIBUR, York University. Those typed (double-spaced) are appreciated. Letters must be signed for legal reasons. A pseudonym will be used if you have a good reason.

## MA candidate berates psych students' analysis

Sir:

For Messieurs Freedman, Fukakusa and Grayman.

I must admit that you have certainly impressed me with your utterly narrow-minded and shallow conception of the psychology department at York.

Furthermore, I am thoroughly convinced that, although you express a great distaste for the learning approach to psychology, a few books and courses on the topic might enlighten you gentlemen on the true and more constructive nature of 'learning' or 'behavior' theory and of its genuine contribution to the study of the human mind as well as behavior.

To begin with, I would like to question your source of information. To state that the department, as a whole, is primarily concerned with behaviorism is ridiculous. Without going into the merits of drawbacks of this approach, I think that if you had actually seriously discussed the orientations of the majority of the staff in the department, if indeed you are capable of doing so, you would have found that very few people are willing to adopt the 'behaviorist's' model per se, and especially so in the manner to which you ascribe it.

Now for some facts. The historical roots of behaviorism can be traced back to England and the continent, although it is true that the major impetus to this approach in modern day has come from America. Why is behaviorism being taught?

Surely you can't be serious in your involvement of technological progress in this era with this discipline. Respective to each approach or school of thought in psychology, there exists a uniqueness of historical antecedents which, for the most part, has dictated the extent of its usefulness and applicability.

No one approach including behaviorism, claims to be the know-all and cure-all of psychology. Rather, each approach attempts to portray the organism in a different light, constantly working to justify and validate a view-point, and trying to be as thorough as possible.

The task of studying man's mind and actions is complicated, at the least. Behaviorism, in its basic tenets, accepts this fact and has adopted what may be considered an 'easily applied' route, with no attempt being made at dehumanization of the individual. It does not negate the existence of a functioning 'mind', but rather concentrates on examining overt manifestations of the mind's activity. They did not wish to delve into the hidden mysteries of that little black box situated in the upper region of the human torso, commonly referred to as the 'head'.

Nevertheless, this approach has been fruitful in dealing with an abundance of abnormality like phobias and neuroses, using such techniques as desensitization, reciprocal inhibition and counter-conditioning. Again, this does not mean that it can tackle all of mankind's problems, but it certainly works on some of them. What it does not and never has purported to do is control people — it can be an effective means of behavior modification, when this is sought for by an individual!

To continue your rescue from latrine-wall scripture, I would inquire whether you gentlemen can distinguish between research and applied situations. Behaviorism lends itself to easy application and its usefulness as a research tool is limited.

Perhaps this area represents all that we presently know about the human mind. The investigation of intraperson and interperson aspects of human behavior are more than adequately dealt with and considered in psychology at York under such headings as Social Psychology, Personality, Clinical, and Psychological Services. Perhaps you hadn't heard of these yet! Or are you just keeping us in suspense 'til next week, when we might once again be entertained by your comprehensive analysis of these disciplines.

The mental hospitals of 1800 were truly fortunate institutes. Abnormalities were so well understood then and cures so effective as to allow for this high rate of discharge.

Dementia Praecox, now referred to as schizophrenia, is a good example. A person categorized as such would be put under fire, literally, or flogged, or cut open, to allow for the devil demons from within to escape. How wonderful it must have been then!



I could go on and on, but I will be content by quoting one of you gentlemen. "Generally, students don't realize what is going on in the department and they aren't aware of the alternatives which could be offered to them..." and to continue with a slight modification. "...At York there are alternatives." My dear gentlemen, "Seek and ye shall find." O scholarly trio, how you have enlightened us!

Ralph Shedletsky,  
MA Candidate,  
Psychology

P.S. If the article was a hoax, as I can easily see this to be the case, I will be all too willing to apologize for my negative response to your humor.

The article was not a hoax. — Ed.

## Cameron denies saying Mac was overbudgeted

Sir:

With reference to the article in EXCALIBUR Jan. 22, 1970, I was reported to have said that Mac Council was overbudgeted by \$3,000 and that "nobody knows where the money went." I wish to inform you that I deny any such statement and furthermore I was never interviewed by a reporter from EXCALIBUR. I would appreciate it if you would print something to that effect in your next issue.

Jim Cameron,  
College Affairs,  
McLaughlin College

## More from Osgoode on U.S. imperialism

Sir:

I have read with interest your stories on American imperialism and also Prof. Aron's reply in your letters column. The professor draws attention to the serious problem of invasion by foreign students of Canadian universities, and cites the example of Osgoode Hall Law School where up to 50 per cent of the students are reported to be non-Canadian.

I thought that was pretty serious, so I did some research to find out the explanation. The results of my research are as follows. They are stated best empirically.

Guy A picks up a BA from an American University, goes over to the Ivory League and picks up an LLB. He heads north or jets up to Toronto and walks through the doors of Osgoode Hall. They find him a chair in one of the faculty rooms. Chap B picks up the same degrees or equivalents in England or India and he flies into Toronto and walks into Osgoode Hall. But now all the comfortable faculty chairs are occupied, so where does the chap go? They feel pity for the bloke, the winter outside is cold, and they give him a locker and he becomes a student. Hold it, that is little to fast. No, he must put down the deposit for the locker. So he waits one year for the

Student Awards Office to give him the deposit. He pays the deposit and walks in.

No wonder the student number is reaching epidemic proportions at Osgoode Hall. They can't find enough faculty chairs. The architect made a slight error in the planning???

If you don't believe my research please check your Osgoode Hall Calendar and ask the registrar there. The architect who designed the Osgoode Hall is still somewhere in Toronto?!

Then I checked into Canadian women, foreign salamis and cheeses and found that Canadian women were busy at the Women's Liberation Movement making speeches on the 'right to have cheese and salami and education of their own choice'. So when they came to Osgoode Hall after the Guy A and chap B there was little space left at the Osgoode Hall to accommodate them there???. The architect made a second mistake. If you don't believe this story, go to Osgoode Hall and see for yourself.

J. Chauhan,  
Osgoode Hall.

## Friends in YGC but McCall denies she is

Sir:

I am writing in reply to an article which appeared in last week's EXCALIBUR.

On the front page of the paper is the headline "2 York Green supporters are acclaimed in colleges." I must say that I was quite surprised to read I was one of the two.

The same allegation occurs on page seven. Although some of my personal friends are members of the YGC, I am not. As a result of this article I request two things of this newspaper: a) I would like to know where the writer obtained his information because I was never contacted; b) a printed retraction.

My nomination form was signed by a personal friend who is a member of the YGC. Surely, EXCALIBUR did not print the article on this basis.

Janice McCall,  
CYSF rep,  
Founders College

## Former Green leader surprised at members

Sir:

Last week EXCALIBUR ran a front page article triumphantly revealing the names of several candidates "known to be running for other positions in CYSF" as members/supporters of the York Green Committee. As former co-chairman of the Green Committee the revelation that these people are members/supporters came as a great, but welcome surprise. I welcome new members/supporters, however I think that these candidates and the Green Committee should have been consulted before their names were publically and

irrevocably linked with the YGC. This is of particular importance when:

— the alleged affiliation is printed the week before the election, when EXCALIBUR knew there was no chance for a public correction or retraction.

— when EXCALIBUR has consistently distorted and misrepresented YGC's theme of evolutionary change to read "adamantly conservative".

— when EXCALIBUR knows the label of 'conservative', however false and misrepresentative it may be, is electoral homicide.

The next time EXCALIBUR goes out on a front page limb I suggest they carefully consider the import of their allegations and most carefully document their sources. I sincerely hope the new council sets down ethical guidelines for our newspaper.

James Bull,  
Winters II

## The City and the Self

Jack Kerouac died a couple of months ago. He fathered a new-born child, on the eve of a sub-cultural revolution in North America. Two decades ago Kerouac, the apostle of the 'Beat' generation wrote a book about life, about America and about travelling.

He talked about a special kind of travelling, though not your normal run-of-the-mill-upper-middle-class-summer-in-Europe travelling, but rather what contemporary political observers might call 'grass-roots' travelling. Kerouac travelled through the towns and ghettos that airlines never use to lure overweight salesmen, their hypersaturated conventions or their pudgy kids.

And that's what I want to talk about now; shedding the fat that surrounds, that stifles, that suffocates middle-class North American travellers and insulates them from the world of real experience.

What I want to say is that there is another kind of travel, a travel of light, of life and of experience. That is the kind of travel that starts on the spur of the moment with no end in sight; a pick-yourself-up, just-get-moving kind of travel that trades an airline ticket for a thumb or a bus pass; and they don't give you a shiny folder to put your bus pass in — it just stays in your pocket and gets crumpled and sticky.

And suddenly you've been riding with a stranger and sleeping because you haven't slept for 36 hours and you wake up. The sun is trying to break through the horizon and your lift says he's only going to the little town that's coming up next and then you know what it's all about. It's being free of the Self that your friends, your parents, your teachers see; it's being someone who lives inside your body — your real self. The real self that is free of the role that others make you play; a self that is free to be free.

It's cold out now, you've been walking through the little town and you've got 78 cents in your pocket and your clothes on your back and you feel poor, but you feel free too. This is the freedom that starts where the airlines don't fly to and where the big hotel chains can't make any money — but really, it's anywhere you're on your own.

You've probably been reading this and thinking that the author is some sort of catatonic schizophrenic who has dreamed all this up in a nightmare and is crazy. And that's OK because if you've read this far then I've done what I set out to do — to make you aware that you don't have to be rich to travel, that you don't have to cross an ocean to find your Motherland — and if you think hard enough and long enough about it you might get out on the road and play at being Jack Kerouac for a week or two or three or . . .

And if you're wondering what all this has to do with cities, well all I want to say is that all our cities should open places — basements, anything — where we can sleep awhile when we're tired and travelling, and that they shouldn't charge more than 25¢ for them (not \$2.50 like the Canadian Youth Hostel Association).

I know this is all right and I'm sorry for Jack Kerouac that he died before he could see all of us kids travelling and breaking that alienating, desensitizing bubble like he did. For I think that his new-born child is the same sub-cultural revolution that allows me to think these itinerant thoughts.

Peace.

Ron Freedman