

THE PRIMARY EDUCATION OF THE CAMIROI

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ABSTRACT FROM JOINT REPORT TO THE GENERAL DUBUQUE PTA CONCERNING THE PRIMARY EDUCATION OF THE CAMIROI, Subtitled Critical Observations of a Parallel Culture on a Neighboring World, and Evaluations of THE OTHER WAY OF EDUCATION.

Extract from the Day Book:

“Where,” we asked the Information Factor at Camiroi City Terminal, “is the office of the local PTA?”

“Isn’t any,” he said cheerfully.

“You mean that in Camiroi City, the metropolis of the planet, there is no PTA?” our chairman Paul Piper asked with disbelief.

“Isn’t any office of it. But you’re poor strangers, so you deserve an answer even if you can’t frame your questions properly. See that elderly man sitting on the bench and enjoying the sun? Go tell him you need a PTA, He’ll make you one.”

“Perhaps the initials convey a different meaning on Camiroi,” said Miss Munch the first surrogate chairman. “By them we mean—”

“Parent Teachers Apparatus, of course. Colloquial English is one of the six Earthian languages required here, you know. Don’t be abashed. He’s a fine person, and he enjoys doing things for strangers. He’ll be glad to make you a PTA.”

We were nonplussed, but we walked over to the man indicated.

“We are looking for the local PTA, sir,” said Miss Smice, our second surrogate chairman. “We were told that you might help us.”

“Oh, certainly,” said the elderly Camiroi gentleman. “One of you arrest that man walking there, and we’ll get started with it.”

“Do what?” asked our Mr. Piper.

“Arrest him. I have noticed that your own words sometimes do not convey a meaning to you. I often wonder how you do communicate among yourselves. Arrest; take into custody, seize by any force physical or moral, and bring him here.”

“Yes, *sir*,” cried Miss Hanks our third surrogate chairman. She enjoyed things like this. She arrested the walking Camiroi man with force partly physical and partly moral and brought him to the group.

“It’s a PTA they want, Meander,” the elder Camiroi said to the one arrested. “Grab three more, and we’ll get started. Let the lady help. She’s good at it”

Our Miss Hanks and the Camiroi man named Meander arrested three other Camiroi men and brought them to the group.

“Five. It’s enough,” said the elderly Camiroi. “We are hereby constituted a PTA and ordered into random action. Now, how can we accommodate you, good Earth people?”

“But are you legal? Are you five persons competent to be a PTA?” demanded our Mr. Piper.

“Any Camiroi citizen is competent to do any job on the planet of Camiroi,” said one of the Camiroi men (we learned later that his name was Talarium). “Otherwise Camiroi would be in a sad shape.”

“It may be,” said our Miss Smice sourly. “It all seems very informal. What if one of you had to be World President?”

“The odds are mat it wont come to one man m ten,” said the elderly Camiroi (his name was Philoxenus). “I’m the only one of this group ever to serve as president of this planet, and it was a pleasant week I spent in the Office. Now to the point How can we accommodate you?”

“We would like to see one of your schools in session,” said our Mr. Piper. “We would like to talk to the teachers and the students. We are here to compare the two systems of education.”

“There is no comparison,” said old Philoxenus, “—meaning no offense. Or no more than a little. On Camiroi, we practice Education. On

Earth, they play a game, but they call it by the same name. That makes the confusion. Come. We'll go to a school m session."

"And to a public school," said Miss Smice suspiciously. "Do not fob off any fancy private school on us as typical."

"That would be difficult," said Philoxenus. "There is no public school in Camiroi City and only two remaining on the Planet. Only a small fraction of one per cent of the students of Camiroi are in public schools. We maintain that there is no more reason for the majority of children to be educated in a public school than to be raised in a public orphanage. We realize, of course, that on Earth you have made a sacred buffalo of the public school."

"Sacred cow," said our Mr. Piper.

"Children and Earthlings should be corrected when they use words wrongly," said Philoxenus. "How else will they learn the correct forms? The animal held sacred in your own near orient was of the species *bos bubalus* rather than *bos bos*, a buffalo rather than a cow. Shall we go to a school?"

"If it cannot be a public school, at least let it be a typical school," said Miss Smice.

"That again is impossible," said Philoxenus. "Every school on Camiroi is in some respect atypical."

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We went to visit an atypical school.

Incident: Our first contact with the Camiroi students was a violent one. One of them, a lively little boy about eight years old, ran into Miss Munch, knocked her down, and broke her glasses. Then he jabbered something in an unknown tongue.

"Is that Camiroi?" asked Mr. Piper with interest. "From what I have heard, I supposed the language to have a harsher and fuller sound."

"You mean you don't recognize it?" asked Philoxenus with amusement "What a droll admission from an educator. The boy is very young and very ignorant. Seeing that you were Earthians, he spoke in Hindi, which is the tongue used by more Earthians than any other. No, no, Xypete, they are of the minority who speak English. You can tell it by their colorless

texture and the narrow heads on them.”

“I say you sure do have slow reaction, lady,” the little boy Xypete explained. “Even subhumans should react faster than that. You just stand there and gape -and let me bowl you over. You want me analyze you and see why you react so slow?”

“No! No!”

“You seem unhurt in structure from the fall,” the little boy continued, “but if I hurt you I got to fix you. Just strip down to your shift, and I’ll go over you and make sure you’re all right”

“No! No! No!”

“It’s all right,” said Philoxenus. “All Camiroi children learn primary medicine in the first grade, setting bones and healing contusions and such.”

“No! No! I’m all right. But he’s broken my glasses.”

“Come along Earthside lady, I’ll make you some others,” said the little boy. “With your slow reaction time you sure can’t afford the added handicap of defective vision. Shall I fit you with contacts?”

“No. I want glasses just like those which were broken. Oh heavens, what will I do?”

“You come, I do,” said the little boy. It was rather revealing to us that the little boy was able to test Miss Munch’s eyes, grind lenses, make frames and have her fixed up within three minutes. “I have made some improvements over those you wore before,” the boy said, “to help compensate for your slow reaction time.”

“Are all the Camiroi students so talented?” Mr. Piper asked. He was impressed.

“No. Xypete is unusual,” Philoxenus said. “Most students would not be able to make a pair of glasses so quickly or competently till they were at least nine.”

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Random interviews:

“How rapidly do you read?” Miss Hanks asked a young girl.

“One hundred and twenty words a minute,” the girl said.

“On Earth some of the girl students your age have learned to read at the rate of five hundred words a minute,” Miss Hanks said proudly.

“When I began disciplined reading, I was reading at the rate of four thousands words a minute,” the girl said. “They had quite a time correcting me of it. I had to take remedial reading, and my parents were ashamed of me. Now I’ve learned to read almost slow enough.”

“I don’t understand,” said Miss Hanks.

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“Do you know anything about Earth History or Geography?” Miss Smice asked a middle-sized boy.

“We sure are sketchy on it, lady. There isn’t very much over there, is there?”

“Then you have never heard of Dubuque?”

“Count Dubuque interests me. I can’t say as much for the City named after him. I always thought that the Count handled the matters of the conflicting French and Spanish land grants and the basic claims of the Sauk and Fox Indians very well. References to the Town now carry a humorous connotation, and ‘School-Teacher from Dubuque’ has become a folk archetype.”

“Thank you,” said Miss Smice, “or do I thank you?”

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“What are you taught of the relative humanity of the Earthians and the Camiroi and of their origins?” Miss Munch asked a Camiroi girl.

“The other four worlds, Earth (Gaea), Kentauron Mikron, Dahae and Astrobe were all settled from Camiroi. That is what we are taught. We are also given the humorous aside that if it isn’t true we will still hold it true till something better comes along. It was we who rediscovered the Four Worlds in historic time, not they who discovered us. If we did not make the original settlements, at least we have filed the first claim that we made

them. We did, in historical time, make an additional colonization of Earth. You call it the Incursion of the Dorian Greeks.”

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“Where are their playgrounds?” Miss Hanks asked Talarium.

“Oh, the whole world. The children have the run of everything. To set up specific playgrounds would be like setting a table-sized aquarium down in the depths of the ocean. It would really be pointless.”

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Conference:

The four of us from Earth, specifically from Dubuque, Iowa, were in discussion with the five members of the Camiroi PTA.

“How do you maintain discipline?” Mr. Piper asked.

“Indifferently,” said Philoxenus. “Oh, you mean in detail. It varies. Sometimes we let it drift, sometimes we pull them up short. Once they have learned that they must comply to an extent, there is little trouble. Small children are often put down into a pit. They do not eat or come out till they know their assignment.”

“But that is inhuman,” said Miss Hanks.

“Of course. But small children are not yet entirely human. If a child has not learned to accept discipline by the third or fourth grade, he is hanged.”

“Literally?” asked Miss Munch.

“How would you hang a child figuratively? And what effect would that have on the other children?”

“By the neck?” Miss Munch still was not satisfied.

“By the neck until they are dead. The other children always accept the example gracefully and do better. Hanging isn’t employed often. Scarcely one child in a hundred is hanged.”

“What is this business about slow reading?” Miss Hanks asked. “I

don't understand it at all."

"Only the other day there was a child in the third grade who persisted in rapid reading." Philoxenus said. "He was given an object lesson. He was given a book of medium difficulty, and he read it rapidly. Then he had to put the book away and repeat what he had read. Do you know that in the first thirty pages he missed four words? Midway in the book there was a whole statement which he had understood wrongly, and there were hundreds of pages that he got word-perfect only with difficulty. If he was so unsure on material that he had just read, think how imperfectly he would have recalled it forty years later."

"You mean that the Camiroi children learn to recall everything that they read?"

"The Camiroi children and adults will recall for life every detail they have ever seen, read or heard. We on Camiroi are only a little more intelligent than you on Earth. We cannot afford to waste time in forgetting or reviewing, or in pursuing anything of a shallowness that lends itself to scanning."

"Ah, would you call your schools liberal?" Mr. Piper asked.

"I would. You wouldn't," said Philoxenus. "We do not on Camiroi, as you do on Earth, use words to mean their opposites. There is nothing in our education or on our world that corresponds to the quaint servility which you call liberal on Earth."

"Well, would you call your education progressive?"

"No. In your argot, progressive, of course, means infantile."

"How are the schools financed?" asked Mr. Piper.

"Oh, the voluntary tithe on Camiroi takes care of everything, government, religion, education, public works. We don't believe in taxes, of course, and we never maintain a high overhead in anything."

"Just how voluntary is the tithing?" asked Miss Hanks. "Do you sometimes hang those who do not tithe voluntarily?"

"I believe there have been a few cases of that sort," said Philoxenus.

"And is your government really as slipshod as your education?" Mr.

Piper asked. "Are your high officials really chosen by lot and for short periods?"

"Oh yes. Can you imagine a person so sick that he would actually *desire* to hold high office for any great period of time? Are there any further questions?"

"There must be hundreds," said Mr. Piper. "But we find difficulty putting them into words."

"If you cannot find words for them, we cannot find answers. PTA disbanded."

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Conclusions:

A. The Camiroi system of education is inferior to our own in organization, in buildings, in facilities, in playgrounds, in teacher conferences, in funding, in parental involvement, in supervision, in in-group out-group accommodation adjustment motifs. Some of the school buildings are grotesque. We asked about one particular building which seemed to us to be flamboyant and in bad taste. "What do you expect from second-grade children?" they said. "It is well built even if of peculiar appearance. Second-grade children are not yet complete artists of design."

"You mean that the children designed it themselves?" we asked.

"Of course," they said. "Designed and built it. It isn't a bad job for children."

Such a thing wouldn't be permitted on Earth.

B. The Camiroi system of education somehow produces much better results than does the education system of Earth. We have been forced to admit this by the evidence at hand.

C. There is an anomaly as yet unresolved between CONCLUSION A and CONCLUSION B.

APPENDIX TO JOINT REPORT

We give here, as perhaps of some interest, the curriculum of the

Camiroi Primary Education.

FIRST YEAR COURSE:

Playing one wind instrument

Simple drawing of objects and numbers.

Singing. (This is important Many Earth people sing who cannot sing.

This

early instruction of the Camiroi prevents that occurrence.)

Simple arithmetic, hand and machine.

First Acrobatics.

First riddles and logic.

Mnemonic religion.

First dancing.

Walking the low wire.

Simple electric circuits.

Raising ants. (Eoempts, not earth ants.)

SECOND YEAR COURSE:

Playing one keyboard instrument

Drawing, faces, letters, motions.

Singing comedies.

Complex arithmetic, hand and machine.

Second acrobatics.

First jokes and logic.

Quadratic religion.

Second Dancing.

Simple defamation. (Spirited attacks on the character of one fellow student,

with elementary falsification and simple hatchet-job programming.) Performing on the medium wire.

Project electric wiring.

Raising bees. (Galelea, not earth bees.)

THIRD YEAR COURSE:

Playing one stringed instrument.

Reading and voice. (It is here that the student who may have fallen into bad

habits of rapid reading is compelled to read at voice speed only.)

Soft stone sculpture.

Situation comedy.

Simple algebra, hand and machine.
First gymnastics.
Second jokes and logic.
Transcendent religion.
Complex acrobatic dancing.
Complex defamation.
Performing on the high wire and the sky pole.
Simple radio construction.
Raising, breeding and dissecting frogs. (Karakoli, not earth frogs.)

FOURTH YEAR COURSE:

History reading, Camiroi and galactic, basic and geological.
Decadent comedy.
Simple geometry and trigonometry, hand and machine.
Track and field.
Shaggy people jokes and hirsute logic
Simple obscenity.
Simple mysticism.
Patterns of falsification.
Trapeze work.
Intermediate electronics.
Human dissection.

FIFTH YEAR COURSE:

History reading, Camiroi and galactic, technological.
Introverted drama.
Complex geometries and analytics, hand and machine.
Track and field for fifth form record.
First wit and logic.
First alcoholic appreciation.
Complex mysticism.
Setting intellectual climates, defamation in three dimensions.
Simple oratory.
Complex trapeze work.
Inorganic chemistry.
Advanced electronics.
Advanced human dissection.
Fifth Form Thesis.

The child is now ten years old and is half through his primary schooling. He
is an unfinished animal, but he has teamed to learn.

SIXTH FORM COURSE:

Reemphasis on slow reading.

Simple prodigious memory.

History reading, Camiroi and galactic, economic.

Horsemanship (of the Patrushkoe, not the earth horse.)

Advanced lathe and machine work for art and utility.

Literature, passive.

Calculi, hand and machine pankration.

Advanced wit and logic.

Second alcoholic appreciation.

Differential religion.

First business ventures.

Complex oratory.

Building-scaling. (The buildings are higher and the gravity stronger than on

Earth; this climbing of buildings like human flies calls out the ingenuity and daring of the Camiroi children.)

Nuclear physics and post-organic chemistry.

Simple pseudo-human assembly.

SEVENTH YEAR COURSE:

History reading, Camiroi and galactic, cultural.

Advanced prodigious memory.

Vehicle operation and manufacture of simple vehicle.

Literature, active.

Astrognosy, prediction and programming.

Advanced pankration.

Spherical logic, hand and machine.

Advanced alcoholic appreciation.

Integral religion.

Bankruptcy and recovery in business.

Conmanship and trend creation.

Post-nuclear physics and universals.

Transcendental athletics endeavor.

Complex robotics and programming.

EIGHTH YEAR COURSE:

History reading, Camiroi and galactic, seminal theory.

Consummate prodigious memory.

Manufacture of complex land and water vehicles.

Literature, compenduous and terminative. (Creative book-burning

following

the Camiroi thesis that nothing ordinary be allowed to survive.)

Cosmic theory, seminal.

Philosophy construction.

Complex hedonism.

Laser religion.

Conmanship, seminal.

Consolidation of simple genius status.

Post-robotic integration.

NINTH YEAR COURSE:

History reading, Camiroi and galactic, future and contingent.

Category invention.

Manufacture of complex light-barrier vehicles.

Construction of simple asteroids and planets.

Matrix religion and logic.

Simple human immortality disciplines.

Consolidation of complex genius status.

First problems of post-consciousness humanity.

First essays in marriage and reproduction.

TENTH YEAR COURSE:

History construction, active.

Manufacture of ultra-light-barrier vehicles.

Panphilosophical clarifications.

Construction of viable planets.

Consolidation of simple sanctity status.

Charismatic humor and pentacosmic logic.

Hypogyroscopic economy.

Penentaglossia. (The perfection of the fifty languages that every

educated

Camiroi must know including six Earthian languages. Of course the child will already have colloquial mastery of most of these, but he will not yet have them in their full depth.)

Construction of complex societies.

World government. (A course of the same name is sometimes given

in

Earthian schools, but the course is not of the same content. In this course the Camiroi student will govern a world, though not one of the first aspect worlds, for a period of three or four months.)

Tenth form thesis.

COMMENT ON CURRICULUM:

The child will now be fifteen years old and will have completed his primary education. In many ways he will be advanced beyond his Earth counterpart. Physically more sophisticated, the Camiroi child could kill with his hands an Earth-type tiger or a cape buffalo. An Earth child would perhaps be reluctant even to attempt such feats. The Camiroi boy (or girl) could replace any professional Earth athlete at any position of any game, and could surpass all existing Earth records. It is simply a question of finer poise, strength and speed, the result of adequate schooling.

As to the arts (on which Earthlings sometimes place emphasis) the Camiroi child could produce easy and un-equaled masterpieces in any medium. More important, he will have learned the relative unimportance of such pastimes.

The Camiroi child will have failed in business once, at age ten, and have learned patience and perfection of objective by his failure. He will have acquired the techniques of falsification and conmanship. Thereafter he will not be easily deceived by any of the citizens of any of the worlds. The Camiroi child will have become a complex genius and a simple saint; the latter reduces the index of Camiroi crime to near zero. He will be married and settled in those early years of greatest enjoyment

The child will have built, from materials found around any Camiroi house, a faster-than-light vehicle. He will have piloted it on a significant journey of his own plotting and programming. He will have built quasi-human robots of great intricacy. He will be of perfect memory and judgment and will be well prepared to accept solid learning.

He will have learned to use his whole mind, for the vast reservoirs which are the unconscious to us are not unconscious to him. Everything in him is ordered for use. And there seems to be no great secret about the accomplishments, only to do everything slowly enough and in the right order: Thus they avoid repetition and drill which are the shriveling things which dull the quick apperception.

The Camiroi schedule is challenging to the children, but it is nowhere impossible or discouraging. Everything builds to what follows. For instance, the child is eleven years old before he is given post-nuclear physics and universals. Such subjects might be too difficult for him at an earlier age. He is thirteen years old before he undertakes category invention, that intricate course with the simple name. He is fourteen years old when he enters the

dangerous field of panphilosophical clarification. But he will have been constructing comprehensive philosophies for two years, and he will have the background for the final clarification.

We should look more closely at this other way of education. In some respects it is better than our own. Few Earth children would be able to construct an organic and sentient robot within fifteen minutes if given the test suddenly; most of them could not manufacture a living dog in that time. Not one Earth child in five could build a faster-than-light vehicle and travel it beyond our galaxy between now and midnight. Not one Earth child in a hundred could build a planet and have it a going concern within a week. Not one in a thousand would be able to comprehend pentacosmic logic.

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Kidnapping five Camiroi at random and constituting them a pilot Earth PTA.
- B. A little constructive book-burning, particularly in the education field.
- C. Judicious hanging of certain malingering students.