

Moral educators engaged in philosophical tug-of-war

Berel Wetstein

The fight between fundamentalists and free-thinkers is unresolvable, says professor Dwight Boyd.

"These two groups are at opposite ends of a rope. The rope is the education of children," says Boyd. "They view each other as the prize to be fought over, while it is doubtful that the children are really cared about in the argument."

Boyd, a professor of History and Philosophy at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, presented his views Tuesday at a Vanier seminar entitled, "Moral Education: Danger or Necessity?" He began by noting that both sides have political weight behind them,

adding that one feels threatened by the other.

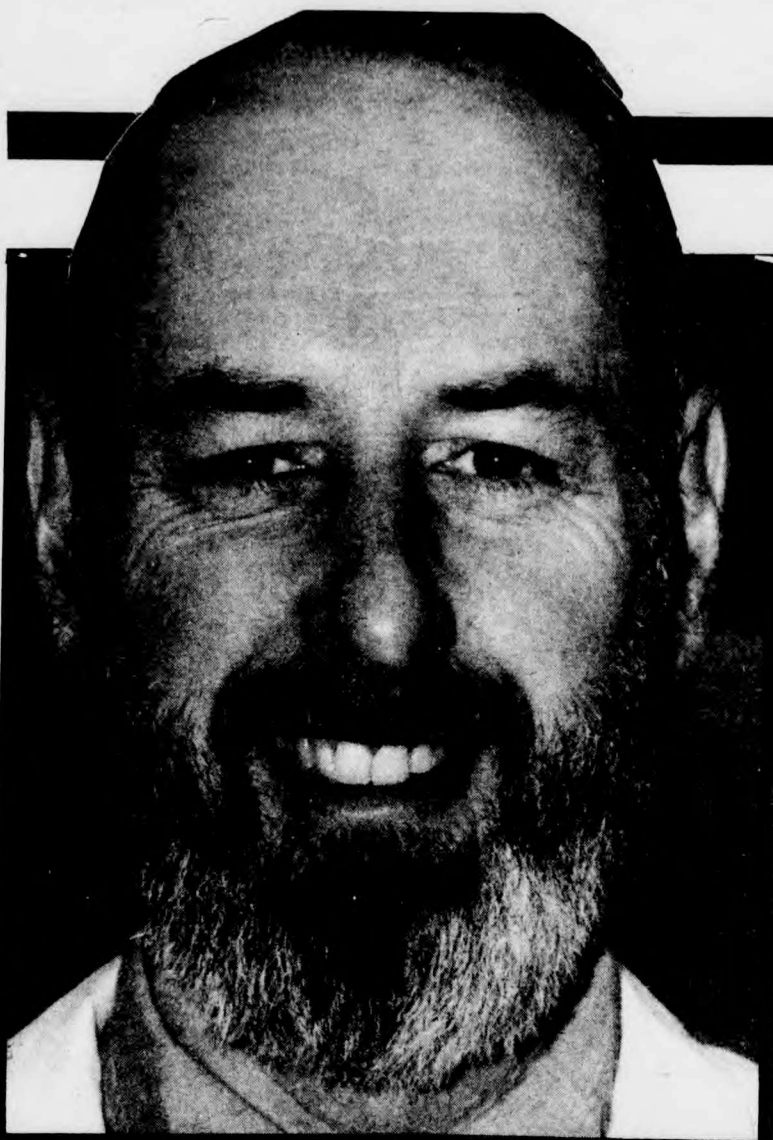
Boyd stated that the two factions use deductive reasoning as a weapon to advance their arguments. Nevertheless, they come to different conclusions. Whereas fundamentalists believe there is such a thing as "Absolute Moral Judgement", free-thinkers argue that moral judgement is personal. According to Boyd, both conclusions are flawed, because they are presented as absolutes that don't allow for any mitigating circumstances.

At a panel discussion which followed, high school teacher Ted Schmidt accused teachers of

abdicated their moral responsibility by failing to instruct students of the immorality of allowing the rich to feed off the poor.

York Education professor Mary Sue McCarthy, asserted that "a teacher who says nothing about values is saying something about values."

Ron Wideman, director of the Values Education Project in Scarborough, stated that if liberal thinkers do not organize themselves quickly, fundamentalists will dictate how morals and values are taught in the school system. "I do not believe the left will react for four or five years, until their toes are stepped on," he said.



Headway for Heddle

PJ Todd

York University is as impressively represented by its off-campus scholars as it is by those on campus. One example? Dr. John A. Heddle, a geneticist who enjoys the rare privilege of a joint professorial appointment (to the Faculty of Science and to Atkinson College), is currently on a leave of absence from his lecture hall duties. He is involved in experimental colon and breast cancer studies at Toronto's Ludwig Institute for Cancer research.

"We know that the incidence of these two forms of human cancer vary from country to country — a person develops the risk of the type of cancer peculiar to the area. This indicates a relationship between the kind of cancer and the environment, the diet or both. We want to examine the nature of that relationship."

Alongside his associates at the Institute, Dr. Heddle is working with the hypothesis that the same chemicals that cause genetic changes, such as chromosome damage, can also cause cancer. To study chromosome change in the colon Dr. Heddle and his research group have developed the *micronucleus test* which evaluates the effects of a synthetic carcinogenic — dimethylhydrazine — on the colon of laboratory mice. Heddle believes these experiments will eventually lead to the development of simple tests for humans; tests that will reveal the relationship between the foods we eat and the risks they pose as cancer causing agents.

Tall and immaculate in the snowy white professionalism of the lab coat, Dr. Heddle inspires confidence and optimism in cancer research. "I want to speed up the experimental process so I can study the impact of a person's diet in several days rather than conducting the usual thirty-year research program," he enthuses. "You wouldn't mind eating just vegetables for two days for us, would you?" I squirm slightly in my chair, apprehensive to assume the role of guinea pig, but recognizing that it will be men and women like Dr. Heddle who will solve the cancer riddles.

"When do I start?"

Campbell wants new party

Ian Bailey

The ongoing discussion of women's rights is a reality that Margaret Campbell finds bothersome. As far as she is concerned, modern society should have resolved the issue years ago.

Campbell spoke on Women and Politics yesterday at the Founders College Senior Common Room as part of York University's Women's Public Lecture Series. Before an audience of about 16 people the retired member of provincial parliament detailed some of the hard realities of life facing women who choose to enter the political forum.

Campbell contends that women go into politics with a cause; a characteristic that tends to make them more intense, "we need to develop a sense of humour" she said. Later she conceded that the healthy emotion of anger, which

everyone understands, is often perceived as hysteria in women.

She does not like the "artificiality of the party system" and says that it is unfortunate that women in different parties are unable to work together for their mutual benefit. "Perhaps we should organize a political party," she suggests, "not a women's party but an alternative to the other stagnant groups."

Angrily, Campbell asked, "Where are the educated women, prepared to enter the world of politics, hiding?" She identified this reluctance to take a chance in entering the political fray as an area of concern.

Campbell also expressed dissatisfaction with a previous speaker in the Public Lecture Series. She believes that Doris Anderson, the ex-president of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, ran as a throw-in candidate for the Liberal party in the Eglinton riding.

Engel searches for angle

PJ Todd

Huffing and puffing Marian Engel burst into Glendon's Hearth Room 30 minutes late for her guest speaker spot in the Canadian Women Writers Series and blew away the image of the artist as introvert.

"Never ask a cabby where he's from," she laughed, apologizing boisterously for her delay. Eyeing her audience, she asked earnestly, "What should we do. I've been reading *Lunatic Villas* (her latest novel) on the CBC and I don't want to do the same thing. I'm going to try a rough draft out on you."

For the next hour, wine-sipping listeners were involved in an intimate tete-a-tete with the novelist who addressed them as her literary confidantes. "I've researched the lives of two sisters who came to Ontario in the 1830s and had nineteen children by the same man. I've read their letters and talked to people who knew of them but I am wondering if writing about women in the past is worthwhile."

Engel read several chapters aloud in her husky Bette Davis voice, but it was evident that she was having trouble with the genre, so it came as a relief when she stopped suddenly to exclaim, "the trouble is that Jane Austen did it much better." Her self-criticism sparked an open discussion on the historical novel. "It's too confining for me," she confesses, "but it sells doesn't it?"

Engel, justifiably, is concerned with the commercial success of her novels. *Lunatic Villas* has sold only 2,400 copies and consequently Engel said, she cannot earn a living wage by writing. She voices the pessimism of many Canadian writers. "We are beginning to



Author Marian Engel.

wonder if the struggle is worth it. There is no relationship in this culture between success and literature."

Financial troubles have led Engel to a job with the Toronto Star for which she is writing a weekly column. "I never considered how difficult it could be," she hints. "The column bleeds me for ideas — ideas I should be saving for novels. I am not sure how long I'll be able to keep it up."

Engel doesn't hesitate to share herself with her audience. "I lie in the bathtub and make up sentences which sound

marvellous ringing in my head. The problem is getting them down on paper." She finds writing "emotionally draining" and believes she is "only capable of producing four stories a year."

It was this personal interaction between the novelist and her readers that carried the evening. "It's like being in the middle of the Bloomsbury Group," said Shelagh Wilkinson, Series Coordinator, "writers like Wiseman, Atwood, Laurence and Engel are reading and editing each other. It is very exciting that they are willing to share their work with us."

News In Brief

Stabbing in Winters College

PJ Todd

A man was stabbed in Winters College Saturday night. Twenty-two-year-old Kulwam Jagpal was attacked by five knife-wielding men in what police believe was a "village feud".

Jagpal, a guest at a dance sponsored by the Indian Student Association, was slashed in the left wrist by a machete when he struggled with his assailants. As a result of the injury, Jagpal has undergone two operations and is

scheduled for a third to repair extensive ligament damage. Although police have confiscated some knives, the machete in question has not been recovered.

Charged with possession of weapons dangerous to the public, and with wounding are Dalbir Nijar, 26, Mohan Singh Billin, 24, and Surgit Gill, 32. Two suspects remain at large as the police continue their investigation.

Senate continues APPC vote

Mike Guy

On Friday, January 22, the Senate of York University met again to vote on the last thirty recommendations of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee. However, this meeting proved to be even less productive than the one that preceded it.

The Senate members managed to cover only ten of the remaining thirty recommendations. And to complicate matters they voted on only two of

the recommendations that were labelled as priorities. A dispute over funding allocations to Glendon College was the major cause of the delay.

Although it was clearly understood that Glendon's library is in desperate need of financial assistance, Senate members struggled with the fact that York is not in a financial position to aid Glendon.

Senate meetings on the 50-odd APPC proposals will resume on an unspecified date.

Death at Ice Palace

Rose Crawford

A man, who died last Saturday while playing pick-up hockey at the Ice Palace, was an accounting student at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, *Excalibur* learned yesterday.

Stanley Peldiak, 23, was incorrectly identified as a York student by police and this

information was printed in the January 24th issue of the Sunday Sun.

The coroner's office will only say that Peldiak, a native of Quebec, died of natural causes. Further information can not be released without a written authorization from the family of the deceased.