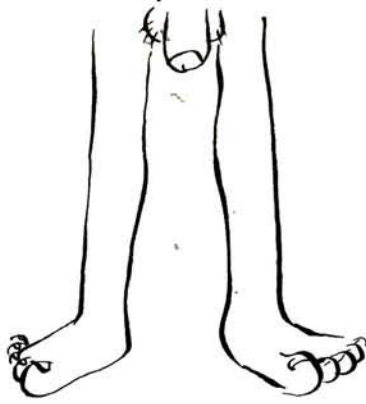




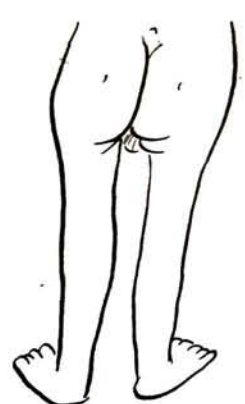
NUDITY, MALE, FRONTAL, UPPER



NUDITY, MALE, FRONTAL, LOWER



NUDITY, MALE, DORSAL, UPPER



NUDITY, MALE, DORSAL, LOWER

Once more into the breach: the Ontario Board of Censors has sixteen new labels to protect us from unpleasant surprises inside movie theatres. This impulse to shield sensitive Ontarian minds might be commendable but the service could go so much further.

Take the language labels. The Chief Censor defines "mature language" as a warning about words kids may ask the meanings of. Too right! Any concerned parent wants to be ready with a clear, concise reply, especially when surrounded by listening ears as in the cinema, with kids only too likely to wonder about difficult words, like paternalistic, authoritarian, censorship. Theatres Branch could do us a real service by providing a list of key concepts (with definitions) in advance of each film.

"Coarse language" according to the C.C. is something vulgar (of the common people). Hence, this category must include not only the more startling crudities of certain urban streets, but also the inadequately enunciated, grammatically incorrect language of everyday conversation ("Dey was goin ta Taranna"). Retired grammar teachers, among others, would appreciate knowing which vulgarity to expect.

"Swearing", like the warning about offending religious beliefs, is somewhat too inclusive. Which beliefs? Which oaths? Hindus hardly need warning about *The Life of Brian*. And what of offending philosophies or political beliefs? These labels need development.

On the topic of greatest interest - sex - Theatres Branch offers only two categories, with two more for nudity, raising the possibility of sex with and without. But what distinguishes "explicit sex" from "sexual innuendo" - your grandparents' upbringing or the camera angle? And how is nudity "casual" rather than "explicit"?

Clearly, considerable leeway for unpleasant surprises still exists. A more helpful scale might go: nudity, male, frontal, upper (perhaps abbreviated as NMFU); nudity, male, frontal, lower (NMFL); nudity, male, dorsal, upper (NMDU); nudity, male, dorsal, lower

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# No surprises, please, we're Ontarian

by Gail van Varseveld

(NMDL); nudity, male, total (NMT). And so on. That's explicit. Doubtless, there are similar possibilities for the sexual activities labels but it won't help if the Board starts censoring its own information system.

Violence, under the new system, gets four ratings: "violence", which must be something bad to rate a warning; "brutal violence", which must be worse; and "sexual violence", which is no doubt worse still (or a whole other topic). But "occasional violence" surely cannot be for special occasions (as in, occasional poem), so must not be happening constantly. Then how often is "violence"?

What we need here is a little qualification, a body count of sorts. Perhaps punches per hour, or shots per second, or chops per frame would serve. Not violent time during a film would be welcome information to those who can stand so much and no more. "Bruta!" could be developed to indicate numeri-

cally the sizes and types of weapons - nuclear missiles rating higher than the karate pro's hands, for instance. Add a simple measure of involvement - number of combatants - and we have a four-dimensional image of the violence we're going to see. Some people might want a breakdown of victims and villains, or of types of combatants (people, aliens, spirit manifestations, artificial intelligences, etc.) but that is perhaps too ambitious for the present.

"Alcohol" and "drugs" seem straightforward enough, but "alcohol" would better serve as: social drinking problem drinking or disgusting drinking. Teetotalers could skip all three; unrepentant alcoholics could avoid the moralizing of the middle lot; teenagers and the righteous could be sure to catch the last group.

"Drugs" are more complex: caffeine, nicotine, prescriptions/use and/or abuse, salt, sugar. What use trying to bring up

healthy children if you take them to a film showing some nerd raining salt on his/her food, or some heroic type guzzling cream puffs? More specificity, please.

"Controversial lifestyle" is a wasted label. What it used to euphemize is Movieland's discovery of the decade, and the label will never be applied to lifestyles that *ought* to be controversial: those of people making over \$100,000/year, or deploying nuclear weapons, or making porn films. Replace it with something descriptive or scrap it.

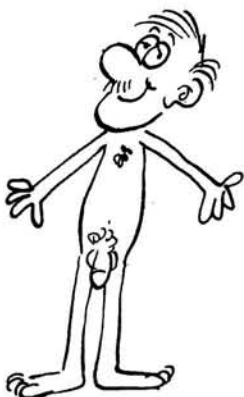
"Frightening scenes", now, is a bit spooky. What frightens me does not frighten my seven-year-old friend, but how does Theatres Branch know? However, if they have such abilities, they can make other assessments for us simultaneously: sickening scenes, disgusting scenes, romantic scenes, sentimental scenes, and so on.

In fact, Theatres Branch seems to have overlooked a warning about the amount of mushy sentiment in films. How about this scale for a start: meaningful looks, frequent meaningful looks, heavy sighing, avowals of lifelong love, lingering death, visitations from beyond.

Other welcome warnings might be: not for adults (for the likes of *Prom Night* and the numerous *Halloweens*), loud music (for those who want to bring ear plugs), and sexist stereotypes (obviously cheaper to label films without). Theatres Branch could also warn us about: slow moving film, poor quality photography, indistinguishable sound track, indecipherable plot line, physical humour, intellectual humour, no discernable humour, little substance, complex substance, incomprehensible substance, no redeeming social merit.

In sum, Theatres Branch can tell us everything except whether a film is boring or great. The only limit to the potential of such a system is the size of the posters to display the labels. With the system in place, film distributors wouldn't even have to advertise their wares.

Or maybe we could skip the intervening stages. Theatres Branch could pass out copies of the shooting script along with some production stills, and we wouldn't have to go to the cinema at all.



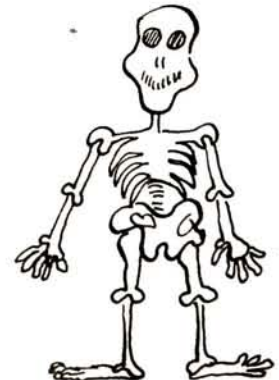
NUDITY, MALE, TOTAL



NUDITY, MALE, IMPLICIT AROUSAL



NUDITY, MALE, EXPLICIT AROUSAL



NUDITY, MALE, COMPLETE

Illustrations by Don Artoli