



## EDITORIAL

### The spirit of science

Last year, groaning under what I considered to be a heavy load of editorial duties at the *Gateway*, I dropped all my university courses. I didn't seem to get any more work done, however, so this year I dropped back into my program, which happens to be Science.

To tell the truth, it feels good to be back in class and lab. I am sure you have heard many cliches (or variations on cliches) about science: statements about its narrowness, its stifling preoccupation with facts, its indifference to noble social crusades, its total unawareness of the soaring aspirations of the soul, etc.

The person who holds such views misses the central idea of science, an idea perhaps best expressed in the writings of T.H. Huxley, and which appears quite often even in university science courses. It is an idea both revolutionary and fertile, applicable to any field from pharmacy to philosophy. It is the idea that in intellectual matters a person must always be guided by a ruthless and all-encompassing skepticism.

Such a tough-minded attitude is not for everyone. It is not for timid or stodgy conservatives, happy in their hogwash complacency, or clinging pathetically to conventional ideas for hope and reassurance. It is not for soft-headed leftists, brandishing their "Question Authority" buttons and falling into goose-step behind every half-baked charlatan who sets up shop as a social reformer.

Above all, comprehensive skepticism is not for the 27,454 species and sub-species of religious believers, with their delusion that ultimate truth is knowable, and with their infinitely conceived presumption, explicit or implicit, that they and their petty sect have a monopoly on that truth.

Even people in nominally "scientific" fields aren't necessarily scientifically-minded, although experience leads me to suspect that gullibility is somewhat less rampant among them than in the general populace.

What the scientific attitude leads to is, first, the constant testing of theory by observation. Along with this comes the value judgement that doubt is the supreme virtue, and that faith is a crime. This may seem irreligious, but in fact it is profoundly religious, because doubt is nothing but the affirmation that life really *is* a mystery. The priest, of course, always talks in solemn tones about "the mystery of life" but if you look carefully you will always find him filling the vacuum with dogma.

Finally, the scientific attitude leads to a greater exactness of language, primarily the replacement of the word "truth" with more modest and fitting words like "model" (see for instance the recent *Scientific American* article on Galileo), or "theory" (even for tested theories like those about relativity), or "prejudice" (take a bow, Nietzsche).

Indeed, one of the best ways of distinguishing truly scientific persons from the pretenders is their choice of words. The truly scientific always hesitate to consider anything proven. The unscientific, on the contrary, are always straining to make their theories seem solid and respectable.

Thus the creationists are always telling how "scientific" their "creation science" (never "theory") is, while ironically arming themselves with the arguments of evolutionists, who, with true scientific spirit, practise a degree of self-criticism unheard of in creationist circles.

Like all fools the creationist is quite certain he knows exactly what is true. The scientist is wise enough to entertain some healthy doubts.

Jens Andersen

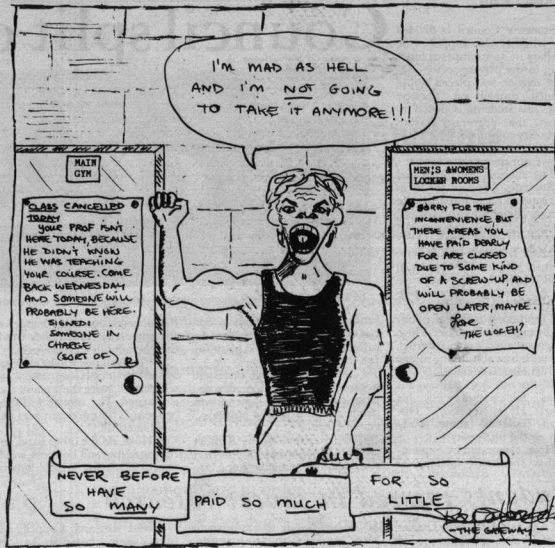
### Sexism

As president of the newly-formed Men's Centre on campus, I note with shock and dismay the recruitment posters around campus for women's fraternities. Needless to say, in this female-dominated socialist society there is no such thing as a men's sorority.

J.A.

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## « LETTERS TO THE EDITOR »

### Male gawk show

To the Inter-Fraternity Council:

I would appreciate it very much if you would forward a letter to the *Gateway* justifying, or at least explaining, why you have decided to introduce a male beauty contest into your Greek Week this year. My concern is not that you have decided to use reverse sexism (Males instead of females), but rather that you have resorted to using sexism as PR.

Surely, I.F.C., if you want to plug yourself or increase student participation in your organization you can come up with a better PR tactic than a gawk show.

One move that is politically expedient on your part was to ask members of both the *Gateway* and the Students' Union Executive to be judges at your Greek God contest. Organizations that participate in functions do not

tend to be critical of said functions.

Being that this is a new function that you have slipped into your otherwise commendable schedule for Greek Week, I can understand why you have stacked the panel.

Among the females asked to be judges were the v.p. External

and a *Gateway* Production Editor, the later whom asked not to be named and refused to make a comment.

I hope that next year's I.F.C. has more originality in choosing its events: catch up to the present, I.F.C.

Robert Cook

### Outside Sources

Unluckily, it is difficult for a certain type of mind to grasp the concept of insolubility. Thousands of poor dells keep on trying to square the circle; other thousands keep going along at perpetual motion. The number of such persons so afflicted is far greater than the records of the Patent Office show, for beyond the circle of frankly insane enterprise there lie circles of more and more plausible enterprise, and finally we come to a circle which embraces the great majority of human beings.

These are the optimists and chronic hoppers of the world, the believers in men, ideas and things. These are the advocates of leagues of nations, wars to make the world safe for democracy, political mountebanks, "clean-up" campaigns, laws, aids, Men and Religion Forward Movements, eugenics, sex hygiene, education, newspapers.

It is the settled habit of such credulous folk to give ear to whatever is comforting; it is their settled faith that whatever is desirable will come to pass. A caressing confidence - but one, unfortunately, that is not borne out by human experience. The fact is that some of the things that men and women have desired most ardently for thousands of years are not nearer realization today than they were in the time of Ramesses, and there is not the slightest reason for believing that they will lose their coyness on any near tomorrow.

Plans for hurrying them on have been tried since the beginning; plans for forcing them overnight are in copious and antagonistic operation today; and yet they continue to hold off and elude us, and the chances are that they will keep on holding off and eluding us until the angels get tired of the show, and the whole earth is set off like a gigantic bomb, or drowned like a sick cat between two buckets.

H. L. Mencken, 1920  
"The Cult of Hope"

## LETTERS

Letters to the Editor should be no more than 250 words long. They must be signed and include faculty, year of program, and phone number. No anonymous letters will be published. All letters should be typed, or very, very neatly written. We reserve the right to edit for libel and length. Letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the *Gateway*.

Heather-Ann Laird is now married to the typesetting machine. Robert Cook and Sandra Corbett arrived in time to save the gibbering John Roggeveen. Bill Ingles is still green and suffering. Marting Beales, having gone for help, is hopelessly lost in the dark. Roy van Hooydonk and Michael Leitch sought help, and are now on the Yellow Brick Road. Jack Vermees is reviewing the troops near the Elysian Fields. Robert Woodbury met another writer and took the path not travelled. George Longmore and John Algard have gone to meet the Sea Witch. Karen Redford and Lorie White magically appeared, while Bruce Pollock and Kent Blinston searched for trolls in the caves nearby...