

The Underground GRAMMARIAN

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Maximum Brain Dysfunction

Everybody is in a whole lot of trouble. People all over America are losing their car-keys and even forgetting their own telephone numbers, to say nothing of their zip codes. A man we know put an empty shredded wheat box in the refrigerator, and a lady in Tacoma asked her husband to pick up a tune of canna fish on his way home. Three out of four diners in the fanciest restaurants move their lips while figuring out fifteen percent of \$48.83, and some of them will find that they *have* left home without it.

So what, you say? Ha! So you obviously don't know the first damned thing about minimal brain dysfunction, that's what. We *do* know the first damned thing about that dreaded disorder, and a supremely damnable thing it is: there are *at least* ninety-nine separate and distinct symptoms of minimal brain dysfunction! You are probably suffering from about thirty of them right now. And here's yet another damned thing: minimal brain dysfunction is itself only *one* of a whole host of 'learning disabilities' that educationistic psychologists have somehow managed to discover in the last fifty years or more. And the damndest thing of all is that when we ask those educationists why their victims are so ignorant and thoughtless, they say that they'll try to puzzle it out if we'll just give them more money, and we give them more money, and they hire each other as consultants, and the consultants duly discover yet another, hitherto unsuspected, learning disability.

So we were recently appalled, but hardly surprised, by a fat bundle of guidelines called 'Michigan Special Edu-

cation Rules.' It is only *in theory* a separation of goats from sheep; *in practice* it a charter of perpetual employment for goatherds. Its covert assumptions make the Doctrine of Innate Depravity look like the sentimental dream of some bleedingheart liberal, for the Doctrine of Universal Impairment has no counterpart of the Operation of Grace. It looks instead to the Implementation of Grants.

The Michigan Rules include: 'R 340.1706 Determination of emotionally impaired.' Stubborn neurotics that we are, we just couldn't resist the risk of self-knowledge that offers itself in *any* list of symptoms. Sure enough, the very first symptom of 'emotionally impaired' was: *Inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships within the school environment.*

A double whammy! That is *precisely* the environment within which every member of our staff has plenty of trouble with those very relationships. Furthermore, since literacy has recently been discovered—within the school environment—to *include* lots of that interpersonal relation stuff, we had to find ourselves illiterate too!

Reeling with the shock of recognition, we managed to puzzle out, by lip-movement and sub-vocalization, the second symptom: *Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances*, presumably still

'within the school environment,' although whether that is a 'normal circumstance' is worth some thought.

A mystery. What *types* of behavior and feelings *are* there? Which circumstances are normal? Is it normal or not, under this very circumstance, to feel, as we in fact do, (*Cont. on p. 4*)



They also Serve Who Only Look for Work



Decision Makers Looking for Work

This isn't going to be easy, so try to pay attention. We are about to quote from a poopsheet (what a splendid term!) called *Bulletin on Public Relations and Development for Colleges and Universities*. The *Bulletin* is quoting, with approbation, Ivan E. Frick, president of Elmhurst College in Elmhurst, Illinois. Frick will be quoting, also with approbation, Cohen and March, who must be members of the educationistic-administrative mutual approbation complex. Here we go:

Presidential leadership is always needed to get a college of any size to move and that task is seldom easy. Cohen and March did a study of leadership among college presidents and developed a theory...they called "organized anarchy." They said:

An organization is a collection of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they might be aired, solutions looking for issues to which there might be answers, and decision makers looking for work.

There is considerable truth in this. An example is when one prepares a case statement for a capital drive. Establishing the case is not a simple process; its path is not linear, that is a straight line from one agreement to the next one. The process is always filled with a tremendous amount of ambiguity.

It is kind of Frick to explain the meaning of 'linear,' although his explanation does leave us to wonder whether that path from one agreement to the next might perhaps be a *crooked* line. But a crooked line is still a line, and so Frick must be saying that there is no line of *any* kind that leads from one agreement to the next. That would certainly make sense, allowing for a tremendous amount of ambiguity, of course, to anyone who has ever noticed the doings of educationistic administrators, but it's unusual for a college president to put it in writing.

And it's kind of Frick—ah, what a teacher he must have been before he was dragged from the classroom into the thankless prominence of presidency—to provide us an honest-to-goodness *example* to help us understand that 'considerable truth' in Cohen and March. We do have to confess that the really heavy thinkers, like Heidegger and Cohen and Hegel and March, are way over our heads. If

it weren't for Frick's illuminating example, we would probably *never* have been able to understand why solutions would *want* to go looking for issues that might already have **perfectly good answers** of their own, unless they (the solutions) wanted, **most uncharitably**, and, one might well say in this context, quite contrary to accepted principles of academic collegiality, to replace them (the answers) with themselves (the solutions), thus leaving them (the answers) **nothing more than disembodied shades** fitting through the **gloomy nether** world of decision situations, looking for **whatever** issues the solutions might have spurned, **because they** (the issues) were *not* the kind to which there might be answers, the very kind for which they (the solutions) are looking. We wouldn't even have been able to figure out whether those issues for which solutions are looking are the very issues that are themselves looking, along with feelings, for decision situations. But now, thanks to Frick, everything is perfectly clear. Only a *bona fide* college president, by gosh, could have detected and revealed that much considerable truth.

Ivan Frick is not the only college president quoted by the *Bulletin* or *etc. etc.* (You can get your own copy, if you like, from Gonser Gerber Tinker Stuhr [whatever that, or they, may be], 105 W. Madison, Chicago 60602.) We also get to hear from Dan C. Johnson, of Mount St. Clare College in Clinton, Iowa. He tells us that 'there are few, if any, institutional activities which cannot be enhanced by presidential presence.'

Yeah, sure. The enhancing presidential presence. Let us be thankful that classroom teaching is at the bottom of any administrator's list of 'institutional activities' and thus the least likely to be enhanced by the presidential presence.

Missing Linker?

Speaking of decision makers looking for work, we suspect that we have discovered a genuine linker, one of those erstwhile change agents turned ex-facilitators about whom we warned you last month. He is Terry McHenry, whose title would make a Byzantine emperor's favorite eunuch sob with envy. McHenry is Assistant Superintendent for Business Services for the County Office of Education in Santa Clara County, California.

Right at the top of its front page, the 'Superintendent's Bulletin' admits that McHenry has completed 'the extensive nine-month Sloan Program offered by the Stanford School of Business.' (For educationists, anything that can be knocked off with a little inservicing is *intensive*; if it takes a little more time, and a lot more money, they call it *extensive*.) Now, McHenry 'has taken on the added responsibility of coordinating all planning,' and 'he will be using the techniques learned at Stanford and applying it [*sic*] to marketing and managing the various services districts require.'

Well. Of course. We do have some grasp of planning coordination, which involves *not* mere planning, but the far subtler arts of planning to plan, and planning *whether* to plan. That might be what Cohen and March should have meant by 'issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they might be aired.' But the rest of it is murky. What does one *do* when he manages a 'service districts require'? Does he order paper towels according to

those techniques learned at Stanford? Is it appropriate for the employee who *manages* services, whatever that might mean, to *market* them as well? And to what, exactly, is this mysterious responsibility added? In short, what does this man do for a living?

Fortunately, we need not speculate. McHenry describes his labors in the cause of the life of the mind:

Districts are our clients. Under the new planning program, we will hopefully do a better job of determining what the needs are in the field and, given, how we can meet those district needs.

This will be a lot more than just asking a simple question of do you want a certain kind of service, which is what they (the districts) have been asked before. It is a matter of what is the potential, and, what is the possibility of getting resources for it—either from the County Office or from some other source. We will be looking at the whole scenario.

We are going to start doing an overall look. The first year is not going to be extensive, but we have to find out what the attitudes are out there for the need and provision of services. It will be much more than a needs assessment.

Aha! The whole scenario. The potential. The resources for the potential. More, much more, than a mere needs assessment. But gently. Nothing extensive. The needs in the field will keep: First you have to start to find out those attitudes out there, the attitudes for need and provision. (Could there be any *against*?) Not an easy job. Might take years. None of them extensive.

So what did we tell you? The man must be a linker!

Please don't laugh at a linker. Without linkers there couldn't be any county superintendents, who can hardly be expected to superintend the *district* superintendents all by themselves. And those superintendents need linkers, both to link with the county linkers and to look at the whole scenario in superintending the attitudes for need and provision among the principals and *their* linkers. And *all* of those people need offices, and secretaries, and Mr. Coffee machines. Quality education doesn't come cheap, y'know.



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Neither can his mind be thought to be in tune whose words do jarre; nor his reason in frame whose sentence is preposterous.



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[Proposed for Recreation Majors and Masters in Recreation and Leisure Services at Central Missouri State U., Warrensburg.]

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Still More Dysfunction

a feeling, if not a type of feeling, remarkably like another symptom of 'emotionally impaired' in Michigan? *General pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.*

So. When it's three o'clock in the morning of the dark night of the soul, don't go near the guidance office. There will be no waiting around for Godot in the hallways, no hesitation at the turning of the stair.

And the thought of all that 'school environment' where all the little Donnies and Mariés are all agog about Be All That You Can Be Week, and where 'to be or not to be' is definitely *not* the question, brings on the fourth symptom of 'emotionally impaired': *Tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with school or personal problems.*

Right. Absolutely right. Bellyache and vertigo. And fear. Fear and trembling. The simple truth must out: we are emotionally impaired in Michigan. A classic case.

Who shall stand when the Impairment Inspector appear-eth? Who shall abide the day of the Disability Determinator's coming? Not we, surely; and, whether out of some

inappropriate feeling or this pervasive mood of depression, we're beginning to have some dark suspicions about you. We can see you, sitting there in some *appropriate* type of behavior, smugly congratulating yourself on all your swell interpersonal relations, and wallowing in your pervasive mood of jollity, without even a touch of heartburn. Well just you read this little codicil to the Four Symptoms:

The term 'emotionally impaired' also includes persons who, in addition to the above characteristics, exhibit maladaptive behaviors related to schizophrenia, autism, or similar disorders. The term 'emotionally impaired' does not include persons who are socially maladjusted unless it is determined that such persons are emotionally impaired.

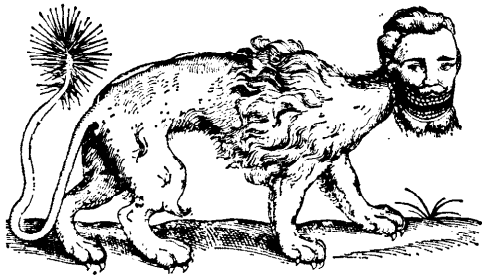
Well, at least you don't have to worry about being found emotionally impaired just because you're socially maladjusted, unless you *are* found emotionally impaired because of certain maladaptive behaviors that have brought you into your social maladjustment. When just about all of us are normally impaired, your sanctimonious unimpairment is about as maladaptive as you can get. And forget about trying to convince us that those behaviors of yours are *not* related to schizophrenia or autism. Big deal. What about those 'similar disorders'? Do you have any idea how many of them there *are*? All in all, you're damn lucky to be living in a country that still has to put up with all sorts of deviants. In some countries, those maladaptive behaviors related to similar disorders could get you shipped off to live in some very cold place where you'll probably end up eating your shoes.

It will not surprise regular readers that all this determining is done by members of the Affective Functionary Faction, government agents who keep watch over how people feel. In Michigan:

The emotionally impaired shall be determined through manifestation of behavioral problems primarily in the affective domain, which adversely affect the person's education to the extent that the person cannot profit from regular learning experiences...

The wonderful thing about that Affective Domain, and what makes it both the Lotus Land and the Happy Hunting Ground of educationists and other pseudo-scientists, is that there is no Bureau of Weights and Measures in that fair land. To weigh, to count, and thus to find wanting, are the appropriate, normal, and profitably adaptive behaviors of those whose greasy thumbs are on the scale.

Cardinal Richelieu, who was a member of an Affective Functionary Faction in his time, knew how to determine maladaptive behaviors too. 'If you give me six sentences written by the most innocent of men,' he said, 'I will find something in them with which to hang him.' What can it mean for our times that a wily conniver of the bad old days suddenly sounds so refreshingly honest? ♣



Teratology

HERE is a blurb from a brochure promoting a 'Celebrate Literacy' workshop sponsored by the River Falls Area Reading Council in Hudson, Wisconsin. It explains a lot:

Dr. Robert A. Pavlik is chairman of the Reading Department at Cardinal Stritch College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is also a language consultant for the Scott, Foresman Publishing Company. In his capacity as a language consultant, he inservices authors and editors on how to write textbooks for minimum student comprehension.

And here is an assessment of the conditions that prevail at the Santa Cruz campus of the University of California. The assessor is Chancellor Robert L. Sinsheimer:

The absence of a functional structure coupled with stress on being different that encouraged each faculty member to pull his or her own way effectively locked the campus into a state of dynamic immobility.
