

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ART IN AMERICA

I READ YOUR ARTICLE "Art in America" [SR, Sept. 8]. It is a pleasure to read about art in words that are lucid and precise. So much of the current criticism is just so much nonsense.

I hope that some time in the future you will publish something about the purpose and function of an art museum. It occurs to me that the museums are returning to an earlier idea, that of being giant safe deposits for art and money, and have lost vitality.

ZALMAN Y. ALPER.

Chicago, Ill.

... I GATHERED that Katharine Kuh believes a museum director must be a first-rate art historian. I agree. I also received the impression that his administrative ability was of little consequence. Why should it not be demanded that he possess both?

... The chief executive of any institution ... cannot be a specialist by the very definition of his office. He deals in his specified body of knowledge, which is primarily scholarly; but he also deals in administration, which is primarily manipulative; and he deals in complicated human relationships, which demands perception.

CHARLES C. MARK,
Executive Director,

The Spirit of St. Louis Fund.

St. Louis, Mo.

... BEYOND A DOUBT, the current article is a hint that the art world better come around and clarify many of its panic-buttoned vogues. ...

JOHN C. LORENCE, JR.

Milwaukee, Wis.

I APPRECIATE Katharine Kuh's article. ... I cannot agree with her remarks on the younger artists, but that's what makes horse racing.

PHILIP JOHNSON.

New York, N.Y.

THERE WAS A TIME when most young ladies took water color and piano lessons for the edification of their families and friends. Today the piano lessons have fallen off but the private art classes are booming ... and all one needs to become a full-fledged artist is a set of paints and plenty of enthusiasm.

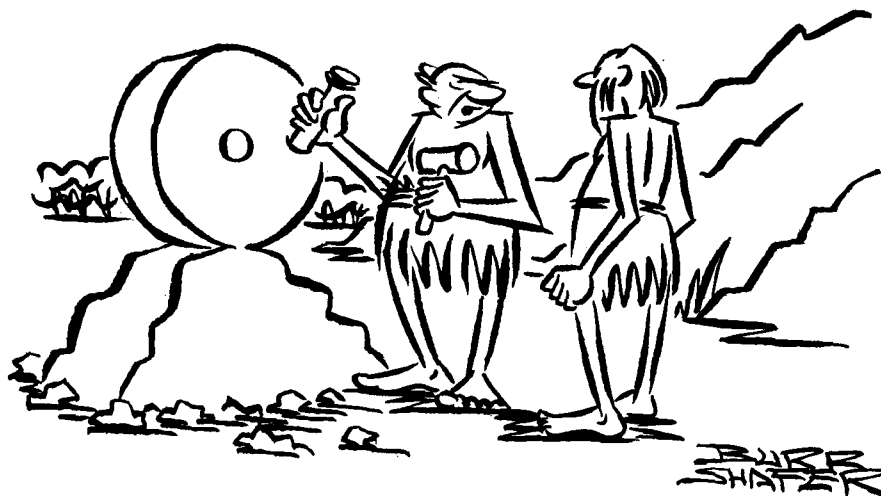
CHARLOTTE MALSBARY.

Charlottesville, Va.

KATHARINE KUH's charge that Lichtenstein's comic strip paintings are "usually devoid of invention," and "literally reproduce and enlarge familiar comic strip scenes," does not mention the truly original and very satiric effect which takes place when a four-inch panel is enlarged to a seven-foot canvas. Certainly, this effect is inventive.

GEORGE MCDADE.

Terre Haute, Ind.



THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH
"It's not *supposed* to be useful—it's a work of art."

IT WOULD BE HARD to name any significant aspect of Art in America in 1962 that Katharine Kuh did not touch upon, and illuminate with wit, clarity, and plain good sense in her article.

The reproductions would do credit to the most painstaking art book, and the entire presentation should stand as one of the important documents of this country at midcentury.

GEORGE McCUE,
Art Editor,

St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*.

St. Louis, Mo.

WHILE YOU COVERED many phases of the current art situation, I was very interested in your analysis of art directors, trustees, gobbledygook art language, and the undue press given to art values.

I had not seen "Art Market Guide and Forecaster," but did read this past winter Richard Rush's book on "Art as an Investment." Although some of the facts may be true, I deplore the emphasis that is being put on money instead of aesthetics, and I certainly hope that your dissertation gets wide publicity.

SIGMUND W. KUNSTADTER.

Chicago, Ill.

AMERICAN MYTHS

THAT WAS A VERY FINE PIECE on American Myths by Malcolm Cowley [SR, Sept. 1]. I have one or two others for his collection: (1) The mythology has it that "ugh!" should be pronounced as if it were "ugg!"—contrary to common sense and the dictionary. (2) Jiggs-and-Maggie-wise (ugh!), the American wife continually threatens her husband with a rolling pin and/or crockery and refers to him as "You worm!" (3) The American male has to beg for a night out, and must invariably come sneaking in, shoes in hand. (4) A female school teacher has stringy hair, no bosom, dowdy clothes, and high shoes.

... I am a male school teacher—and you should see some of my colleagues. Wow, not ugh!

ALLAN GOWER.

St. Paul, Minn.

FICTION, POLITICS, AND ERRORS

IN REVIEWING MY NOVEL, "Noon on the Third Day" [SR, Sept. 8], Edwin M. Yoder, Jr., states that "only an interplay between private conscience and public standard redeems fiction set in public life." I don't acknowledge that this is the *only* subject for a novel set in public life, but such a conflict is, of course, one of the central points of my novel. In fact, Mr. Yoder seems to admit this when he says, "We are convinced by the story line that Senator John Burnett, an appealing old liberal from Missouri, might well have found it agonizing to discover public interest in the narrow strait between a 'punish labor' lobby and an equally uncritical union lobby."

Mr. Yoder is also disappointed because I did not develop a theme which interests him: "Must a liberal believe in the essential goodness of man?" He answers his own question—"Who needs conclusions about the nature of man in order to campaign for the Senate?" In the hectic hubbub of a political campaign my observation is that such ideas, however interesting, are not given prolonged consideration. I accuse Mr. Yoder here of committing the classic reviewer's sin—reviewing the book he wishes I had written instead of the one I did write.

For the three grammatical errors Mr. Yoder cites, I apologize. They just got by half a dozen literate people, of whom I am the least literate, I am sure. Errors do occur despite our efforts. Mr. Yoder, for example, misquotes the title twice—and that even got by the usually meticulous *Saturday Review* editors.

JAMES HULBERT.

Washington, D.C.

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

JACKIE GLEASON

as
***GIGOT**

*Pronounced GEE-GO

with

KATHERINE KATH
GABRIELLE DORZIAT
FRANCK VILLARD

Produced by KENNETH HYMAN

Directed by GENE KELLY

A Seven Arts Production

Filmed in Paris in Color

A 20th Century-Fox
Release

ON THE GREAT STAGE

"SOUNDS"

Lavish spectacle introducing novel
and exciting effects, featuring Bal-
let Company, soloists, guest artists,
Rockettes, Symphony Orchestra.

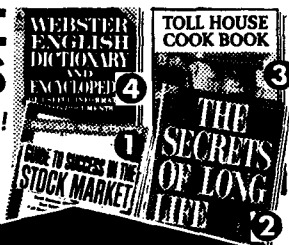
"KOL NIDREI"

Famed holiday presentation.



FREE BOOKS

Choose One!



PLUS

HIGHEST PREVAILING INTEREST RATE

EXTRA
BENEFITS...

- Interest paid from date funds received when left through end of quarter and paid to date of withdrawal when left 6 months or more.
- Funds received or postmarked by the 10th earn from the first.
- Savings insured to \$10,000 by the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation.
- We handle all details of transferring your account. Pay postage both ways.
- Accounts welcomed from corporations, institutions, etc.

Send for FREE BOOK
OPEN YOUR ACCOUNT TODAY



(Mail coupon below)

Commonwealth Savings

AND LOAN ASSOCIATION

5077 Lankershim Blvd., Dept. BH., No. Hollywood, Calif.

☐ Please open an insured Savings Account in the amount of \$..... Funds are enclosed.

NAME(S) FOR PASS BOOK

STREET

CITY AND STATE

☐ Please send additional information and financial statement.

☐ Please send book No. 1 2 3 4 (circle your choice).



SR GOES TO THE MOVIES

Total Recall

FOR ALL its many faults, Eugene O'Neill's autobiographical "Long Day's Journey into Night" made memorable theatre. Through three stolid, talkative, repetitive acts, the play slowly generated a charge of electricity that, in the fourth act, crackled all over the stage like chain lightning. Each new encounter of the tortured, loving, hating Tyrones bit deeper into the nerves, hearts, and minds of the audience; and suddenly it became clear that the overwhelming effectiveness of this shattering finale lay in the slow accretion of detail in those lumbering preliminary acts. One has to know as much, and care as much, about the Tyrones as they do themselves to participate in their anguish, to be wrenched by their tragedy. O'Neill, intent upon total revelation, prepared the way by peeling off layer after layer of each of his characters until, as midnight settled about the ugly house, they were raw, bleeding, and ready for the final plunge into the abyss.

Obviously, this is unlikely stuff for the movies, in which it is preferable, in Herbert Gold's phrase, to have "happy people with happy problems." Even more obviously, movie audiences—and American movie audiences particularly—are rarely willing to accept a gradual unfolding and involvement. They want to be grabbed, then hustled through their hero's predicaments. None of this happens in "Long Day's Journey." Both the O'Neill play and the O'Neill method have been preserved, line by line and scene by scene. Ely Landau, who originated the Play of the Week series for television, has produced it with the same sense of dedicated integrity. He assembled a truly extraordinary cast (all of whom worked for minimum pay), and then hewed to the original play with a fidelity both praiseworthy and self-defeating.

Films have a tendency to telescope. They can tell a great deal in relatively little time; the eye drinks in more detail; the ear listens more acutely at a movie than at a play. (After all, both sights and sounds are magnified a hundredfold by the camera and the microphone, while the screen sharply delimits the playing area, and the sound recordist has eliminated all but the essential voice-and-effects tracks.) But O'Neill's technique, with its repeated lines and recapitulated situations, is the very antithesis of this. As a result, the early acts, sluggish enough on the stage, are often unbearably turgid on

film—a situation hardly enhanced by Sidney Lumet's direction of the camera, in which brilliant flashes alternate with shots that are awkwardly composed and clumsily put together.

Where Lumet excels, however, is in the handling of his cast. Katharine Hepburn caps her distinguished career in the role of the pitiful, dope-addicted mother, groping back to the past for dimly remembered moments of happiness. Her transformations are extraordinary as, in recollection, she suffuses her tense and aging face with a coquettish youthfulness or, in the larger pattern of the play, changes from a nervous, ailing, but loving mother into a half-demented harriidan. Her final scene, which contains some of O'Neill's most beautiful writing, is in every way masterful (including Lumet's daring cut from a long pull-back to a huge close-up).

No less impressive is Jason Robards, Jr., as the dissipated, ironic elder son, perhaps the most complex of all the Tyrones. With his magnificent voice and lean, lived-in face, he immediately becomes the film's most winning character—until he turns Jamie inside out to reveal the rottenness beneath the charm. Ralph Richardson, the senior Tyrone, and Dean Stockwell as young Edmund (the youthful O'Neill himself), seem to do most of the listening, though each has moments of eloquence.

What is most extraordinary about "Long Day's Journey" is the way it builds. Shot in progression, the actors come to the peak of their powers just as the play rises to its climax. Together, they provide a final half-hour of sustained intensity the like of which has seldom been seen on the screen. This may not be justification enough for an approach that pointedly ignores the potentialities of the film medium, but no one who has ever demanded serious, mature entertainment on the screen can afford to miss it.

Since movies, even today, are essentially a mass medium, the chances are that Irving Wallace's "The Chapman Report" will attract a far wider audience than O'Neill's "Journey." Quite apart from its well-publicized source, it has a bevy of beautiful dames—Claire Bloom, Jane Fonda, Glynis Johns, and Shelley Winters—all acting their pretty heads off in a vain effort to conceal the triteness of the situations each finds herself in. The Knight Report: *Caveat emptor.*

—ARTHUR KNIGHT.