

## A classic — in propaganda

Thursday, November 27, the graduate students in history presented the Nazi propaganda film *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willen*).

The film was produced by Leni Riefenstahl, a worker in Goebbels propaganda machine, and filmed at the Nazi convention in Nuremberg in 1934 which was, according to the brief introduction given before the film, deliberately staged for the purpose of being filmed.

Technically, the film made excellent use of devices such as unusual camera angle, heavy contrast, long vistas, rapid panning from short to long range, and quick cutting from one view to another. When these techniques are combined, they function effectively to hold the audience's attention throughout the entire two hours plus of the film, while they were confronted with a blatant piece of propaganda.

The propaganda value of the film was enormous. The viewer watched countless thousands of young, healthy, and apparently dedicated Nazis march, demonstrate, and cheer for their Führer. He saw incredible numbers of swastikas passing before the cameras, carried by those same people. He saw how happy those people were to be Nazis and how GOOD it was to be a Nazi living in the wholesome Nazi way. He saw them shouting at any and every opportunity "SIEG HEIL!" in mighty and interminable chorus. In short, it used every propaganda device available (including kissing babies) to show that Nazism was good for Germany and every good German should be a Nazi.

Which brings me to something that disturbed me about the film: who remembers the Wallace campaign of last year? Remember how the Wallace supporters thought of themselves as GOOD Americans? And especially remember how all of those good Americans shouted "AMERICA" in chorus after Wallace's speech?

It may be unfair to interject this analogy into a review of an old propaganda film, but, this is what the film reminded me of, and I am frightened by the whole thing.

Which brings me to the most horrifying part of the film. There were segments of the film devoted to speeches of the Nazi leaders, in particular, Hitler. When Hitler spoke, his gesture was foreign, as were his words. Therefore, because his meaning escaped those who went to see the film while his posturing did not, he seemed comic, and people LAUGHED—just as they laughed at Wallace last year before they knew how strong he was.

The purpose of presenting the film was to show a classic item of propaganda and to show the nature of propaganda itself. In this purpose, the presentation succeeded. Thank you very much, History Department, for your presentation.

—Dick Nimmons

## book review

SAY YES, by Miriam Waddington: McClelland and Stewart Ltd.

It is rather unfortunate that Miriam Waddington has given her most recent collection of poems the title *Say Yes*.

At many points in the collection, one feels a deep compulsion to say no. Too often the poems become prosaic and uneven. Moving, beautifully crafted lines fall away into mutters.

*but now there is no one to ask  
no one to telephone from the  
strangeness of cities in the  
lateness of nightness . . .*

The book is the fifth volume of poetry published by Miriam Waddington, whose other works include *Green World* (1945), *The Second Silence* (1955) and the text of *Call Them Canadians*, a photographic study of the Canadian people put out in 1968.

The author is a member of the English department of York University, Toronto.

These are generally sad songs, songs of middle age and memories cherished long after the reality has disappeared. *Say Yes* is a book of personal icons.

*Suddenly  
in middle age  
instead of withering  
into blindness  
and burying myself*

*underground  
I grow delicate  
and fragile  
superstitious;  
I carry icons  
I have begun  
to worship  
images.*

Each poem seems to grasp at some fast-retreating happiness or sigh resignedly at an arriving pain. Perhaps the most painful of these last ones is the brief jingle, "Women who live alone". Its refrain, "beware the menstrual crone", provides an interesting, bewitched image of the kind of growing pain seldom found in poetry, but the whole poem thuds after three stanzas. One gets the impression the poet had a second of inspiration, three seconds of typewriter-fiddling and something more important to do after that.

Though the collection on the whole seems too tired to climb very high, there are moments when an image, or a gently entering metaphor, surprises the reader into an appreciation of beauty.

It is in these brief organic descriptions the Miriam Waddington shows her real poetry.

*I see  
empty nests falling  
in the cold air  
forced out of the trees*

*by a stiff wind  
I am afraid  
of this bird-emptiness  
and the ratgrey dark*

Sometimes her rhythms work in an interesting way, bringing a flow to the words so that they carry the flow of an idea. The poem, "Leaf", demonstrates this:

*Curly leaf uncurl  
to white ungrow  
back to seed to  
wind unclasp to  
carrying air that  
landed you here  
on earth in tree  
in branch in bud  
and in the lighted  
bay of my  
imagination.*

There are moments which move you as you read. But the weight of prose trying to communicate a poetic magic tends to deaden the beauty that is there. Miriam Waddington feels a lack of music in herself apparently, for she keeps meditating through the book on "dead words" which "powder the window-sill".

Often she will close a poem with an introspective worry: "I wonder / if I can still sing". One can only conclude she titled her book as she did for fear of other answers.

—Elaine Verbicky

## A modest proposal . . .

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clearance, sewage-disposal, slaughtering, morgue night duties, etc. As for those tramps, bums, winos, fiddlers, and other such habitual vagrants as may no longer be accessible to remedial treatment, we suggest that, following the lead of the Germans in their attempt to remove gypsies and other undesirables from an otherwise healthy society (incidentally an ideal example of "complete physical, mental and social well-being" or *Gesundheit*, these persons be granted an element of social utility by being permitted to participate in medical experiments of various kinds. Such "human" material at hand would, to give but one example, enable Dr. Yonge to determine with much greater range and accuracy the damage sustained by the brain structure on the

introduction into the system of larger quantities of a given drug than are at present feasible.

It should be quite clearly understood, of course, that we have no wish whatever to associate either Dr. Yonge or ourselves with the Nazi mentality and value-system: on the contrary, we strongly repudiate it. All we suggest is that valuable lessons in guided group-integration, work-therapy and individual self-abnegation can be learned from the German experiment. But this question of method is our only point of contact, and since we would apply such techniques not against a race but merely against recalcitrant individuals we can hardly conceive how the two can be equated, or even compared, with any pretence to reason.

To conclude, what Dr.

Yonge has really proved beyond a shadow of doubt is a fact often forgotten in today's chaotic world: that the question of drugs and related evils is not a medical or scientific but a moral matter. It is not enough, as today's "liberals" believe, for society to attempt to determine the danger to the individual of any given activity and then leave him free to decide his attitude to it. In today's technological society there is no room for the individual, only the group, and its decisions must be taken on its behalf by a group of specialists qualified to make decisions in the related field of study, and thus the only persons capable of making moral choices concerning it. It may be objected that the proposals outlined in this article are too complex and far-seeing to be applied in the world as we know it. Our answer is that that world must be changed by the force of technological advance into an unrecognizable new world, where mankind can aspire to ever higher group activities within a meaningful social context. With the necessary governmental and provincial support we can see no reason why this country should not undergo such a transformation in a relatively short time, say by 1984 at the latest.

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