

Edward M. White

## MASS TESTING OF INDIVIDUAL WRITING: THE CALIFORNIA MODEL

*The most useful materials to come out of the institutional testing experience so far are the annual reports describing the California State University and Colleges (CSUC) English Equivalency Examination.<sup>1</sup> Although they detail the administration of a program for granting credit for freshman composition to students who have not taken the course, the procedures for evaluation can be applied to placement or proficiency testing at any level of competence. Because we think the reports can serve as valuable working papers for teachers and administrators charged with the responsibility of developing programs for evaluating writing, we are reprinting parts of them here. As space does not permit us to reprint all the material we consider valuable, we must refer our readers to the reports themselves to gain a full appreciation of the care taken in constructing this program.*

*With a rich source to select from, we have chosen to present material which can serve as a guide to the art of essay test design.<sup>2</sup> What follow are remarks on essay testing made by Edward M. White at the 1976 MLA*

---

*Edward M. White is Director of the English Equivalency Examination and Coordinator of English Testing Programs, California State University and Colleges.*

1. Edited by Edward M. White, the reports are titled *Comparison and Contrast* and dated 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, and 1977. They are available for purchase from the Office of the Chancellor, The California State University and Colleges, 400 Golden Shore Blvd., Long Beach, California, at \$1.50 per copy.

2. There are sections that do not appear here but which we think might be of particular interest. In "Four Issues for Faculty in Equivalency Testing" (1975, pp. 101-111), Edward M. White responds to faculty concern about the testing program. In "Data Processing Procedures" (1975, pp. 37-48), Robert Bradley details the CSUC methods for handling the practical and logistical problems of scoring over 3,000 examinations. "The Working of a Controlled Essay Reading" (1976, pp. 68-75), assembled by Jan Green and Gae Goodrich, serves as a guide for those colleges and departments interested in using controlled essay readings for staff final examinations, placement or proficiency testing, self-study or research. Finally, each year's section on developing essay test norm samples, read sequentially, can give a sense of how a carefully planned large scale testing program can persuade teachers and administrators to look thoughtfully at instructional goals.

*convention (A); an account assembled by Journal of Basic Writing editors of the procedures followed to develop essay questions (B); the 1974 essay scales and accompanying writing samples (C); and the questions and scale used in the 1975 test (D). Although many of our readers are no doubt familiar with several essay ranking scales, we think they will be interested in reading the CSUC scale and writing samples. It is the only scale we know of which describes levels of writing samples composed in response to a single, carefully designed, college-level task.*

## A. PRINCIPLES OF TESTING

The CSUC English Equivalency Examination program is designed to offer entering college students the opportunity to gain college English credit by examination. It is one of the very few such programs in the country directly controlled by English faculty; and we gained control and retain control of the program by developing (with, I should add, the continuing good faith and assistance of Educational Testing Service (ETS) ) a considerable amount of expertise in essay testing.

To ensure careful testing we develop questions with great care, screen them through faculty committees and pre-test them with students. Pre-testing is essential for a good essay test. The basic principle here is that a test needs to be tested itself, and needs to demonstrate it is ranking students according to its declared criteria, to ensure what test specialists call validity. We need to demonstrate that a writing test in fact discriminates among students according to writing ability, and we need to define the particular kind of writing ability a particular question is designed to measure.

We also need to be aware of the desirability of giving assignments that are clear and whose scoring criteria are relatively apparent. Pre-testing will usually reveal problems in clarity, but careful question writing calls for consideration for the student writing the test. Far too often we compose questions that are vague and confused, in the hope or expectation that we are freeing students to write as they wish.

Another very common practice that damages the validity of essay testing is to give students a choice of topics. Most of us feel that we are helping students if we allow them to choose either topic A or topic B. We are wrong. There is no evidence to show that, when given such a choice, students will choose the topic on which they will do best; and giving the

choice we lower the possibility of fair grading. After all, one of the topics is sure to be easier than the other, and we will be assigning grades in part on the luck of the choice rather than on writing ability, or whatever else we think we are testing.

In addition to pre-testing, clarity in the question, and a single question for all students, I'd like to add the need to give more than one essay, if we are to achieve a ranking of students that will reflect their ability.

The ETS Advanced Placement Program essay readings are the basic source of this approach to scoring essays; controlled scoring sessions contradict the notion that it is impossible to reach agreement on the value of a piece of student writing. If we want to give fair, reliable tests, we need to be scrupulous in developing questions, and in conducting controlled essay readings. Only if we do so, will we be able to claim that we can test writing as effectively as, or more effectively than, the multiple-choice tests.

## B. FORMULATING THE TEST <sup>3</sup>

*For the CSUC testing program, students were required to write two forty-five minute essays, the first informal and personal, the second a comparison and contrast response to two literary passages, and to take the Analysis and Interpretation of Literature examination which was developed by ETS and is scored by computer.*

*Procedures for developing the essay question have followed the same pattern over the years. English department members on different CSUC campuses are invited to serve on one of two question committees. One committee develops a question to test the student's ability to move from description to abstraction. The other committee develops a question which asks for a comparison and contrast of two short passages in order to examine the student's ability to respond incisively to others' ideas. Committee members bring sample questions to the first meeting. The questions are discussed and the committee agrees on one or two to be pre-tested. The professors then assign the sample questions to freshman composition classes and examine the essays to see if the question has elicited a range of responses that indicates different levels of student abilities. (The step of pre-testing has proven invaluable for separating*

---

3. This account was assembled by *Journal of Basic Writing* editors using as a guide the reports of question committee leaders which are included in each issue of *Comparison and Contrast*.

*those questions which may serve as valuable teaching devices from those which serve as discriminating testing devices.) At the next committee meeting, members rephrase the question if necessary and develop directions for scoring the essays. When the examination has been given, the members of the question committees take on the responsibility of training and supervising those who score the essays.*

#### C. CSUC ESSAY SCALE, 1974 <sup>4</sup>

*Question 1.* The following question was distributed to all students:

Think of a personal experience that has in some way changed your life, either for better or worse: a particular event, a person, a place you have visited, a book you have read. Describe the experience in detail and explain fully why it was an important one for you.

The following directions for scoring were distributed to all readers engaged in the grading of question 1:

The student is asked to write about a personal experience that has in some way changed his life, either for better or worse: a particular event, a person, a place, a book. He is specifically asked to 1) describe the experience in detail, and 2) explain fully why it was an important one. The student should be rewarded for what he does well in his response to the assignment. Papers should be scored for their *overall* quality.

An extremely well-written response may be scored a point higher than it would on the basis of content alone.

A poorly written response may be scored a point lower.

Errors in spelling and punctuation which occur in writing a draft under examination conditions should not ordinarily be counted against the score.

*NOTE:* Since the student is asked to write about a *personal* experience and its importance to him, a wide range of individual choices and attitudes must be allowed for. Answers should therefore not be penalized simply because the writer may regard even his most important experience as relatively insignificant, because he seeks to provide a philosophical perspective, or because he views the experience in humorous or satirical fashion. Imaginative responses should be recognized and rewarded, as distinct from 'cop-outs.'

---

4. Question 1 and directions for scoring can be found on pp. 16-18. Writing samples for question 1 can be found on pp. 21-27. Question 2 and directions for scoring can be found on pp. 27-30. Writing samples for question 2 can be found on pp. 31-39, *Comparison and Contrast*, 1974.

*Possible Scores:*

- 6 A superior response will be a well-organized essay that does the two things asked for in the assignment. It will *describe* an experience in sufficient *detail* to make it distinctive, and it will explain the *importance* of the experience. An essay getting a score of six will show a high degree of competence generally, though it may have minor imperfections.
- 5-4 These scores apply to responses that deal with the two tasks specified in the assignment less thoroughly than the essays scoring 6. The description may be somewhat general or abstract, and the explanation more implicit than explicit. However, essays in this group should have an effective, logical order and be reasonably free from errors in the conventions of writing.
- 3-2 Papers in this category respond only partially to the assignment. They may:
- give adequate attention to one of the specified tasks but little to the other;
  - treat both tasks rather superficially;
  - be lacking in supporting detail;
  - drift away from the topic or display considerable irrelevancy;
  - have serious faults in writing.
- 1 This score should be given to any response that is on the topic but suggests incompetence.
- \* Non-response papers and papers that are completely off the topic should be given to the table leader.

The following student responses to Question #1 were sample papers used during the reading to illustrate the grades on the 6-point scale:

*SCORE OF ONE*

I was becoming rather pessimistic in my view of life in general; Because of the injustices, corruption, lies, and hypocrisy I saw in almost everyone; in school etc. Until I started to think why many of these things were, what circumstances brought them about, and I realized that life is pretty much what you make it. From pessimism I came to believe that everyone wanted to be good but they weren't sure how to do it.

This change in my way of thinking didn't come all at once. It come by gradual perceptions of human behavior; such as why a person should become nervous in a certain situation, or why some people seemed to understand better than others. This experience was brought about mainly by a combination of several events that helped me to think more clearly; and I think another major factor was an atmosphere at home and school of calmness.

The importance of this revelation or understand is manifold. It has shown me a new way of learning to live in this society. I have noticed several times that it has saved me from doing foolish things. I have become more at ease with myself. Frustration doesn't bother me mentally, make me upset; it may make me mad but I understand how to deal with it. In general it has made me a better person, enlightened my life, given me an ambition to live my life the best I can and to be proud of it.

### *SCORE OF TWO*

A persistently used topic in novels and films is that of the 'art student' in a garret in Europe. Humble, naive, and left out of the mainstream of culture and society, he spends his days mooning through plaza and cathedral. Typically he subsists on a meager income gleaned from selling a small painting or two. Such a romantic existence was the antithesis of my sojourn in Firenze, Italy.

Caught helplessly in a rush from private school to villa, and back, I was a captive of a widowed teacher bent on spending a small grant for the luxury of touring Italy in a new Mercedes-Benz. Culture was deprived from my visual perusal by the constant onslaught of theatre engagements and expensive restaraunts. No, I could not boast of an increased understanding of Verrochio, but only of the finest wines and meats.

Such a fictional account must be the meat of many an essay dealing with milestones in life. Yet I regret to say that I am not able to paint such a lurid tapestry, if only because most of my life is yet ahead of me. I find that when faced with the challenge of recognizing a major catalyst in my existence, I am unable to do so because of several important considerations.

For some event to be meaningful in the necessary contest, surely its aftermath must be multi-decodous in length. At 18, and aware of only the last half of my duration to date, I lack the required insight to appreciate such a remarkable, if not violent, motive force. Oh, I could speculate to the hearts content, but this method falls short of reality.

To guess at the probably longterm outcome of anything short of death or greivous injury is grossly unwise. Understand that any predictions of the future are always clouded by optimism, or perhaps pesimism, but rarely the correct confluence at the hands of the adolescent writer.

In short, careful retrospect and insightful analysis can not be taken from a medium that has not, as yet, had ample opportunity to mellow with experience. One can not stand at the mouth of many tunnels and know what dragons lurk within. Only with the eventual outcome of the drama can I afford to rest and then comprehend the reasons for the structure of the plot. Such a report may indeed be forthcoming in future years.

As a note to the preceding piece, it is not meant to be acid but rather the

only reply imaginable to me, in light of the nature of the question. Perhaps I interpret the meaning too gravely.

### SCORE OF THREE

There has been one person in my life that has changed me very significantly. This person, who's name is Leslie, makes me realize just what kind of an individual I am. Before I met her, I had a variety of problems. One very drastic problem that I had was the lack of self-confidence. There was no self-motivation behind me what so ever, and it showed very much. I also had another very serious problem which was the constant thought of death. The idea that we will not *be* any more or more specifically that *I* will not be any more was running through my mind at all times. Still another problem that troubled me was an inferior attitude towards myself. This attitude was not only mental, but in my physical features and abilities also. I was constantly believing that I was very ugly inside and outside, and this feeling developed into deep stages of depression. Depression was so much a part of me that others did not want to be around me. Then I met this person and started talking out each problem with her. She explained to me the seriousness of my problems and allowed me to solve them for myself, just by talking. Leslie said that if *I* had no confidence in myself, *who would* have confidence in me? She also showed me how fun and exciting life could be to the point where I no longer had to think about death. By this time, depression seemed one of the farthest possibilities for me.

Because of Leslie, I am now a changed person. She made life worth living for me, and most of all, she allowed me to understand it all. Now I realize that I am a changed individual. An individual different and unique from all other persons, with attributes that are unique also. This realization has been very important to me. Everything was against me before Leslie helped me understand all of this, but now I have a lot to learn and experience. Now I am even starting to understand and help other people with their problems. This also is very important to me. It raises my self esteem to know that I can be of help or service to another individual in need. To some people the importance of life is not realized unless they find out they are going to die. By this I mean someone who finds out they have a terminal disease. Then, the whole world changes before their very eyes. Each day is lived to it's fullest; like it was the last day of their lives. Everything becomes beautiful and simple. Leslie made me realize that I don't have to think of life as a terminal illness. By understanding myself better, I can live each day with enthusiasm just like it was the last day of my life.

This feeling alone that have described explains the importance of Leslie being a very significant change in my life.

## SCORE OF FOUR

When I was approximately ten years old, I joined a synchronized swimming team called the San Francisco Merionettes. I heard about the team from a friend of mine who's sister had been on the team for about five years. For the first few years we trained on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. As the years went by and I advanced within the team I began to train more often during the week—three days, four days, five, six, and finally seven days a week. The club was divided into smaller teams ranging from the "A" team (the best) down to the "G" or "H" team. It took me seven years to reach the "A" team but it was well worth all of the time and effort spent to reach this goal. As a member of the Amateur Athletic Union I competed in many meets here in San Francisco and also in other cities throughout the Bay Area. My coach, Marion Kane; was known as one of the best in the business so I frequently placed in the top three and received medals for my accomplishments. I also made many lasting friendships not only with the girls on my team who I trained so often with but also with girls from other teams who I competed against. Though the competition was tough there was always a friendly atmosphere at the swim meets and it was a good chance to make new friends from other cities. For some meets we would travel to other states such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas to compete. This was usually a National Meet where girls from all over the United States met to compete in the sport of synchronized swimming. National meets occur twice a year; usually in April and in July. Synchronized swimming is different from speed swimming because you swim to music in a team of eight, a duet of two, or a solo routine. The routines take from three to five minutes each and are prepared and practiced for months ahead. When your routine is completed you are judged by seven judges on a scale from one to ten and when the scores are calculated, you are ranked from first on down. The competition was sometimes very close which made it exciting and suspenseful when the medals were being awarded. The travel was always exciting and fun and it was a good chance to see new and different places. In the summer of 1973 a team of ten girls from our team toured Europe for three weeks to help the European teams and also to do demonstrations. I was included in this team and had a very fun and interesting trip. Now, our coach has retired so I no longer swim, but I have the friends and the memories from the seven-year experience. Swimming was a very big part of my life during those years. I enjoyed the daily exercise and the idea of getting out and working with a group headed towards a major goal rather than eating and watching television every day after school. I feel the discipline did me alot of good, also, physically as well as mentally. I feel I am a much more rounded person from all of the travel and the meeting of people from different areas. All in all, my membership in the Merionettes



had a lot to do with the person that I am today and I am very glad that my young friend got me interested in the team. I got alot out of it by putting alot into it and I feel that if I had it to do over, I certainly would.

#### *SCORE OF FIVE*

“Oh - Amerika!” I remember her face scrubbed clean in the sub-zero air like an old apple someone had picked up and polished. Her eyes sparkled against the snowy forest as she looked up at me, bent now but still so alive.

We were walking through the snow drifts to the chapel; I was nineteen, she was ninety-three; and we were both just a little suspicious of why the other was there, the Russian border only ten miles away.

Of course, she had more reason to be there than I. She was Russian. It showed in the way she tilted her hat to the right, as all Cossacks did before the revolution struck; it showed in her thick, gnarled hands that helped in the fields for ninety years before she decided to slow down and just work in the barn; and it showed in her eyes as she looked at me then.

“Amerika.”

What could I tell her? How could I tell her why I had come? Was Russia as different as we were told it was? Russia, now the USSR and ‘Amerika,’ now the U.S.—were they that different? Was there some kind of mutation in the human race that made our ideologies so diametrically opposed?

I looked at the wizened, ancient woman as if she could give me an answer, but I spoke only Finnish and my companions teeth had either fallen out or served her so badly that I could barely understand her as she spoke. She smelled of the barn. Of green hay and warm milk and geraniums-in-the-window, in an old patched coat that seemed to bury her—but not her eyes. She was looking past the forest at the sun as it began to rise and bathe the sky in velvet;

“It’s beautiful,” I said as my eyes followed hers.

“Herosheni,” She said.

“What?” She smiled at my question.

“I am too old, and my Finnish is very bad, but it makes no difference. Everytime we see the sun rise, I will say ‘Herosheni,’ and you will say whatever it is you say in Amerika, and it will make no difference. We will be as one.” She smiled as she walked ahead of me.

“Herosheni.”

“I have never found a dictionary that could define that word.”

#### *SCORE OF SIX*

Sometimes, people are not able to mature properly; others get a head start early in life. A trip I went on to Canada with my father at age eleven

changed my whole outlook on life, from that of a frolicking boy to a serious young man.

We had gone mountaineering for several years, and our experience was extensive. My father and I both belonged to the Sierra Club, and had participated in many of its' events together. But we had grown tired of climbing in the High Sierras. We wanted to climb in another country, on an expedition. At one particular club meeting, we picked up a brochure put out by Mountain Travel, an expedition organizing corporation. We read through it, and found a trip to Canada to our liking. The first requirement, we learned, was to send resumes of yourself and your experience. Needless to say, the expedition leader was astonished at my amount of experience in the mountains, on all types of terrain. My age cast some doubt on my eligibility, but the amount of experience I had compiled more than made up for it. After several months of planning, buying, assembling, and packing, we were ready to go. The first stage was to fly to Vancouver. Everything from then on was left to the organization and its' leaders.

We left Vancouver in an Amphibious aircraft headed for Mimpo Lake. This was to be our base, from where we were to attempt to explore the Monarch Icecap region of British Columbia, and conquer several of its glorious peaks. Every other day it rained, so we did not get much done for the first week or so. The leader, Gary, was not much to my father's liking. He was a very immature man of about thirty. We attempted two or three minor peaks, with him leading, and he would just walk off and leave the group to catch up or get lost. His wife was on the expedition also, and once, when we stopped at the base of a large glacier to put on crampons, he just left his wife behind, still struggling with her crampon straps. My father was not pleased with our leader's conduct; to say the least, he was furious. There we were, 200 miles from the nearest city, fifty miles from a farm or cow pasture, and we were stuck for two more weeks with a man who might just walk off and leave his own wife to die. My father did not like the situation, and the friction between him and Gary increased. The other members of the expedition were also aware of Gary's immaturity, but what could we do?

One night, in our tent, my father and I decided we were going to leave on our own. We were not having any fun, and we were being herded about like cattle by the leader. We packed up everything we would need, and, at about midnight, we set off down the glacier towards Bella Coola, where we could get a plane home. Walking in the dark, with only starlight to guide us, we worked our way through the maze of glaciers that could swallow a man before he could shout. The deep crevasses all around, some 300 feet or more to the bottom, loomed toward us like high abysses. In the light of early dawn, we were almost down off the glacier when my father slipped and broke his ankles. I was horror stricken! What could we do, out in the

middle of a glacier, my father who could not walk and myself, an eleven year old boy. We worked to erect a sort of shelter, my father directing and me lifting or tugging. When he was safe and warm, I set off alone, back toward camp to get the others to come and help us.

It took me a day and one-half to get back and get help, winding my way around gigantic crevasses, over huge snowbridges that threatened to give way beneath me, over cliffs so slimy my boots would not stay put. It was a miracle I got back alive. I enlisted the help of the other climbers, and we used the camp radio to call a helicopter to get my father and I back to civilization.

I think this event in my life was an important one because it changed my whole outlook towards people, especially adults. It made me realize that there are dumb, incompetent people at every age level, and that people like my father were very extraordinary indeed. I had previously thought that all adults were like my father; calm, mature, collected, not like little children. That talk with my father the night we left camp was very enlightening. He showed me how Gary had been a very mean, immature man, self-centered and unreliable. I came to realize that many people never really grow up, but die as immature as young children.

I also learned to take on the responsibility of an adult. I saw what had to be done, and I faced the crisis head on, instead of crying or turning away from it. I feel that all the temporary grief this incident caused was nothing compared to the changes in my character that were brought about by this calamity.

*Question 2.* The following question was distributed to all students:

A. 'If a society is to strive with any hope of success toward peace and prosperity in a commonwealth, the authority governing that society must not only be able to pass laws and to reassess those laws constantly as circumstances change. . . , it must also be enabled to enforce those laws and to exact penalties for their violation.'

B. 'Under a government that imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also in prison.'

Assignment: Write an essay on the two passages above in which you answer the following:

In what ways are these statements alike and in what ways do they differ?

What strong or weak points does each position have?

To what extent might a person accept both positions?

The following directions for scoring were distributed to all readers engaged in the grading of question 2:

“The student is asked to write an essay in which he explains 1) in what ways the two statements are alike and in what ways they differ; 2) what strong or weak points each position has; and 3) to what extent a person might accept both positions. He should be rewarded for what he does well in his response to the assignment. Papers should be scored for their *overall* quality.

An extremely well-written response may be scored a point higher than it would be scored on the basis of content alone.

A poorly written response may be scored a point lower.

Spelling errors should not ordinarily be counted against the score.

*Possible Scores:*

- 6 A superior response will be a well-organized essay that does the three things asked for in the assignment. It will compare and contrast the meanings of the two statements. It may explain the meanings by *means* of comparison and contrast, or it may explain the meanings *and* compare and contrast them. The best essays will note that while the quotations both say something about government and laws, the first asserts the need for law and order and takes the point of view of the state, while the second affirms the principle of justice as superior to the laws of the state when those laws are unjust, and it is written from the perspective of the individual. The best essays will show consciousness of the possible dangers inherent to the first quotation (that is, that it could mean that even unjust laws should be enforced, that it says nothing about individual rights, that it emphasizes punishment and authority rather than freedom); and the most perceptive may perceive dangers in an uncompromising position on the second passage. The best papers may show an awareness that the two positions, properly qualified, can both be accepted. An essay getting a score of six will show a high degree of competence generally, though it may have minor imperfections.
- 5-4 These scores apply to responses that concentrate more on one quotation than the other, or that deal with both subjects somewhat less thoroughly than the essays scoring 6. Essays in this group may have minor errors in writing.
- 3-2 Papers in this category deal with both quotations but may:
- be lacking in supporting details, or treat both quotations superficially
  - give adequate attention to one but too little to the other;
  - fail to see that both are concerned with laws and the state but that there are important differences between them;
  - misunderstand or misinterpret the meaning of either or both;
  - be *primarily* critical or argumentative;

- have serious faults in writing;
  - draft away from the topics or display considerable irrelevancy.
- 1 This score should be given to any response that is on the topic but suggests incompetence.
- \* Non-response papers and papers that are completely off the topic should be given to the table leader.

The following student responses to Question #2 were sample papers used during the reading to illustrate the grades on the 6-point scale:

#### *SCORE OF ONE*

These statements have little in common except that they both talk of justice and penalties within society. "A" speaks of keeping up with the times while "B" speaks of justice for those accused of violating laws.

Both have something important to say, and deliver it with a certain amount of impact. I say "B" has much more impact than "A", because it's statement is made with one short (down to the bone) sentence, stripping it to the raw unclutter *point!* Which "A" trips out on

If society is to strive—blabber—," "A" gives an introduction to its statement which I feel isn't necessary, leaving me with the feeling that its more story than statement.

I would accept both positions to any extent. B is a little extream in its message but thats what gives it its impact. While "A"s position is one of a lot of peoples, I'm sure. Its a safe general statement of fitting penalties to the present day society. They are both reasonable, and complement eachother nicely.

#### *SCORE OF TWO*

The two passages are quite different from each other. Although they are both of the opinionated form, the second is much more poetic than the first. The first one states a warning or a set of instructions on which one might form a constitution. The second, on the other hand, gives a form of philosophy.

The first one is quite explicite in that it sets the goals and what must be done to meet them. I says that peace and prosperity are what you're striving for and the only way is through flexability in government.

The second is harder to understand. It says that if you live under a government that imprisons unjustly, a just man should be in prison. I find this hard to agree with. I feel if a just man lives under such a government he should strive to make it just. Another thing which is hard to take is that if all the just men were in prison only the unjust would be left to govern.

A person might accept both positions if he understood the the second is pretty dangerous.

### *SCORE OF THREE*

The two questions are similar in that they deal with the just way to strive for justice in government. Laws are provided that hopefully nobody who is innocent of a crime can be punished. This creates a situation that enables many criminals to escape justice. By the second questions standards it is better than few guilty people are protected so that innocent people are protected also. There must be sufficient evidence to support guilt, leaving no doubt in the judge or jurie's minds of guilt or innocence.

The question arises of what is just or unjust. Who is allowed to set standards for society. Some argue that the majority rules in all cases leaving no allowance for any other possibilities. In many cases however the majority will be the same people and the minority will never be heard from, thus getting the shaft.

In other cases it is the ellect officials which we the public elect into office who create justice, and all that laws are followed. These people however are squeezed into tight limitations because of our Constitution, leaving no possibility for personal involvement in any case.

The Constitution creates another loophole in that it creates different powers, and leaves Congress open to decide what is meant by parts of the Constitution. They can interpret it a number of ways, changing it for individual cases.

A major weakness in the first statement is that it does not set limitations on law enforcement. There is a limit to how much power any one particular organization should have and ones own individual rights as written in the "Bill of Rights." Where does law enforcement end and 1984 begin. Do we want a police state, with no regard for personal freedom. If this were to occur the second question could likely be draft, with both just and unjust persons being the victims.

At the same time total anarchy with no rules or regulations would create total chaos, with everybody attempting to beat out his competitor. In creating laws you try to establish what will be the best good for the most amount of people, without leaving any individual out.

The system we live in creates a sense of competition, in which money is the eventual end goal. In many cases people are placed into roles of superior inferior, with the inferior having to prove himself to rise to the higher plateau. There are often obstacles which obstruct and impede this persons progress, which results in extreme measures by that individual to survive in society. He is left little option but to committ a crime under governmental laws. Is it fair that this person was put into the situation

where there was *no* alternative. Does 'fairness,' even enter into the picture as a possible motivating factor. That is a question which is often dealt with, but with no satisfactory answer for everyone. The question arises of everybody having equal opportunity in our society, but is that always the case or is that a non-reality.

The first question makes the statement, 'reassess those laws constantly as circumstances change,' which outwardly seems fine. Everything no matter what it is should be open to change, but is that change occurring fast enough. In many cases the statement is made that we are changing, but we can't do everything overnight. Is this an exaggeration by these people or are they justified in this comment. In some cases they do change, but in others they don't, but not everybody wants these changes to occur, so on the whole it would seem successful, but what about the time lag between a proposed change and the actual writing of it into law. In many cases it becomes obsolete, and has a negative reaction by all.

It is hard to please everybody, but the major thing which should be strived for is justice, even in one form or another, making a strong attempt to please everybody.

#### *SCORE OF FOUR*

Statement one, taken for itself, has many strong points but it is not entirely without fault. In any orderly society, there must be laws, and they must be enforced, so as to insure greater peace and protection for all. However, law must be not so terribly strict as to imprison a man unjustly. The justice of these laws must be considered in their reassessing, but, even then, a law should not be totally rigid.

Statement two, dealing with unjust imprisonment, also has strong and weak points. If a man is imprisoned unjustly, it should not be taken as an indictment against the whole system. It is true, however, that a law should be able to be considered differently in different situations. When just men see others imprisoned unjustly, their place should not be 'in prison' with the first, but out trying to do something about unjustness.

In many ways, the statements' basic messages can be both accepted by a person. However, qualifications must be made and neither statement should be accepted as it is. Laws are necessary in society, if it is to flourish, and they must not be ignored. However, in their enforcement, the justness or unjustness to the individual must be equally considered. The key to the reconciling of these two viewpoints is found in this sentence from statement one: authority must 'reassess laws constantly as circumstances change.' If the law is reassessed according to different and changing situations and times, then it also must be considered differently in situations involving different individuals. In this way, it will be insured

that laws, while being enforced, are not unjust in their imprisonment of persons.

### *SCORE OF FIVE*

Statements A and B have both strong and weak points. They are similar in some ways, but different in others. It is actually possible for a person to accept both positions.

Statement A is basically sound government policy. It is true that a society should be able to pass laws and reassess those laws. As times change, the attitudes and needs of the citizens change, and the duty of the legislature is to meet those needs with progressive legislation. A society should also be able to enforce its laws and punish violators. With no executive branch to support the legislature, a society quickly becomes anarchy. Punishment must be administered to violators to rehabilitate them, deter other possible criminals, and protect society from dangerous individuals. These are not all strong points of Statement A. However, statement A does not mention any guarantee of personal rights to the citizens. To insure a democratic society, a constitution outlining these basic rights is a necessity. Without this basic framework, an oppressive government could result.

Statement B, on the other hand, says that in a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also in prison. The strength of this statement lies in the principle of justice, where no innocent man can be punished for something he did not do. This statement is weak by not offering any solution or system whereby a government could operate efficiently and not risk persecuting the innocent.

Statement A appears to be written from the viewpoint of the head of society, while statement B seems to express the average citizens views. In this way the statements differ. They are alike in that they are both opinions on how a society should operate.

It is not difficult to accept both statements. Obviously, the men who set up our government took both points of view into consideration. Our legislature operates under a basic constitution and continually makes new laws to keep up with our changing society. Our judiciary uses a system whereby a fair trial is guaranteed and those convicted of crimes are punished. We also have policement to enforce the law and protect society from criminals. It is impossible to have a system where all criminals are punished. We also have policemen to enforce the law and protect society not persecute any just men, and still efficiently punish criminals. A good society should have a golden nean, as ours has, where the rights of the individual are protected and criminals are still punished.

We have seen that the two statements offer opposing views of a perfect



society, and that both have their strong points and weak points. By adopting the strong points of each, it is possible to accept both statements to a large extent, much as our society has.

### *SCORE OF SIX*

Statements A and B differ greatly, primarily in their respective outlook upon Society in general. The first Statement is undoubtedly that of a political realist, dealing only in the black-and-white of the extent of governmental authority. The second is obviously the profession of a political moralist, to whom authority is useless if misdirected. In the 4<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. a Chinese philosopher named K'ung Fu'tzu, better known as Confucius, stated that government exists for the benefit of the governed, and not visa-versa. Hence, while a government may possess power, it must also dispense justice fairly.

Examine each statement carefully for while both are well-founded, both contain damaging, perhaps damning contradictions of thought. The author of the first can be thought of as being guilty only of political realism and skepticism. All he has done was to put bluntly what every nation's political philosophy has stated indirectly since time immemorial. An ordered state is desirable, therefore laws must be made. If laws are to be made their violators must be punished. This is all simple political philosophy, with all conclusions resting on the basic premise of national survival. Had the author of this statement rested his personal argument upon 'national survival', there would be little to dispute. However, his supposed aim was 'peace and prosperity in a commonwealth.' Under these circumstances, his statement is found to be inadequate. While bills of attainder are suitable for rational survival, genuine peace and prosperity requires a judicial check upon legislative authority, a means by which justice can be dispensed in the commonwealth. Note that such a reference is non-existent. The exacting of penalties is left to the governing authority. This authority reaches omnipotency in that it exists and operates without the interaction with any independent power (as a check).

In the second statement a verbal profession of the ideas of Gandhi is seen. Indeed, it is nothing but a restatement of the noble theory that led many Indians to perform acts of civil disobedience (resulting in imprisonment) in order to call attention to widespread injustice. Yet, if a government is so lacking in justice, civil disobedience or non-violent publicity-getting is not adequate. If we are to believe the Confucian concept of government to benefit the governed, then we can conclude, as did the master's student, Mencius, that the people have the right to change their form of government, by whatever means are endemic to that nation's beliefs. Therefore, we see that the just man's confinement (by his own

design) to prison, defeats the just man's purpose in an unjustly governed society.

Although the two statements seem to be different, a man can, with clear conscience, subscribe to both. An omnipotent governmental authority can indeed bring 'peace and prosperity', as long as harsh laws are tempered with even justice, so that a just man need not feel his true place to be in prison.

#### D. ESSAY QUESTIONS 1975 <sup>5</sup>

*Question 1.* The following question was distributed to all students:

We are all made up of many selves. Describe some of your various selves—for example, food checker at a supermarket, big brother to a foster child, sole wage-earner in a large family, etc. How different are those selves? What do they have in common?

The following directions for scoring were distributed to all readers engaged in the grading of question 1.

The student should be rewarded for what he does well in response to the question. Here the student is set a three-fold task: to *describe* some of his selves, to *show* how those selves are different, and to *comment* on what they have in common. He is told to think about the question and plan his response.

Note that the question asks for a comparison-contrast commentary beyond mere description, simple autobiography, or generalizations about personality. Responses that do not go beyond such description, autobiography, or generalization should not ordinarily receive scores above 3.

An extremely well-written response may be scored a point higher than it would be scored on the basis of content alone. A poorly written response may be scored a point lower.

---

5. Essay questions and directions for scoring can be found on pp. 21-22 for question 1 and on pp. 31-32 for question 2 in *Comparison and Contrast*, 1975.

*Possible Scores:*

- 6 A superior response will describe two or more selves and state differences and similarities clearly. Though it may have occasional faults, it will be well-organized, well-detailed, and generally well-written.
- 5-4 These scores will be useful for a well-handled paper which is weak in one or two characteristics of the superior response, i.e., description of the selves, or in demonstration of the differences or the similarities, but is otherwise competently written.
- 3-2 These scores will be useful for the following kinds of papers:
- those in which only two parts of the three-part question are treated;
  - those which treat the subject in superficial or overly generalized fashion;
  - those which treat the selves only as moods, opinions, etc., instead of as roles.
  - those in which the writing exhibits serious weaknesses in structure, syntax, or diction.
- 1 This score is to be used for papers which show very little understanding of the question or suggest incompetence in structure, syntax, and diction.
- \* Non-response papers or those which argue with or avoid the question should be given to the table leader.

*Question 2.* The following question was distributed to all students.

“My father was killed on Iwo Jima,” he said.  
“I’m sorry,” I said.  
“I guess there were good people killed on both sides,” he said.  
“I think that’s true,” I said.  
“You think there’ll be another one?” he said.  
“Another what?” I said.  
“Another war,” he said.  
“Yes,” I said.  
“Me too,” he said. “Isn’t that hell?”  
“You chose the right word,” I said.  
“Each person does a little something,” I said, “and there you are.”  
He sighed heavily. “It all adds up,” he said.

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Mother Night*

To be sure, whoever realizes the senselessness, the hopelessness of this world might well despair, but this despair is not a result of this world.

Rather it is an answer given by an individual to this world. Another answer would be not to despair, would be an individual's decision to endure this world in which we live like Gulliver among the giants.

Friedrich Dürrenmatt, "Problems of The Theatre"

Write an essay in which you explain the views implied in each of these passages. How are these views different and how are they alike?

The following directions for scoring were distributed to all readers engaged in the grading of question 2.

The student is asked to write an essay in which he explains *what* the two statements mean, and *how* they are alike and *how* they differ. He should be rewarded for what he does well in his response to the assignment. Papers should be scored for their *overall* quality.

An extremely well-written response may be scored a point higher than it would be scored on the basis of content alone. A poorly written response may be scored a point lower.

Spelling errors should not ordinarily be counted against the score.

*Possible Scores:*

- 6 A superior response will be a well-organized essay that does the three things asked for in the assignment. It will explain briefly the meanings of both quotations and compare and contrast them; it may explain the meanings by *means* of comparison and contrast, or it may explain the meanings *and* compare and contrast them. Essays in this category will interpret the quotations intelligently and coherently, though there may be minor errors in interpretation. An essay receiving a score of six will display a high degree of competence generally but may have slight flaws in writing. An essay getting a six will support generalizations with appropriate details.
- 5 The essays in this group will concentrate somewhat more on one quotation than on the other or deal less thoroughly with both quotations than essays scoring 6, but they will clearly demonstrate competence.
- 4 This score will apply to responses that are generally well written but may lack the development of those essays in the 6 and 5 categories, fail to perceive the distinctions and similarities in the passages quite so accurately, or reveal somewhat less facility of expression.
- 3 Papers in this category may show signs of clear writing but contain misinterpretations of both passages; radically misinterpret one passage; deal superficially with both passages; display some evidence of serious deficiencies in writing; or deal almost entirely with one passage to the exclusion of the other.

- 2 Essays receiving a score of 2 may start with the assigned topics but drift away from them; be primarily critical or argumentative rather than expository; display considerable irrelevance; fail to see similarities in meaning between the two passages or make distinctions between them; have very serious faults in writing.
- 1 The response in the 1 paper shows almost no understanding of the question or the passages, *and* the writing strongly suggests incompetence in structure, usage, and idiom.
- \* Non-response papers and papers that are completely off the topic should be given to the table leader.