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What Education Means to Me

"All things flow," said the Greek philosopher Heraclitus nearly twenty-five hundred years ago. This is still the case today. The brief two years and nine months of my undergraduate studies will within a few months come to conclusion. What do they mean to me? Since to live means to grow, to change, to adjust, this brief time was for me not a state of being, but a dynamic becoming. The exposure to new facts and ideas leaves a definite impression on my life. I have extended my understanding; I have become more free to express my emotions, ideas, thoughts, and hidden impulses. I have learned to "know" myself better, to "accept" myself more positively, and to "be" myself as much as possible.

Ignorance deprives humanity of its most creative ability. Man becomes intollerant of individuals and ideas that are different from those he is holding. Such a state results in strife, friction, and persecution. Education breaks down such unfortunate attitudes by making the individual aware of the grandeur of the world and his limited ability to perceive it in its totality. Education, if

sincerely pursuit, helps to embark on the road toward a more appropriate relation to fellow men as well as the universe. I know this is true; this is what education means to me.

There is another aspect equally important to me: Education prepares for the tremendous task that we call life. Every man owes some kind of contribution to society. It is my responsibility to prepare for future service. Young Lincoln's guiding motto was: "I will prepare myself; my chance will come." One owes it to the world; one must prepare. College intends to do just that. I hope to have succeeded at least partially. When my opportunity comes, I hope to be ready.

In regard to social studies, I would consider psychology and sociology as taking the first place. Modern psychology has made great contributions in all areas of human relations. The most valuable question that can be asked about a human being is not "What is his intelligence quotient?" or "To what socio-economic bracket does he belong?" but "What are his motives?" "What is he trying to accomplish in life, and how determined is he pursuing his goal?" Motives are those inner personal forces that impel us toward the various goals of life. They are the real psychological energies of personality that direct the individual toward a particular goal, determine the intensity with which he pursues in a given direction, and influence the degree of per-

sonal application to acquire a particular objective. Behaviour, in reality is the result of an inner driving force. Beneath the surface is a mechanism that accounts for every action or performance of the human being. The quality of his motives determine the quality of his action. If the motives are of high value, the actions will be accordingly or vice versa.

This is just one important principle that I learned in psychology, although there are several other concepts being strongly emphasized in regard to human behaviour. I learned to see humanity from different perspectives, understand myself as well as others better, and increased the probability of a successful life. Just to give one illustration: My first few months in the United States were months of cautious and critical observation. Many aspects of every day life were unfamiliar to me. But there was one statement that I had read somewhere: "I shall not despise things that I don't understand," and this belief helped me to compartmentalize concepts and ideas, beliefs and convictions until I could understand better. It saved me from becoming radical as well as cynical. Psychological and sociological principles helped me to explain the similarities and differences, and what means more to me, they helped me to see opportunities ^{for contributions} ~~circumstances~~ on my part.

My success in college is to a large degree due to my psychology professor Mrs. W. Perry, at Warner Pacific College. When I came to Warner, I had very poor preparation for a

college student. In Germany, I had completed only grade V. in public school, and in Canada I could add only grade XII English and history. Consequently, my scores on the entrance exams were very low -- if I remember right, I scored seventeen out of a hundred. But, my psychology professor was a good teacher, sincerely interested to help me, and a good psychologist. Whenever I had a paper which showed some improvement, she complimented me and gave me a good grade. This encouraged me to study diligently and confidentially. I had confidence in her because I knew she sincerely wished to help me through providing me with incentive; and by making little compliments here and there, she re-inforced what I had learned. Looking back, I must give her credit for saving ^{me} from suffering a crushing defeat during my first semester of my college career. From there on success was more or less a matter of self-discipline and application, for I had gained confidence in my ability and knew how to approach the problem. I have learned to understand the operation of dynamics that account for success.

History, one of my major fields, certainly is not less significant. As human beings, we are accustomed to draw analogies thus prove a point or learn a lesson. By doing so we understand the present by studying or relating the past to the present. We interpret the present in terms of the past. A good example illustrating this point is the analogy between the conditions of the Roman empire and present day America. A better illustration yet might be the divided

city of Berlin. The causes are in the past. The past is the background. To understand the present situation, it is imperative to find out how the city was divided, and what the reason for the division were. This fact applies to many other things. The past and the present are so close together that one can not be separated from the other. Neither one can exist without the other.

Moreover, studying history is an attempt to reduce the world to a size where one can comprehend it. Ancient civilizations are brought into the present; and distant lands are brought into the class room where the student meets with their peculiar custom and way of life. Through the power of his intellect, the student is able to get on top of the world instead being lost in it.

A social science seminar "integrates history to the social sciences and other branches of knowledge in order to insure a needed perspective in the pursuit of one's chosen field." Through the power of the intellect, the separate disciplines should be pulled together and interwoven into a coherent system so that the student can relate what he has learned as well as himself to the universe as a totality. Compartmentalization of knowledge, done by many students, is one of the most outstanding reason for not being able to relate oneself to the environment. To have knowledge over a variety of subjects without being able to relate one to another means not have the ability to apply it. In my opinion, this is what we call being un-

adjusted, and unbalanced though one might have lot of schooling.

Social Science Seminar 451 has only partially succeeded to accomplish these objectives. I think the limitation of topics related to political ideology was too narrow. First, it did not provide the student with necessary liberty to study an aspect of social science that he was interested in. He was confined to political ideology of which many in the class knew very little or nothing. Domination by political science has paralyzed a spontaneous creativity in those students who either knew very little about political ideology or had little interest in that particular field. And the political science majors have, for reasons not known to me, not done exceptionally well.

There is also a positive side that I like to point out, namely, the benefits I received from the course: I learned a critical, analytical evaluation of my own writing, and the experience of more independent study. I do not like receiving a low grade, but I shall remember my shortcomings. I regret for not having produced an "A" paper thus not satisfied my professors; but above all, I have learned a great amount about Roosevelt and his influence in the present day U.S.A. This was my desire; and herein I have succeeded.