

The Function Of A Library

Editor's note: The following is a reprint of Dorothy Thompson's editorial which appeared in the Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star, June 21. Worthy of campus readership, it is a fine presentation of the argument, "let truth and falsehood grapple."

President Eisenhower made his remarks about book-burning standing before the Baker Memorial Library at Dartmouth College, from which last Sunday he received an honorary degree.

It was an appropriate place from which to warn of the danger of attempting to "conceal faults by concealing evidence that they have ever existed."

The library of Dartmouth College is one of the largest in America, used by many besides Dartmouth students. Situated 30 miles from my Vermont home, I also use it when the need arises. Its years-long director, Harold Rugg, has made it a vital institution of a wide community, and keeps its contents moving.

Its stacks are open; one is directed where to find the book he seeks or the subject in which he is interested; he finds his own volumes to take out, or read in one of the library lounges.

I know no great library which seems so like one's very own. In this great library are thousands of books dealing with Communism—the classic documents of Marx and Engels; the treatises of Lenin; commentaries of Marxist theory; books by Marxists criticizing other Marxists; books by anti-Marxists; books by former Communists telling why they left the faith. One could spend weeks in the Dartmouth library reading about nothing but Communism.

And one can also find books by Fascists, racialists, imperialists, "infidels, atheists, reactionaries, and radicals of every hue; Catholic and Protestant apologetics; idealistic and empirical philosophers; saints and skeptics; plays and novels, poems glorifying the American scene and others depicting its most squalid aspects.

Those who assembled this library did not "approve" all these books, with their immense diversity, nor investigate the personal lives of the authors. Yet not every book ever published is in its stacks, for the tens of thousands of momentary trash or trivial entertainment would crowd its shelves. Some judgment must be exercised.

But for what does a library exist? It exists for knowledge and inspiration.

Within these walls, I can learn what men and women have thought, felt, perceived, and longed for thousands of years, down to this present moment. I open the pages of a book and am immediately interested or bored; enchanted or disenchanted. I may find myself a genius or a fool—but the fool cannot long intrude his unwelcome company; I close his mouth and return him to the shelf. Or I find myself in interested argument—so that, in the books I own, I carry on running conversations with authors in the margins.

A general library must be representative and electric. There in lies the difficulty of reconciling "library" with "propaganda." A U.S. Information Service library that contains only books praising America would not be representative of even anti-Communist, but Communists have drawn upon his books. "The Grapes of Wrath" was written by an anti-Communist, but praised by Communists.

"The Education of Henry Adams," a great American classic is not 100 per cent uncritically American. The greatest American novel, I think, is Melville's "Moby Dick," but it is not American Propaganda.

The case against the books of Howard Fast is not that he may be a Communist, but that his work, as such, is poor in content and form.

The American libraries abroad are nevertheless the best expression we have of America. They proclaim the free, inquiring, critical mind, which is the strength and glory of our western civilization.

The reader will always remember what awakens and appeals to his mind; he will ever reject what insults his soul . . . Affirm the belief in his judgment! Give him the best we have, however controversial, and he will find a companion far away, in another country, even perhaps, in another century; a fellow mind; a fellow soul.

This is the function of a library — not "propaganda."

Weekly Wisdom

When wealth is lost, nothing is lost;
When health is lost, something is lost;
When character is lost, all is lost!
—Unknown

Summer Nebraskan

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EDITORIAL

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BUSINESS

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You Don't Say

By JOYCE JOHNSON

There seems to be quite a turnover of actors in Hollywood these days.

I recently read where Olympic Decathlon Champion Bob Mathias of Tulare, Cal., is being sought to play Buck Rogers in a series of video films.

The athlete is supposed to go before the cameras late in July for the first of 26 half-hour films.

After the TV series, a 3-D motion picture will be produced, with Bob in the star role.

Another famous, red-blooded American, Mickey Spillane, author of the thrill-a-minute mysteries, is also going to try acting. He will co-star with Clyde Beatty in "Man Killer"

Any day I expect to see Bobby Reynolds flying through outer space as Captain Video's right-hand man, or Bear Handshy darting through the jungle maze pounding on his chest and uttering the famous Jungle-Lord's cry.

I heard that Cisco Kid's sidekick Pancho died the other day. Here's a chance-of-a-lifetime for those of you who have the theater in your blood.

Personally, I'm waiting to fill the girl's shoes who plays Lois Lane, ace reporter on the Superman TV series. There's an opportunity to combine business with pleasure!

Speaking of TV programs, I heard a refreshing version of a description of low-cut evening gowns on "Toast of the Town" . . . "She was wearing one of those quaint Biblical gowns . . . "Low and behold."

On the educational side of TV, the University of Houston is the only university in the country using television as a regular educational offering.

Within five years they plan to offer enough courses on TV for a student to receive a complete degree. The station has been on the air one month and the first course offered, Introduction to Psychology, received good response from the viewers, according to the Summer Texan.

What a blow to the habitual class-cutters at NU!

As the baby polar bear said as he sat on an iceberg, "My tail is 'told!"

Why Be Half-Safe! Lockjaw Is No Fun

Beware of the summer monster known as lockjaw!

Lockjaw, or tetanus, cases jump in summertime because exposures in the form of cuts, scratches, or puncture wounds are more frequent in warm weather when people are out-of-doors.

The germs of lockjaw are commonly found in soil. They enter through a skin break and emit a deadly toxin which constricts jaw and neck muscles to constrict so severely that jaws involuntarily close, vice-like.

To fight off this dangerous enemy a series of immunization shots should be taken with periodic "booster" shots to keep the immunity level high.

Pittenger At U.S. Alumni Conference

James S. Pittenger, secretary of the Nebraska Alumni Association, left Wednesday to attend the 38th annual conference of the American Alumni Council to be held at the Shoreman Hotel, Washington, D. C., July 13-18.

While in the east Pittenger will meet with Nebraska Alumni clubs in Pittsburgh, Washington, New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Cleveland to discuss plans for a "migration" to Pittsburgh October 10 for the Nebraska-Pittsburgh football game.

Thirty years ago the average American woman was able to eat from 2,800 to three thousand calories per day keep her fashionable figure.

Now many women are more likely to eat about 2,200 calories a day or less, to keep in good trim.

Various authorities believe the widespread use of labor-saving devices and motor travel in place of walking call for less energy from women, and therefore they need less food. (Excerpt from "Here's Howe" by Pete Howe.)

Comedy 'Gramercy Ghost' Is Third Production Of Hayloft

By RON BECKER

As a cool breeze blew in through the Hayloft Summer Theater Tuesday night, The Lincoln Stock Company produced its third show of this season's run, John Holm's delightful comedy, "Gramercy Ghost."

The first act of the show went rather slow but the second act picked up and the third act was played in top condition. In some places I was bothered by the timing of the light and sound cues, but on the whole the show was very well run. A word of praise is also necessary concerning the set which was excellent, and for the period costumes which for once, didn't look as though they were actually handed down from 1775.

Leading in the cast of twelve was Miss LaVonne Slaybaugh, Walker as the ambulance drivers, who played the role of Nancy Willard. Miss Slaybaugh gave a splendid performance and was a vote of praise for a job well very convincing in her role. Also done on a top-notch comedy.

sharing the spot-light was Rich Miller, who portrayed Nathaniel Coombs. Mr. Miller was excellent as the "Ghost" and I looked for him to deteriorate at any time.

Mace Richford, as Charley Steward, was also very good and well deserves a compliment on his consistency of character. Doing a fine job as Parker Burnett was John Reeds who contributed much of the humor as well as much of the timing. Miss Randy Yorke gave a nice performance as Margaret Collins and also supplied a bit of the comedy of the show.

Les Mathis did a commendable job as the officer and Jack Parris was suitable as Mr. Ames. Supplying more of the sparkling humor were Bill Lucas, Mike Shane, and Arlene Stetina as the other ghosts, and Mary Doyle and Twila was Miss LaVonne Slaybaugh, Walker as the ambulance drivers, who played the role of Nancy Willard. Miss Slaybaugh gave a splendid performance and was a vote of praise for a job well very convincing in her role. Also done on a top-notch comedy.

Library Of Congress Will Soon House Complete Biography Of Gen. Pershing

Library of Congress will soon contain the final eight volumes on General John J. Pershing to complete his 12-volume biography.

The biography, "Footprints in the Sands of Time," has been prepared by Harry R. Follmer, retired Omaha real estate man.

Nearly 10 thousand dollars has been employed in the preparation of Pershing's biography, the most complete personal history of the general, which was started 15 years ago by Follmer.

The author first admired the general in 1886 when he was participating in escapades as an Indian fighter. Follmer then studied mathematics under Lt. Pershing at the University in 1894. He was also one of the original members of the Pershing Rifles, crack drill unit.

President Eisenhower will receive a summary of the new work, the 13th book, for the White House Library.



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