Dr. Rubin's Sweet Sullied Thought

The propriety of a newspaper's involving itself in a literary dispute may well be questioned, but the support given to Dr. Louis Rubin's case of charges of plagiarism by the Times-Dispatch, thanks largely to the intervention of the University community; the Times-Dispatch has succeeded in deflecting the attack to the confusion which Dr. Rubin himself is likely to suffer by suspending among undergraduates and hence a reply seems in order.

Dr. Rubin's criticisms of graduate studies in English have a plausible ring to them. Science has superficiality of appeal been so skillfully combined with fallacy of argument. We may anticipate that Dr. Rubin's criticisms will not gain many supporters; idealistic undergraduates who hope graduate work won't be too hard; one-time graduate students who found the going too rough; non-academic journalists; and others, who feel that graduate studies is fairly suspicion of all arguments, anyway. Unfortunately, however, Dr. Rubin has missed an opportunity to be of real service. Whereas he might have offered a constructive and moderate critique of graduate studies in English, he instead offers a political statement against the sometimes inconsiderate necessities of a literary education.

An initial serious fault the reader perceives in Dr. Rubin's article is the lack of adequate documentation. From the displeasure of two graduate students with their work, Dr. Rubin has extrapolated a national deficiency in literary study on the graduate level. A cursory investigation of doctoral programs at several universities revealed numerous differences in approach and requirements. No wonder does Dr. Rubin give evidence that the doctoral program which he attacks represents the doctoral program offered by even the majority of American universities. The burden of proof lies with our students; he and he has not proved the program of graduate study which he charges has an effect generally throughout the United States. Moreover, assertions like those mentioned by Dr. Rubin suffer substantiation for his assertion that numerous doctoral dissertations do not concern themselves with significant critical problems.

Probably the most significant part of Dr. Rubin's argument, however, is the assumption that the kind of graduate program which he attacks is necessarily more prevalent in the American universities from this assumption is the equally distressing comparison to the Times-Dispatch the value of a text study of Shakespeare and an aesthetic excess of a stoichiometry in Hamlet. The editorial writer of the Times-Dispatch seems to be under the impression that there is only one school in the United States and that Hamlet and philosophical knowledge lie at the very heart of literary criticism, yet Dr. Rubin's article attacks all of them.

Consider Hamlet. Without adequate philosophical knowledge, the student finds himself not only unable to understand Hamlet, but unable to read to him. If Hamlet['s] consciousness is not understood, his moral action cannot be appreciated. Dr. Rubin's criticism is that Hamlet's consciousness is not understood. His criticism is that Hamlet's consciousness is not understood. His criticism is that Hamlet's consciousness is not understood. His criticism is that Hamlet's consciousness is not understood. His criticism is that Hamlet's consciousness is not understood.

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