

Subliminal perception a conflict of terms

by Kevin Gillese

As a follow-up to two previous articles done in the Gateway which dealt with Professor Wilson Brian Key's theory of 'Subliminal Seduction', that is, the implantation of subliminal stimuli in advertisements to subconsciously affect consumers' buying patterns, the Gateway recently spoke with one of the men in perceptual experimentation on this campus - Dr. E. Lechelt, Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology.

GATEWAY: Professor Lechelt, does such a thing as subliminal perception exist?

LECHELT: No, not in the terms that it is described as. Liminal comes from the German word 'limen', meaning threshold; subliminal perception means the perception of physical stimuli at a level below their threshold value. While the limen or threshold generally implies a physical stimulus level above which a physical stimulus will be perceived and below which (subliminal) it will not be

perceived, it is much more complicated than this.

For instance, threshold is a statistical average, thus having a probability characteristic; thresholds vary among individuals and 'within' the same individual from time to time.

I cannot, as a scientist, believe in subliminal perception, simply because stimuli below threshold, i.e. subliminal, by definition are not capable of being perceived.

It is more likely that the stimuli are above the threshold

level but our attention is drawn away from them.

One can draw the analogy with the magician; he draws attention away from the hand doing the work and then pops up with the magic. In like manner, advertisers draw attention away from the stimuli 'planted' within the ice cubes, for example, and thus one consciously perceives a glass filled with ice cubes, without attending to the 'planted' message which is actually present, although very subtly disguised.

Now, whether or not this will have an influence on spending habits, I can't really say for sure.

GATEWAY: Are you aware of the research done with the tachistoscope and its influence on the theatre groups exposed to it?

LECHELT: Yes, it appeared that a correlation did exist between the flashing of an image stating "Drink Coke", flashed at 1/3000 second every five seconds, and increased sales of the product. But I don't think anyone has yet established a clear scientific relationship on the effect of subliminal perception totally free from important concomitant factors.

GATEWAY: Are you aware

that legislation concerning the implantation of subliminal stimuli, after discussion in the House of Commons and the House of Representatives in 1957-58, was dropped? If so, do you feel such legislation should be adopted at the present time?

LECHELT: Two points, I feel, should be made. First, no one can deny or perhaps even comprehend the powers of Madison Avenue lobbyists in getting "their way". This, however, can be countered, if necessary. Second, and most

important, is that ineffective or inappropriate legislation would probably be worse than no legislation at all.

What is really needed at this time is more basic research in the area of 'subliminal' perception so that we can come to a more thorough and exact consideration of its nature. Once this is done and can be brought forth as scientific finding, rather than armchair speculation, hopefully legislators would be in a better position to respond in a realistic and proper, or more meaningful, manner.

Demand for women's courses

The following is the text of a letter that is being sent to the Academic Vice-President, Dr. Morowitz, the President of the University, Dr. Gunning, the Deans and Directors of various faculties and the Selection and Curriculum Committees.

The issue of women's studies will be brought up before GFC. The Ad Hoc Committee invites comments and suggestions on this issue to the Ad Hoc Committee on Women's Studies, c/o W.P.C., S.U.B. rm. 230 or the Gateway.

To: Students, Staff, Alumni and Community:

On November 17 a meeting was held of concerned students

and faculty to discuss the absence of courses dealing with women.

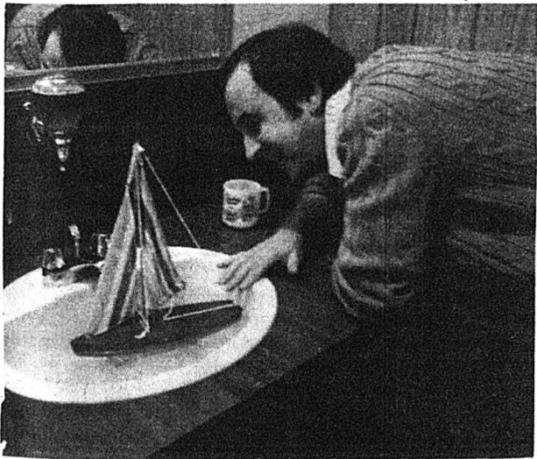
Instead of extending the number of women's study courses that have been offered, the University has in fact dropped certain courses over the past year.

In view of the increased interest shown by faculty and students towards women's studies, we urge you to take immediate action.

We would appreciate a reply on how you are dealing with this very important matter.

Ad Hoc Committee on Women's Studies
c/o Women's Program Centre
Room 230, SUB

Get your ship together



with **Mike Cranston**

From 5:30
Til 9:00 A.M.



Ernie's STEAK PIT LTD

For Elegant Dining
Licensed Lounge
Open 'til Midnight
FREE PARKING

reservations: 469-7149

40 Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre

THE KING AND HIS LOYAL SHORT SUBJECTS

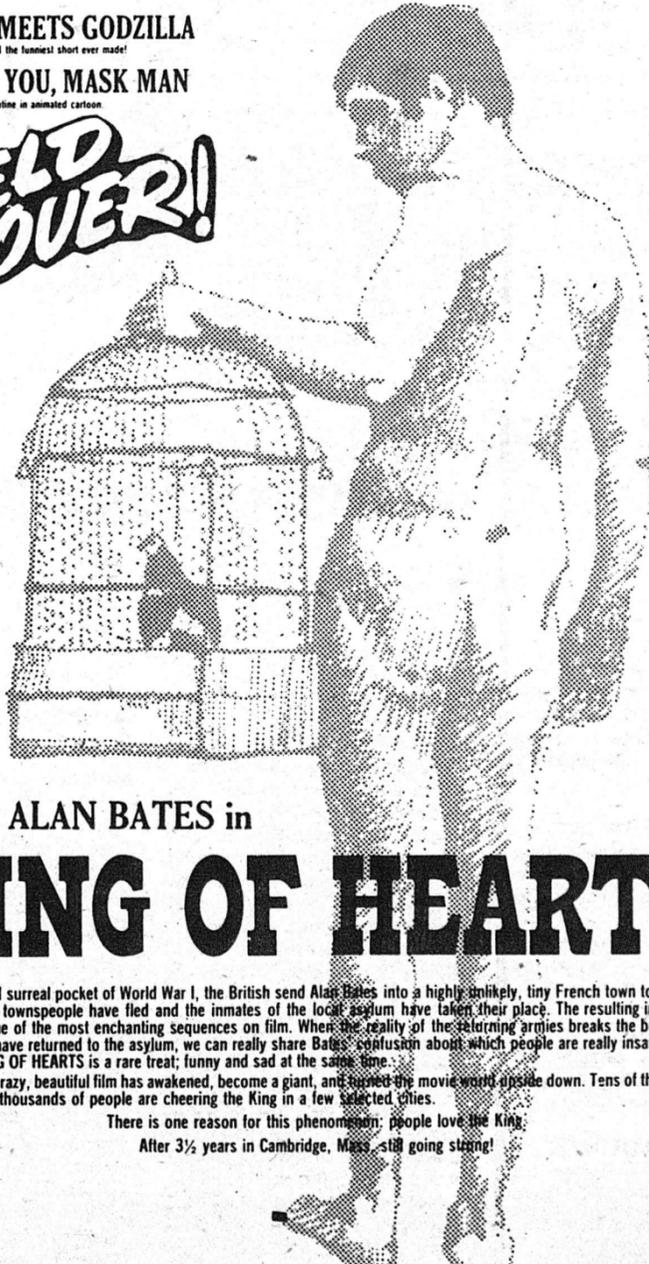
BAMBI MEETS GODZILLA

—second for second the funniest short ever made!

THANK YOU, MASK MAN

—a Lenny Bruce routine in animated cartoon

HELD OVER!



ALAN BATES in

KING OF HEARTS

In an isolated surreal pocket of World War I, the British send Alan Bates into a highly unlikely, tiny French town to discover a bomb. The townspeople have fled and the inmates of the local asylum have taken their place. The resulting interaction gives us some of the most enchanting sequences on film. When the reality of the returning armies breaks the bubble and the inmates have returned to the asylum, we can really share Bates' confusion about which people are really insane. In our opinion, KING OF HEARTS is a rare treat, funny and sad at the same time. This wacky, crazy, beautiful film has awakened, become a giant, and turned the movie world upside down. Tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of people are cheering the King in a few selected cities.

There is one reason for this phenomenon: people love the King.

After 3½ years in Cambridge, Mass. still going strong!

ADULT, NOT SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN



118th Ave. at 124th St.
Phone 454-5168

7 AND 9 PM