

Ted Mahar

Movies Better Than Ever; Adultery Funnier Than Ever

(Once a year the Emerald holds its annual awards banquet. And I don't think I can make a less controversial statement than that. And at this banquet are given some serious and some humorous awards. One of the humorous awards is the Miss Purity Award for the cleanest mind on the Emerald. Currently leading in competition for this award is an editor who, in one regrettable slip of the tongue, admitted that he opposes sexual indulgence before marriage. Most people would sooner watch their grandmothers hang than make such a damning admission; and, indeed, this poor careless fellow apologized profusely for his startling breach of etiquette. But although his apologies were accepted, he is still the top contender for the Miss Purity Award. With this column, unfortunately, I probably place myself in the next closest competition for the humiliating honor.—Author)

Back in the good old days when nickel candy bars were only a dime, a comedy was not funny unless at least three characters were hit in the fact with a custard pie. Nowadays, however, we are all sophisticated and worldly. In fact, the whole society is avant garde. We don't laugh at comedies any more. We smile at them. And now we find ourselves smiling at adultery and/or propensity to same.

OH THERE are other subjects for comedy, of course. In "Tunnel of Love" the viewer was treated to the hilarious spectacle of a couple who could not have the children they wanted; in "Imitation General" there was a riotous sequence in which Glenn Ford and Red Buttons killed four Germans in a machine gun nest; in "The Gazebo" murder was the primary humorous element. But childless couples, war, and murder aren't funny any more. A comedy just isn't a comedy unless some poor slob gets cuckolded.

Now any fool can plainly see the immense potential for comedy in adultery. For example, think of the scene where the husband discovers his wife's infidelity. A good comic actor can turn this into a maelstrom

of mirth just by facial expression alone. Or think of the scene wherein the would-be adulterer can't remember which motel his girl promised to meet him. He drives all over town trying to find the right motel. Then, when the wife gets home late, she tells her husband she was just out buying groceries, and the audience explodes with laughter at the befuddled expression on the cuckold's face.

ACTUALLY, these movies have a subtle value for some members of the audience. For instance, a fellow and girl who are pinned or a newly-married couple can view these movies and learn through laughter that infidelity is not really so bad as some would paint it. They can, in this way, have a much healthier attitude when they learn of it first-hand, and they will be able to cope with the situation more realistically than they otherwise would. After all, Dr. Kinsey put the occurrence of infidelity in American marriage at around 50 per cent of all marriages, which is pretty funny in itself. Any spouse who expects 100 per cent fidelity from his or her partner is a kind of laughable fool anyway—but in a nice homespun way. So contemporary movies can serve as a valuable educational aid to these naive idealists. And certainly, education is a "good thing."

But after a while, of course, the public will tire of infidelity as a comedy subject, and new worlds of humor will have to be explored.

AND I HAVE just the thing. I'm working on a comedy script right now. The story is set in the polio ward of a metropolitan hospital. One humorous aspect can be seen right away by the perceptive viewer with a keen sense of humor, and that

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OREGON DAILY EMERALD

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Little Man On Campus



"OH, I THINK GOING TO COLLEGE IS GREAT—BUT DAD CAME UP LAST WEEK AND SAID IF I STAY I'D HAVE TO TAKE SOME COURSES!"



The Anonymous Letter

Anonymous letter writers are usually cowards, but even more important, they are generally misinformed. The Emerald received an especially vicious letter in the Saturday mail. It concerned one of the University's less prominent administrators. We refuse to discuss the exact nature of the letter, but suffice it to say that the letter attacked the man on grounds of incompetence and even criminality.

Nothing could be farther from the truth.

THE LETTER finally catalyzed a sense of distress that we have felt while reading recent letters to the editor. The letters, in part, have made excellent points, but phrases like "the iron-fist policy of the administration" and the over-all condemnation of the ASUO Senate strike us as being gross over-simplifications.

The Senate's primary function is to serve as a lobby group for its constituency—the students of the University of Oregon. This lobbying may be done with the Legislature, with the State Board of Higher Education, with a dean or department head; or it may take no more substantial form than discussion which is reported in the Emerald.

IT MAY NOT SHOW on the surface. Lobbying is a matter of first recognizing student opinion and then presenting a persuasive argument to "the powers that be." Much of this cannot be measured.

But this does not mean that the Emerald has been overly sympathetic with the Senate. Far from it. While we have been quite pleased to see many new ideas spring up, we also regret that the Senate has been slow in reaching decisions. If the Senate does not make rapid judgments, it soon finds itself discussing projects which "the powers that be" have already considered and decided upon. This is our objection, not some slogan like "the Senate is the pawn of the administration."

THE CATEGORICAL grouping, "the administration," seems to be another common over-simplification. In the last analysis, the University administration is one man—Acting President W. C. Jones. Under him spreads a very thin hierarchy of men who must make administrative decisions about University financing, student welfare and conduct, dormitories, dining facilities, etc. Each of these men is an individual.

Each of these men, in his individual way, is dedicated to students and the University. But they can make mistakes. They may be caught in a web of habitual practice. They may forget to explain their actions to the student body.

THESE ARE AREAS in which the student must be alert. Students should constantly demand information from the various administrators (and be prepared with persuasive arguments if decisions appear unjust.)

It is one thing for a semi-literate coward to make criminally libelous statements about an administrator who is trying to do the best job he can. But it is by far another for a serious student with a serious complaint to use catch words and half-thought-out slogans. We expect this sort of thing from the coward. But we expect the serious student to research his position before flying off the handle in some gross generalization.

Keep Off!

Anyone who has been at the University more than a week should know that if one pedals his bicycle across the grass, the grass will get all rutty and ugly.

AT SOME metropolitan colleges there isn't much grass. But we have grass at the University. We are proud of it. It looks nice. Don't pedal your bicycle on our grass.

If this sounds like a high school editorial, don't be disturbed. It's aimed at a high school mentality.

Footnotes

Dry zone, hah! We're lucky if we can get to classes without swim fins.

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According to a radically informal poll, the new dixie cups the SU slops our Cokes into are pretty popular. At first we thought it was just some stunt to impress the high school kids down for the festivities. But we're glad to see that the new green cups will be with us for a while. And for you economy minded students, they hold the same amount of Coke (or anything else, come to think of it) as the old ones did.