



End as a Woman

PHILADELPHIA.

THERE ARE those who contend that the resident professional theater movement should be more daring and more adventurous than Broadway. This audaciousness can be expressed in violently unorthodox productions of classics and established modern plays. Or it can result in the presentation of unusual new works by unproven playwrights. Either way, the box office almost invariably suffers.

One answer to their problem seems to be the endowing of a few organizations whose express purpose is working with new playwrights. The New Dramatists, Albee, Barr, and Wilder's Playwrights Unit, The American Place Theatre, The Eugene O'Neill Memorial Foundation, the ANTA Matinee Theater Series, Cafe La Marna, and the Judson Poets Theatre have all proved their value in performing this function.

The same impulse is felt by those who run the resident professional theaters outside New York. The Dallas Theater Center, the Theatre Company of Boston, and New Haven's Long Wharf Theater immediately come to mind as organizations that have recently ventured into this area. And Washington, D.C.'s Arena Stage; Abingdon, Virginia's Barter Theater; Waltham, Massachusetts's Brandeis University Theatre; Ann Arbor, Michigan's Professional Theatre Program; and Yale University Drama School have all just been awarded \$25,000 matching grants by the National Council on the Arts for the purpose of developing experimental play projects.

The farthest-out resident professional theater production to date is currently on view at Philadelphia's Theatre of the Living Arts. There, director André Gregory has launched the world premiere of *Beclch* (pronounced Beck-leck), by a young American writer, Rochelle Owens. Because the play is an uncharted excursion into violence and sensuality, the playhouse itself has been appropriately turned into a jungle. While the program tells us we are in Africa, the strange events that ensue defy geography.

Amid African tribal doings vigorously supplied by the Afro-American Dance Ensemble, we meet *Beclch*, a fortyish woman who, like the Marquis de Sade, has an apparent compulsion to assert her cruelest instincts as a true extension of her vitality and sexuality. In the beginning, she assaults the satisfactions of motherhood, by forcing one matriarch to

immure herself in a pile of old bones. Then she kills a boy in front of his mother, ostensibly because the mother is taking vicarious comfort from her offspring. A little later we see *Beclch* meet a handsome young man whom she indoctrinates to love by forcing him to watch a cockfight. When it sickens him, she pushes him into the cock pit so that she can have the pleasure of caring for his resultant wounds.

This is gruesome stuff, and Mr. Gregory has relieved it with a couple of humorous interludes in which a female impersonator, an effete crooner, and a Playboy bunny rapidly sing "Can't We Be Friends?" and "Something to Remember You By." The device also suggests that the phony bloodlessness of our artificial civilization is *Beclch's* real target.

Nevertheless, the first act seems

shapeless and unfocused. It is only in the second act that *Beclch* really interests us with her project of destroying her impotent husband in order to be free to express her deepest sexuality by falling into a pure animal love with a young man whose eventual abandonment of her will lead to her suicide. *Beclch* does this by persuading her husband to contract elephantiasis in one leg, which will make him a king in the eyes of the natives. But after he has done this, she chides him for his lack of masculinity in having let himself be persuaded.

There is much more ruthless and horrifying detail in the play, and it is a tribute to the director, the performers—particularly Jerome Dempsey as the husband and Sharon Gans as *Beclch*—and designers John Conklin and Eugene Lee that the events emerge with a sense of the poetic. For Miss Owens is not the poet Jean Genet is. Nonetheless, the fact that she works with the same sense of subconscious totality commands our highest respect. Philadelphians probably will loathe and reject *Beclch*, but the whole resident professional theater movement gains new size from such a production. —HENRY HEWES.

Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich and David M. Glixon

MAIL CALL

Each of the passages in the first column is from a letter written by someone in the second column to someone in the third column. Elizabeth Breazeale of Philadelphia begs you to untangle the correspondence. Zip-code on page 126.

I've not written or published for other people 1. Agrippa. A. Duke of Milan
but to satisfy myself, just as a cow gives milk.
()

Tell me, why should I plot against your life? To 2. Anne Boleyn. B. President of
plunge myself into a worse fate? That is not France
likely. ()

The arrearage of the wines will pay my debts. 3. Pierre Curie. C. Henry VIII
And howsoever you do, for my soul's sake, pay
all poor men. ()

It would be a fine thing, in which I hardly dare 4. Héloïse. D. Josephine
believe, to pass our lives near each other, hyp-
notized by our dreams. ()

Let me have a lawful trial, but let not my sworn 5. Leonardo da E. Elizabeth
enemies sit as my accusers and judges. () Vinci. his wife

As to the men I accuse, I do not know them. I 6. H. L. F. Abélard
have never seen them. . . . For me they are only Mencken.
entities, emblems of social malfeasance. ()

Your heart is excellent; you feel wonderfully, 7. Napoleon. G. Will Durant
but you don't reason well. ()

As the occasion requires, I can supply infinite 8. Sir Walter H. Her son Nero
means of attack and defense. () Raleigh.

Others in despair and envy have reproached me 9. Emile Zola. I. His future
that I had no charms but what your wit be- wife
stowed on me. ()

Moses

Continued from page 21

design of cars and incompetence of drivers rather than speed, that air pollution can be completely eliminated by drastic ukases, crackdowns, and official pronouncements rather than painful, long-range, step-by-step realism.

The same logic must rule earnest, honest attacks on pollution of streams and shores, noise, school integration, slum clearance, and the substitution of high modern residential buildings on small coverage of land. Hardly any other field of reform has been as grossly misrepresented as comprehensive slum clearance and few other officials as recklessly maligned as those in charge of it. The extension of the supreme power of eminent domain and huge write-downs in the cost of land acquisition were declared constitutional because of the paramount public interest in the entire elimination of housing ghettos. Slum clearance as such was the objective to be followed by whatever best suited the neighborhood. There was no requirement that all or part of the cleared area was to be devoted to the lowest income housing. In fact this would have been wholly unacceptable in the case of an area like Lincoln Square, keeping in mind the loss of taxes due to tax-exempt cultural lessees. It should be noted in passing that the fight for the new Fordham University campus for colleges of social sciences and law, largely replacing a Puerto Rican slum—as nasty and bigoted a performance as I can remember—was carried all the way to the United States Supreme Court on the issue of using public funds for a private religious institution.

IT would take too long and invite too much misunderstanding to attempt to characterize the attitude of the modern press, and the communications, advertising, public relations, and image-projecting professions. The lesson I have learned, especially at the World's Fair, is to expect little steady, reliable press and air support, but much concern with "angles," sensational disclosures, fomenting controversies, and accentuating the negative. In journalism, in Gogarty's words, "Oh, boys, the things we have seen, the things we have seen." We have seen one big metropolitan newspaper after another fold, readers forming new habits, viewers not too happy with tele-scoped air news, and the old gossip weekly still flourishing.

A Wisconsin weekly I see now and then, going into its second century, has always carried the banner headline **IT'S THE GLAD TYDINGS WE AIM TO BRING TO YOUR HOME.** Where shall the conscientious official who is not a headliner find

his news media and his support? More and more he must depend on readable, illustrated reports. The price of first-rate reports is lost in the cost of the tremendous sums we spend on design, administration, and building. No public official has a right to immunity from criticism. A certain amount probably does him good and reduces swellings. But snide, captious criticism terrorizes the weak, reduces the attractions of public work, and drives the strong into the comparative quiet of private business.

I have learned that critics build nothing. They did not deserve a World's Fair. The fault-finders denigrated the city, aggravated the malaise which affects the world, intensified differences, and fomented disorder. They made the tasks of management tougher, but we succeeded in spite of them. Over 52,000,000 visitors testify to it. The critics arm their blowpipes with lethal arrows dipped in curare and shoot in all directions. Regardless of the victims, they are happy as long as there are fatalities.

I have learned to be ready to admit that higher education for every youngster is a dream of the future. Our colleges become too large, the teachers too far away, and the talent to profit by cultural as contrasted with practical courses beyond high school or junior college instruction is too limited. A college degree should not be the open sesame to earning a good living any more than a Ph.D. should be indispensable to a teacher. Almost every president of a small college wants, as the social workers say, to "eventuate on a larger scale," that is, to spread, create a university, add graduate schools, recruit football and basketball stars, a large hockey goalie, and a good baseball battery, and to have a huge silver mace carried in front of him in the academic processions.

I would settle in the immediate future for any educational system through high school and junior college which teaches pupils how to read, write, and speak simple English. We need not inculcate style or knowledge of the tyranny of words and the trickiness of metaphors—just a respect for simple unlatinized English. I would also require students to read music, not write or play it. I can't read a note myself but have learned to mark time.

AS government proliferates and Parkinson's Law becomes more and more provable and less and less an amusing, farfetched academic witticism, public officials turn to Washington for contributions to the arts, performing and static, and the amenities, incidental and prevailing. Manifestly philanthropy cannot

foot the bill for all the fringe benefits of public works and all the rising demands of a public clamoring for the good things of life, for self-expression, for new manifestations of the eternal verities, and for cultivation of increasing leisure. No wide-awake official can afford to be against such things if he expects to keep abreast of the times, not to speak of remaining in public favor; but must it all come from the Santa Claus at the White House? The conservative local official wants to go easy, remembers that there are unresolved wars with frightful threats of annihilation, and that you can't have a truly great society in a torn atomic world.

THOSE of us who function at the lower government levels, viewing Washington from afar, learn that we are only pawns in a cosmic chess game. In international affairs we live in a continuing crisis. We don't know whether to step up containment in distant disturbed danger spots regardless of future repercussions or to go on with almost superhuman patience to cultivate and aid those who march to a different drum. And with this puzzle goes another—whether to continue to assume that huge, generous investments in a Great Society and picking up the tabs for every municipal need and adventure are consistent with prudent, audited foreign aid and foreign military containment.

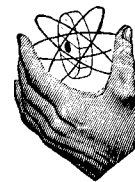
I have had some responsibility for several major self-supporting public works, each costing a billion dollars, and have some notion of the difficulty in spending so much legitimately, effectively, and economically. Our professional almoners, the Commissioners of Bread and Circuses, compete today for federal gifts in no sense self-liquidating, beyond the fondest imaginings of the prisoner in the Chateau d'If, who later became the Count of Monte Cristo. This abandoning of home rule and municipal and state responsibility and begging the federal government for every variety of handout to meet every local problem, has become known as creative federalism, surely one of the trickiest, most dangerous slogans of our time. We humble ditch-diggers suspect that the diagnostician or gynecologist with the glad hand, cheerful smile, and professional bedside manner may not be a better doctor than the old-fashioned general practitioner who frankly reports that the illness is serious and the outcome doubtful.

Here endeth the lesson. The local builder who has the nerve to say these things will probably be ridiculed, if not stoned, and suffer considerable hardship before time, native common sense, and decency come to his rescue. I verily believe that in the end the truth is mighty and will prevail, but the end sometimes seems a long, long way off.



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ARTICLE: Defining the New Physician

RESEARCH IN AMERICA

MEN, MOONSHIPS, AND MORALITY

THREE HUNDRED and fifty-eight years ago Johannes Kepler—the great German mathematician who figured out how the earth and its sister planets orbit the sun—wrote the first scientific treatise on the problems man must solve in traveling to the moon. He considered the perils of the solar wind. He correctly described the influence of gravity in both the earthly and lunar phases of the voyage. He anticipated the use of inertial power. And he predicted that when earth was finally seen from the moon the geographical features of the planet would be recognizable.

At the time Kepler wrote that manuscript, in the year 1609, the very idea of going to the moon so unsettled his superstitious contemporaries that his mother (who had been named allegorically in his script) was imprisoned as a witch and put on trial for her life.

By the end of the month of September in the year 1967, the inertial power that Kepler foresaw will have been in use for ten years. Moonships designed to carry a crew of three men are already built and christened with the name *Apollo*. Considerably smaller and lighter craft have been rocketed to the moon's surface, and others have been placed in orbit around the moon. One of the latter, called *Orbiter I*, has photographed both hemispheres of the moon: the one earth never sees as well as the one that is continually in earthlings' sight. While pursuing its course around the moon, *Orbiter I* has also photographed the earth. The first of those pictures, reproduced on this page, confirms Kepler's prediction of 358 years ago. Although not clearly distinguishable by the untrained eye, features discerned in the crescent image of the planet by photo-analysts of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration at Langley, Virginia, include the eastern coast of the United States (in the upper left portion of the crescent), southern Europe (near the mar-

gin of earth's darkened portion), and Antarctica (bottom of the crescent).

The appearance of the earth from the moon, then, at 4:35 P.M. Greenwich Mean Time on August 23, 1966 (the date of the photograph), was not vastly different from what Kepler had expected from looking at the moon in 1609. But three and a half centuries of technological change had to intervene before confirmation of his vision became possible. During that interim, the art of transportation has undergone several successive revolutions. People today are able to move over long distances at speeds that would have been thought incredible in Kepler's day. Their political inventions have not kept pace with their growing mobility, but in the main kings have given way to popularly elected agents of the people, empires have crumbled into independent states, and nations have banded together in free associations of free individuals.

WHAT has been the fate of moral wisdom meanwhile?

Dr. Robert S. Morison, director of Cornell University's Division of Biological Sciences, commented on this most fundamental of all human questions at the public celebration of California Institute of Technology's seventy-fifth birthday two months ago.

"Compared to our views on the nature of matter, the origin of the seasons, the control of the weather, and even on the creation and nature of man himself," he said, "our views on private property, murder, rape, and adultery have changed very little since the time of Moses."

Casting a long look backward into history, he continued:

"In earlier times, the repositories of knowledge, wisdom, and morals were inextricably intertwined. The high priests of the early riverine societies were the astronomers, the biologists, the phil-

—Photo by "Orbiter I"—NASA.

A moon-view of earth.