

Opinion

Art vs. smut

X-rating doesn't denote pornography

Film is art, believe it or not.

Despite the recent fare of movies at the local theatres, film is a valuable art form, just like painting, sculpture, music and literature.



Karl Pallmeyer

There have been hundreds of films that are considered masterpieces. A list of classic films would include "Citizen Kane," "Persona," "Birth of a Nation," "Potemkin," "Seven Samurai," "The 400 Blows," "8 1/2," "Hiroshima Mon Amour," "The Graduate," "The Red Desert," "That Obscure Object of Desire," "Rope," "Breathless," "M" and "The Bicycle Thief."

A list of classic films would not include "Red Dawn," "Debbie Does Dallas," "St. Elmo's Fire," "Commando," "Bohemia," "Missing In Action," "Missing In Action 2," "Invasion U.S.A.," "Deep Throat," "Rhinestone," "Rambo: First Blood II," "Rocky II," "Rocky III," "Rocky IV" or "Grunt: The Wrestling Movie."

This semester a new club was formed to bring some of the better films to campus. This semester the Student Art Film Society showed several classic films, including "Seven Samurai," "Persona,"

"The Trial" and "Breathless," showed various short films, held an exposition of local amateur video works and brought guest speakers talk about film. The Student Art Film Society is funded by membership fees and donations instead of box office receipts.

Tonight and Friday night at seven, in room 103 of the Soil Crop Sciences and Entomology Building, the Student Art Film Society will be showing their last film for the semester — an X-rated film.

"The Canterbury Tales," is a film by Pier Paolo Pasolini based on the literary work by Geoffrey Chaucer. If you've ever read "The Canterbury Tales" you would realize that it would be impossible to make a movie that was true to the text and not X-rated.

When "The Canterbury Tales" was released, it was surrounded in controversy. In 1972, Pasolini was booted by the audience when "The Canterbury Tales" won the top prize at the Berlin Film Festival. Many critics hailed Pasolini as being an insightful director while other critics chided Pasolini for making pornographic movies.

Pornography is described as being writings and pictures intended primarily to arouse sexual desire. It would be foolish to say the primary purpose of "The Canterbury Tales" — the book or the film — is to arouse sexual desire.

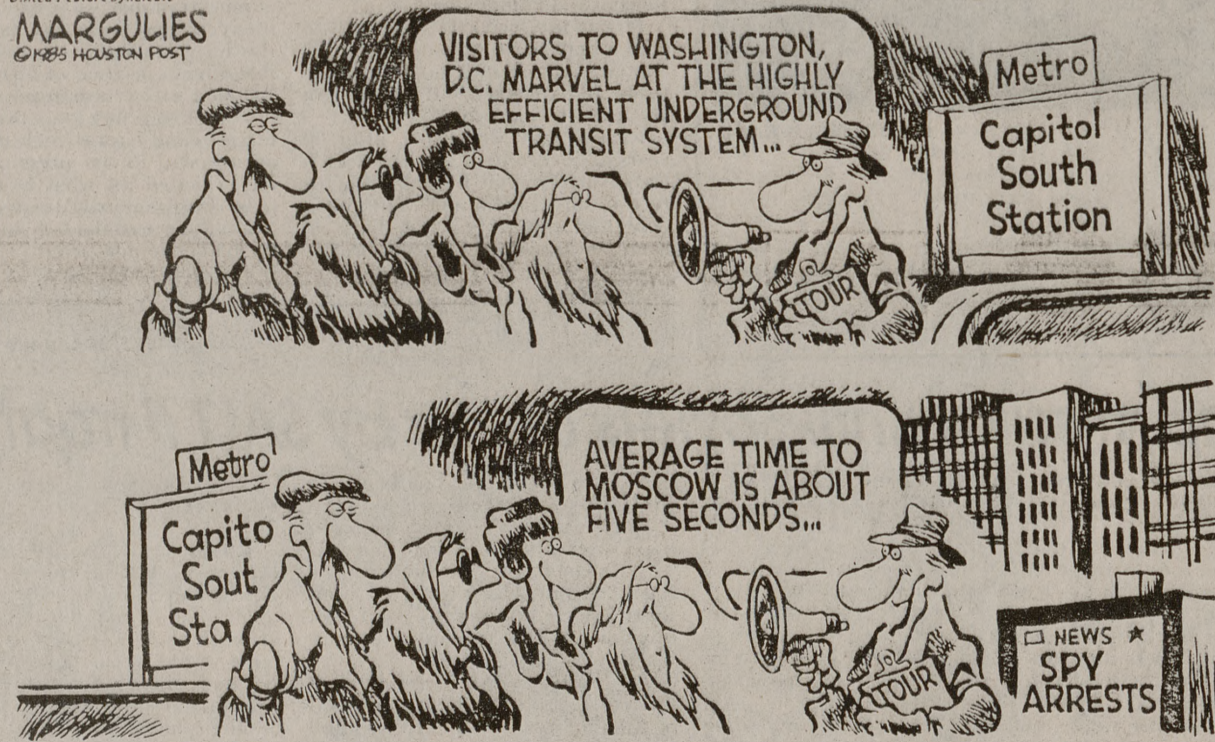
Chaucer's book was an attack on the church and society of 14th century England. Pasolini used Chaucer's work as the basis for his attack on the church and society of 20th century Italy. In "The Canterbury Tales" — book and film — the various characters, a cross section of 14th century society, tell stories that would parody the then current social and moral values. Even though 600 years have passed, the hypocrisy and narrow-mindedness is still prominent.

Sex is used for many purposes. In movies like "Debbie Does Dallas," "Bohemia" and "Deep Throat," sex is used to arouse sexual desire so that people will pay money to see the film in the hope that they will be aroused. In "The Canterbury Tales" sex is used to make fun of society's embarrassment towards sex. The word "pornography" has its roots in the word "prostitution." "Debbie Does Dallas," "Bohemia" and "Deep Throat" are sex to make money, therefore they are pornography. "The Canterbury Tales" uses sex to make a statement, therefore it is art.

The Student Art Film Society is using sex, in the form of showing an X-rated movie, to attract more members and to expose the general public to art films.

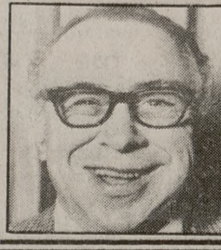
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MARGULES
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Inside view of spy-bargaining

The toughest thing about catching a spy is seeing that he gets the punishment he deserves. As soon as one is arrested his attorney starts bargaining for a lighter sentence in exchange for the fink's revealing how much information he turned over to the other side.



Art Buchwald

"Hello, Justice Department? This is Mat O'Hara representing Collard Cosmos, the weasel who sold the plans for the Stealth bomber to the Bulgarians. What kind of deal are you offering us?"

"We don't negotiate plea bargains for spies, O'Hara. Your guy sold out his country and the government intends to hang him by the neck until he is dead."

"You better think it over. Except for the Stealth bomber you have no idea what secrets Collard walked away with, and we have no intention of telling you if you keep demanding a pound of flesh."

"We're not talking about some two-bit code clerk, O'Hara. Cosmos is the biggest fish we've caught in years. We intend to put him in the freezer for life."

"What if I were to tell you that my client is willing to name over 120 people in the U.S. government who are still on the KGB payroll?"

"O'Hara, did it ever occur to you that we may not want to know who they are? The more spies the government uncovers, the worse we look in Washington. Every time we arrest somebody, Congress wants to know why it took us so long to flush him out. We reject your offer for the list of KGB agents, and we're still holding the position that Cosmos has to serve a minimum of 20 years."

"Would it whet your appetite if I told you my client smuggled blueprints of 'Star Wars' in Nancy Reagan's cosmetic case when she went to Geneva?"

"That's impossible."
"Here are the films of Gorbachev switching cosmetic cases with Nancy at the airport. My client knows the whole story and will tell you how he did it for a reduced sentence."

"The law is the law. Every person in

this country must be punished according to his crime. In this case Cosmos has to do at least seven years for compromising the security of the nation."

"Apparently you don't realize what a predicament you're in. You people have spies coming out of your ears and spies coming out of your socks. If you don't show mercy to Cosmos I'll advise him to remain mum about the nuclear submarine codes that he has stashed away in a pumpkin in the northeast part of the United States."

"What sub codes?"
"I can't say because we might have to sell them to another country for legal expenses if you make us go to trial."

"O'Hara, we have an open-and-shut case on your client committing treason. No matter what information you say he can turn over to us he still will have to rot for 30 days in the county jail."

"I can't believe my ears. Collard made one lousy mistake of selling his country down the river, and when he says he's sorry and offers to make amends, your response is that he spend a month behind bars."

"What do you think Cosmos should get for cooperating with us?"

"It wouldn't bother me if you charged him with one count of failing to curb his dog."

"The government can live with that. We were afraid you were going to hold out for the Congressional Medal of Honor."

Art Buchwald is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate.

Mail Call

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but will make every effort to maintain the intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the address and telephone number, if available.

Apologies for The Batt

EDITOR:

Recently following a weekly meeting of student leaders here on campus I had the opportunity to speak with Rhonda Snider, editor of The Battalion.

During our conversation Rhonda reluctantly mentioned her concerns that the night before, while visiting at a Student Senate meeting, she received a rather cold reception from several of the senators in the room. Knowing the long-standing rivalry that has existed between Student Government and The Battalion, I think she was possibly wondering if that a tradition she was yet unfamiliar with, that is, hissing The Battalion representatives at meetings of the Student Senate.

I assured her that this was not the case and that neither myself nor Rhonda Johnson, speaker of the Senate, knew of such goings on. However, later recalled our discussion I realized that what I told her might not have been entirely true.

To a large portion of the student body an indignant outlook on The Battalion is probably considered "good bull." After all, The Battalion has time and again printed letters and editorials that are not representative of the campus consensus.

I will be the first to admit that on more than one occasion I have been particularly chafed by opinions expressed in the pages of The Battalion that were contrary to my own. It occurred to me that the thought of such negative attitudes being traditional at A&M was not far fetched but plausible.

At this point I feel compelled to apologize to Rhonda and the rest of The Battalion and to express a personal sentiment as well. If there exists a degree of hostility between A&M students and The Battalion, I think it is lacking sufficient justification. Aside from possible arguments with philosophical nature of journalism there is little reason to complain about this year's Battalion. As college newspapers go, The Battalion is among the best. While boasting a circulation of over 22,000, The Battalion is among the top ten student newspapers in the country.

Lastly, I want to express my appreciation to Rhonda and the rest of the leadership of The Battalion for their superb relations with Student Government and other campus organizations during this semester. From their efforts our programs and events have received more than adequate coverage.

Sean Royall
Student Body President

Un-American ad-tivities

EDITOR:

This letter is being submitted in response to the ridiculous letter published in Mail Call on Nov. 25 dealing with the CIA recruitment ad.

The CIA is an agency of our federal government. Alan Sembera clearly implied that the members of this agency lie, cheat and steal. However, he offered no facts as a basis for these implications.

I believe that making criminal implications without offering factual evidence is very unfair and, since it was against our government, un-American.

Chad Abney '89

Flatten, don't flatter

EDITOR:

I am hoping that most, if not all, of the students chanting "Poor teasips" did so simply because they have not been Aggies long enough to know better. Not only do we have more class than those fans from other schools who resort to such poor sportsmanship, but imitation is the sincerest form of flattery — and we do not want to flatter the teasips, just to ten them.

C. David Stasny '74
Anne Stasny '84

Not among the chosen few

EDITOR:

I was shocked to read in a somewhat biased Austin American Statesman front page (naturally) article on the eve of our game with the University of Texas that we had a fourth-year "student" at Texas A&M who was "downright ashamed of what goes on . . . and doesn't like that people identify Texas A&M with the Corps. Since there are only 2,000 cadets in a student population of 36,000."

What this so-called "Aggie," fourth-year student, doesn't understand is that the reason A&M exists today and its graduates have such an outstanding worldwide reputation is because of the Aggie Corps of Cadets.

Graduates of this institution — and in almost every case former cadets — are leaders in every facet of the American business/industrial world in medicine, research, engineering, agriculture and in key positions at branches of state and federal government.

John Makely (the fourth-year student) is a name I shall remember and I see over 100 resumes a month — and shall certainly not count among the chosen — those few good men and women deserving to be known as Aggies!

Jay Biskey
Austin, Texas
Class of '59, Cadet Colonel

World-class dining?

EDITOR:

I am writing in reference to Sbisa. This is the third case of food poisoning I've had since the beginning of fall '84. After the first two, I generally stopped eating on campus, except when I needed a quick meal.

Now, I am going through the same thing again! How can Sbisa maintain a reputation of good food at reasonable prices if they keep getting students sick? How many cases go unreported because students think it's just a 24-hour bug?

I think a lot more work is needed to make Sbisa a world-class dining hall.

James Tomlinson '87

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Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the Editorial Board or the author and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.
The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.
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