

Mills on Media

by Stephen R. Mills

MEDIA VIOLENCE: SO WHAT?

Anyone interested in television was probably disappointed by this season's program line-up. It wasn't that the viewer was not given the usual quota of sickening situation comedies, doctoring dramas, spy "thrillers" and variety shows. Something seemed to be missing and it's not hard to see what that something was even after just one night's viewing: violence.

Violence has always been an essential part of entertainment because homo sapien, by nature, is a violent species. Since a huge portion of media is devoted to entertaining the public, why should anyone be surprised that, for years, violence was predominant on television and movie screens throughout the country?

Indeed, no one was surprised or even took particular notice until the synthetic violence of the media-world began to manifest itself in reality via riots, demonstrations, and assassinations. The people in power were quick to draw attention to the "glaring" and "shocking" violence on television and in the local theatre. Quick were they also in convincing the public that this was the cause of riots, assassinations, demonstrations, and every crime in the nation from first degree murder to pick-pocketing.

Not surprisingly, there grew almost overnight a huge campaign to stamp out media violence. Somewhere along the line, the idea was picked up that the children were the most affected, their sweet pixie natures being more easily warped by the ghastly images being fed to them every day. (Parents seemed to forget that most television sets have OFF buttons.)

Education:

Does It Serve Business?

By Dorothy Wigmore

Some teachers are concerned in changing the present education system. This was evident at a conference held at Dalhousie on Nov. 14-15, entitled "High School-University Education, Complementary or Conflicting?" - with respect to English and Math programs.

The conference started Friday afternoon with a panel discussion on the general problems of transition to university from high school. Unfortunately two of the university students in the discussion were graduate students: Bruce Gillis from third year law and Larry Fredricks a sociology graduate student.

This was followed by a keynote address from Mr. F. C. Hudson, President of Municipal Spraying and Contracting Ltd.

Mr. Hudson began by saying that education should not serve the business world, and followed up with an attempt to draw an analogy between business and education, unsure if society or the student was the final product. He elaborated on ways the university should prepare the student for business, suggesting that many more industrial managerial courses be offered; that a basic knowledge of the three R's were essential and that accuracy is of prime importance.

Students coming out of university do not know how to spell, articulate or make correct calculations, he added.

A panel discussion was held Saturday morning on High school English and Mathematics programs, with a university and high school representative from each department. None of the participants were satisfied with the system they were in.

The main complaints were the difficulty teachers have in conveying their subject, the change in study methods a result of changing from a spoon-feeding class to one where the onus is on the student to find out things, and the impersonal atmosphere of the university compared with high school.

Workshops in each subject were held after the discussion. In one of the groups, the quality of texts in high schools were compared with

This year's programs are the result of that campaign. No westerns; no detectives, nothing that suggests violence (except perhaps the news, which serves to show the foolishness and hypocrisy of the campaign in the first place.)

So the children (apparently) are safe but the question still remains; Has violence disappeared from the media?

Alas, I am sorry to report that it has not. The situation is similar to the town where one family was hated by everyone and a huge campaign was started to get the family to leave the town. One day, the people noticed that the family's house was deserted. Everyone was genuinely happy until it was discovered that instead of leaving town, the family had just moved to a new house a few blocks away.

Similarly, violence has moved. It is no longer on television but runs rampant in movie-houses throughout the land. Motion pictures such as "The Wild Bunch", "The Detective", "Bullitt" and a host of others are more than enough to satisfy the public's hunger for brutal and sadistic beatings, shootings, stabbings, rapes, suicides, and anything else that tickles your fancy.

Now that we have concluded that the power people have not eliminated violence, we are left with the basic and ultimate question that raised the whole controversy: does violence on TV and in the movies cause real life violence? Are children really affected that much by what they see on television?

It's a very difficult question and it must be admitted that, because of the lack of adequate research and ex-

periment, there is hardly a definitive answer.

However, such research and experimentation as has been carried out seem to go against the popular belief. Certainly children are affected by what is presented to them over the ether but no child is going to be so affected that prolonged viewing will turn him psycho unless the seeds have already been planted by other factors (such as his home life or his relationships with his friends.) The same is true of adults; no sane person will be turned into a murderer, an assassin or a master thief because he's seen too many westerns or James Bond flicks. The people who are affected are already ill. That is, media is more likely to reinforce than to change.

This does not mean media violence is not dangerous. The growth of mental illness in the nation is not helped by the media exploitation and glamorization of murderers and maniacs. It should be realized that violence in society will never be eliminated by getting rid of media-violence. We must tackle the basic problem of social evils causing the explosive conditions whose fuse media is able to ignite.

Despite the impression many readers may have gathered over the past few weeks, media is not a huge monster, lurking in the machines that serve you, waiting to leap out and destroy.

Media is what people make it. The violence on the television and movie screens can only accent the violence in the hearts and minds of men. When this basic violence is done away with, perhaps media will come into its own, and perhaps, likewise, will Mankind.

those in university. The teachers were concerned, but no concrete solutions were reached.

In another group, the blame for poor quality of students was put on the lower grades, that is to say, the system.

The English teachers met together later to discuss three textbooks on the Nova Scotia curriculum; Man's Search for Values, Argosy for Adventure, and Sound and Sense. The discussion centred around the purpose of the texts in teaching literature.

Professor Cannon of Dalhousie felt that such books as Man's Search for Values are "able to focus in a real way on the things students are concerned with." He disagreed with Miss Broomfield of Mount Saint Vincent that the book was too gloomy and that something else would be more useful.

Professor Sproule of Dalhousie dealt with a chronological text of literature, Argosy to Adventure. He expressed the opinion that literature is fundamentally a presentation of experience in various fields. He recommended a chronological study of literature because "very few students have a real ability in the area of subjective thinking". The chronological method leads to a completeness of knowledge and a good base for critical reading, he added.

Pollution Talk

By Fran Giberson

A colloquium on water and air pollution will be held in the McInnes Room, 8:15 P.M. Tuesday November 25. A twenty five minute National Film Board Production, "A Matter of Attitude" will be shown and speakers have agreed to speak on several related topics.

The seminar is being sponsored by the Education Committee of the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students. A panel discussion will follow the film.

The speakers will include Dr. E. Mills of the Biology Department on the biological aspects of pollution, Don Walker from Nova Scotia Tech

Poetry was considered in Sound and Sense, by Professor Cowan of Dalhousie and Sister Marie Agnes of the Mount. Both felt that the text was quite good.

In the discussion after the critiques, one young teacher expressed concern in the system turning out "little literary critics".

In agreement with several other teachers, he felt that teachers must keep in mind the fact many students do not continue into university.

Referring to the mechanics of literature, Professor Cannon stated that until students are persuaded, and they must be, that poetry is a necessary exciting and important part of life, they do not need the mechanics.

In summing up, the chairman, Professor Cooke of Dalhousie, said the problem of teaching poetry and other aspects of literature rests on presentation in the junior grades, that a poem cannot be completely understood until the mechanics of it are known and that high school students not going on to further education should not be swamped with work.

Dean Uhlman of Student Services in closing the conference expressed the feelings of many of the teachers present: no solutions had been reached but at least the problems had been presented. It was a step forward.

Sexual Liberation

Last week Student Council bought 2,000 copies of the McGill Birth Control Pamphlet for distribution on campus. Copies are free and available in the Council office, at Student Health, and at literature tables in the S.U.B. during noon hours.

The McGill Birth Control Pamphlet includes information concerning male and female anatomy, the menstrual cycle, various birth control devices, their use and effectiveness, and a section on abortion.

The idea of supplying Dalhousie students with these pamphlets and their purchase was initiated by members of the Women's Caucus at Dalhousie who felt that there was a great need for birth control information at the university level.

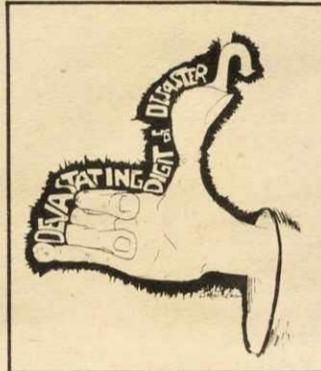
They felt that this kind of information should not be suppressed but made available to all students entering university.

"A comprehensive understanding of one's body could free people from unwanted children, forced marriages, and hypocritical and self-destructive sexual abstinence," they said "It

could also eradicate the possibility of resorting to abortion, which at present is expensive and usually dangerous. This knowledge could make child-bearing a matter of choice and not of chance. Parenthood could be planned and happily anticipated rather than being a financial and emotional burden."

Certain authorities within the university argued that parents will be upset by the distribution of the pamphlet. "Surely they would be more upset if, by lack of knowledge, their son or daughter was responsible for the birth of an unwanted, "illegitimate" child."

A panel discussion on birth control and its liberating importance for men and women will be held Tuesday, November 25th in Room 324 in the A&A building. Dr. Johnson from Student Health will give a medical viewpoint, Dr. Judy Gold will give a psychiatrist's opinion, and a representative of the Women's Caucus will relate birth control to women's liberation as a whole.



cuity within the hall'... and that's not all!

The girls of residence, with true sense of purpose, initiated a plan to distribute the leaflets on their own. To this, the Dean of Women blatantly countered by announcing that any birth control booklets found within the hall would be confiscated.

When asked about the situation, she replied, "it isn't being distributed in the hall, is it!!"

Further queries met with the classical response of "no comment".

It appears to be certain that such actions warrant the appropriate acclaim which only the Devastating Digit of Disaster can undisputedly offer. To Miss C. I. Irvine, we offer a resounding "Congratulations".

The recipient this week of the widely acclaimed Devastating Digit of Disaster Award was virtually unopposed - her intrepid sense of "the morally right", coupled with her unsurpassed realization of authority truly merit due recognition, of the nature offered only by the DDD.

The woman in question is none other than the Dean of Women for Dalhousie University, Miss C.I. Irvine.

The controversy and her subsequent attainment of the high standard to qualify for a Devastating Digit stemmed from the 2,000 pamphlets purchased and distributed by the Student Council. The books, as a matter of due course, were distributed in Men's Residence, and made available at the SUB. ATTEMPTS were made to further disseminate the educational material within the "Halls of Sherriff", otherwise known as the women's residence - an action, it would seem quite natural, of the utmost rationality.

However, a reliable source relates our winner as saying that the pictures are obscene, and that it would "probably lead to promis-



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