

# OPEN THE LECTURE DOORS

Dr. Ross Vant's lectures for women students have become something of a tradition and something of a joke on this campus. They are traditional because they appear regularly for two nights each autumn—this is the 14th year—as part of the administrative effort to give young Miss University a certain sense of direction in her first wide-eyed brush with the adult world of away-from-home. And they are traditional in the sense of being eagerly anticipated.

Dr. Vant's lectures are anticipated by both the serious and the light-minded. The serious-minded are young women who know that they do not know all there is to know about themselves and their sex: physiology, psychology, reproductive functions, emotional make-up, along with rules of hygiene, social mores, and common sense. These young women attend Dr. Vant's lectures to learn.

But the light-minded of both sexes also capitalize on these lectures as a sure stimulus for whispered jokes, and out-spoken witticisms, speculations, innuendos and much tittering in the corner.

No one can say how many of our female students take the lectures seriously and profit from them—how many are slightly cynical and self-superior about themes which have been familiar and avidly explored since the 6th or 7th grades. There are undoubtedly many young women of both descriptions.

## CLOSED DOORS

But the fellows are almost automatically light-minded. They are forced to be, because they cannot take seriously that which they cannot directly face. As long as their information is second, third, or fourth hand, and never more than partial; as long as they encounter an aura of esoteric embarrassment about this annual female ritual; as long as they can never really know the inside story, they will inevitably bring both imagination and sense of humor into play. The result will be exaggeration and distortion.

Certain university officials have realized that Dr. Vant's lectures will not prove wholly satisfactory as long as they are taken lightly. To impress upon us the momentousness of the problem discussed, two suggestions have been made.

First, for the benefit of the men, parallel lectures have been proposed.

Second, for the benefit of the young ladies, Dr. Vant, this year proposed to be more straight-forward, plain-spoken, hard-hitting than ever before—and so that there be no undesirable repercussions, the press was to be pledged to silence about the content of his lectures.

The first of these suggestions is a palliative. The second completely misinterprets the real problem.

The crux of the matter is a small word with big implications: **SECRECY**. We could take a first step toward wholesomeness by simply making Dr. Vant's lectures open to students of both sexes, including the student press.

The suggestion for instituting separate lectures for men assumes, and tacitly approves, segregation of the sexes. It will be argued that discussion of intimate subjects in a mixed group would be embarrassing to many, and inhibit frank questions. It will be objected that our traditional mores would be outraged, and that public opinion would not permit it. It

might even be argued that with (light-minded) young men in the audience it would be impossible to make the proper moral impression on tender feminine minds, and that the very opposite of the intended impact would result.

We suggest, in reply, that both young men and young women by this time ought to be past the embarrassed stage, that public opinion on this subject can stand some enlightenment, and that if the lecturer has sufficient respect for himself, his subject matter and his hearers, together with a sensitivity to the real needs of today's youth, there will be no problem of a light-minded audience.

## CLOSED PRESS

To the second proposal—for press silence—we take far more serious exception. There is a principle here even deeper than that of male-female relations: namely, a principle of free inquiry. We do not object to Dr. Vant pulling out all the stops to make his points clearly. Of this we approve. But we strenuously object to the suggestions that the student press ought to keep hands-off because it is not competent to set and maintain its own standards of good taste, and/or that the subject matter of Dr. Vant's lectures is beyond our competence. It is no wonder the lectures are exposed to ridicule when they are muffled in a thick swaddling of sacrosanctity.

We feel no responsibility to publish a verbatim report of the lectures, although much of the silliness which secrecy breeds would evaporate if they were made publicly available in pamphlet form. But as journalists, we do feel a responsibility to insist on the right of investigation, and the right to publish if and when we feel that the search for truth demands it. Nor do we make an exception for sex and morality. These are delicate subjects, but should not therefore be exempt from public forum.

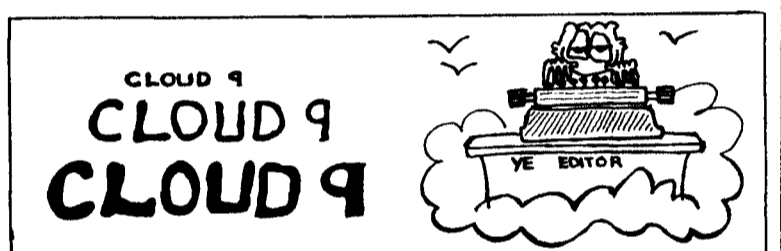
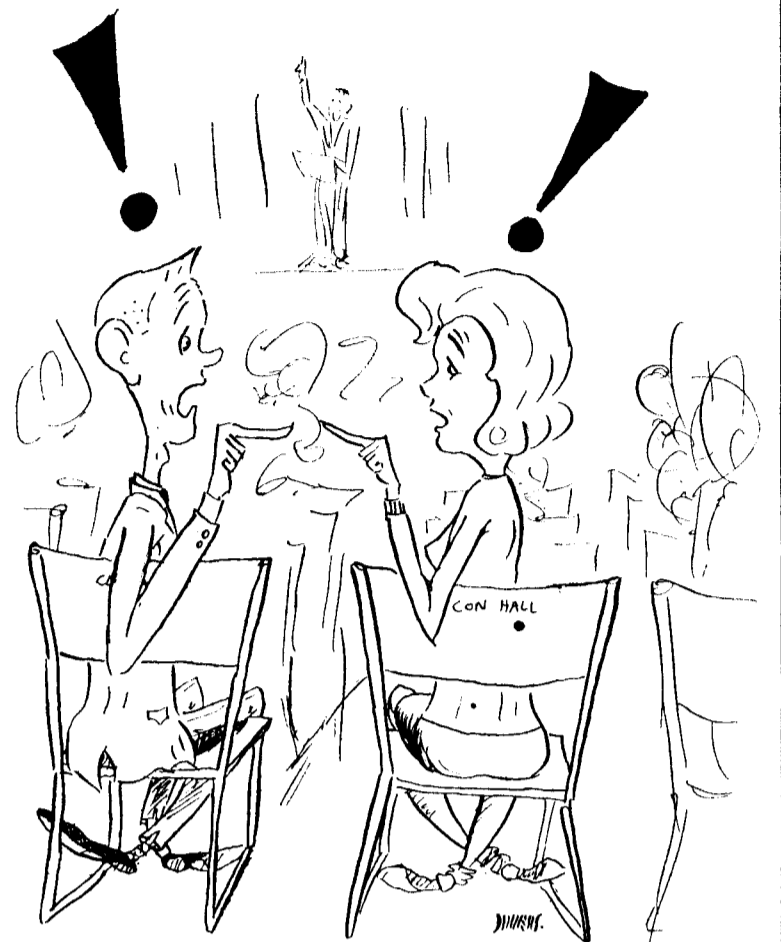
We insist on the freedom to discuss Dr. Vant's lectures because we know of no other way to maintain the values and principles which a free press represents. Dr. Vant is highly esteemed as the recently-retired head of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University Hospital. Yet for all this we have no surety that his lectures are devoid of cant, hypocrisy and falsehood. We hope there is no such problem. But we will not be sure unless we are free to inquire, and, if necessary, to criticize.

When we are specifically asked to refrain from publication we tend to be curious about what it is people would hide. Perhaps there is nothing to hide, but how will we know while we are shut out?

## CLOSED MINDS

We ask for an end to secrecy; for we see no need for it. We all—both male and female—belong to the same human race. We are mutually interested in Dr. Vant's subject. And we will always be partially uninformed about the nature of sexual phenomena until the two sexes have the opportunity to learn and to react together, not separately. In short, we suggest that the whole idea of the closed door and the closed press smacks faintly of the closed mind, of superstition and a morbid view of human nature.

We ask that these lectures be opened to all interested students, and we suggest that students, treated as adults, will take them seriously.



Aunt Pheobe thinks I'm a dreamer, out of touch with reality. She finds my ideas slightly absurd. She takes a "that would be fine, but . . ." attitude. The "but" or "if" clause usually hangs on an interpretation of human nature.

For example: one day we were discussing the difficulties involved in setting up a private school designed for an intellectual (and financial) elite.

"One of the delicate problems," Aunt Pheobe explained, "is the exclusion of Jewish children. You get accused of anti-semitism, and if you're not careful there'll be political repercussions clear around the world."

I bit hard on this. "So let the Jewish kids in," I said. It looked simple to me. Aunt Pheobe gave me a condescending look. "Well, why not?" I persisted.

"You'd find yourself running a Jewish school," she said. (Aunt Pheobe isn't racist—she's simply a realist.)

I protested: "Surely we're beyond that sort of infantile behavior. Surely all the non-Jewish parents wouldn't pull their kids."

Aunt Pheobe just smiled at my naivety. "Where have you been all your life?"

I sighed. "When are we, as a race of men, going to grow up?"

"How do you like it up there?" Aunt Pheobe asked.

"Up where?"

"Up there on Cloud 9?"

So that's how Cloud 9 was born, and Aunt Pheobe will see, when she reads today's paper, that I'm still up there.

I'm on Cloud 9 because, among other things, the results of a statistical survey reported in this issue show more kindness than ignorance, more people anxious to have colored students in their homes than to turn them away. Meanness lends itself to big black headlines, but I am happier when we can report mostly enlightenment.

I'm on Cloud 9 because it looks like a "live" year starting off on this campus. There are interesting things going on. There are actions and reactions. There are "issues". If you need a demonstration, just watch the Forum and letters sections. Thanks to Young Canadians for Freedom we are wide awake.

ON THE UCF DRIVE. Go out and campaign if you like. I think I'll study.

I am generally "anti-asking." Have you noticed how it is possible to pester folks till they give just to get you off their backs?

I am out of step of course. Campaigns and promotions of all kinds leave me quite cold. I dislike the Madison Avenue approach. I generally prefer to put out the facts and let the people take it or leave it.

But this is to avoid reality and hide out on Cloud 9.

le baron

# THE RIGHT AND THE WRONG REASONS

Do go out on Blitz Day and storm the town—but don't go for the wrong reasons.

Don't go just for the football game afterwards. Nor for the free dance.

And don't go because you feel it your duty to show the people that our university is a humanitarian institution. Don't go for the sake of our "public image"; don't go because it makes "good community relations."

We should care—about this United Community Fund project—for our own sakes, and for those we indirectly serve. And we should cam-

aign because we care.

It is hard to become emotionally aroused in the sense of a personal involvement with the unfortunate individuals in whose name we solicit. The alcoholic, the cripple, the mentally deficient, the criminal, these are remote from us. It is hard to see through the efficient, organizational layers of SVS, UCF, and 45 member agencies to the "person" at the other end. It is hard to resist the feeling that it is a mechanical monster which swallows our dollars: benevolent of course, but none the less impersonal. More and more,

things are done vastly, smoothly, statistically, in this mass-media world: even our charity.

We sometimes wish it were not so. We would rather preserve some personal contact between giver and receiver. We wish a huge "united" campaign need not be the "only sensible alternative" to 45 hands and more reaching into each pocket. But perhaps it will help to remember that for the hungry child, the invalid, the outcast on the other end there is an intensity of need which is unrelenting.

And perhaps it will help to take

thought of what is in it for us, on this end. We do not refer simply to the approved escape from a day of lectures, although we bless that too on the possibility that what one may learn down on Jasper Avenue might more than compensate for any loss of notes.

More particularly, it is likely that the experience of going out into the wide world to ask for money will open many innocent eyes and stir some passive minds. There will be much of what we might loosely term laboratory experience in psy-

chology, for opportunity to observe variety in human nature will be ample.

At the UCF campaign banquet last week, featured speaker Mr. Henry Singer remarked concerning this assignment: "Nothing you will do during your university career will give you more insight into human nature."

So go out for your own good, and for the sake of those who suffer. There is direct, personal, vivid experience on both ends, which is valid reason for this day of blitz.