



FEAR OF CHANGE

ILLEGIB

Almost 2000 years before the invention of the printing press Socrates was teaching on the streets of Athens. Socrates wrote nothing himself and taught solely through the medium of verbal interchange between teacher and pupil. His pupils, Plato and Xenophon, and the printing press enable us today to evaluate the greatness of Socrates as a teacher.

It is perhaps a futile exercise to speculate on what attitude Socrates would have taken toward the printing press had it been invented 2000 years earlier. As a non-textbook writing teacher, would he have feared the competition of the printing press? We'll never know; but we can surmise that because he was not only a great teacher but also a man of great wisdom, he would have welcomed the new medium. We're on surer ground when we state that even though Socrates might have feared the possible competition of the printing press, he could not have stopped its evolution.

The Frenchman, Nicholas Joseph Cugnot, is generally credited with inventing the first self-propelled vehicle in the year 1769. And what a host of fear neuroses this first "automobile" produced! Not only physical fear, but we can assume also, fear of competition from some farsighted but misguided horse breeders. Whatever the source of the fear, it grew to such proportions that so august and presumably intelligent a body as the British Parliament passed the Red Flag Act in 1836. One of the provisions of the law made it illegal for a self-propelled vehicle to proceed at a speed in excess of four miles per hour! The provisions of the Act from which its name was derived required that all self-propelled vehicles be preceded in daylight by a man waving a red flag and at nighttime, a red lantern!

The Red Flag Act was not repealed until 1896! We can only guess at the effect this 60-year ban had on the development of the modern automobile. Obviously it hindered but it did not stop the development. Some of us believe that the automobile is here to stay. Today horse breeders of race horses, polo ponies, cow ponies, hunters, show horses, thoroughbreds, quarter horses, Arabs, etc. are among the successful members of our affluent society. In the final analysis, the only creatures who had good cause to fear the advent of the self-propelled vehicle were the city dwelling English Sparrows who through the bounty of the city dray horses had neither to toil nor spin very hard for their dinners.

JOB NO. 30X NO. FLD NO. DOC NO. 2 / NO CHANGE
IN CLASS / DECLASS CLASS CHANGED TO: TS S C RET. JUST.
NEXT REV DATE: 11/80 / DATE 7/1/80 / REVIEWER 02723 / TYPE DOC. 30
NO. PGS 2 / SERIALS DET. / PROC COMP // OP// ORG CLASS 4
REV CLASS 4 / REV COORD. AUTH: RL 793

Alexander Graham Bell's telephone in 1876 was greeted with hues and cries. Diverse church groups joined to denounce it as an "ungodly instrument." Teenagers of the 19th century were forbidden to use the telephone for fear of electric shock or "insidious infection"! Alas, progress!

The Wright brothers in 1903 managed to keep their aeroplane in the air for only 12 seconds on their first flight. Unfortunately the biographer of Henry Ford, Sr. is silent on whether the developer of the Model T feared the ultimate competition of the airplane.

In our own time, we can remember how alarmed were the makers of phonographs and phonograph records over the competition of the radio. In turn, the manufacturers of the radio feared the advent of television. But today all three media are flourishing.

And in the sixth decade of the 20th century teachers and training administrators are confronted with Programmed Assisted Instruction (PAI) and Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI). Whither?

Ol' Cactus Matt