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Comment on the Commentary of Anatol Rapoport  
on Universities and Classified Military Research  
Alfred de Grazia\*

I cannot find much of a theory in the eminent theorist's diatribe against classified military research and therefore comment in kind.

I love an open society and I hate secrets. Some of my best friends keep secrets (the scoundrels!). My own life has unfortunately involved many secrets.

I have met men who carry a secret between their <sup>(cortical)</sup> buttocks like a repressed fart and they are unpleasant. <sup>men</sup> Some men are power-hungry and, like professors without ideas, ~~some~~ gather secrets so as never to be starved out of their ~~strength~~. Then there are all the secrets that are too banal to be publicized; those who hold them are ashamed to reveal them. One could go on; but the point is that most secrets are not worth keeping - - or learning. Most classified research is for the birds.

But professors, <sup>(in re q. cf. Jesus, New Test. Ed. Matt., 6)</sup> like the birds (~~I beg to differ with Jesus~~), try to supplement their incomes. They feel that they need to get equipment, travel, meet people, blow their minds, etc. and classified research helps them do these things. Why keep them from it?

That's ~~the~~ question: Why? Professor Rapoport elevates the question sky-high. He talks of an academic community that doesn't exist and of a defense community that he says (regretfully) exists. He says secrets spoil the academic community. (I think usually they also spoil the defense community.)

But this academic community that we adore - - this womb of pure scholarship - - where is it? Peel away all the dependencies of classified military and non-military research, and little is left - maybe some Chaucerian scholars (with their cryptic specialties), cuneiform experts (half-a-dozen vestal virgins) and organ-grinders to whom knowledge is a pot-pourri that they crank out.

I have news for Professor Rapoport. Practically everything is classified. Eighteen years ago I suggested limited outside access to Survey Research Center punched-card files and heard a lot of tongue-clicking. (The situation is greatly improved). Yet here is a group

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as pure as they come. Move to the condition of the pure astronomers and pure physicists and pure psychologists: they're so open-minded that they squirrel away their ideas and will fight you tooth and nail for the right to date their manuscript ahead of yours. *Still* ~~But~~ they love that word "pure", although, or perhaps because, it is devoid of operational meaning.

Then go on to a hundred departments and schools. In all of them professors hold their secrets - - the secrets of many types of clients. Following Rapoport's logic, why shouldn't we know who is being interviewed by a teaching psychiatrist or social worker, and why, and whether he is being paid for the knowledge he is concomitantly gaining? *Or* why shouldn't we bar all corporate, legal, and foundation ~~and~~ consultantships, all studies for school boards, all party politicking, all confidential client and subject relations? *Are* two thousand practicing political Democratic scientists going to *be made to* spill their party secrets to their Republican students? Do we bar medical school faculty from practicing? No, even though they return to our halls with green on their hands and secrets in their hearts, for we know from the history of science what can happen when medical teaching is kept from bodily contact. And anyway, they won't let us stop them.

*In a strangely limited search for a supporting example,* Rapoport says we should demand that ~~Communists~~ <sup>*their secret red*</sup> reveal ~~themselves~~, so *that* we can have the pleasure of ~~shunning~~ <sup>*shunning*</sup> them. Why not homosexuals too? Why not the shadowy informants of ~~the~~ Deans and Trustees? Why not everyone? Let us all confess and do it publicly: we of the great Rapoport Academic Community - - no secrets, please!

The Wicked Secret, <sup>*wickedly secret*</sup> of course, is the defense secret. "Purge the academic womb of these men, if not ~~the~~ <sup>*the*</sup> others." It is not the secret that is disliked; it is the wicked kind of work involved. Never mind that <sup>*non-academic*</sup> most people think classified military <sup>*research*</sup> is more noble than the other kinds of classified work. Why not say it? "Let no true academic womb sustain this martial worm." Very well, then there will be no one who will talk intelligently of what went on in the martial community. We would dance around it like savages about a secret source. Whom would this benefit: ~~Scientists~~, students, public, opposing politicians, pacifists? None of these, no one at all. We should become ignorant victims, paranoid dogmatists, smiling organ-grinders.

It occurs to me that, in the "defense" field as in any other, a man should do his duty by his academic community; he should translate his private knowledge into public form, he should teach the young and old to think, he should do good research. In short, he should be a good professor and scholar. If he can be so, and wants to, or has to keep secrets, that's his business. If he cannot, <sup>*be a good professor*</sup> he should be fired.

Pari passu, a University administration that cannot administer classified projects in ways that are congenial to our academic way of life should not allow them in or should be fired if it does. But why blame classified military research for the massive delinquencies of our universities? It is merely a leaking tap in this slum dwelling. If the reason is to help raze the slum, well then, ~~wellcome to the~~

that is another matter ©  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
END

Aditya in  
Oct. 29, 1968

Print to follow A def-  
Critique of Rappaport  
article.

69

January 31, 1969

Readers' Forum  
The Humanist  
4244 Ridge Lea Road  
Amherst, New York 14226

Dear Mr. Editor:

We never know where the next blow will come from in this cruel world. Your myriad readers will have read that I wrote "I have met men who carry a secret and they are unpleasant men," and they will have wondered what I was trying to say. I really wrote "I have met men who carry a secret in their cortical \_\_\_\_\_ like a suppressed \_\_\_\_\_." You broke up a perfectly serious classification.

To suffer this censorship from THE HUMANIST is simply too much! And not even two dots (..) to show that the phrase was cut out.

To tell the truth, I had hoped that you might do this so that I could say "You see. In THE HUMANIST, you can exclaim 'Christ is a fool', 'God is dead and ought never have been invented', and worse, but watch your \_\_\_\_\_ language." Eschatology, but not scatology!

Really, I am indignant as well as amused, as when my babies used to \_\_\_\_\_ on the floor. Up against the wall, \_\_\_\_\_!

Sincerely yours,

Alfred de Grazia

AdG:smp

This letter was Printed in The Humanist.