

**PIERCE THE PIG**  
A Play for Faculty and Student Chorus

Gottfried Brieger

Personae non gratae

President Proud  
Provost Thrifty  
Dean Makeshift  
Associate Dean Thrust, Urban Affairs

Professors:

Egod-Sociology	Bloodshot-Biology
Libell-History	Denkmal-Philosophy
Scribble-History	
Kunst-Art History	
Plodinsky-Physics	
Numb-Mathematics	
Verbalini-Modern Languages	

Students:

Bill Idler-1982-001-A freshman  
Coeds  
Students

*Setting: A perennially self-renewing, growing, small liberal arts university of about 35,000 students, Valhalla U., located somewhere in Middle America. Time, around 2030, but actually time is immaterial.*

*Act 1. Scene 1. Opening commencement procession of academics in bizarre robes, basically deteriorated academic regalia, vintage 1960 or earlier*

Scribble: Will everybody please line up according to academic rank -Verbalini-Modern Languages, Kunst, Art History, Denkmal, Philosophy, Egod-Sociology, Inisfee, English, Pl... .

Egod: I think this is absolutely outrageous. This is the first year the administration has deviated from the departmental factors since 1969. I should be right up there ahead of all of them. Say (addressing Verbalini), Kunst, how long have you been here?

Verbalini: Sorry, I'm Verbalini

Egod: Sorry, old chap. How long have you been here. Kunst?

Verbalini: (*Aside*-Damn Egod). Twenty-five years, just like you!

Egod: Hm, seems incredible. In any case since when is Art History ranked ahead of Sociology? I don't understand the lineup this year. Have you written anything?

Verbalini: Yeh, about 200 memos

Egod: I don't mean that. I fulfill my University Factor too. I'm the chairman of the inter-sex sports committee, I supervise the R. M. Nixon Memorial Applied Ethics Program, I'm the right wing-excuse me, right-hand adviser to President Proud on Student Dialogue Translation, you can see I'm a busy man... but I meant scholarship of course, how do you stand in scholarship?

Verbalini: Well, I'm working on the tenth revision of my third elementary text: "French for Nonverbal Students. I've got two articles coming out in the "Visions on National Education in Languages" on the echo chamber method of audiophonic language teaching and ...

Egod: But that's nonsense. I mean scholarship is...well, say like my "Diatribes at Sea" the definitive account of a traveling commune,...

Libell: Pardon me for butting in but did I hear the scholarship issue raised again? It seems to me that teaching is no longer being recognized at Valhalla. Last year I was third in the procession...

Egod: Talk to Makeshift. Ever since they introduced rank order in the procession in place of merit increase, the whole system has been going to hell. But in any case, teaching ??? Have you increased your TELED rating?

Libell: Of course! Ever since the dormitories were put on direct line. Students don't even have to get out of bed. They simply push the rating button on their Interactive. According to the Office of Statistics I have an audience of 1500 for my "Urban History-Anatomy of a Wasteland" and a rating of satisfactory to good- although students tell me that they often rate the reception rather than the lecture...

Egod: I recommend stereo receivers for my lectures..

Numb: I am opposed to this ridiculous ranking system. There is no reason in the world why Verbalini should head this procession. Of course she's a woman. According to my calculations, every faculty member should have a statistical chance of  $n$  factorial divided by  $x$  factorial times  $-x$  factorial to be first, the contract specifies a minimum opportunity to be first in line of one in ten-thousand. This is the second year Verbalini is first. Why?

Plodinsky: (speaks slowly and deliberately) Look, Numb, we've discussed this exhaustively with the executive committee... . As a matter of fact you've brought it up every year...

Scribble:(continues chortling)-Libell-History, Brusks, Engineering....

*Procession slowly marches in to Soul music, sits down in auditorium filled with casual students, earnest parents, carefully placed cheering section*

*Provost Thrifty rises to the Podium*

Provost Thrifty: Beloved students, parents, liberated women, liberated gays and lesbians, Stalinists, ex-Stalinists, Maoists, Republicans, Democrats...and faculty. It is my pleasure to introduce the one man who has kept this boat on an even keel. We've been through some really rough water these last thirty years...I mean at least three crises each fall semester, one of major proportions, then the follow-up investigations, 'final solutions' in the Spring and Summer semesters, just in time for the next series in the Fall...I'm sure the pattern is familiar to all of you who have been through menopause (chuckle). One man alone, along with a small

unworthy staff, including yours truly, has carried us through! May I present- President Proud! (Wan cheers from cheering section)

President Proud: Beloved governor, legislators, contributors, philanthropists, liberated women, liberated gays and lesbians, Stalinists, ex-Stalinists, Maoists, Republicans, Democrats, maintenance engineers, clerical and technical assistants, food service, campus police (to himself-there that's all my unions), students and ( sotto voce) faculty! I want to address you today on a topic which many of you will find familiar- I gave the same speech last year-but which I am sure you will want to hear again-Who, Where, and What is Vallhalla University? There is of course the rumor that-that I am Valhalla U.! Nothing could be further from the truth! In addition to myself there is the able administrative team of three, Provost Thrifty, my left-hand man, Dean Makeshift, an able negotiator, and Associate Dean Thrust, to be found everywhere (and sometimes nowhere-chuckle) as the University continues to serve the city, the county, the state, and the country! We four are the University!

Where is the University? Many of you have complained in the past that little can be seen of the University except cars and parking lots. Those trees, which have been faithfully replaced each year by larger ones, have finally reached a size that we can no longer support. Accordingly I have authorized the landscape department to replace all trees on campus with suitably sized artificial palms. As a special feature a built-in breeze maker will make Valhalla U. the only minor university with built-in outdoor air conditioning!

But I haven't answered my final question. Where is the University? The answer is really quite simple. The University has gone underground. Beneath each parking lot, neatly stacked, layer after layer, you will find our classrooms, laboratories, offices. The faculty found that it could better meet its commitments (pause) -to round-the-clock, 24-hour education, by not being influenced by an external natural light stimulus. The department of Statistics tells me that the majority of biological clocks among faculty have suffered no setback. On the contrary, if the results from the automatic midnight snack dispensing service are to be believed, many of our faculty are most active at that time-or at least eating! Finally our new dorm TELED system has reduced to a minimum the often grating personal contact with students. We do however still have a small problem with insomniacs...

What is the University? The University is what it has always been, a half-way house- between our troubled disintegrating family system and our dynamic growing reward-centered society at large. We believe, as you do, in the suburban

home for everyone, wheels and four-on-the-floor for all members of the family above fourteen, a boat in the summer, a snowmobile in winter, indeed a chicken in every pot (last year it was steak I believe), pie -in-the-sky, and so forth... But it is our solemn task to prevent an immediate engorging of society's rewards on the part of our students, which can lead to early apathy. Therefore we see the University primarily as a holding tank-if you'll pardon the analogy- so that the fish, I mean our beloved students, are not exposed too early to the unseemly rigors of consumption. Our means for entertaining, pardon, educating-the students of today are still hampered by traditional limitations. Our faculty persists in the concepts of bygone days that words and ideas can satisfy the basic needs of human beings at the height of their psycho-sexo-physical powers. This is nonsense! We continue to seek a full integration of mind and body! Let me just remind you of the pioneering efforts of our sports and recreation department in sponsoring underwater courses, creative writing in the steam room, and so forth. Since the Academy of Classroom Dramatics has taken over the formal lecturing responsibilities for almost very department, we have found a tremendous surge of student interest. There has only been a slight negative impact from the delays incurred in the TELED system, as the actors-I mean professors- consult the Fact-holders for questions. But I am digressing. You will have a chance yourself today to hear both the professors and the Fact-Holders as we want to give you a small sampling of what Valhalla is today!

Now I come to the main point of my little digression. As you know all of this reprogramming, curriculum scrambling, hiring (aside-I wish I could say firing as well), costs money, big money. As our budget has not grown, as it hasn't for the past fifteen years, we have had to take some unusual measures... Would the ushers please pass down the aisle...

*Enter- Coeds dressed as cigarette girls: Cigarettes, candy, chocolate, beer, adult, literature, booze, condoms...*

*Enter Dean Makeshift and Thrust, dressed as ushers, but shabbily. Profuse handshaking for each donation*

President Proud, continuing: ... In addition we are once again this year auctioning off honorary doctor's degrees...(reverting to auctioneer's lingo).... what am I bid for a Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, cum laude, etc....do I hear 2,000, doctor of medicine (non-practicing of course)-let's start the bidding at 100,000, doctor of science, 500, Dr. of Education-what am I bid?

This year we have also considered the needs of our own students who, through no fault of their own, but due to the limitations of society, have failed

to pay their fees and have thus been prevented from receiving their Certificate of Lifemanship, formerly called degrees, without which it is extremely difficult to interface with the bank and credit computers. After they have signed a statement promising to receive in their home at least once a month, our Lifelong Extended Learning Program, we will issue them the Certificate in Bronze, suitable for credit up to 10,000 dollars, which they may then apply to their fees and receive regular gilt edge CL ... . (speech trails off as faculty and audience show signs of extreme restlessness).

*Act II. Scene 1: Setting is a small windowless room. Wall is covered with lurid ads for various courses. Another wall has computer terminal, monitor, chair.*

*Bewildered freshman student enters. Automatically a disembodied voice recording starts up.*

*Bill Idler, would-be freshman, is a typical product of our secondary school system. Potentially capable from K-3rd grade, his mind has been progressively weakened by constant exposure to the alternating assault from television and the public school system. The former has won out however and now his mind retains only the reflex desires for consumer products, alias the good life. He has no clue how to get them however. A loose connection between work, money, and the good life has been established however in the inner recesses of his mind. In the absence of any significant advice, he takes his father's, and has entered Valhalla U.*

Voice: Welcome to Valhalla U. We know you will love the fantastic educational fare that we can offer you this semester. We draw your attention to the Roman Gastronomy I-Feast with the Gods, a hands-on lesson in forgotten cooking; Trash Bags to Riches-the Sociology of Garbage 202-History of Whig-making 1775-Aerodynamics of Paper Airplanes, taught both as Physics 450 and Engineering 650-Advanced Fermentation Chemistry-Good Scotch...these are just a sampling of our current selection. After consulting the wall menu, please proceed to the computer terminal, enter your name, age, and bank balance. Select your course carefully, remembering to indicate whether the course will be taken E (for Erect) or (P (for Prone). If you decide to take the course prone, please indicate whether you wish a dormitory bed, or the take-home cable connection. If you have any further questions, please kiss the screen. Thank you!

Bill: (bewildered)-Roman gastronomy? Good scotch?? I want a job when I get out of here, isn't there anything practical like guidance and counseling, letting

the boss know who's boss, advanced picketing, gifts and grants from our government? -I'm going to call the registrar (Kisses the screen).

Registrar (pleasant female voice)- Thanks for signaling! How can I help?

Bill: I'm Bill Idler, Miss. I want to get my share of the good life out there, you know-five-bedroom ranch, swimming pool, sauna, matched Corvettes, you know-and these courses here Roman Gases, paper airplanes-hey that doesn't make any sense. Frankly, I need big money quickly-I'll need a job. What should I take?

Voice: what is your number?

Bill: 150 dollars

Voice: We already have your bank balance. It checks out to 148.50. What is your student number?

Bill: But I'm not registered yet!

Voice: Your bank balance is sufficient. If you will look in the lower right -hand corner of the monitor-your number is 1982-001.

Bill: (hesitatingly).but...

Voice: Do you wish to have your number entered in the Valhalla Daily Lottery?

Bill: I suppose...

Voice: Congratulations, you have won curriculum VIIB, Government Gifts and Grants Specialist, 1st class! Your instructors will be: D. Handson-economics and management; J. Egod-sociology; A. Libell-history; B. Numb-mathematics; R. Bloodshot-Biology, Your course selections will be as follows... (*chattering of computer printer is heard*).

*Scene 2: Economics and Management Classroom. Instructor Handson in middle of bare room, resembling a squash court. Audiovisual aids are directed at all three walls, and ceiling. All are projecting graphs and tables of great complexity. A small group of students sits in a circle around the center on swivel chairs. Students are dressed in bathing suits. Intense sun-like lights indicate that they are*

*getting tans. Dark glasses etc. Prof. Handson enters, moves to middle of room. Sun lamps dim instantly.*

Handson: Damned moles that we are here underground. How are your tans coming? I'm glad that there are still a few viewers willing to take this course erect (chuckle)-you know that you won't have to take notes-I sell them at the usual discount rate (chuckle) So, let's begin (*he turns on the audiovisual equipment, slides, videos, movies, overheads, all flicker on and off, change rapidly and randomly*)---*Handson speaks very rapidly*) Over here you will notice the rate of inflation which is climbing rapidly past 100 %. Over here is government spending which is increasing at 200 %. Now I ask you, when will curve 1 intersect with curve 2? That's right 1982-001, never, because they're parallel lines, good that old-fashioned mathematical concept is still taught. Here we have the latest computer projection for the energy market in the year 2050 AD, you can see that Valhalla planned wisely in going underground, that right 1762-335, there won't be anything but body heat down here, and damned little of that, but anyhow that needn't worry you-what you want to know is how to get at Uncle Sam's rapidly diminishing coffers- to tell the truth grantsmanship is the only answer-I am even now (*putting on his coat and grabbing his briefcase*) going to Washington to find out (*Handson departs, switching lecture to recording which starts in a dull, even tone*)... The systems approach is, in the last analysis, and with the help of a good computer to straighten out the lines, the most reliable way to project a finicky exponential decline into a rosy linear rise... .

Bill (to a neighbor): what the hell, I came here to get...

Other Student: Listen, don't worry. Handson knows how to get. He's graduated from Valhalla just last year, and got one of the few real jobs around-teaching!

Bill: But how long.... Hey, man how's my tan coming?

*Scene 3: Same room, but now walls are covered with travel posters. Students sit around periphery on outdoor restaurant furniture, ostentatiously drinking espresso, liquors, most wear wigs. A. Libell enters, dressed as a tourist flowered shirt, camera, etc. Begins to take pictures of the students.*

Libell: Ah, that's a nice one! I always like the personal touch in my classes, 1982-001. (*Sits down at table, orders coffee, begins to lecture*)... This is history 253-history of wig making, 1775-to tell the truth-there isn't much to tell about wig making in 1775-but it will probably take me all semester. As you know, wigs were made wherever there were men and women to wear them-Williamsburg,



Philadelphia, and so forth-wigs were made of human hair for the upper classes, horses' hair for the lower classes, in between there was a lot of baldness (*Goes over to a middle-aged woman, obviously wearing a wig-somewhat jestfully to woman*)-today we don't need them what with hair implantation and so forth- (*lift's woman's wig playfully*).

Woman (*outraged*)-How dare you! I'm going to report you to Dean Thrust for molestation!

Libell(*unperturbed, but kindly*)-there, there, I think most of us in this class have a common interest. I'm over thirty too (*Lifts his toupee-laughter*).

Woman (*embarrassed but readjusts her wig*)-Chauvinist pig!

Libell: Anyhow, 35,200 wigs were produced in 1775, 2,000 horses were slaughtered, obviously some of the upper classes wore horses'...but that's not what I wanted to talk about. My real passion is travel, romance (*teasingly approaches an attractive coed, sits down at her table*) Where would you like to go?

Coed (*coarsely*)- Disneyland!

Libell-Disneyland (*sighs*)-Look at these! Costa Brava, the Blue Grotto, Rio, Mardi Gras, back again to London, Paris , Rome, the Pyramids...

Coed: - Look, you profs can afford this. Us working girls can't...

Libell: Can't you dream?

Coed-Look if you've ever watched " Wide World of Travel", you don't need to dream. My problem is sleep. (*She rests her head on table in sleeping gesture-then raises head briefly*)-but you just might be the answer.

Scene 4: *Class with tables and tape recorders, loud rock music is heard. Students walk about with headphones. Prof. Verbalini enters, dressed in tragic clown costume. She is enthusiastically greeted.*

Verbalini: Willkommen! Bien venue ! to my clase di lingua. As you know it's been a heavy burden for me, as sole survivor of the modern language

department, to carry on instruction in ten languages simultaneously, but we manage...

Bill: Why do we need this? Nobody I know speaks any of these.

Student: Look, she's a good friend of Libells, and he told her that a few phrases in a foreign language could open up all kinds of doors when you travel abroad.

Bill: But I don't travel beyond Detroit!

Student: That's the point! See all those ethnics down there, Ukrainians, Maltese, Macedonians, Chaldeans...

Bill: But I'm not even a minority. I eat with the rest at M McDonalds....

Verbalini: Excuse moi for interruptione, 1982-001, but I want to demonstrate my new, painless Rapidoling instructional method-would you volunteer?

Bill: well, Prof.. Spagettini, my ears aren't so good after 18 years of rock.

Verbalini: That doesn't matter with my technique, as long as you're not stone-deaf.

Bill: Okay, I guess.

Verbalini: The method is based on the simple idea that repetition is Mother Nature's way...

*An apparatus much like an old-fashioned Victrola with a speaker's horn is seen. Prof. Verbalini demonstrates. As she speaks into the horn, a loud repetitive echo comes back.*

Verbalini: Let's start with an internationally recognized word. Cuckuck (echo is heard)... You see it's that simple.

Verbalini: Now you, 1982-001

Bill: (*imitating sound quality of Verbalini*)- Crazy (*echo*)

Verbalini: Your accent needs a little work. Tone is good. Now I am going to give each of you a word. Please try this: Nein, No, Nyet, non.

Each student picks a word, says it, turns on the tape recorder echo, a concert of no's in four languages is heard, different tone levels, but always repetitive. *Verbalini leaves. Students remain with puzzled expressions.*

*Scene 5-Same room, tables, students stand about, examining contents of large plastic garbage bags. Prof. Egod enters. He wears shabbily elegant suit, cravat, etc.*

Egod: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, I am Professor Dr. Egod, but I would prefer it if you simply address me as " your Excellency". I am the author or co-author of at least two books in the last twenty-five years, my latest being "Diatribes at Sea", which, by the way, although not required for this course, is highly recommended. *(Reaches into briefcase for a copy)* You may charge it if you wish at the Registrar's. *(Bill eagerly reaches out for a copy. Egod carefully replaces his only copy in briefcase)*-not now, after class...

Student *(whispering to Bill)* Forget it. He pulls that stunt every class. The book's been out of print for the last ten years. It's his only copy.

Egod (Continuing)... no my classic earlier work, " Treasures in Trash" is however required. Unfortunately my publisher informs me that demand nationally has exceeded supply temporarily, so I have made these copies *(hands out dog-eared mimeographed material)* at only 25.00 a copy. For those of you who haven't the money, there are loan copies in the library, although I understand some pages are missing...today we have a laboratory exercise in urban sociology.

Student:*(Pulling copy of Playboy from trash bag)*...Ah!

Egod: Yes, trash can be very revealing. Pornography too! *(Laughter)*  
I have brought in today some representative examples of upper, middle, and lower class garbage. The bags are unmarked however. Naturally there is a certain artificiality to this...

Bill: Why, professor?

Egod: "Your Excellency" please, 1891-000

Bill: I'm 1982-001, your Excellency!

Egod: Yes, I'm terribly sorry, triple zero...anyway, the artificiality is that the lower classes don't bag their garbage, so I had to have a graduate student collect samples from a representative alley, but anyway...

Coed: (*pulling copy of Playgirl from bag*)-gross!

Egod: Miss 36-30-29, sometimes research is gross, sometimes klein (*chuckles*)

Coed(actually 1632-080): But what can I learn from this stinking...

Egod: Exactly. The odor is directly proportional to the use of soaps, hair sprays, deodorants, intimate sprays-in short the Wet Nose Test. Do you get it?

Coed: I guess!

Egod: Now that's not very profound of course. Let's get back to the-er-licentious literature.

Student: Yea, you mean the porno mags!

Egod: Well, yes. I don't read them myself of course but in every class there are a few... and what do you notice, triple zero?

Bill: Well, my copy of Hustler is really torn, mangled up.

Another student: I've got a good copy here (*holds it up*)

Egod: Exactly, one is upper class, the other lower-class-which is which?

Bill: Mine's the lower class.

Egod: Wrong again, triple zero. You need to apply the Deja-Vu principle. Upper-class people can't afford to be seen buying that type of material; they raid the middle class garbage, who in turn got it from the lower class. Naturally in the process it becomes a little dog-eared...The point is in our present society trash is always upwardly mobile-that's all for today.

Bill (*to fellow students*): Will this help me in Washington?

Student: You bet! Where do you think Congress gets its information?

Scene 6. *Same room, same students, tossing about paper airplanes in great profusion. Others are busy folding. Plodinsky enters. He is dressed in a WW-I flying outfit, sort of minor-league Baron von Richthofen. Cardboard paper wings are attached to his back. Speaks with an accent.*

Plodinsky: We have come to the crucial moment in our course, ladies and gentlemen-Will I fly? ( *Confused murmurs of yes and no, who cares*)...I shall also be handing out the grades today for Physics 450-Engineering 650. I ask again, Will I fly? - ( *Enthusiastic response, Yes, Yes, Absolutely, Right out of here, etc.*) ...Now the wings that I am wearing today are based on the best, most rational design submitted by one of you-naturally the proof is in the flight-we in the hard sciences are totally reliant on experimental evidence--I shall attempt flight after class from the carillon tower- ( *with considerable feeling*) since the days of Leonardo, man has dreamed of flight under his own power...but first the grades. I have here an A+, ( *starts standard patter of an auctioneer*), it's an excellent value, what am I bid? Shall we start at 1,000...( *Students begin wildly and frantically to outbid one another*). He begins to pass out grades on large marked cards, collecting money and checks.

Bill: My god, look at those greedy premeds, 1500 for an A-. I'll never get out of here. I can barely afford this C.

Plodinsky: Before I leave, I ask one favor. No side deals. I have to put these grades into the computer immediately.

Scene 7. *Same room, now rearranged for cooking demonstration. On the front table, facing audience, a small pig or facsimile thereof, is arraigned for dissection. Electric frying pan to the right, pressure cooker to the left, various kitchen utensils. Enter Ms. Bloodshot, a nervous assistant prof, dressed in apron with motto Biology takes Guts. She proceeds to the front table, addresses the class. Class is sitting with bibs, similarly inscribed.*

Ms. Bloodshot: This is Biology 202, -Roman Gastronomy1. It used to be called Anatomy of the fetal Pig-but the Department felt that if we could efficiently recycle the instructional material-er, pork-then why not make it interdisciplinary, Roman history, your digestive tract (*shyly*) -a bit of Julia Childs...Anyway (taking a good sharp paring knife or dissecting scalpel) you

open the pig- (cuts pig) along the ventral line, the first thing you encounter is the mesenteries which you push aside to reveal- (*pulls out links of pork sausage*)-the intestines, which already in Roman times were recognized as ideal containers for waste scraps of meat. We prefer to call them sausage however. These may be placed directly into a heated pan (does so) and cooked for 20 minutes at 350°. Please note the time and temperature exactly in your laboratory notebook. Now continuing along the medulla obligata, we come to the reproductive organs-this is a pig with a womb (*aside to class*) we are no longer allowed to refer to the gender of experimental animals- (*takes out womb, actually a partly filled balloon with various edibles*). Now Apicius tells us that stuffed womb...

Bill: Disgusting!

Coed: Exciting!

Ms. Bloodshot: *Putidus solum in oculi spectatorem est*-It's all how you look at it.

Bill: (Aside) What's that gibberish?

Student: I think it's an extinct language they once taught at Valhalla.

Ms. Bloodshot: (*reading*)... *Vulvulae isiciatae sic fiunt*...Stuffed wombs, make as follows. Pounded pepper and cumin, two short heads of leek stripped to the soft part, rue, liquamen, add the meat well beaten--press into the well-washed womb...Pepper, cumin, leek, you see, even a little botany here.

Students (in chorus): When do we eat?

Act III. Scene 1- *Freshman 1982-001 and coed are strolling across campus. 001 is discouraged.*

Bill: Listen 36-30-29, I think I've had it with Valhalla. Underground all day, sunburn from those damn lamps, rapid eye flicker from Handson, a travelogue rerun from Libell, trashing from Egod, a C from Plodinsky, and a monumental stomach ache from Biology 202-how can you get ahead of the game at Valhalla? What is the game?

Coed: Well the name of the game hasn't changed for ages, it's grades. Of course since they changed the system from A's and B's to Student Personally Initiated

Testing, it's been bad for those of us who can't write...but there's always S.P.I.T. If you can't afford those prices at the grade auctions, try the direct approach. I usually go to a professor and tell him that I'll do anything for a good grade.

Bill (eagerly): -and?

Coed: Man do those profs have imagination!

Bill: So you think I should approach Ms. Bloodshot??

Coed: Why you lousy sexist pig! This is one of the few areas of fair competition left for us coeds!

Bill (downcast): What else is there besides the "direct approach"?

Coed; Get involved with their research!

Bill: But most of them aren't doing any!

Coed: So what! If you ask them, they'll always say yes and find something for you to do.

Bill: Hey, thanks for the tip! By the way, you ever take any of those courses in the P module?

Coed: Sure, all my day classes.

Bill: I guess I'll go and see Handson, but he's hard to get a hold of.

Coed: Best way to catch him is to be his driver to and from the airport!

*Scene 2. Handson's office. Typical faculty office, small, incredibly cluttered with loose papers, books, charts, etc. Also a bed, liquor cabinet, dying potted plant. Ticker tape connection to Wall St. Pictures of various Presidents on wall, clever photomontages with Handson. Handson is reading letter out loud as Bill comes in.*

Handson: " Dear Professor Dr. Handson:

I am delighted to inform you that, after brief consultation with the administration, I am unanimously recommending you for promotion to full professor, even though you have been at Valhalla only eight months. Your track record on grants has been outstanding, 50,000, then 100,000, now half a million, all for the identical project, and from several different agencies. Grantsmanship of this magnitude cannot afford to be unrecognized. Valhalla is particularly appreciative that 90 % of your funds are designated for overhead. Please accept our heartiest congratulations.

Yours in Grantsmanship!

President Proud

What do you think of that 1982-001?

Bill: That's just what I wanted to talk to you about, sir.

Handson: My promotion?

Bill: No, grantsmanship, but yes of course-I mean congratulations on your early promotion.

Handson: This calls for a drink!. What'll you have, Coke, Pepsi?

Bill: Well I see you have some chilled Dom Perignon...

Handson: That's only for visiting grants persons; no, no, we professors live a Spartan life. By the way, did you know that I only graduated from Valhalla last year? (*Musingly*) Imagine, just a year ago in your shoes (aside: No that's not quite right. I believe mine were patent leather already then).

Bill: Yes! and I've got the same burning desire to make good (*under his breath-money*)-and master the art of creative proposal writing, to milk the great Washington cow, to...

Handson: Just a minute, Can you read?

Bill: Well, haltingly.



Handson: If I were to give you a proposal, and were to underline certain key words, do you think you would recognize them in another proposal?

Bill (incredulously): Are you asking me to do research with you?

Handson: Yes, I'm going to reveal to you, in the strictest confidence of course, the secret key for unlocking the coffers in Washington and elsewhere...but there's a catch!

Bill: What's that?

Handson: A 50% kickback.

Bill: What's a kickback?

Handson: Well, it's the modern equivalent of an apple for the teacher.

Bill: Oh, I get it!

Handson: Good! You just passed Economic-Management 135-The Individual and the System!

Bill: Gee, thanks!

Handson: Now here's the system. (*Brings out a large stack of old proposals*). These are old but successful proposals for grants. You'll see that I have underlined certain key words or phrases such as (*reads*)...major progress...successful completion...potential breakthrough...promising cure...heart, lung, cancer cure...exiting potential, magnificent achievement...many publications...potential Nobel Prize work. Now I've found that if we identify enough these phrases and words, the computer will generate an outstanding proposal and put them in this (*hands Bill a document with blank spaces*) in the blank spaces...here we put the amount of money we want.

Bill: (*Eagerly*) Yes! Yes!

Handson (*somewhat admonishing*): but always be sure to pay at least lip-service to the environment, civil rights, human rights, OSHA, NASA, EPA, etc.

Bill: It's that simple!

Handson: Well, yes to a freshman, 001...then, with each successful grant, we reprogram the computer for a better fit. Right now I've got one going in for one million. Sounds like a lot doesn't it?

Bill (*overwhelmed*) Wow!

Handson: (*somewhat irritated*) Don't forget though, Valhalla gets 90%. That's where you come in. You get the grant, don't you see, I become your consultant at say, 100,000 a year...

Bill: Oh, I see! the apple bit, eh!

Handson: That's right, an apple for the teacher, you get a bite.

Bill: Idler-Handson Inc., sounds fantastic. I better trade up my sports car.

*Act IV. Scene 1. Valhalla, four years later. Convocation address by President Proud. Again academic procession of the Lumpenproletariat. Procession is led by former freshman 1982-001, alias Bill Idler. Faculty collapsed around tables. Droning voice of President Proud in background.*

Professor Denkmal: This Idler, how did he get to the head of the line? Didn't I have him as a student two years ago?

Libell: You're damn right, so did I! It's only twice a year that we climb out of our rat holes anyway, and then this insult... Hey, Egod, how can you take this?

Egod: I couldn't except for the fact that he is in Bermuda during the academic year. Listen. I understand he's invented a machine that can extract money directly from Washington--simply bought out Handson by giving him 100,000 /year till death--of course Handson's only 30, so he'll have to pay plenty. Of course in my day you could only get tenure based on scholarship, publications, teaching, university service, but that's just because nobody knew the right price--now we know (*In the background President Proud welcomes Idler to the rostrum*)

President Proud: It is a rare pleasure indeed to thank a benefactor of the University while he is yet alive, even rarer when he consents to dwell among

us. I refer of course to Professor Idler, Valhalla 1982-001, who within the short time span of four years has acquired an enviable education, has endowed the university in perpetuity, and to the resounding applause of his colleagues, has had the degree of Dr.Dr. of Grantsmanship conferred upon him. He now occupies the endowed professorship formerly held by Prof. Handson, who is now handsomely retired on the Riviera. We need not look for a moral in this success story however. There is none. It is the highest form of enlightened self-interest to show a modest profit in life, while still paying Valhalla the required 90%. I hope distinguished older members of our faculty who are at this point in their career on what we might call short rations, will look to his example, and renew their dedication to Valhalla! I ask you to join me in " Hail to Idler"!!

Faculty rises unsteadily, chants: Hail to Idler! , Hail to Idler!

Idler (*Rises, flushed with embarrassment*): Thank you, President Proud. I shall continue to be grateful to Valhalla, to you my colleagues, and perhaps some students, for the opportunity to stand here today. Do you want to know the quintessence of education? It came to me three years ago, during the late Prof. Plodinsky's exquisite demonstration of scientific technique. He said: " We in the Sciences are totally reliant on experimental evidence". In other words, use what you have-in his case an inadequate set of paper wings- he coupled this with a sound demonstration of the value of grades in his auction. I understood what he meant-after all it was my wing design which he used in his final flight- soar! Soar! to whatever relative heights you can-the base of the carillon tower is 600 ft. above sea level-but know the value of all things, especially grades, and of course grades are education! So I followed his advice, flew to Washington regularly with my good friend Prof. Handson-the rest is history-*alea iacta est*

That I remember from Ms. Bloodshot. It's in an extinct language. I think it means:" Pierce the Pig!"