

Letters

Pay TV porn will increase attacks

To the Editor:

To the women students of Dalhousie University. No doubt you are aware that the CRTC plans to air "soft" pornographic material on its pay TV channel. I view this as yet another means of degrading and exploiting women in order to make a profit.

You may also be aware of the fact that it is still unsafe for females to walk alone through this campus at night, for fear of sexual assault (*Gazette*, Jan. 27th). I fear that with the increased availability of pornographic material through television, that more men will view women as mere merchandise, and will treat them as such. I fear that this exploitation of women through the media will lead to an increase of such attacks on women.

If you are in any way concerned about your right to be treated with respect, or about your safety, I urge you to voice your concerns to the CRTC, the minister of communications, and to your member of parliament, at the following addresses:

Dr. John Meisel, Chairman, CRTC Ottawa, Ont. K1A 0N2.

The Honorable Francis Fox, MP, Minister of Communications, Department of Communications, Journal Building, North Tower, 300 Slayter Street, Ottawa, Ont. K1A 0C8.

Your local MP c/o The House of Commons, Ottawa.

Adele Dyll
4th year Nursing

Humour reveals prejudices

To the Editor:

RE: Tom Dickie's letter

The humour inherent in Tom Dickie's letter regarding the "First Choice" issue gives me deep sadness and equally deep indignation over how "humour" so easily becomes the prostitute of real and deep-lying prejudices. If humour can lighten up the expression of hatred, if it can camouflage insecurity and fearful aggression, if it can be manipulated into allowing inhumane statements and beliefs to pass, the humour is an ass. Did the reader laugh when he read it? . . . The callousness and plain unconcern of this kind of "humour" causes real harm to real people.

Do we care for each other as fellow humans? A certain

Man once taught that we are to love each other as brothers and sisters. I'm glad he said "love" and not "like one another," because while I can care for Tom Dickie as my brother, I cannot, and am certain that many women cannot "like" his chauvinism, and what it does.

Andrew Ager

Hunter S. no threat to Canadian culture

To the Editor:

Jim Lotz's criticisms of the upcoming Hunter Thompson lecture are irrelevant. What Mr. Lotz fails to realize is that the revenue generated through ticket sales will pay for approximately eighty percent of the lecture. If in fact anyone besides Mr. Lotz gets upset at the cost of bringing an American to Dalhousie, it will be motivated by the same causes; namely misinformation, and this paranoid notion of the savage raping of the Canadian culture. When one looks at the contributions made by Canadian artists and scientists it becomes clear that their is no need for any cultural protectionism, Canadians can compete on an equal basis. I can see no advantages to choosing a Canadian lecturer simply because she/he is Canadian; on the contrary, if we reward mediocrity we will be repaid with the same. Personally I believe Hunter Thompson has something worthwhile to say, and I am going to listen to it. The fact that Thompson is an American will not bother me, not even a little bit.

Lotz also criticises Thompson because his radicalism is motivated by fear and loathing. Once again a lack of reflection has seriously flawed Lotz's argument. Hunter Thompson is primarily a journalist, he reports his observations. Thompson's fear and loathing is a reaction to these observations, it is not what motivates Thompson's radical perspective. When one looks at Thompson's brief and unsuccessful career as a politician it is obvious that Thompson was motivated by a desire to protect and enhance a way of life. A way of life that stresses community, ecology, and sanity, at the expense of those whose actions are determined by their unrelenting pursuit of money.

For those of you who are unhappy with the present state of the North American society check out the lecture, it should be interesting.

Finally I imagine the engineers are in for some pretty harsh criticism in this issue, actually I can almost commend their individuality, these people obviously do not care what anyone else thinks of them, at least not me.

Matt Klug

Apologetic attempt?

To the Editor:

I read Alec Bruce's review of the *Pottersfield Portfolio* with fervent interest and then promptly used it to help light my woodstove for the night. May it never be said that a critic's words are not put to good use.

Perhaps I should apologize to Mr. Bruce for having included fiction in the *Portfolio*. His own apologetic attempt to mention the stories sadly disturbs his otherwise fanatical tirade against the sad state of modern poetics. Even though the fiction accounts for over half of the volume (word for word 3 to 1 over the poems) Bruce chortles, "The eight short works of fiction are, by and large, quite good."

He has nothing further to say about the fictional content. I admit that I am wary of reviewers who editorialize at length before actually sully the page with anything specific about the work at hand. But Mr. Bruce had an axe to grind and he wasn't about to get the damn thing sharp without lopping off a couple of digits first. He is so good at it and his opinions are so quaint that I would have assumed him to be an octogenarian had I not actually met him once and found him to be a bit young yet for senility.

Much to your reviewers chagrin, Lesley Choyce will be hanging around Nova Scotia for quite a while yet. While the *Pottersfield Portfolio* succeeds at publishing important poetry that lives, breathes, comes complete with sobs, tears, insults and (even) bad breath, I have my doubts as to whether we will ever invest heavily in the sort of "excellence" Bruce prefers. Dry, lifeless, "quality" verse is rampant in the Canadian journals. And while the *Portfolio* has managed to stay aloof from the true "travel brochure" style of magazine that periodically flourishes in the region before declining into receivership and bankruptcy, we have sustained the magazine through hard work, gutsy writing and public confidence. All of our writers get paid for their poetry and fiction; this is quite rare for a Canadian literary periodical, I am told.

As to his, "nothing sells culture quite like excellence" platitude, I detect that he is already hard at work honing his cliché making skills and he will probably have a wonderful career ahead of him in the world of advertising and promotion. Go for it.

Sincerely,
Lesley Choyce

Commentary

On Disarmament and Geoffrey Martin

by Glen Johnson

After reading Geoff Martin's rebuttal to my letter against disarmament, I felt a short reply was called for.

Mr. Martin recognized that my article was "factually correct" (which is more than I can say for his) and that "the Soviet KGB have been involved in the peace movement." This is a very important admission on the part of Mr. Martin, one that most disarmament-types shy away from. If the Soviet Union harbours malevolent intentions towards the West, something which most intelligent people realize, then its support of disarmament movements necessarily implies that disarmament is not in the West's best interests.

The real impetus behind the peace movement is not "Ronald Reagan's strident statements" (which Mr. Martin contends), but the following: human cowardice, a lack of confidence in liberal democratic institutions, and Soviet/Communist-front agitation. I've already dealt with Soviet/Communist front agitation in my article. As

for the others: Ronald Reagan did not create human cowardice, but the agitation of pseudo-intellectual left-wing militants such as Mr. Martin is a major cause of the West's crisis of confidence.

Western Europeans are justifiably concerned about the possibility of nuclear war, as Mr. Martin claimed. However, he neglects to point out that these weapons would be used only in response to a Soviet invasion. Mr. Martin wrote that it would be "perverse" for the Americans to use nuclear weapons in defence of Europe, a view which — in light of the Soviet superiority in conventional weapons — condemns Europe to that fate worse than death, Soviet occupation. Possibly it would be a good thing for the North American powers to pull out of Western Europe. Then the Europeans would be responsible for building, maintaining, paying for, and using these weapons. As an added bonus, European leftists would no longer be able to point to the American bogeyman. However, I'm sure that Mr. Martin would oppose

European self-defence as vehemently as he opposes American defence of Europe.

Mr. Martin also made several farcical assertions:

(1) That the El Salvadorian government was not democratically-elected. (It was. Even the mouthpiece of the American left — the *New Republic* — agrees with me); (2) Only two of the eleven parties in the FDR are "communist." (There are at least five communist parties in the FDR. They denounce democracy, advocate seizing power by force, and have received Cuban training and aid.); and, (3) That the Ho Chi Minh government was "better" than the contemporary South Vietnamese governments. (Ho's government — in 1954 alone — murdered 100,000 people in cold blood and imprisoned or left to starve an additional 500,000.)

Mr. Martin did make one good point: It is almost impossible — even for experts, let alone laymen — to make intelligent observations as to which side has the more powerful nuclear arsenal. And any

"lead" in nuclear weapons could very well be "redundant." However, the Soviets have been building weapons at a much faster rate than we have, and this may make us appear to be vulnerable. Appearances are very important, and a Western military buildup will convince the Russians that we are ready to defend our right to exist. Furthermore, many commentators believe that it is impossible to monitor or verify a disarmament treaty. Much of Mr. Martin's argument turns on the fact that such a treaty is verifiable. When dealing with the Russians it is better to play it "safe," which means that we should not disarm.

In addition, Mr. Martin attacks me for presupposing that the West (i.e. liberal democracy) is "good," while the Soviet Union (i.e. totalitarianism) is "bad." Even if one views the Vietnam War as ignoble (which I don't), it could only be an aberration. The Afghanistan affair is the norm for totalitarian societies. As far as I'm concerned, Mr. Martin must live in a state of moral and intellectual squalor if he views

both systems as equally moral, or immoral. If Canada was a totalitarian society like the Soviet Union, a critic of the system such as Mr. Martin would probably in serious trouble. If not for an accident of geography or birth, Geoff Martin would be a corpse.

Lastly, Mr. Martin says that I am a "pro-American polemicist" and an ideologue. Well, my friends know that I'm not "pro-American," especially with relation to acid rain, the East Coast Fishing Treaty, and FIRA. Moreover, except for my nominal membership in the PCYF, I don't belong to any political organizations. On the other hand, Mr. Martin is a member of the Latin American Information (or should I say Disinformation) Group and of the Dalhousie Disarmament Group. He has written more letters and articles in one issue of *the Gazette* than I have in my life. I am a moderate conservative while he is a radical leftist, and he is much more politically active than I am. It is he who is the product of ideological indoctrination, not I.