

A close-up photograph of a hand turning a page in a book. The book is open, and the pages are a light cream color. The background is a warm, out-of-focus brown. The text is overlaid on the image.

michael ceraolo

scars publications

2003

mini chapbook

mini poem book

A Modest Proposal: Twenty-First Century Edition

Though you can lead children to knowledge you can't make them think;

Hence,

Compulsory education is not working;

And

Given the voluntary non-literacy
Of people perfectly capable of reading;

And

Given, in this society, at this time,
The love and the lure of the illicit;

I

Offer this solution to our current woes:
Make education illegal



Initial Poem

There's still a NATO, but no SEATO
And an FBI, CIA, and NSA still searching for POWs and MIAs
There's a U.S., U.N., U.K., but no longer a U.A.R., U.S.S.R., or G.D.R.
There's a WHO, but no WHAT or WHERE that I'm aware of
There's ICU, CCU, CPR, CAT scans and a couple more pages of acceptable
medical abbreviations for use by RNs, MDs, DOs, and PhDs
There's OPEC who sells to BP
There's AT&T, IT&T, MCI, IBM, and your ATM
and thousands more, though I've forgotten them
I see a silver lining in initializing:
Though most people still are saying anything,
at least now they're saving your time and a few trees



Library Sonnet {7}

Turnabout is fair play
While typing a long poem
a screen popped up to notify me
“There are too many spelling and grammar errors
for Word to continue to notify you of them”
Of course, most of the ‘errors’ were nothing of the kind
My name at the top of every page constituted a large part,
because Word didn’t know how to spell my name
And Word didn’t know very many foreign or native names
And Word didn’t like the fact that I didn’t capitalize every line
I had finally done it
I had pissed Word off
Bill Gates was going to take his ball and go home
That’s okay: I have my own ball



Both Sides of the Tracks

I-90

heading eastbound

out of downtown

To the north

the tony suburb

nestled along the lakeshore

has its noise nicely abated

by walls put up for just that purpose,

while to the south,

in the working class neighborhoods in the city

the noise is nicely unabated,

and is joined by the roar

of the occasional train



Committee Report {2}

Further findings of the Citizens' Committee
on Oxymorons Operative Today:

life-affirming religion

creation science

just war

marketplace morality

television news reporter

student athlete

conventional wisdom

independent counsel

More to come at a later date



Medical Doublespeak

Doctors must not have read Orwell,
for when making diagnoses
they use the phrase rule-out
to mean that, in fact,
they don't rule it out

Denial

At most hospitals and nursing homes
the entrance for patients brought by ambulance
is around the back by the trash dumpsters,
apparently because going through the main entrance
would let everyone know that there are sick people here



Health Care Bureaucrat {2}

The paper pusher at the psychiatric hospital
refused to accept a patient brought there by ambulance
because the patient had signed only a consent to be transported,
not a consent to be admitted
Perhaps he thought she consented to be transported there
for a sight-seeing tour or the fine cuisine



Nursing Home Blues

The nursing home had posted prominently
the patients' bill of rights,
among which was the right to social interaction
But when that interaction included
sex between the residents,
repression was the response,
and the patients' bill of rights was as
the Bill of Rights as applied to schoolchildren
or as interpreted by most Supreme Courts
-Michael Ceraolo
Thank you for your consideration.



Essay on a News Report {72}

Midway through the program the news drone intoned
about the dangers posed by people imitating
the stupid stunts seen on pseudo-reality shows;

then
the next story had the male bimbo breathlessly ‘reporting’
the latest ‘news’ about their network’s reality show



Now for This Commercial Message {9}

It was a most mixed message:
in the men's room of the bar,
under the signs seeling cigarettes and whiskey,
the splash guard in the urinal
said to say no to drrugs



Essay on a News Report {73}

On the news of the network owned by a big warmaker,
where the anchor pretentiously preens in front of a screen,
one whole program was devoted to the coming war
that the anchor and his bosses were making inevitable,
and though it was covered on every other station,
there was not a word about a strike,
over health care issues,
involving the big warmonger



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scars **publications**

published in conjunction with

children
churches
& daddies

the unreligious, nonfamily-oriented literary and art magazine
ccandd96@scars.tv ISSN 1068-5154

Editor@scars.tv <http://scars.tv>

829 Brian Court, Gurnee, IL 60031-3155, USA, Northern Hemisphere,
Planet Earth, Solar System Milky Way Galaxy, the Universe

Freedom & Strength Press 

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