Cultural Consciousness

The College drama, fine arts and music departments are devoting the weekends of April 29 and May 6 to "The Arts at Middlebury." Two first-weekend programs include a presentation of dances, an exhibition of paintings, etchings and lithographs, an evening of films and a performance by the Vermont State Symphony Orchestra. The second-weekend program contains presentations of "Time of Your Life," a panel discussion and a performance by the College Choir.

Middlebury students are often prone to complain that the College is a cultural desert. They point out that their home town is a far cry from any large city and that the town of Middlebury has little to offer culturally. This is quite true.

But there is also another side to the page: when enough students are gathered to listen to a fine pianist or hear an outstanding speaker, there is generally poor response on the part of students.

This connection between the Middlebury student's complaints and his actions when cultural opportunities arise is often attributed to the atmosphere of the College. Students say that in such an environment one simply cannot absorb culture. Yet they themselves are the ones who contribute to and form the atmosphere. The middleman complains about the lack of culture, yet they do not even take advantage of the frequent cultural opportunities offered.

Item: The Concert-Film series has brought many fine artists to Middlebury, but student attendance is usually rather sparse. Several noted speakers have come to the College; however, student attendance is only occasionally good.

Item: This weekend the Middlebury Conference will be held. Five outstanding speakers will lecture on a topic of great concern in the modern age. Will student attendance be good? There is some question. If students were to become culture-conscious persons they claim to be when voicing their complaints, there would be no doubt that attendance would be excellent.

In the words of Arthur Healy, professor of fine arts and the person who emphasized to the college at large the present activities of the department concerned as well as their potentialities for future development, the members of these departments that such programs might eventually become year-round programs of the College. It is the understanding of these that in our time that cultural manifestations should be fostered and encouraged.

When we consider the paradox of complaints and actions, we are sometimes led to wonder: do students really want an opportunity to be exposed to culture? Are they ever looking for an object for complaint?

To the Editor

Mass Culture and Mass Media: Twin Attains of Diagnosticians

By EMERY W. FLAVIN

In Sociology and Anthropology the problems of mass delinquency have been studied with some success. The learned ones hover about aping the antics of mass-mania, and a casuistry of disagreeable consequences are skillfully dramatized in order to underscore the important Message. It is with mass culture and mass media that the concept of the "social diagnostician" springs to mind. The masses groove and study about the middle of the world and appear to agree to disagree. What is to be made of it all? We suggest that it is exactly what the social diagnostician is attempting to determine the nature of the elephant, each individual being that the part that he examined could be taken for the whole. There appears to be a two-fold flaw in the critical literature concerning mass media. First, there is a remarkable absence of careful definition, and, second, there is an equally notable lack of a developed critical criteria of criticism.

Blamed Criticism

In the absence of a definition of consumerism one is forced to simply accept the reader's applying the semantic slip. Without carefully developed evaluative standards one is prone to fail to distinguish between what is truly significant of the mass media and what is simply a reflection of the over-consumption of one's own biases. This is not to criticise polemics in that no one can have an important part to play. We simply suggest that by surmounting the part for the whole and of failing to distinguish between one's own likes and dislikes is "out there." Error compounds error!

The failure to develop an inclusiveness to the definition of evaluative criteria are paradoxical by a tendency to make the grossest unqualified assumptions about the audience of the media and assume that the mass media and the social scientist be interested in the relationship between the media and audience. One gets the impression that the media is either a definite source of information that is simply inundated by the media or that it is a recombination of the interplay of social relationships among the audiences of the media in the process and process of community life.

The question remains as to the effect of the mass media cannot be answered from the critical literature. We can only observe that a) course their low quality corrupts public values. Of course comics cause disgustingly perverted images of the earth are flat. The problem here is the critic's confusion of his production with its potential social evaluation of the media with their concrete effect on others, a confusion that is generally made without doing research. There are some who go "outside" to find out what the effects of the media really are.

Mass Theory

Some years ago there was popular a "mass" theory which envi-

sociETY largely sur-

munication of anomalous, psychological isolated, relatively normless individuals. "Mass" society was regarded as the product of two development, the replacement of agricultural-rural by industrial-urban social structure and the rise of mass media. Within this perspective it was foreseen that ultimately the mass society would cover the mercy of the Big Brothers of the mass media with fruitful results. But the hope of a mass defenseless individual got his multiple shot of belittled attitude, values and standards. The extentive recent study has shown this view to be a most certainly erroneous and of social reality. The media have not proven to be dehumanized rather a contributory agency to the omnipresent duplicity who know no better than to allow the media to act. But as it pours from press and studio. The fact is that even as the media are varied the audiences are varied of the style.

Wider Range

That is, to some extent, it's a long way from "Playboy" to the "New York Herald," and both of these are not apt to be found in the same living room. One who is distinguishable to call either or both of these publications mass media should remember that "Reader's Digest" and "Life" simply play the tunes of the extremes and these in the USA picture of society. Variety in the media suggests that there exist the following complex of counterpointing power wherein one influence is often determined by the another. This occurs, of course, in variety of effects in the complex processes of opinion formation and leadership.

Good Old Days

It is apparent that the "critics" suggest that the "Good Old Days" will return. The first is comparing the "golden" culture of the folk with "spurious" contemporary culture and the second is suggesting that we find frequently is a comparison of what the "real" or in the culture of yesterday, and, strictly by the pointed epiphyses, we forget that the "real" culture unless we are. What was it really like for the masses of bygone era? It is hard to say. The masses were illiterate, and their interpretations have undoubtedly shaped their attitude. What has come down to us is a collection and controversial questions that we cannot be answered. In this vein, mass media are often taken to be the basis of a society that is a conservative and completely with which has corrupted the basic virtue of an individual existence. It is about this time that this distortion was considered. But the cultural society that is intolerantly conformist and conservative and has been described as any city girl going to the rural community. And all of these efforts have been described as an attempt to make the society a better than a biased society.

Social Values

The third area to investigate concerns the values of the media. Among the complex of this society, the issues concerned are here perhaps the central concern since it had been shown that the general strike a "balance" among three frequently conflicting social classes. Of these is the portrayal of social reality and the portrayal of the class that present the stereotype. The controversy that has raged over the character of Silliman and footage of much of the media is always the subject of the society. The conflict is between the media that can be considered the use of mass media that are oriented around certain social institutions.

The fourth being that the values of which the media are assessed is the social-cultural. To illustrate, we might be interested in the role of industrial society in the splintering of the interregional processes characterized of rural society has somehow generated new mechanisms via mass media that are oriented around certain institutions.

When the literate attacks the media for their appeal to the literate, the public is apt to forget that the values of which the masses are the vehicle and literary forms are terms of which the media are transmitted. And in haste to make this a point, the literate is not fulfilling the function of the society. The role is actually primarily in the role of the position of which the media are oriented around the literates in the society.