

Gadflies

The Summer Nebraskan noticed an odd similarity between all of the columns published in this week's issue. The Mutterings of Steve Schultz complained of the apathy of students toward the Sunday night presentation of Henry V. The Preacher noted a similar reaction of the audience during the Lincoln Civic opera. And the Gally Slave observed that the grader system does not provide students with an education worthy of a university.

All three of the columns point up a lack in the University.

The University has an obligation to the state of Nebraska. And if cultural apathy exists in Nebraska, whose fault must it be but the University of Nebraska, whose job it surely is to provide culture to the state.

There has been an alarming tendency for the University to be merely a mirror reflecting the cultural trends of Nebraska, instead of beacon which guides that culture.

The University has no right to plead that it cannot teach cultural appreciation to citizens who have no interest. It must be the job of the University to create that interest. If students have no interest in culture, then in future years state citizens will have none. If the University cannot teach them this, for what reason does the University exist.

But if it is asking too much to have an institution of higher learning teach higher values, then perhaps we must remain content with a few gadflies such as these columnists. Perhaps if they gripe and groan, complain and moan long enough and loud enough, the University may at least take notice that someone is not quite satisfied with the education it attempts to provide.

* * * * *

mutterings

—steve schultz

Eight speech majors, including myself, made a faithful pilgrimage to see Sir Laurence Olivier's "Henry V" at the Union Sunday night. Sir Laurence, you know, is the Ty Cobb of the theatre, the consummate artist in every facet of his chosen career; professionals respect him, and amateurs stand in awe of his every move. And the free movie in the ballroom last weekend is one of his finest achievements.

Thus, the eight of us — and probably many others who were present — were startled when, shortly after the showing began, a sizeable share of the audience began a trek toward the exits. It shocked and disappointed us that so many people could so unfeelingly slough off a great performance of a great play by the world's greatest playwright. Admittedly Shakespeare is difficult for the modern audience; this is to say that his language demands close attention and provokes thought. Later over a welcome glass of iced tea, I wondered whether every popular presentation must be some oversimplified, commercial success — whether Rock Hudson is the man of the theatrical hour.

We wondered too why Shakespeare's play were the outstanding successes that they were at the original Globe theatre. After all, much of his audience was composed of "groundlings," bricklayers and ditchdiggers who were taking the afternoon off.

They were apparently able to give the poetry the attention it deserves, and I suspect that at the Mermaid or the Boar's Head or wherever they went for a bracer after the show, they talked among themselves about the problem of Hamlet's revenge or Macbeth's

ambition or Othello's jealousy. One wonders what the people who walked out of the ballroom Sunday night talked about.

Now this sounds like snobbery, but it is something nearer to lamentation. That the modern popular audience has lost its taste for provocative drama is tragic.

This tragedy is perhaps attributable to the deluge of drivel which is flowing from every mass medium. Television's mass produced situation comedies have spawned a million lovers of Lucy and convinced thousands that the father who knows best is a half-wit. To combat this encroachment on the American home which was formerly its exclusive sanctuary, radio has adopted the practice of playing the top forty songs in a relentless assault of nursery rhyme melodies and puppy love lyrics. Politicians have put pancake makeup on their bald heads and become painfully casual in an attempt to look like the neighborhood barber discussing the stories in this morning's newspaper. Even religion has descended to the "let's all be deliriously happy" level with Norman Vincent Peale's announcement that "the cross is a plus sign."

So let's all relax. Stop that damned thinking and we'll go play hopscotch.

gally slave



—dick shugrue

For those of you who weren't around during the regular school year an all out war including some cannon-like verbal blasts was waged against the reader system in the University . . . by me.

To the average student (and this unusual animal, I realize, is hard to define) the grader system makes it hard to get a real education. I listed a few reasons for the difficulty sometime during the spring, but rather than drag out old spooks in the closet of the Arts and Sciling, etc.) College I'll list some big bugaboos in the program.

First of all from my own experience I can give some indication of how the grader is picked. Usually he is one who has some talent (often hidden to the student who is graded) in a particular field. Often a student who is in need will apply for work and get a job.

And that's all grading is to many of the graders whom I know.

The big faults with grading?

1) The lack of rapport between the student and the grader which stems from the fact that very often the grader has never had either the teacher he is working for or even the course he is grading! Consequently the poor student plugging away to impress the teacher with his comprehension of the little quips passed out in class finds his "clever" writing flat on its face.

2) The failure of graders to make themselves available for conferences with the students or even with the teacher in order to get the idea which is desired in a particular assignment.

3) The — to put it bluntly — poor job many graders do on their papers. It has become a standard joke around the campus that the only qualifications for the job are

that the student grader be a master of the cliché and sloppy penman.

What can be done about the situation? Little if anything at the present time. Instructors are overworked as it is. Add to their chores the task of grading a couple hundred papers each week and they will just not be able to do a decent job — they'd probably be even worse than the graders!

Graduate assistants, so they tell me, at any rate, are likewise overworked or are placed in courses "way up there" and far from the freshman and sophomore levels where readers can do the most efficient jobs.

I suggested to an influential professor that the University establish special courses in various departments which would give, in addition to the pittance now paid, college credit for grading, thus insuring a better quality of work.

Of course, the program would only be open to special students.

That was last February. Nothing has been done.

Weekly sessions should be set up by the teachers so that a discussion can be held between teacher and grader and between grader and students. After all, it would be nice to know what the object of a lesson is.

This would remedy the situation in the English Department which one irate student reported to me of a teachers refusal even to tell the students who the grader was.

The University must operate within a wee budget. But it must not sacrifice quality of instruction just because hordes of wealth are not available to pay for the finest graders.

But I'm afraid that instead of doing anything about these suggestions the University will have to hire even more poor graders because of hard tack financing.

the preacher

—john heeckt

The supreme apathy of the audience at our tenth annual civic opera was indicative of the cultural values of the mid-western pseudo-intellectuals professing an appreciation of the arts. A typical response of these nobly inspired folk was their scattered and inappropriately timed applause.

It was quite obvious that the audience's acquaintance with opera or the other fine arts was—to be kind—sparse. These aesthetic pretenders paid out .25 for programs intended to give them an outline of the opera, and then promptly turned the programs to use as fans and seat cushions.

Throughout the entire production the air was filled with the crackling of papers, the pop of empty coke cups, the whining of tired children and babes, and the wheezing and whispering of obese elderly ladies.

At the end of each act the applause was scarcely sufficient to arouse tired mosquitoes in the pine branches. It was hardly complimentary to the cast; it was a

rather a half-hearted attempt at politeness.

At the conclusion of the production the audience, with out knowledge or thought, committed the greatest of theatrical sins by rising from their seats and leaving during the final applause and before curtain calls.

I profess no ability as an opera critic, however, I am certain that this production, though amateur, was worthy of the attention and support of an interested audience.

It appears that, if the people of this territory ever wish to rise from their position of ridicule in the eyes of their more are appreciative neighbors, they had best instigate some form of instruction for their still susceptible youth that will engender at the least an understanding of the fine arts.

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Letterip

To the editor:

In reply to the gripe expressed by "The Jocks" in the July 11 issue of the Summer Nebraskan several points could certainly be focused upon. Anyone who is the least bit familiar with University of Nebraska campus life can vouch that the "murals" in the Crib reflect the majority of activities (no, not in the "jock" sense) that take place upon our campus. Who can deny that classes, honoraries, dating, rallies, sports, dances, pep rallies, and activities (in the common 96 per cent of the time of students? Two of the murals, I must concede, could be improved. The student dashing toward the class building on the west wall is manifestly headed in the wrong direction, and the book strap is more than outdated. Moreover, the editor of the Rag is usually male — and the lines of any female putting in time at the Rag office during the current semesters are not true to form.

Regardless, the walls of the Crib are definitely in good taste, and it's a shame that the "Jocks" can't find something more constructive to complain about.

Disfigured

Forgotten

In the Nebraskan's story of June 20 on the University budget, we quoted Sen. Dwain Williams of Broken Bow as saying, "I am sick of the University running the state of Nebraska."

Two days later, the editor mailed a letter to Sen. Williams asking him to send us a statement — at his leisure — clarifying his remark.

We haven't heard from Sen. Williams lately. They must not have much leisure in Broken Bow.

Film Short

The film short "Water Fowl and Aqua Play" will be shown in the Union Lounge Thursday from 11:45 to 12:30 p.m., according to Bob Handy, Union activities director.

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