

Great Brain Robbery finds few friends at Dal

By KATIE FRASER

The authors of *The Great Brain Robbery* and their critique of Canadian universities will find few friends among student leaders and faculty at Dalhousie.

The September 20 edition of the *CBC Journal* dealt with reaction to the issues raised by the book's authors, David Bercuson, Robert Bothwell, and J.L. Granatstein. Dalhousie Student Union president Alex Gigeroff was flown to Toronto to give his views on the subject.

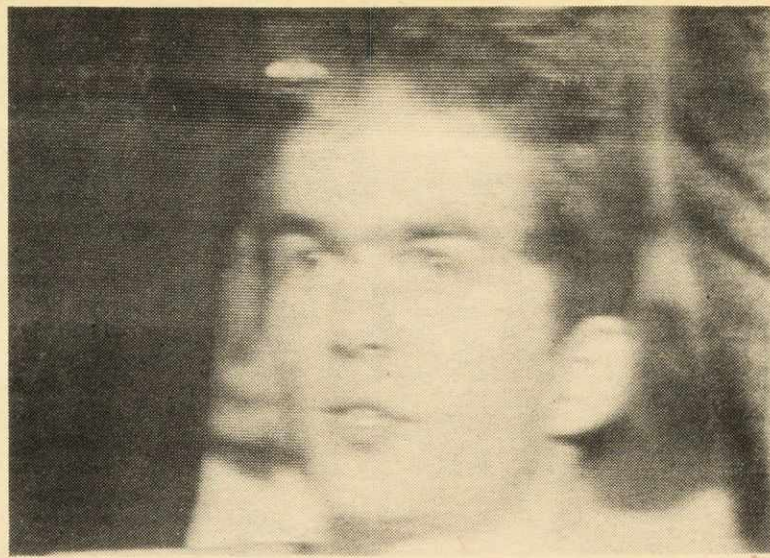
"I think they (the authors of *The Great Brain Robbery*) have missed

the real issue," says Gigeroff. "The real issue is that universities are heavily dependent on the government for funding."

It's a valuable book because it does get people talking about education," says Gigeroff. "But the authors of it would rather have Mr. Chips-type education as opposed to a high quality university system that is accessible to all Canadian and foreign students."

In *The Great Brain Robbery* the authors write that the students at universities should not participate in the running of universities.

"Students are directly interested in programmes and in trying to control faculty. It is human nature, and as fundamental as greed, to



Alex Gigeroff, Dalhousie Student Union president made his debut on the *CBC Journal* last Thursday night. Photo: Peter Katsiitis, Dal Photo

want to exercise control over the people who will determine whether you will pass or fail, whether you will win scholarships or work your way through university. It is also human nature to try to smooth obstacles and lower barriers," write Bercuson, Bothwell and Granatstein.

Geoff Martin, student representative on the Dalhousie Board of Governors and chair of the Students' Union of Nova Scotia also disagrees with arguments made in *The Great Brain Robbery*.

"It's a shoddy piece of work, there is no proof. It is offensive to the students and faculty. They use condescending language in reference to students. They assume all academics are lazy, incompetent and lack ambition. They assume students want the easy course and the easy professors. They assume it is a total vacation for students. The book completely misses the mark," says Martin.

Like Gigeroff, he says that funding has a great deal to do with the problems of today's universities.

James Moss, a professor of education, says that certain aspects of the book are illogical. He says that the authors attack on the tenure system and the practice of sabbaticals is off base.

"As in any profession you are going to have a certain 3-5% that will abuse the system. But I don't like where they're coming from. They're doing what they accuse that 5% of doing, making money off the Universities. I am embarrassed that an academic would come out with such a thing," says Manos.

He says they have a serious misunderstanding of tenure, and without such a system the universities would suffer. He added that it would also be disastrous to get rid of sabbaticals as they save money for the universities.

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further sets out the reality of their ill-presented elitism argument. It becomes increasingly clear throughout the book that they want the rich and refined to attend post-secondary institutes and are masking their belief behind a call for better standards and more financial autonomy.

Given tuition fees contribute only about 8 per cent of universities' budgets, the net result of raising them, even dramatically, would be negligible, and the real effect would be to lock out the poor and middle-class students who aspire to higher education. And to expect governments to embrace the elitist system and grant full scholarships to the academically gifted, given that they are already eliminating and making loans near-impossible to secure, is ludicrous.

Any discussion of finances under the utopian model set out in *The Great Brain Robbery* is purely superfluous, however, as no speculative enrolment figures for Shangri-La University are given, and there is no data demonstrating how their proposed changes would bring about the perceived savings. And we need not even breach the idea of what would happen to the masses

Feminist visionaries visit Dal

By MAUREEN EVANS

Feminist Visions is the topic of this year's Killam lecture series. Authors Mary Daly, Sheila Rowbotham and Marge Piercy will be speaking about their very different visions of feminism.

This topic was chosen from a number of entries presented to the faculty of graduate studies at the Law school. The Dalhousie Women's Faculty Organization suggested this year's topic to show the great diversity in feminist thought.

Feminism and its many visions of the future play a role in the media and have become a significant factor in political phenomena, said Dr. Susan Sherwin, chairperson of the Philosophy department.

In coordination with the Dorothy J. Killam lectures the Dalhousie Art Gallery will be showing an exhibition by Nova Scotian women artists and the department of part time studies is offering free seminars about the women who will be speaking.

Lecture dates and topics are as follows:

Feminism: A Vision to End Dichotomies, October 11—Marge Piercy

Traditional Values: Defence and Transformation, October 18—Sheila Rowbotham

Wanderlust/Wonderlost: Remembering the Elemental Powers of Women, October 25—Mary Daly.

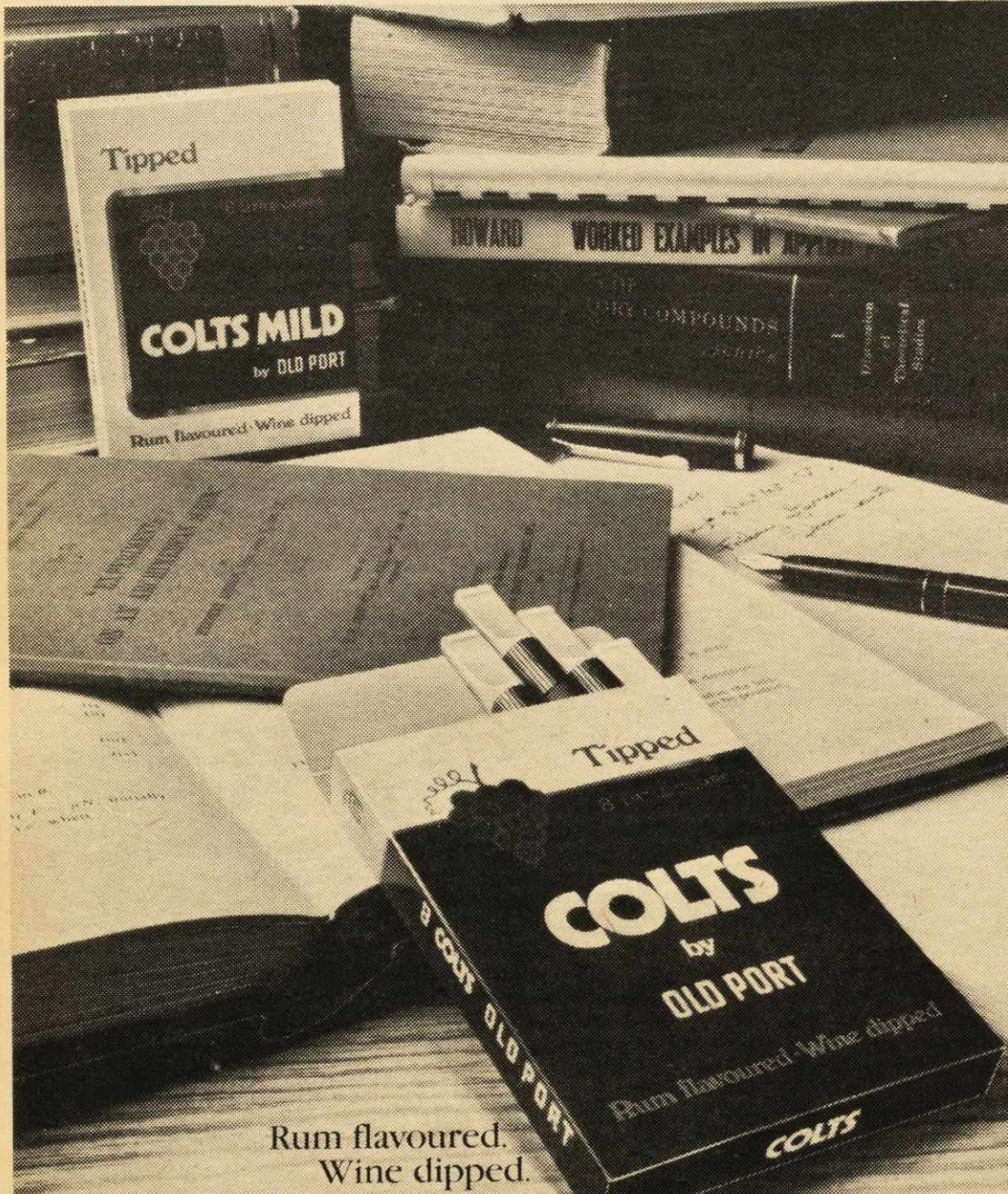
All lectures are at 8 p.m. at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium.

of young people who would be ineligible for these haughty scholarly palaces, uneducated and out-of-work because the authors have evidently not thought out their arguments to the point where these real issues arise.

Granatstein, Bothwell and Bercuson also take administrators to task for offering such programmes as Canadian studies, women's studies and native studies, which they label "shallow piecemeal and self-congratulatory navel-gazing." Again their attacks are not logical nor supported by evidence. They fail to mention such programmes are an amalgam of supposedly solid offerings of traditional faculties and cost little extra to offer. It is worth noting these programmes sprang to life as a reaction to eons of WASP male dominated courses by snobbish scholars—like these three—who do not consider them "intellectually worthy."

And it's a pity—not to mention unprofessional—that professors Granatstein, Bothwell and Bercuson did not treat their chosen topic as they do their individual pieces of historical scholarship.

André Picard is national president of Canadian University Press.



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