

films

The old issue of censorship has been raised again—well if it wasn't before, it just has been—and yours truly will drop his nickle's worth into the discussion.

In our great democracy, it is said, we are free to do anything that doesn't inflict on the rights of others. That is, the natural liberties of one individual are curbed by law, but only so far as they deny another individual the same and equal rights. A civil liberty is the *right* to do anything that doesn't transgress these equal rights.

The Protectors of the Faith are often guilty of transgressing this right. All too frequently they institute laws which infringe on the civil liberties of the individual, to protect him from himself, and out of a misguided belief that it is necessary to protect society against some unimaginable evil, when it is in fact imaginary.

Society was once protected from the black magic of witches; until recently, we were protected from homosexuals; and today we are protected from the yet undiscovered evils of marijuana and the uncensored movie.

As soon as you advocate the elimination of movie censorship, some puritan will invariably level you with that horrific giant-killer: "Moral Degradation." I ask what is this "moral degradation" and he points contemptuously at my open fly.

Was society "degraded" when they stopped burning witches? Somebody finally realized no one could really generate any evil being a witch. If a person wants to be a warlock, let him be a warlock.

It is time somebody in the government realized no one is going to do any harm by watching "dirty" movies. If a person wants to watch "filthy" films, let him watch "filthy" films.

"Ah, ha," Puritan continues as I zip up my fly, "all you want to do is watch filthy movies."

Right. That is exactly what I want to do. I want to watch *Blow-Up* uncensored. I want to see Mai Zetterling's *Loving Couples*. I would also like to see that filthy, sex-exploiting movie *Ulysses*, but with the Alberta government protecting me, the chances are slim.

Were the two scenes cut from *Blow-Up* going to "degrade" society, or instigate sex crimes? And if the film company had not allowed the production to be cut, would the whole movie have been completely banned for two scenes?

Ulysses will arrive shortly. They won't allow it to be cut, so it is all or nothing. I see another *Tom Jones* scandal blowing in.

And what is this great myth of "making" society morally degraded? All this evil degradation, like sexual intercourse, already exists. How is society going to be degraded by a recognition of its existence?

Conceivably it could do a great deal of good to eliminate censorship, to recognize society and what it really is behind this mask of censorship, to examine whether or not this trite "moral degradation" has some factual basis or if it is merely the product of social prejudice.

Another argument for censorship is that susceptible people will be influenced by what they see to commit crimes. Heard of any Bonnie and Clyde murder lately?

Take a passing glance at the old evil—firewater. Drinking liquor in Alberta is legal—barely—and the large majority of people can handle it. But impaired drivers account for many deaths on the roads. Liquor is involved in two-thirds of all murder cases. But the influence liquor has on a few people does not justify a return to Prohibition.

First let us ask if there will be any "crime" or other forms of evil arising from uncensored movies. There is convincing evidence that there is none. There is also convincing evidence that censorship is entirely unnecessary.

Return next week for the concluding episode of our exciting story.

The poet as amateur: Woodcock

SELECTED POEMS OF GEORGE WOODCOCK by George Woodcock. Clark, Irwin and Company Limited, \$3.50.

When a writer sums up thirty years of poetic achievement in a collection of selected poems, the result should be a significant publication. However, if the material on which the book is based is poor, the collected edition will be poor. So is the case of George Woodcock; in this edition of his poetry all Woodcock has done is persuaded me that he has wasted thirty years attempting to write poetry.

There are many levels of standards of poetry that exist, but basically there are writers who write poetry and those that try to write poetry; the amateurs and serious writers. The lower levels exist in their own way and are quite temporary, to the relief of those interested in good poetry; they eventually disappear when interest dwindles or the writer grows out of his 'poetic yearnings of youth'.

The higher levels consists of poets who know their craft, what they are writing, and do it well. They are for the most part published in some major way.

Woodcock has the distinction of existing, unnaturally, on both levels. Woodcock is a poet who has published three volumes of verse, yet still writes like an amateur; his verse being less in stature than some of the verse found in little magazines in this area.

His poetry is characterized by over-use of adjectives and many ambiguous allusions or images which are irrelevant to the verse. Lines like: "And from twany soil/ eometric pines/Siphon turgid sap/ Through ascetic viens . . ." are a characteristic of amateur temporal poets who never reach any level of recognition.

With verse such as this, it is difficult to get to the core of the poetry and to find what it is all

about. In most of Woodcock's verse I can find neither visual, vocal, or technical excellence.

Some of the verse is characteristic of the Poundian-Eliot tradition of concrete imagery but doesn't have the rigidity of that verse. The images are stilted and awkward, the verse being a very poor imitation or adaptation of those poet's techniques. Woodcock is not suspicious of adjectives, which one should be when writing this type of verse.

It could be that Woodcock does not know what is writing, but since he is in the position of editor and founder of the quarterly, *Canadian Literature*, he must know something about poetry. He may

be a better editor and critic than a poet, but it seems to me that a poet who knows his craft would know more about the matters which make up the position of influence and command which he occupies. He did however, create the magazine.

This volume and the three preceding it are the best reflections of the crisis in Canadian literature: how second-rate poetry can be published if the writer is in the existing circle of power. Other writers have and still are doing the same thing, making it difficult for a younger, and maybe more talented, writer to break into the Canadian scene.

—John Makowichuk

Arts calendar

Lots of concerts next week

The Edmonton Chamber Music Society will close its 1967-68 concert season on Wednesday, March 13, with a concert by the Hungarian String Quartet. This first concert by the Hungarian Quartet in their month-long stay as artists-in-residence will be open only to members of the Society and their guests. On Sunday, March 17, the Department of Music will present them in the first of three Sunday night concerts open without charge to the general public.

There will be free concerts at 8:30 p.m. in Convocation Hall fea-

turing various student artists this coming Sunday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. On Tuesday the concert, featuring pianist Evelyn Robinson, will commence at 4:30 p.m.

Two Egyptian films, "Nile the Creator" and "Too Young to Love", will be shown at the Jubilee Auditorium on March 12 at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$1.50 for students, available at the SUB ticket office.

At the Citadel, "The Owl and the Pussycat" continues tonight and tomorrow.

The Alberta School for the Deaf will require, for SEPTEMBER TEACHERS

interested in working with handicapped children. The main handicap is deafness but teachers are also required to work with deaf children who have more than one handicap. Teachers are particularly required who have training and interest in mental retardation and emotional disturbance. The Superintendent for the School for the Deaf will interview teachers on campus from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Friday, March 15, 1968. Students in special education interested in future employment are also invited to make appointments and make inquiries. Appointments may be made through the Student Placement Office located on the fourth floor of the Students' Union Building, telephone 432-4291.

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