

My concern was and continues to be not only the tragedy of "all-buts" who never finish doctoral dissertations and then feel burdened for years afterward to explain to those who care not. There is the additional tragedy of those who end up with a distasteful required experience with no research or publication thereafter.

Why should there be such a heavy investment supposedly in learning to produce a result never thereafter produced again? Whether judged in educational or investment terms, the human as well as the material waste seems difficult to justify. Though many factors may be involved, the case for the concentration of this treatise seems impressive.

The relative lack of attention to the early stages and the frequent lack of capacity on the part of mentors more fully to assist in the early stages together seem to produce more floundering, more anxiety, more self-doubt, more sense of inadequacy, more misunderstandings, more delays, more incompletes, more manufacture of needless busy work to keep distracted, more cost and trauma and resolve never to tangle with inquiry again than anyone needs.

Surely, this cannot be an effective planned way to weed out those less suited to a life of investigation or scholarship of one sort or another. And surely, while sadism may be among the human endowments, it cannot be so rampant as to explain the observations described in any sizeable number of cases.

At this point, my interest is not so much in the numerical count or in salvaging people after troubles arise. It is more in not letting things get to that pass in the first place. A more positive aim is to increase the zest as well as the capacity of those who do survive so that they will want to put their newly developed abilities to work again and again.