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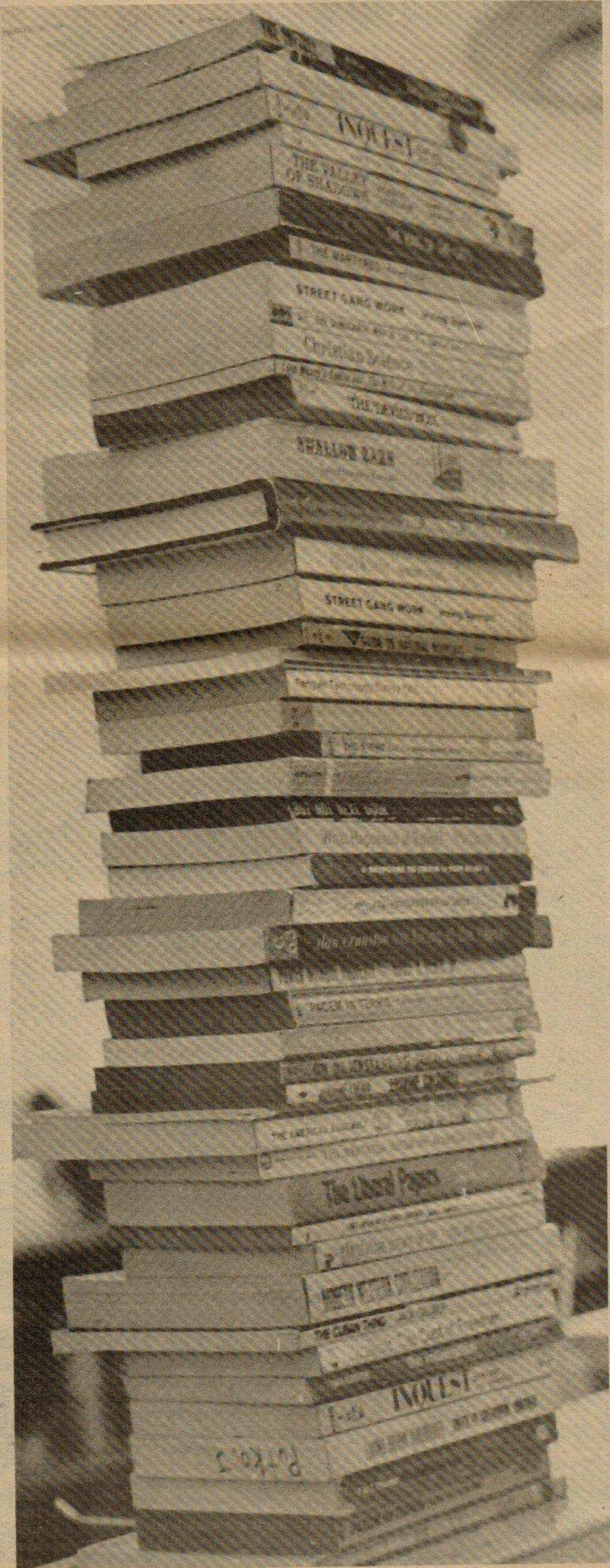
Candle

The owl hid his eyes
under his hands
He hid his hands
under his feet
He hid his feet
behind his ears
He hid his ears
between his toes
He tucked his toes
under his belt
And completely
disappeared

by Penelope Rosemont



Free course writing e a



Essay-writing is a matter of determination. Procrastination is a matter of genius.

This conclusion must become evident to anyone who has ever taken the pains to compare the way in which students avoid doing essays, with the quality of the final product. Impressively more sheer resourcefulness and ingenuity — often born of the genius of desperation — seem to go into the art of procrastination than into the supposedly cerebral and creative activity of writing undergraduate papers.

Recently however, there has been a trend, at this university and at others, to attempt to combat the unhappiness which students feel with their educational experiences. This has taken the form of the establishment of 'free', 'unstructured' and 'liberated' courses, dealing with issues of 'relevance to today's world', and allowing more autonomy to students, as well as the loosening of structures in established courses, through increased emphasis on discussion, and on essays rather than exams.

The results seem to have been disappointing to many. Recently, there have been indications that the professional faculties do not like to accept students with credits in what are considered 'Mickey Mouse' courses. And more surprisingly, there has been, to all appearances, little change in the nature of the learning experiences which take place in the 'free' courses. Writing essays, for example, seems to call forth the same kind of ingenious procrastination as always.

It seems puzzling. Young, long-haired, professors who lived through the heady days of the sixties when alienation was rediscovered and when the university was exposed to everyone as a barbarous monstrosity in a brutal society, mutilating all those in it, are now setting up courses which are supposed to be liberating experiences. (The courses, it is true, are born not only of a fascination with attempts to transcend inhuman human relations, but of guilt on the part of young academics who have to rationalize teaching in an institution they once criticized so uncompromisingly.)

But still. They teach their students about alienation, about repression. Marx and Laing are on the reading lists. (And naturally, the readings are not compulsory; the student should read them because she feels a genuine urge to do so.) Emphasis on the necessity of authentic experience is the order of the day. (Not universally, of course, but only in the 'free' courses.)

And yet. The failure of so many of these courses is so utter that even the faculty offices are beginning to notice. And on their own terms, in their attempts to create unalienated learning experiences, their failure is an open secret.

There is a problem with teaching about alienation, with studying Laing. Alienation exists. And studying it makes a student more aware of the fact. She becomes aware of it, but does not know how to go beyond it. But being conscious of the fact without knowing how to go beyond it makes school, more oppressive, harder to bear. She realizes that she is powerless to change the situation.

Writing an essay, for example, becomes not merely something she dislikes. It now becomes something to be *hated*, and hatred pre-empts more of her emotional resources than essays formerly did.

Writing essays, she realizes, is a ritual, a game, but a massively vicious one. It is a matter of concealing ignorance from the professor or TA, of trying to fit into an external mould of pre-set standards. The essay may be an intellectual *product*, but it is not her thing, she does not *feel* like an intellectual.

The problem is no easier in 'liberated' courses, with their stress on the students' right

to determine course content, to participate in discussion, informal classroom, and lack of structured reading lists for or people in search of easy the educational experiences provide, based on conventional discipline, they were set on commitment and self even under the best of students who have always external discipline) become difficult. Often courses along fairly comfortably without really facing the course outlines promises the activity amounts to satisfaction, where people generate ideas formulated—often they ever came to the course the others in the course listen an ear. The amount of really challenging ideas in the rather minimal.

The professor, who 'leadership' role in seminars groups, often is reluctant the 'free' course. There is commendable reluctance. But the result tends to and says nothing. Or, attempt to manipulate (often without drag his point of view out questions. (And so win anyway and one that is because it is less obvious course, would be for student to exchange ideas on a that superior authority would be associated with the professor again, the bother is students are not *in fact* or, more importantly, neither can, nor should

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Free courses: writing essays alien



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to determine course content, on far-ranging discussion, informal relations in the classroom, and lack of structured assignments and reading lists for one thing, they attract people in search of easy credits in droves. And the educational experience they were set up to provide, based on commitment and self-discipline, they were set up to provide, based on commitment and self-discipline, (difficult even under the best of circumstances for students who have always been subjected to external discipline) becomes all that more difficult. Often courses such as these drift along fairly comfortably through an entire year without really facing the problems that the course outlines promises to deal with. Much of the activity amounts to simultaneous masturbation, where people groove on expressing ideas formulated—often incoherently—before they ever came to the course, ideas to which the others in the course listen with at best half an ear. The amount of real communication of challenging ideas in these courses is often rather minimal.

The professor, who ordinarily plays a 'leadership' role in seminars and discussion groups, often is reluctant to take that part in the 'free' course. The reason is generally a commendable reluctance to 'lay trips' on people. But the result tends to be that he sits back and says nothing. Or, alternatively, he tries to manipulate (often without meaning to) and drag his point of view out of other with leading questions. (And so winds up 'laying a trip' anyway and one that is harder to deal with because it is less obvious.) The alternative, of course, would be for students and professors to exchange ideas on a basis of equality, so that superior authority would not automatically be associated with the professor's views. But, again, the bother is that professor and students are not *in fact* equal, in knowledge, or, more importantly, in power. And this neither can, nor should be, forgotten.

Beyond that, the free courses operate as classic examples of 'repressive tolerance'. What does not exist in them, of course, is the freedom to act creatively, so as to evolve new relationships between people in which new experiences, behaviour, meaning, education, and growth could occur. (This is true not merely because society would not allow it (try not observing even the simplest social conventions and see what happens) or because it is impossible to evolve forms of liberation in an oppressive society — although this is importantly true — but because the people involved are already themselves too dead, emotionally and imaginatively, to begin creating more satisfying forms of learning, especially when the rest of their lives are as leading and draining as before.

Indeed, 'free courses' are a fad that often help to develop new forms of authoritarianism, new ways of cracking the whip. The increased degrees of freedom, it is true, allow greater variety in the forms of behaviour that can emerge in the classroom. Underneath it all, however, students still go on experiencing the same kind of authority relations (although they may no longer be aware of them).

The more indirect and subtle uses of authority are deceptive. In such a setting, both professor and student can come to believe that they are in a dialogue, that they are equals as people, even that a new and revolutionary kind of learning is occurring. And these myths are viable as long as the participants perceive what happens solely in terms of appearances.

But the world goes on. And the underlying authoritarian reality remains. In the long run, the demands of the university assert themselves. Deadlines, essays, grading occur because ultimately the bureaucracy had control over both teacher and student. And

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ses: essays on alienation

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whether they like it or not, both professors and students must live up to the demands of the institution.

Essay time helps to produce a situation where some of the contradictions inherent in 'free courses' have to be faced. For despite all pretensions of lack of structure, despite all drift, despite everything, this time of year produces dilemmas. Like it or not, the professor must hand in marks by a certain date. They must be real marks, marks that a computer can digest. No amount of protestation about how the quality of an educational experience can't be measured will do any good. The student must put something down on paper. No matter how good she may have felt about her experience in the course, no matter how bad she might feel about having to hypocritically ignore her own beliefs, it must be done. Otherwise the professor, be he liberal, sympathetic, radical, feely, or simply traditionally authoritarian, will be pissed off. And who can blame him?

It's all innate in repressive tolerance, of course. The student can feel free (as can the professor, with perhaps more justification) but when it comes to the crunch, she isn't. It's just that now she is supposed to motivate herself to conform to the external authoritarian structures, rather than have to be forced to.

R.D. Laing a guru of the 'unstructured' courses, might formulate it as follows: There are rules. You must live up to the trust put in you by producing academically acceptable work. You must do this because you want to. You must not recognize the existence of a rule that says you have to do it. You must not recognize a rule that says you must want to, whether you want to or not. You must not recognize the existence of these rules. . . etc., . . .

For many students, the conflict inherent in the situation, the contradiction in trying to act out freedom within a structure where is impossible, makes itself most clearly felt in writing essays.

The student chooses an essay topic that is relevant and interesting, something that she herself wants to do. But, so often, the same problems develop as before: chronic procrastination, and writer's block. Why?

Marx's definition of alienation provides a useful framework here: "Man's powers become an object, assume an external existence, exist independently, outside himself and alien to him and stand opposed to him as autonomous power." When the student's intellect, her ability to think and to organize ideas, becomes subordinated to the production of essays, things defined by deadlines and marks, the situation is no different than if a worker's ability to work, his labour-power, is sold to a capitalist. The fact that the essay is written 'voluntarily' — that the student has chosen the topic — is irrelevant. She must write about *something*, produce something that can be marked. In *that* there is no choice.

Nor does the fact that the essay topic may in itself be interesting change the situation. The point is that it is not the 'innate nature' of an activity that determines if it will be alienating, but the context in which it occurs. For example, typing, or working in a factory, or teaching, are not in themselves alienating activities. They only become such when they are performed because the worker has sold his ability to work to someone else.

In the context of the university, where the student is not freely choosing his learning experiences, essay-writing must be alienated activity.

And understanding of the nature of educational institutions and relationships does not thereby transform them. The problems cannot be analyzed out of existence, they cannot be made to disappear through acts of will,

through the attaining of consciousness.

Effectively, what happens to the student when she is writing an essay is that she spits into three parts. One part of her personality rebels against the task, because it is externally imposed, not self chosen. Another part of her personality is mobilized to repress what she considers her 'alien' reactions to the task (such as boredom, tiredness, rebelliousness) which are perceived as somehow being external to her 'real' purposes as she intellectually defines them. Since in fact these reactions are actually rather powerful manifestations of her personality, containing formidable vigour, imagination, and intelligence, it is evident that an enormous amount of psychic energy must be expended in act of repressing and denying this aspect of the self. This leaves a third part of the personality to accomplish the actual task of writing the essay.

When one understands that some of the best parts of the individual are engaged not in writing the essay, but are in fact actively opposing it, then one can begin to understand why persons who clearly have much intelligence, wit and vigour often function so abysmally in 'learning' situations of various kinds. The life-powers are being expended elsewhere, leaving the educational environment very much a realm of death. The irony of the process of alienation is best exemplified by the fact that the most vigorous parts of the personality are condemned and opposed as being not of the self, while the parts of the personality are condemned and crushed in the socialization process, and actually in the service of external impositions (doing the assigned essay) are identified as the self.

Again, it should be pointed out that consciousness of this process does not cause it to disappear. The problems, after all, are real. Meanwhile, the frustration caused by the situation surfaces as aggression directed against the environment, others, and the self.

Consciousness in fact, can even worsen the situation. The conscious person realizes that the causes of her anger, guilt, frustration, etc., are not immediate persons or situations. The professor who assigned the essay had no choice in the matter. He is responsible to the chairman, who is responsible to the dean, the government, the voters. . . Obviously, then, it is foolish to react angrily against the immediate object of irritation, for it is not the real obstacle. The problem is the 'system'.

With this kind of reasoning, the conscious person constructs an abstract model of his own and others' oppression, and opposes it with an abstract anger that can vent itself in practice only in blow-ups over petty

frustrations, or against the self. Paradoxically then, analysis and understanding of the situation function also as a neurotic device for avoiding strong feeling.

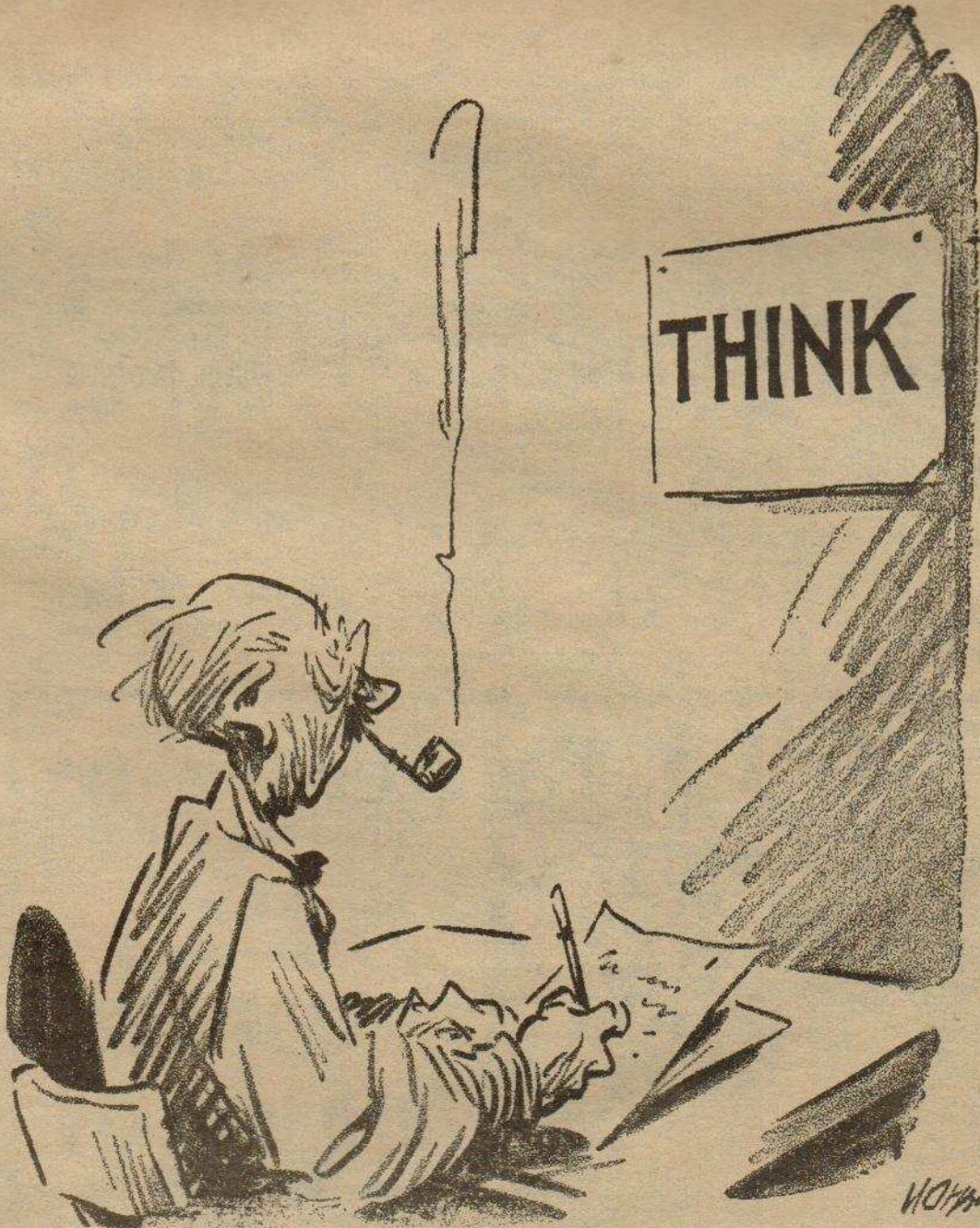
So it is possible to choose an essay topic in which one is deeply interested, and still find completion impossible because of an inability to 'put it together'. The problem is that unconscious attention is directed elsewhere, to the conflict between being aware of alienation involved in doing an essay, and the necessity of doing it anyway. Because the problem is unsolved, it tends to remain in the front, as it were, of the consciousness, and other problems, for example, the intellectual work involved in writing the essay, must recede into the background.

As a result, the unconscious attention, directed elsewhere, must be actively repressed. But the repression cannot be successful, since the problem remains unsolved. Since what is involved is failure to utilize powers because they are dangerous or lacking an outlet, the energies must find an outlet elsewhere. Consequently, the individual often becomes deeply involved in activities which are trivial and not really deserving of the full attention of an alive human being. Small trivial tasks are then sought out constantly (procrastination) because, first of all, they are chose, not imposed, secondly, because they provide an excuse for not doing the other thing (the essay) (and help to keep it out of mind) and thirdly, because it reduces awareness of the oppression involved in being forced to do the essay. Attention is fixed on one part of actuality (or many parts) because in doing so, it can avoid another part of the actuality, which is unpleasant.

On another level, the problem is that there is an unfinished situation which needs to be completed before the personality can move on to other things. The unfinished situation is of course the awareness of the alienating nature of the essay in particular, and the university in general. The bother, however, is that the conscious part of the self has abandoned the situation not only because it was too painful, but because it was insoluble. Thus, there is no prospect for finishing the problem off, and consequently no apparent way to overcome the problem of inability to concentrate.

Ultimately, of course, the essay usually gets done. But while the university remains what it is, essays will remain forms of torture, not forms of liberation. And 'free' courses will remain caught up in the morass of their own contradictions. But in this, after all, they are no different from the educational experiences to be had in any course in the university.

Ulli Diemer



THE SUPREME COURT SAYS IT IS LEGAL

Flummery stifles art



Roberta Senn, in her accoutrements as Elizabeth I, poses with friends from Pro Musica's ornate mask.

In going to *An Entertainment For Elizabeth* at the MacMillan Theatre on October 12, I admit I was not as easy-going and as open-minded as Elizabeth probably would have been before any one of her many private chamber masks. I confess I found myself pre-judging it, fabricating a gruesome pre-mortem analysis of how the thing had failed to come off, and finally anticipating the event with a crude, black delight. The problem is that Elizabeth was a Royal audience of One, used to getting what she wanted and eminently so.

I am a critic, period, and used to nothing but variety and variability. As a critic I was probably too prepared, too suspicious of the foreign, too encumbered with pre-conceptions to sit coolly and comfortably in the stylized Elizabethan world for even one evening. But when there is art or value in a thing, the hard-nosed approach (which has the lowest tolerance for tripe) can usually register it. Rigorousness should never be mistaken for unreceptiveness.

The fact is, I really wanted to like *An Entertainment for Elizabeth*, although I suspected I would not. Any one who has fallen under the spell of Praetorius' bizarre little dances from "Terpsichore" knows how buoyant, and at once stark, haunting and mysterious Elizabethan music can be. And although I had never seen Elizabethan dancing, I had a loose but not wholly inaccurate idea of how it might be done well. John Hollander is famous for both his own poetry and criticism which bridges music and poetry, so I felt justified in expecting his mini-play, or the text of the mask, to verbally enhance the music and choreography.

Even if all this critical fore-play chilled pre-curtain enthusiasm, I believe the New York Pro Musical

(which was divided into musicians, courtiers and maskers) would want as many down-to-earth and precise evaluations as they could get. Their foray into the staging of such an entertainment is unique hereabouts and has garnered rave reviews. In some way, I wanted to prevent swelled heads and treat the effort as the initiation of a type of modified musical drama. Not as a ten-second drag race which is fun, climactic, nerve-and tire-shredding — in short, a novelty, and over before we realize how shallow the whole thing probably was.

And was the Entertainment shallow? Well, even the sub-title was as brazen as if it were something on the midway: *Renaissance Spectacle* which suggests that the audience was in for an artfied and genteel equivalent of a hockey game. In other words, when your goal is art, you want your efforts towards achieving that goal to be as diligent and as faithful as possible. Art entertains, after all, by conquering the obstacles it sets for itself. I think the New York Pro Musica began with entertainment and flecked it with art so it was art only incidentally. I could not find it entertaining because art was used as the sales pitch for a clunker of a product.

Unfortunately, this practice is all too common in both theatre and opera today. Mawkish lyricism and most of all, a huffed up graciousness is made to play the role of art. The recent production of *Tosca*, for example, sloshed the audience with wave after wave of histrionic gestures, with motiveless motion all over the stage during arias, and martial duck-strutting when an innocent amble would have done. None of this is even whipped cream to the cake — it is vapid old Lucky Whip. It is pseudo-art.

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and infuses the whole production, whether the performers know it or not, with childish pomp.

The Pro Musica's production suffered the same fate. The group expected their pomp and festiveness to carry their art, but they only bounced and banded it around so carelessly that you soon felt it to be incidental, a lacey frill blending in with the stylized decor and costumes. The whole affair smelled of ornateness.

The singing was probably the least objectionable item— in fact tenor Ray De Voll as Pattern gave us something very easy-going and artful in the midst of a generally uninhibited put-on. I thought some of the madrigals were well-done too, and it was interesting how the ingenuous mood of these bits of forthright art clashed with the flaunting temperament of the rest of the show.

John Hollander's text was the most unexpected disappointment of all. Basically the plot of the mask has Variety, an evil courter of chaos, enchain Terpsichore, the muse of the dance. And the maskers through their dancing and lyrical charms free Ter-

psichore, strip and banish Variety. After the mask the queen joins the maskers in dancing. Now, I know for the sake of authenticity we do not want a dark Ibsenian drama of soullessness and self-destruction. Neither do we want tortuous Shakespearian blank-verse. But if a director is going to make the mask as prominent a part of Elizabeth's "entertainment" as William Woodman the stage director does, then I think it should be made to speak to us modern sophisticates. Yes, subtly, so as not to be un-Elizabethan, and in a stylized fashion, but still in an up-to-date and engaging way. Otherwise, leave the mask with its archaic format in the background. Do not give sickly Augustan heroic couplets to Variety, to be declaimed by one Arthur Burrows with a "Help! Ho! They Murder Caesar!" bombast. Do not give flights of Shirley Temple oratory to Marsha Davis' Terpsichore to twitter, as if she were giving an Elizabethan twist to the dumb-blonde stereotype. Do not give trivial dumb-shows to the two pages, so they may have an opportunity of making us wince with their under-rehearsed and under-nourished vaudeville.

The acting generally was

Subversion!

classic and monotone. Everyone overacted, except perhaps for Ray De Voll as Pattern and Roberta Senn as Elizabeth (who never spoke or sang). Even the extras were embarrassing. I am always surprised when I go to a play or opera — again *Tosca* comes to mind — and see the extras trying to pretend to make inaudible small talk with one another. Because it is usually done so lamely and ostentatiously, it attracts most of our attention and the brunt of our irritation, even if the "stars" are bellowing fiercely center-stage. These things have to be so well-timed and rehearsed so as not to be obtrusive that I'd suggest directors discourage their actors from engaging in any pretended small talk at all, unless realism demands it. In this case it did not, since the mask was already as glutinously stylized as one could stand.

I'm not really sure what to say about the dancing. I could say the research into exactly what dance

steps were employed is so recent, maybe it is unreasonable to expect anything near balletic proficiency with them. Even if I admit this, I will still say the dancing seemed corny and dried up without a hint of fluency. What is probably more important, this skimpy and tawdry heel-kicking took up center-stage most of the evening. It was so obviously merely cute and folksy, yet was capitalized upon as a novelty. The male dancers had the fancier steps, and like precocious children they thumped and lumbered about when they thought they were flitting and pirouetting like elegant birds. Sometimes, I know, they were supposed to thump soldierly, and, if it is any consolation, they did. The extended ring-around-the-rosy dance was mawkish and straight from Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*. The phony, baroque and genteel manners as of a grand ball during some dances were too much in force, I thought. Again, contrived elegance was made to serve as art.

And finally, the music. It should have been the backbone of the production — after all, they are the New York *Pro Musica*. Some of the pieces were very well-played, especially accompaniments to songs and madrigals. But there were galliards (which are fast and tricky dances) which seemed to leave the cornetto and recorder player still fumbling through the first few bars, while the other musicians were rounding off the piece. None of the players gave enough "presence" to their playing. That is, a bright, standing-out solism, which is very effective in chamber and especially Renaissance instrumental music. I wonder if they had been paying more attention to the playing than to the pseudo-merrymaking about them, perhaps they might have had more time to deal with the fast runs in some pieces and with the (oddly enough) obtuse acoustics of the MacMillan Theatre.

But I'd like to think of the New York Pro Musica as precocious children who couldn't do anything because they tried too hard, than as botchers who couldn't do anything if they tried.

Ian Scott

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Procul Harum Live, (A & M)

Procul Harum has combined with the 52 member Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and the twenty-four voice Da Camera Singers in November 1971 to produce a fine live album. The final result of this effort at merging a small rock group with a full orchestra is a remarkably slick, well put together recording.

The polished quality of the album is a tribute to the Edmonton Symphony and Gary Brooker of Procul Harum. Brooker and the group never miss a cue in recreating some of their most difficult pieces, including an ambitious 19 minute version of *In Held 'Twas In I*. The complexity of Brooker's score staggering. His music is far removed from the simple melodic essentials of other rock ensembles. The recording itself is so well performed and mixed that, were it not for the introductions and applause, each number would be good enough for a studio take.

Each of the five songs included has been arranged as close as possible to the original studio versions. One can appreciate the tremendous amount of rehearsal that was undoubtedly necessary to make the record possible. *Procul Harum* has undergone several personnel changes since some of the songs performed were originally cut. The guitar work of newcomer Dave Ball



Lighthouse

(who has since left the group) is fascinatingly close to that of Robin Trower, and Matthew Fisher's organ lines have been capably handled by Chris Cropping.

The lyrics by Keith Reid are esoteric and often heavy-handed. His own writing reveals, "the words which I use are pretentious and make you cringe with embarrassment". But it's

hard to imagine how less imposing lyrics could match Brooker's mood and complement his musical complexity so perfectly.

An essential departure from the original versions has been in the mixing of a somewhat louder percussion part. It's a small fault that interferes with the music at times but is overshadowed by the high standard of musicianship.

Rock music needs more people of Gary Brooker's talent.

Lighthouse Live, GRT

The tremendously well received Lighthouse concert at Carnegie Hall this past winter was fortunately recorded and put on a two album set. The recording captures the 12 member group at a musical peak. The vocals are flawlessly clear and most of the solos are clean and interesting.

Lighthouse's amplified string section used to have a definite plastic aura about them which has been corrected on their last GRT releases. The two live discs include only 10 songs, of which only one, *Eight Miles High* was neither written by the group members or found on their preceding two albums.

The material is still a bit immature but the group is constantly trying. Paul Hoffert on keyboards and Skip Prokop's percussive wizardry are worth special merit. The extended version of Howard Shore's *You and Me* has some good moments but the flute solo is too long and lacks polish. Also the choice of *Insane* as an encore was in very poor judgement, as it's definitely the worst song they've recorded in the last while.

Still this is a fine album and the cheap price is a bonus.

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Quebec fiction responds to its troubled society

Jacques Ferron Tales from the Uncertain Country (Anansi, paper, \$2.95) Roch Carrier Is It the Sun, Philibert? (Anansi, \$2.50)

Recent Quebecois fiction has an urgency and clarity rarely matched in the rest of the country, where novelists appear to be sunk deep in the dominant mode of listlessness, confusion and despair. The explanation of this difference is mostly to be found in the experience of acute social crisis which Quebec as a nation has been going through in the last decade. At a time when values and institutions are being challenged and transformed, the creative artist plays the crucial role of expressing the meaning of the whole crisis in a thoughtful and entertaining way. Not only does he have important things to say, but he also has an eager and attentive audience.

The combination of social crisis and a creative talent which responds to it makes for good literature, it seems. The House of Anansi has, with two new titles, continues its work of making the literature of Quebec available to English Canadians. As the translator of Carrier's books, Sheila Fischman, comments, this literature probably describes Quebec better than government reports ever can.

The collection of short stories by Ferron is long overdue for English publication. The 18 tales here are drawn from books originally published in 1962 and 1964. For his first collection Ferron's distinctive touch was given recognition by a Governor General's Award.

Ferron's tales are steeped in time-worn tradition. In style they are basically folktales — moral statements expressed through a whimsical dreamworld of talking animals, earthbound angels, old men and old women. Most are set in the small rural settlements of tight family ties and much religiosity that have been so much a part of the orthodox picture of Quebec. But Ferron's

stories are not simple reflections of that tradition — they are too iconoclastic, too sympathetic to the ordinary flesh and blood failings and strengths of human beings. His stories seem to express an underground spoken tradition of rural unorthodoxy that went unacknowledged and unpublished during the generations of strict clerical control over culture.

For English Canadians, perhaps the most interesting stories are those in which the English appear as strange foreign creatures, inserting strange words like "ouiquene" (weekend) and "cuiquelounche" (quick lunch) into the language.

Yet for all its admitted charm this collection of stories remains dated. They are, as the title indicates, tales from an "uncertain" country, and in the years since they were written that country has become much more certain of itself.

A stronger and clearer note is struck by the third book in Roch Carrier's trilogy (La Guerre Yes Sir, and Floralie Where Are You? are the two previous books, both available from Anansi). Here we encounter an urban, industrial civilization, as experienced by Philibert, the farm youth who deserts his parents' home from the big city.

Carrier has a very precise and incisive way of writing which enables him to sum up a great deal in each of the episodes in the novel without losing the fine balance between what's funny and what's tragic in Philibert's experience.

Immediately on his arrival in Montreal he is confronted with the presence of rich people who do not understand his language. Desperately cold and hungry, he clears sidewalk after sidewalk of snow, only to have the door shut in his face by the uncomprehending English. Or, at the legendary Montreal Forum, Philibert joins an enthusiastic crowd to cheer on the Canadiens as they skate circles around the

Toronto team. When a Toronto player hooks Maurice Richard to prevent him from scoring, Philibert steps onto the ice and punches him in the face, a daring act of patriotism that wins him the delightful taste of warmth, friendship and solidarity from people around him in the stands.

But Carrier's novel is much more than a nationalist document. In the description of Philibert's various jobs we get a clear glimpse of what life is like for the ordinary working people of Quebec. Working at a shoe

factory, for instance, Philibert begins to imagine himself being transformed from a man into a boot. He quits this job as he does so many others, but not before delivering an eloquent appeal to his fellow workers:

"When we get to the Pearly Gates Saint Peter's going to ask us, What did you do with your lives? and we're going to answer, I made boots. If he's got any brains he'll tell us to go straight to hell, because it's one hell of a serious sin, spending your whole life making boots."

Ultimately, Carrier's book ends on a note of despair, not of decisiveness. The possibilities of comradeship and transformation are only glimpsed, not grasped. Yet he has brought us a long way in this trilogy — almost up to the present. And while it is important for people to understand the history that lies behind them, it is also necessary for novelists like Carrier to begin to indicate the kind of history that has yet to be made. That's the challenge that he will now face.

David Frank

Canadian poet ventures into barren novel

Surfacing, by Margaret Atwood. McClelland and Stewart, \$6.95

Surfacing demonstrates two aspects of a contemporary paradox. The paradox is seen in the vociferous criticism of present society by certain groups and individuals, contrasted with the feckless existence led by the very individuals loudest in their accusations.



Margaret Atwood, poet turned novelist.

First, the quartet of characters in *Surfacing* fit this formula perfectly. Second, and at the more important level, Atwood fails to contribute anything artistically. Hence she negates any claim to worthwhile social criticism.

The first three-quarters of the book is a shallow account of four shallow people. The narrator returns to a rustic childhood home with her lover and a married couple. They make trite comment on most of today's opular themes and myths; urban pollution, French-English Canadian relations, American tourists, and many more. The comment

is tedious, coming as it does from individuals for whom liberation is to curse and rut and squabble like sewer rats.

Laced with this side of the story are elements of the narrator's past. She was brought up in this Quebec bush setting but left at first opportunity and henceforth evaded her parents. Her mother is dead; her present return was initiated by her father's reported disappearance.

It is these and other incidents that underlie the action of the book's last quarter. The narrator finds primitive sketches that suggest her father's final insanity. Further search however, shows he was studying Indian rock drawings. This leads to covert dives by the narrator in an attempt to find the rocks, now covered by floods. Puzzling events stir some interest in this part of the story, but failure to resolve them leaves this part of the novel as bad as the first. Exactly what revelations the narrator receives are completely obscure.

A work of art is the consideration of some aspect of life, either to clarify it or to present it in some new and profitable perspective. The point is to finish with something that is a degree or two more lucid than what you started with. The narrator says, "I didn't want there to be wars and death, I wanted them not to exist; only rabbits with their colored egg houses, sun and moon orderly above the flat earth, summer always, I wanted everyone to be happy."

Hence the contradiction, one inherent in so much of today's art. Instead of taking the war and death and lesser ills, and producing art that in some small measure re-establishes the order of the sun and moon, too often the artist produces something whose obscurity and distortion renders it worse than its inspiration. *Surfacing* is such a novel.

Hugh Cowan

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Kurelek paints us as surreal city

Toronto's pastoral nooks play against urban blight

If a city is more than a random geometry of streets and buildings, its existence is gauged by our experience of it. The city is different for everyone.

Artist William Kurelek is currently exhibiting his version of our city at the Isaac's Gallery, until October 30 and although a sensation of familiarity will be an important dimension of these paintings to those who share the same geography, all must enter Kurelek's Toronto as strangers.

The artist's previous work has been fundamentally rural, his imagination pastoral. When he applies his talent to the portrayal of a city an inevitable conflict arises: his moralist's rage at materialism and the dehumanization which he sees in urbanized society must accommodate itself to his desire to reveal at least some elements of the city in which he has lived with a degree of compassion.

The result of this double-edged intent is that each work in this series may be classified in two categories in its statement—Kurelek despises the urban, but treasures those scenes within the city that give promise to his pastoral sensibility. The 'urban' work is surreal, verging on the grotesque, whereas the more favourably inspired paintings, such as "Windy Night In Rosedale", make Toronto seem not a city, but a small town.

In his desire to be a humanist Kurelek is at his best. "Balsam Avenue After a Heavy Storm" is perhaps the most successful work of the series, playfully evoking a surging, positive sense of community as the residents of a city street shovel themselves out of a snow storm; in their common purpose they have time for an amiability that would not otherwise be permitted in their morning routine. The same vibrant feeling of community is colourfully conveyed in "Hot Day in Kensington Market"—the country fair atmosphere totally obliterates the fact that this is an

urban scene.

Typically, Kurelek is drawn to the undeveloped refuges of the city in his most representative work. The pastoral is sought in "Early Spring on the Scarborough Bluffs" and "Indian Summer on the Humber"; even a children's amusement farmyard excites his rural imagination in "Late Summer at Centre Island."

In certain facets of his work Kurelek strives for an ambiguous mystical effect. In this there is the unmistakable influence of London Ontario artist, Jack Chambers. With its diffuse study of direct light, "Foggy Morning at the Beaches" and the intriguing "Cold Water Scene From Ontario Place" (significantly backgrounded by the lake, not the city) come closest to this goal, although he fails to attain complex-complex level of perception.

All the paintings so far mentioned reveal the conflict in seeking the pastoral in an urban zone, but if this tension is inevitable why then paint a 'Toronto Series? Why not head to the country where he would be most at ease? The answer, I'm afraid, is that Kurelek has a "message" to deliver unto us, and although this flavour is in only one third of the total work, it unavoidably constitutes the main impression of the exhibit.

Kurelek's talents are seriously undermined when his emotions overcome his artistic sensibility. A stern moralist, he rages against the age.

Without control or subtlety his statements descend from art to propaganda. "Our My Lai, The Massacre of Highland Creek presents us with mutilated, dismembered embryos scattered over the pink-tinged snow. The embryos are being dumped from garbage cans labelled "Hospital Waste" and "Scarboro Centennial". Another load is on the way. Absurdly, streaks of red paint stream from the painting itself.

In 'We Misapply The Primeval

Commandment" the true pastoral vision is represented as a plateau, the sides of which are being eroded by the horrors of city life—parking lots and television sets. On the plateau, which is situated mythically in the heart of Toronto, Kurelek has etched (to accompany an image of Man and Woman) "Multiply and fill the earth and make it yours."

Christ appears in "Toronto, Toronto" on the steps of Old City Hall unheeded as a hippie leans against the cenotaph and streetcar "1984" rolls by. A grim harvest of humanity is reaped in the city imaged as a wall of Yonge Street exploitation in "He Gloats Over Our Scepticism"

Leaping into an unoriginal

genre of surrealism the artist produces what is clearly meant to be his vision of the apocalypse, "Harvest of Our Humanism Years"—certainly the most preposterous work of art I have ever seen. A grim flow of refugees streaming to City Hall to die, an H bomb suspended overhead, rampaging students burning "Legislative Authority", a waste land peopled by isolated television sets, hippies being metamorphosed into green snakes, crevices opening to reveal rows of revolutionary fists in salute (the denizens of Hell), the university feeding the holocaust: These are only a few of the mediocre delights offered us in this bizarre panorama.

The "message" paintings (as Kurelek himself refers to them) utterly fail through a lack of complete insight into the numerous issues he seeks to confront simultaneously. As is usual with self proclaimed humanists, he attempts to engage his imagined enemies by dehumanizing them. Muddled ideas create muddled art. When not wrestling with apocalypse, however, Kurelek succeeds.

The union of the artist and the confused prophet has its unsettling effect; we, the tourists in Kurelek's Toronto, must conclude it to be a schizophrenic, perplexing city. Its rusticity cohabits with its hallucinatory dread.

David Bauer

Gorky transforms nature into cryptogram

The exhibition of over thirty drawings by Arshile Gorky (on display at the Dunkelmann Gallery October 14 to 28,) represents a major coup for a private gallery; some of these works have never before been on public display. Gorky, transplanted from his native Armenia to America in 1920, forms the link between Picasso, European Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism. The show, which covers 20 years of his work, allows us to witness the struggle of this painter as he tries to emancipate himself from the influence of the European masters.

In certain drawings, such as Untitled No.5 Cubist devices are much in evidence. Interlocking complexes of curved shapes occupy the same type of space that typifies a late 1920's Picasso. Yet it is also apparent in this piece that there has been an abandonment of the Cubist reference to real objects. Instead we are faced with oscillating organic shapes, reminiscent of the biomorphic image then employed by Arp and Miro. These paintings are crucial for Gorky's later development. As a

result of this period of Cubist discipline, the freest of the later paintings retain a sense of order.

In 1940 there was a turning point two of the drawings, No. 14



Gorky's untitled No. 5.

and 15, a haunting imagery appears, that is almost compulsive in nature. The embryonic protuberances, and piercing eyelots produce a disturbing tension and we feel that Gorky is just

on the edge of a major discovery.

And in fact, after 1940 his previously repressed emotion seems to be released and fully expressed in the pieces. The catalyst may have been the summers Gorky spent in those years in the Virginian countryside drawing in the fields.

For what is most exciting in these later drawings is the combination of nature and abstraction.

Nature is apprehended in such a way that its structure becomes expressive of Gorky's own psychic pressures and processes. For example, what begins as a simple floral shape in one of the pictures, quickly becomes evergrown with new layers of meaning and association.

Suddenly the flower is transformed into a strange soft organism, with suggestions of bodily parts, intestinal folds and sharp toothlike projections, all softly pulsating among abstract planes and colors. As Andre' Breton has commented, for the first time Nature appears to the artist as a cryptogram.

Sandra Wolfe

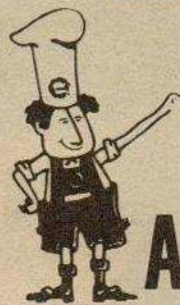


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purchases space in the memory. *Jules and Jim* improves every year. *Catch-22*, on the other hand, not only failed but wasted some of the richest ground a movie might have occupied. (Film rights work so that no-one else can get a crack at it for a generation, and even then it is dicey.)

Even the ambitious pictures that succeed all demand some forgiving. You overlook the schmaltz in *Fiddler*, the plot devices of *The Go-Between*, the lumbering parallels in *Cabaret*, the camera tricks in *Midnight Cowboy*. The bestbig movies are great but always a little rough, never quite as clean as the good little movies.

The trouble with good little movies is, of course, they are so small. They rarely thrill, which is what movies do best. Art is boring like the art gallery. Movies are fun like Saturday afternoon. Ask me who is the best-ever director and I can answer "Truffau" without even having to form the thought. But that doesn't stop me wishing that he made pictures just a bit more like *The Guns of Navarone*. *Sounder*, at the Hollywood, is not like *The Guns of Navarone* either, but it is good, clean, perfect and, what makes it so special, it is also thrilling. Tick off the categories: John Alonzo's photography, Martin Ritt's direction, Taj Mahal's music, the script by Lon Elder III, and the acting, particularly Cicely Tyson as a sharecropper's wife holding together farm, family and self while her husband goes to jail. All are first-rate. A movie this good leaves little to say. The thrilling moments will be apparent when it is seen, without a guide.

The one note that might be added, however, is that *Sounder* is a general release or "family" picture. The book it is taken from is a children's story; producer Radnitz' previous films are *A Dog of Flanders*, *Mysty* and *The Little Ark* —

children's movies. With *Sounder*, Radnitz and Ritt challenge the marketeers' assumption that the general public demands the bad art and the pointless stories foisted on it in its own name. This family film pulls no punches, social or aesthetic.

Sounder chastizes not only smug executives, but also smug artists. Too much heavy-handedness has been excused as "reaching the public", too much

failure of nerve has gone down in the name of sophistication (or, less charitably, snobbishness). No-one is saying that production of sophisticated pictures for specialized audiences (say, *Sunday, Bloody Sunday*) should cease, but too many have been saying the opposite: that there can be no such thing as mass art. There can be. *Sounder*, for example.

bob bossin



Sounder, the coon hound of the title, accompanies his master to search for father in prison camp.

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Movies seem to get better as they get smaller. *Mon Oncle Antoine* quietly

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Saviour-director John Wood

looks backstage

Amateur theatrics. A million laughs. Two million tears. There was the time I had to wear panty hose to imitate an eighteenth century peasant's stockings. Half an hour before curtain time the costume mistress decided to wash them. I went on freezing cold and soaking wet to the waist. The audience must have wondered why my teeth were chattering in the middle of a sunny town square.



New Hart House Theatre boss prods real talent there.

This mishap is the type of thing you chortle over in your dotage, sipping port before the fire. It's considerably more serious when the director of a production drops out two weeks into a five week rehearsal schedule. This is what happened to *The Misanthrope*, the play that opened the season at Hart House Theatre last night. New York made director Donald Davies an offer he couldn't refuse and by mutual and, it is claimed, amicable agreement, left for the greener pastures of the south.

Fortunately, Hart House was able to come up with another director on short notice, John Wood, a man of considerable and varied theatrical experience. Since his graduation from Bishop's University in 1961, he has sung in summer stock, acted in several repertory companies in England, produced public affairs radio programs for the CBC, and worked behind the scenes in a variety of capacities for companies several including the Royal Shakespeare, the Manitoba Theatre Centre and the Shaw Festival. His most recent directorial experience was the staging of the children's musical, *Pinocchio*, for Stratford's Third Stage.

John Wood in person is a cool drink of water who looks much younger than his 34 years. He wears blue jeans over cowboy boots and a blue denim shirt with a suede vest that give him a decidedly western appearance. In fact, he moved to Calgary only last year from his native Toronto. He still retains his eastern accent along with a mop of curly black hair and a neatly trimmed beard.

Wood appears to be completely calm about assuming control of a major production almost half way through rehearsals. He says, "There isn't enough time to do a play like this even with five hours of rehearsal a day, five days a week for the full period. I've gone back and

simplified things, reblocked some of the stuff. The real difficulty is with the language of the play.

"It's made up of incredibly long speeches. There can be a tendency to harangue the audience so we're working with the text as long as possible to counteract this."

Of his inherited cast of 11, Wood has replaced only one. "I'm very pleased with the cast. They're a little amateur in that they're inexperienced. That shows up in comparison to professional actors but they understand the play and they're learning to perform in this kind of play. There are a couple who, if they worked their asses off, could really make it."

Wood is unusual among professional directors in that he is as much interested in the educational process of the production as he is in the end product.

"It's important that the Drama Centre (the graduate department that is the ruling body of the Hart House Theatre) do things like this. Where else will students get the opportunity to investigate a text in this manner. Half of our rehearsal time was spent in talking about what it means. After all, there are five weeks of rehearsal but only ten days of performance.

Despite this interest in meaning, Wood promises a very theatrical performance. He is a professional and feels that it is ideal to have a few professionals around.

"People's attitudes become more professional and their work becomes more professional. A person working in the theatre goes about doing a play differently from an academic. I find academic theatre very boring. If you have an academic production, it's not really theatrical."

The Misanthrope will be reviewed in Monday's Varsity.

Rob Martin

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pop

Mark Volman and Howard Kaylan (The Phlorescent Leech and Eddie) could never have been accused of taking their music too seriously at Massey Hall last Wednesday. The band, through its spontaneous and irreverent wit made humour seem as natural and integral a component of the rock concert formula as the inevitable decibel din.

Volman and Kaylan, both currently providing the lead vocals in Frank Zappa's zany **Mothers** were aided on stage by two other Mothers fugitives, drummer Aynsley Dunbar and Moog and keyboard man, Don Preston. But the music was usually secondary to the fun by choice or by chance as Volman, fuzzy haired, bespectacled and fat of frame, dominated the stage from the first note. With his chest and tummy bared he scattered barbs at all the super self-righteous rock groups, doing split-leaps in the air and playing his guitar in a parodied windmill-style of The Who's Peter Townsend.

The vocal combination of Kaylan and Volman was more distinct and penetrating than their album sound. In fact, they sound more like reincarnations of their old alma mater, The Turtles, on the Flo and Eddie album, than they did on stage. When you could get your attention away from the magnetic Mark Volman, Dunbar's drums and Preston's Moog were clearly musical pearls.

Most of the songs presented were from the group's recently released first album and were unfamiliar to the audience, though that didn't seem to matter who had come to see the headlining English band, Wishbone Ash (they were mediocre and boring). The group finished with the Turtle hit **Eleanor** and was recalled for an encore. Encores are rare for a warm-up act but Kaylan and Volman are rare even for this purpose.

The Downchild Blues Band, with the special addition of four horn players, will be hosting a concert at the St. Lawrence Centre tomorrow night at 8 pm. The Toronto group will be introducing famed American blues artist, **Robert Junior Lockwood** at the performance. Lockwood is the son-in-law of blues great Robert Johnson, and two duet albums with the late Otis Spann to his credit. An added attraction is the weird (but wonderful) singer and guitarist, Leon Redbone. Tickets are \$3 in advance (available at Grossman's Tavern, 379 Spadina) and \$3.50 at the door.

Toronto's newest TV station, CITY-TV, channel 79 (cable 7), broadcasts a show on Sundays at 8 pm devoted to folk and rock music. The taping sessions provide an opportunity for some free entertainment. The program is taped on Sunday afternoons from 3 to 4 pm. An audience of 50 persons is allowed into the studio (99 Queen St. East) at 2:30 pm. This week's guest is **Dr. Music**.

At Grumbles, 71 Jarvis above King (368-0796), entertainment abounds tonight and tomorrow with the appearance of **The Good Brothers** and **La Troupe Grotesque**. Canadian folksinger, **Valdy** is next week's headliner. Admission is \$2.50.

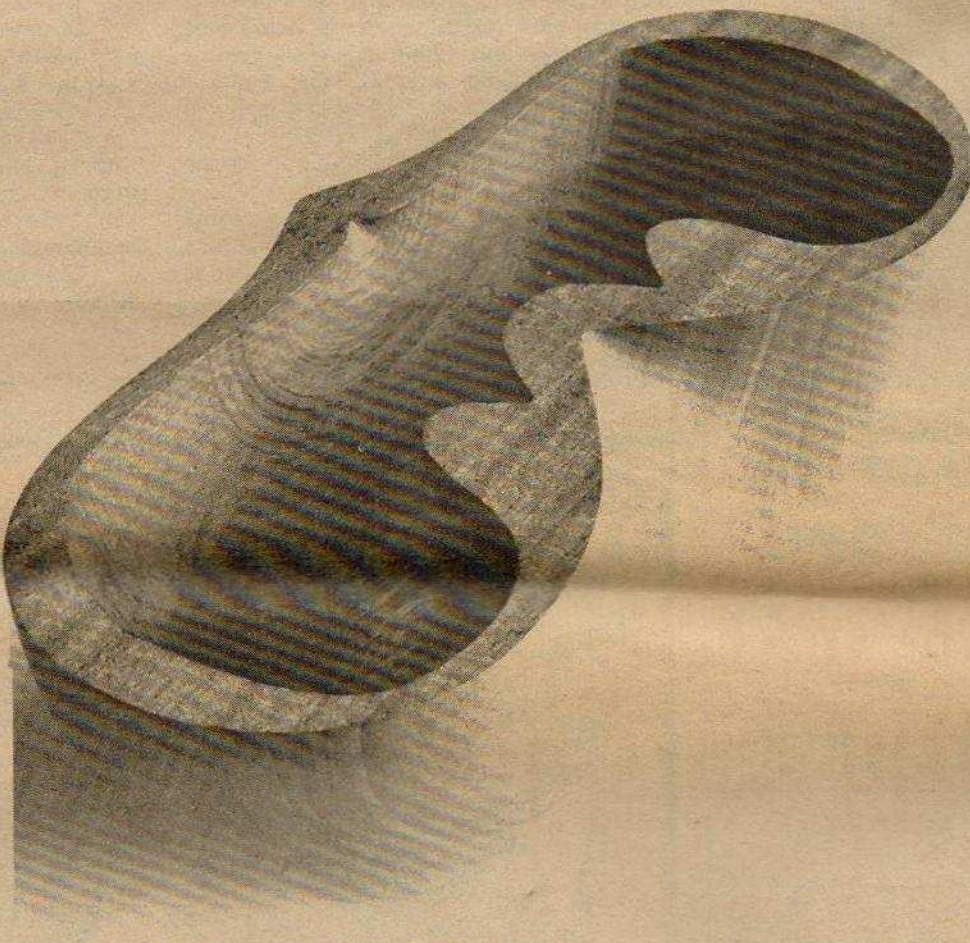
The lowest priced folk club in town is still Fiddler's Green, near Yonge and Eglinton (489-3001). A **Cellidh** (musical gathering of friends) is planned for tonight. Admission is only \$1.

Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee are held over at the Riverboat, 134 Yorkville (922-6216), until Sunday. Next Week: the English singing duo of Robin Williamson

and Mike Heron, better known as the **Incredible String Band**. Admission is \$3.50.

Bruce Cockburn, brings his personalized brand of gentle, wooden songs to the Massey Hall stage, Sunday at 8 pm. Tickets are \$3 to \$5.

The dates for the two **Cat Stevens** concerts are November 11 and 12. Although tickets are steeply priced at \$4 to \$7 they will probably be snapped up quickly. Mail orders are now being accepted at Massey Hall and tickets go on sale at the usual locations on Monday.



Bowl sculpted by Stephen Hogbin.

music

Andre Segovia said of English guitarist John Mills, "his playing shows musical sensitivity, and purity of technique". The Guitar Society of Toronto is hosting him in a concert at the Unitarian Church \$2 for students, at the door, or phone 487-0536. It's tomorrow at 8:30 pm. The Faculty of music is proudly displaying their progeny in what is billed as a concert of ensembles — a variety of instruments in various combinations. This will be in the MacMillan Theatre at 2 pm Thursday afternoon. The second of Hart House's Sunday Evening Concerts is to be held October 22 and features the Czech String Quartet, which is to return after Christmas for a six-part series exposing the development of the string quartet through their choice of works — from Haydn to Janacek. This Sunday's program is Mozart's quartet in G Major, K 387, Beethoven's opus 95 and Ravel's quartet in F major.

Baritone Victor Braun will sing Die Winterreise at the Town Hall, October 23., accompanied by Paul Helmer. I'm glad someone wants to sing Schubert's famous song cycle after (and before history-in-

the-making recordings of it have been made by Dietrich Fischer-Dischau. Tickets are \$3.50 and \$4.50, which are a bit steep to my mind for the Town Hall, only because we have come to expect first-rate artistry, often Canadian, at lower prices. Phone, 366-7723.

The United Church Choirs Festival takes place, by the way, this Sunday at Metro United Church at 7:30 pm.

Scarborough College is hosting an impressive series of fall concerts. The first is this Sunday at 3:30 pm and admission is free. The Chamber Players of Toronto are the attraction. Their program is works by Boccherini, Vivaldi and Canadian composer and radio producer, Irving Glick. The guest artist is Christopher Weait and he will play the Fasch Bassoon Concerto.

theatre

Old Play? New House: Sean O'Casey's 1926 play about the Irish Rebellion, **The Plough and the Stars**, opens the University Alumnae Dramatic Club's first season at its new permanent home, the Firehall Theatre, 70 Berkeley Street at Adelaide. When first presented in Dublin, there were riots in the Abbey Theatre because the

flash than art, their Sunday series of French and American classics is terrific. It appears to be necessary to buy a season ticket at \$3 for the remaining 16 films, available at the door. This Sunday it is Jean Renoir's **La Grande Illusion**. 7:30 and 9:30 pm.

Also this week: Sunday at 2 pm at the Revue there is **Alexandre Nevsky**, Eisenstein's classic with score by Prokofiev. \$2, or less if you buy tickets for other films in the Sunday afternoon great directors series.

Monday the Roxy shows Milos Forman's shot at America, **Taking Off**. It is fairer to the kids than to the parents, but still keeps the Czech gentleness. Very funny. 99¢ at 7:30 and 9:30 pm.

And this week, Cinemalumiere ended the repertory policy it pioneered in Toronto. Thanks to Bob Huber.

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education: The story goes that when they were finishing OISE, they had an excess of tinted glass, so they used some for the projection booth windows. I checked, and, sure enough, there was the source of the bluish look OISE movies seem to have. The screen image is fuzzy as well, to say nothing of the sound, as if the projector can't quite make it to the other end of the hall. **The Go-Between**, sharp and bleached at the York, came out hazy, and, in **Accident**, shot largely at night, faces were constantly lost to the shadows. The solution would be to schedule twice as many showings and only use the upper half of the auditorium. Unless this is done, we don't recommend screenings at OISE: the film is almost sure to turn up somewhere more sympathetic to it, and we will let you know.

The Avenue Cinema, on the other hand, is a lovely little place. It is housed in the old Silent Cinema, and Brian, who takes tickets, runs the projector, books the films and cleans up, makes it quite cozy. He'll hold the film a couple minutes for you if you really must smoke. Coming up is a **Scarlett Pimpernel** double bill. This week it's Bogart and Lupino in **High Sierra**, plus Bogart and Bacall in **The Big Sleep**. \$2.

And, not to be outdone, the Roxy 99¢ impressarios are getting into door prizes and give-aways, like the free beef stroganoff (Lipton's) served at the showing of **War and Peace**. They promise free pumpkins to the first one hundred on Hallowe'en, but I am holding out for an intermission yo-yo contest.

Note: we still welcome notes, complaints, letters, alternative revues. Is anybody out there?

art

Stephen Hogbin, a young artist from England, is showing an exhibit of recent works at the Craft Gallery until October 28. An award-winning craftsman, Mr. Hogbin has also taught at Sheridan School of Design and the College of Education since coming to Canada, in addition to his freelance work.

These recent works strongly reflect natural forms, the individual pieces echoing organic shapes. An interesting method is used to achieve this effect. The pieces are turned on a lathe, cut into cross-sections, and reassembled, so you see the action through the cross-section of the piece, and complex structural inlining forms are created with the grain working in several directions. Other pieces are crafted of formed metals and plastics.

John Mattar is a Guelph artist employing traditional techniques in an exhibition of paintings, drawings and prints at Erindale. William Kort's prints are still at the college and the 3000 Years of Chinese Art closes on October 25. At Hart House, William Wood's little drawings are on show to October 29. We feature an article on the Kurelek exhibit at Isaacs Gallery this week, and the paintings are there until October 30.

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movies

If on the whole this year's Friday and Saturday showings at St. Mike's are more