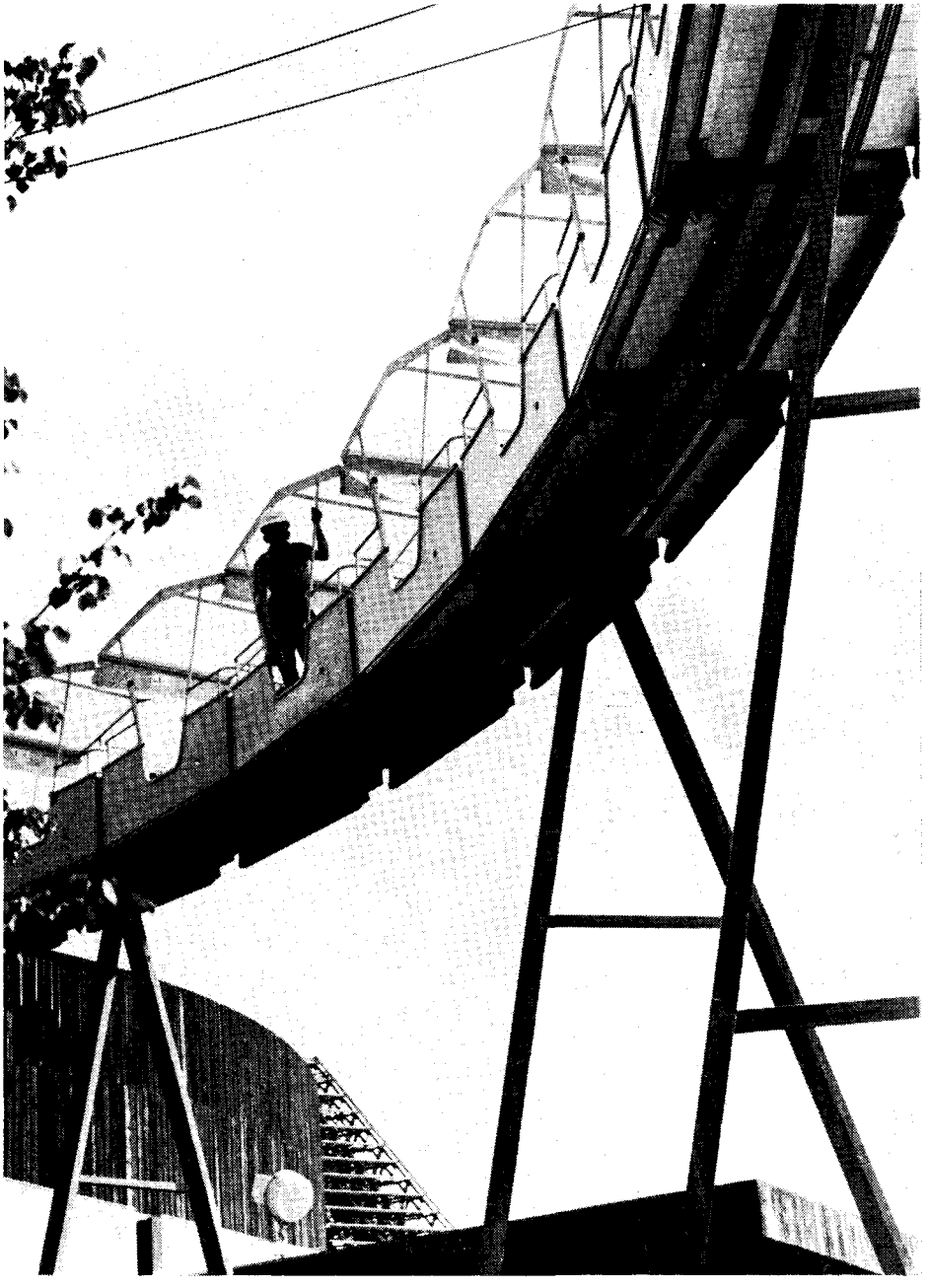
Art and Its World at Montreal



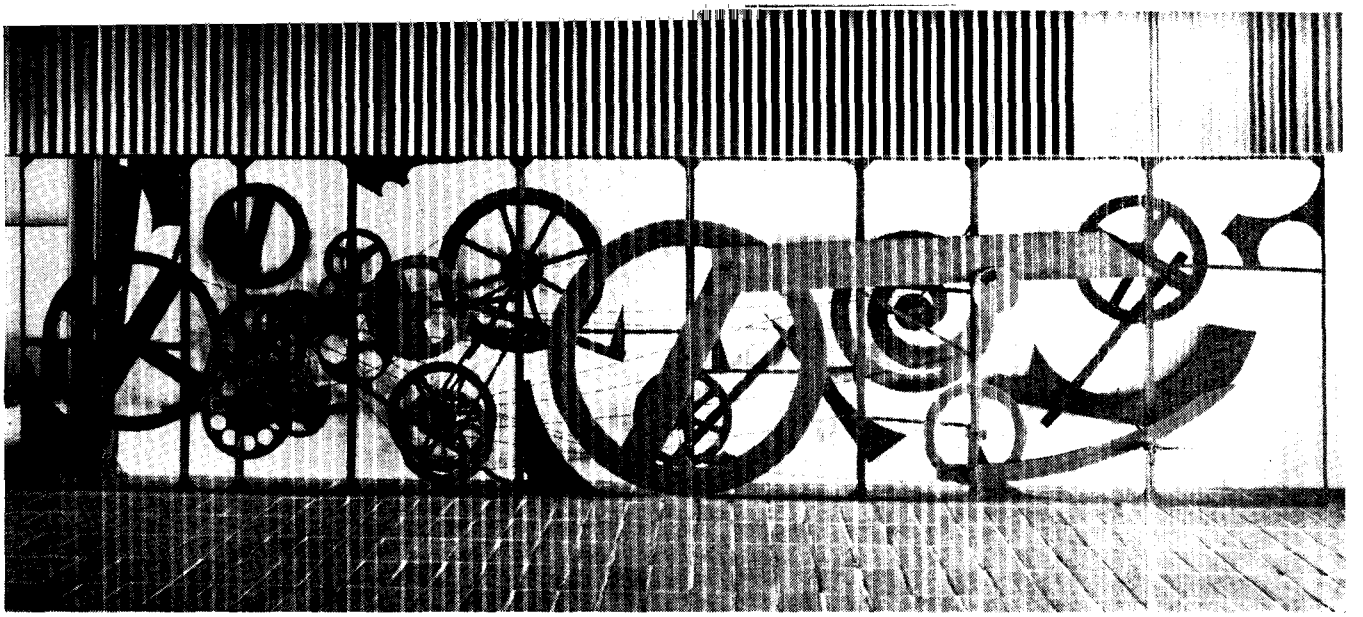
Minirail train at fairgrounds—"an enticing itinerary."

FOR THE ART enthusiast, Montreal's Expo 67 offers a heady menu, richer than normal eyes can absorb in a short visit. Topping a prodigious round of paintings, sculpture, and architecture are Canada's splendid International Fine Arts Exhibition, France's comprehensive survey of Gallic art, and occasionally spotty but often stimulating group shows in other national buildings. Even more impressive are numerous outstanding achievements in contemporary architecture, notably the German, American, and Dutch Pavilions, to say nothing of the shimmering Gyrotron, a simulated space ride in the amusement area.

All these buildings, either hung from or predicated on interrelated self-supporting metal bars and tubes, are freed from the orthodox columns of routine glass and steel architecture. As such, they become open translucent structures eminently suited to flexible modern needs, which, to be sure, are nowhere better exemplified than in a temporary international exposition. Industrial design, too, is admirably served, in contrast to its often haphazard vulgarity at New York's recent fair. Outdoor lights, plastic telephone booths, directional signs, spacious new Métro stations, and, not least, the entire conception of the Minirail, from its comfortable cars to its enticing itinerary, testify to thoughtful overall planning.

Expo 67 is geographically immense, including several islands and literally acres of buildings. To cover only its most important art concentrations demands sturdy legs no less than agile eyes. Among these concentrations, the No. 1 triumph belongs to Canada and to its official Fine Arts Exhibition effectively housed in a newly erected museum. The show encompasses 188 works spanning all periods and representing every corner of the world. Many are familiar masterpieces from the great museums of Japan, India, Egypt, the United States, Mexico, and from most of Europe's important art centers. The U.S.S.R. and France have been especially generous, the Louvre alone having lent no fewer than eleven fine works.

To accommodate Expo 67's main theme, the show deals with "Man and His World." Divided into nine different sections, such as "Man and Work," "Man and Love," "Man and His Ideals," the exhibition rises above these arbitrary classifications because it was selected

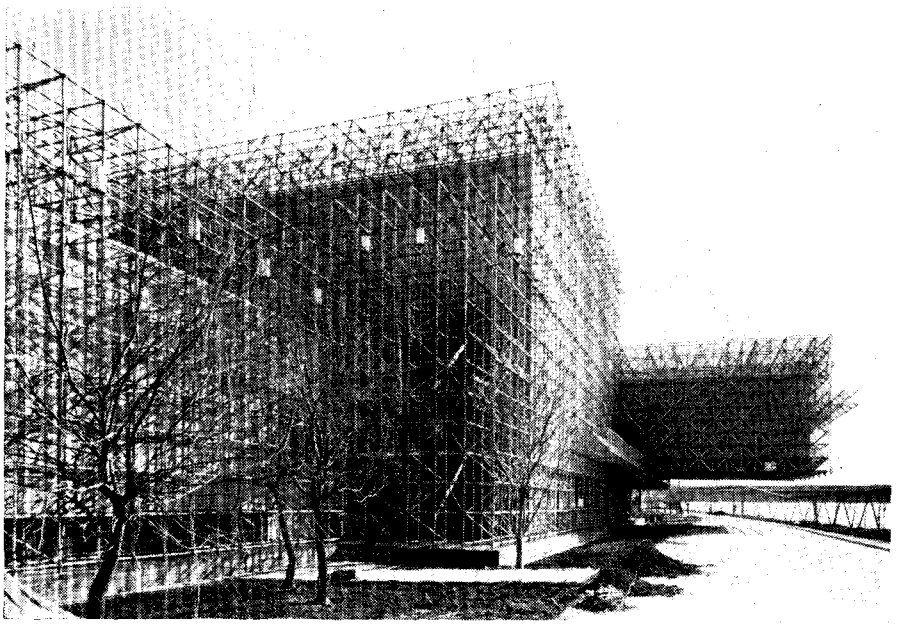


Requiem to a Dead Leaf, **by Jean Tinguely (on exhibit in the Swiss Pavilion).**

with rigorous respect for quality and installed with the utmost dignity and sensitivity. Then, too, these slightly silly categories have been approached so loosely as to melt away. We remember only the works of art, which fortunately never take on the role of illustration. Indeed, they are far too assertive to be codified in any way. Yet the juxtaposition of outstanding paintings and sculpture from totally different ages and places presents new relationships that are sometimes curiously revealing. Van Gogh's *Portrait of Dr. Gachet*, painted in 1890, is surprisingly enhanced by its stylized neighbor, a haunting twelfth-century *Head of Moses* from Mantes. No single work is overdramatized, and still each is given its due.

To my mind the rarest object in the show is Jan van Eyck's meticulous likeness of his wife, Margaret (see cover). Lent by the Musée Communal Groeninge of Bruges, this touchingly honest Flemish portrait, painted in 1439 on oak panel, can easily hold its own esthetically, if not romantically, with Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*. Other artists seldom seen so splendidly represented are Piero di Cosimo, with a mysterious large canvas from Canada's National Gallery in Ottawa, and the extraordinary twelfth-century French sculptor Gislebertus, whose serene romanesque stone carving was lent by the Cathedral of Autun.

The French Pavilion, a huge building full of modern architectural clichés but less ungainly than its pretentious British next-door neighbor, devotes two upper floors to art. Here, an ambitious exhibition selected with care and installed chronologically traces the entire development of French painting and sculpture; also the decorative arts, from medieval times until today. The show is large (more than 200 objects) and distinguished by such famous painters as Georges de La Tour, Watteau, Fragonard, Poussin, David, Ingres, Delacroix,



Netherlands Pavilion (note unusually large cantilever at right).

West German Pavilion—One of many sculptures by Canadian artists stands in the right foreground.

Manet, Cézanne, Degas, and a host of other celebrated French names. In addition, it includes foreign artists who have worked in France. The whole impact of this country as a creative art center unfolds before our eyes. The exhibition brings us up to date. We see the latest avant-garde experiments but we also see what they came from. Surrounding the building are several large metal constructions by important French sculptors or by colleagues living in France. Not as strictly nationalistic as most of the other native displays, the French show demonstrates the full sweep of Gallic involvement with the arts everywhere.

All of which brings me to the United States Pavilion, a miracle of architectural beauty, yet a letdown as far as contents are concerned. One approaches the building with a sense of pride, for wherever one looks, the lightly poised dome of the United States dominates the landscape, partly because of its size but more because of the radiant purity of its structure. Designed by Buckminster Fuller, the vast, glowing bubble is composed of a transparent plastic and glass skin supported by a filigree of metal. The interior presents a dazzling enclosed yet unobstructed space, ideal for exhibition purposes. All the more reason to sorrow that our government has seen fit to fill this soaring masterpiece of modern technology with trivial blownup trinkets and homey folk art. The over-obvious desire to play down America as a power symbol and present the country as a cozy, naïve young nation seems to have backfired. If the hope was to capture a certain imaginative American vulgarity, this, too, failed, for the show is tame—even tedious.

Polychromed wood sculpture, by Kuan-yin Bodhisattvu (Chinese, twelfth or thirteenth century), lent by Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, to the International Fine Arts Exhibition.

Collections of rag dolls, decoy ducks, a variety of oddball caps and hats (intended, could it be, to stress U.S. emphasis on individuality?), handmade quilts, cowboy paraphernalia, desultory Indian artifacts, magnified photographs of movie stars (including, ironically, Charlie Chaplin), and, at the entrance (shades of the Soviet Presidium!) a huge benign likeness of President Johnson—all of this does little to present the "creative America" that the pavilion claims to typify. In a special area hang outsized Op, Pop, and minimal paintings (some 53 feet high) by the usual "in" names; paintings incorporating numerals, neon lights, and all the repetitive advertising accoutrements we have come to know by heart. Decorative? Yes. Gay? Yes. Empty? Alas, also yes. Except for an absorbing section devoted to American space probes, the U.S. Pavilion is a pseudo-sophisticated debacle. Could it be that in the search for a lighthearted contrast to our present aggressive image we foundered, and instead of witty urbanity produced childish regression?

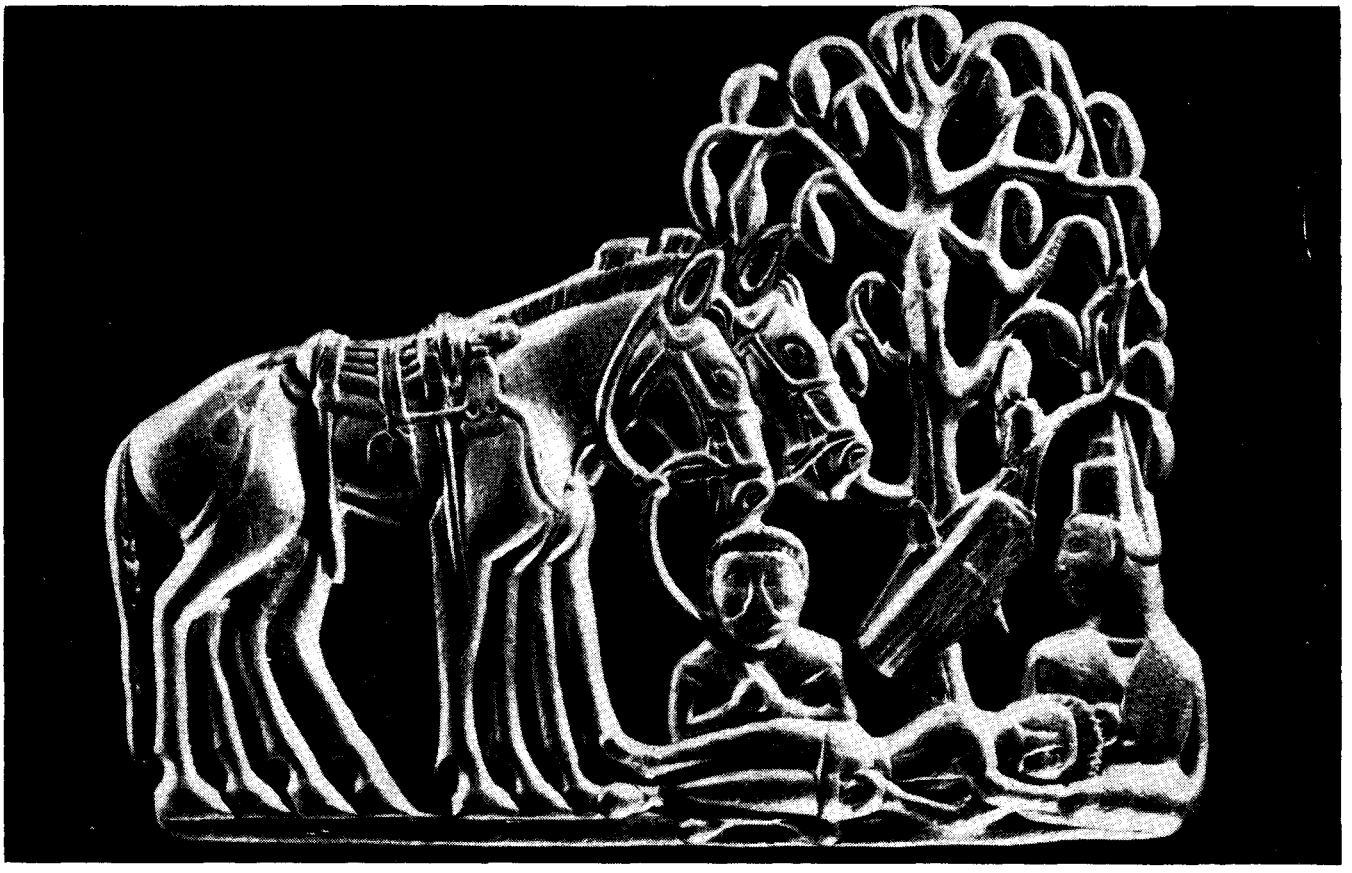
I am not suggesting that we supply a wealth of humorless didactic installations such as pack the Soviet Pavilion, but at least we might have honored our serious writers, painters, sculptors, photographers, and inventors by acknowledging their existence. Many of the other countries were wiser, though rarely as successful architecturally. Take, for example, Switzerland, with its outdoor sculpture display of works by Giacometti and Max Bill, and its inside wall reliefs by Kemeny and Tinguely, the latter with a beguiling mechanistic requiem to an almost invisible dead leaf. Also claimed by France, Tinguely has installed perpetual-motion constructions on the roof of the French building as accompaniments to Niki de Saint-Phalle's *outré* plants and animals. Genuinely sophisticated and genuinely amusing, these combined works act as an appropriate background garden for an outdoor bar.

Belgium has brought single paintings by Rubens and Jordaens, also examples of medieval and Renaissance treasures, but somehow the impact of these fine works is dimmed by seeing them next to a garish, overlighted reproduction of the Ghent Altarpiece, at once an indignity to this peerless fifteenth-century polyptych as well as to the noteworthy original works nearby.

Almost all the Europeans feature contemporary sculpture outside their pavilions. In many instances these works seem far less progressive than the buildings they surround. In fact, Expo 67, with its wealth of modern sculpture, presents a certain dilemma. Can these myriad metal and plastic constructions compete with the sources that spawned them? Are they as handsome and meaningful as their useful prototypes—as, for instance, the machines, architectural structures, and industrial inventions from which they take their inspiration? Too often the sculptor repeats what he sees rather than transforms what he senses. His work, whether highly complicated or reduced to an absolute minimum, becomes sterile, even contrived, when removed from the isolated protection of museums and galleries. Often it cannot stand the exuberant presence of those motivating influences which we now accept as part of our daily lives. Who wants to look at the sculptor Kricke's chic twists of metal outside the German pavilion when that fascinating tent-roof structure of steel and plastic is adjacent? Designed by Frei Otto and Rolf Gutbrod, the building seems actually to breathe, to expand and contract with exhilarating vitality.

Wandering from pavilion to pavilion, one is repeatedly struck by the monotonous repetition of motifs that recur in

***Head of Moses* (twelfth century), lent by Dépôt lapidaire de la Collegiale Notre-Dame, Mantes, France, to the International Fine Arts Exhibition.**



Horsemen Seated Under a Tree **(Siberian, third to fifth century b.c.), lent by the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, to the International Fine Arts Exhibition.**

much of the contemporary sculpture on view. Here, individuality is less evident than in Expo 67's architecture. If, at times, the latter is vulgar, at least it is also enterprising. Whether produced in Austria, France, Scandinavia, Canada, or almost any other Western country, sculpture of the last ten years adheres to a common vernacular. It does not lead; it follows. One need only observe the work of some thirty young Canadian sculptors who were commissioned to design for specific public areas at Expo 67. Depending as a rule on aluminum, cast iron, epoxy, or wood, these native artists turned out highly proficient constructions which nonetheless I sometimes confused with hoists, cranes, and other machinery still at unfinished sites.

In contrast, the extensive and well-selected International Exhibition of Contemporary Sculpture installed on a hill of Ile Sainte-Hélène shows none of the same conformity and yet remains equally puzzling. For though all the renowned twentieth-century names are present, starting with Rodin and continuing to Ipoustéguy, most of the sculpture for some reason seems overwhelmed either by the surrounding landscape, by neighboring pieces, or by Bucky Fuller's nearby gleaming sphere. Because many earlier sculptors here exhibited were deeply involved with personal expression, these important single samples of their work appear strangely at odds with one another. An uncompromising, brightly painted iron construction by David Smith is scarcely at home with Matisse's expressionist *Slave* or with a tender bronze by Manzu. Unlike a painting show where walls supply needed isolation, an outdoor sculpture exhibition provides a simultaneous experience. Perhaps the only hope for monumental three-dimensional art is to plan its site and its relation to neighboring architecture well in advance—indeed, when the architecture itself is being planned.

But even this does not always pan out. Take Sandy Calder's 67-foot-high stainless steel construction which was commissioned by the International Nickel Company. Too large, too inert, it is neither architecture nor sculpture. There it stands, squashed into a small space, literally and figuratively riveted to the ground, fighting with the skyline, and sadly bereft of Calder's usual rhythmic poetry. Everything the artist stands for has been sacrificed to sheer size, a size that has little meaning since this particular stabile is less a heroic conception than a playful gesture. It should never have been frozen into monumentality.

A final word about Expo 67's setting. Man-made islands threading the St. Lawrence River combine with the vertical profile of Montreal to turn this site into an overall work of art. See for yourself. Take a ride on the Minirail.

—Katharine Kuh.

Desire, **by Aristide Maillol, lent by the Musée National d' Art Moderne, Paris, to the International Exhibition of Contemporary Sculpture.**

From Anxiety to Identity

IT IS NOT without meaning that the most interesting characters in Arthur Miller's television version of his Salem witch-hunt play, *The Crucible*, were those who had doubts about themselves or were candid about their faults or were willing to admit openly that they were torn by conflicting, ambivalent emotions and convictions. This is, perhaps, the theme of the play, the wider truth that the author was attempting to communicate: Communities are healthier when they do focus skepticism on their rigid certainties, when they are ready to debate reasonably, to recognize and examine differences of mind. Danger exists, in such a view, when all doubts are exorcized, when people accept transcendent beliefs in which total good meets total evil in an irreconcilable struggle.

Four characters carried the burden of this theatrically compelling division in the human spirit; it is also of moment that not all were on the "right" side. John Proctor (George C. Scott) and his wife, Elizabeth (Colleen Dewhurst), the central figures in *The Crucible*, are basically good folk whose strained personal relationship makes them targets for the wild arrows of hysterical accusation loosed in the panic of fear of demonology in the repressive, theocratic Massachusetts colony. Reverend Hale (Fritz Weaver) enters the play as a fire of Christian certitude, but exits in guilty horror at his own role in the fantasy of corruption; and Mary Warren (Catherine Burns), the Proctors' servant girl, does not arrive at the betrayal of her master without fits and sobs of intense vacillation.

The turns in behavior, prompted by self-scrutiny and conscience, gave the four actors who played these roles richer opportunities for virtuosity than were afforded the rest of the cast. Generally, the other actors realized only single-dimensional, unfulfilled outlines. They were sketches of real people, moving the narrative along, personifying moral abstractions—even the "good" ones, who knew their minds so well that they never wavered in their resistance to the witch-hunt, even to their death. Some of the "bad" people did falter in their commitment to stamp out the Antichrist, but they did so out of expediency, out of fear of the town's rising rebellion.

The superior appeal of the more ambivalent characters, as well as a higher and lower level of the play's power, may be viewed as a distinction between identity and anxiety. On television the play began at the level of anxiety. Confusion is abroad in Salem; misfortunes cannot be explained by rational causes. It must all be the Lucifer poison; his cohorts must be exposed, their guilt confessed before purity can return to the threatened Christian community. Alex Segal, the play's director, sought to make the mounting panic exciting—in forest, home, and courtroom. Crowded scenes and hysterical people can be handled successfully in *mise-en-scene* in a theater; but for the small color television tube it was too cluttered, too frenetic.

Mr. Miller wrote a new scene at the very beginning showing a voodoo ritual in the forest, with the young girls "sporting." It may have been intended to "hook" the fickle television viewer, but it had the Hollywood, not the Miller touch. When the play's angle shortened to the narrower situation of the Proctors, the involvement deepened.

Nevertheless, even at this point, halfway through, the play still hung at the level of anxiety. The Proctors wanted to save their friends who had been accused of devil-trafficking. Elizabeth was herself placed under suspicion; Proctor fought manfully to save her by exposing the accusing children as frauds, failed, and faced death by hanging unless he confessed to having consented to serve the devil. It was then that *The Crucible* rose from anxiety to identity.

In the last act the Reverend Hale is a tormented man, in despair over his lost certainty. In the jail, John Proctor is permitted to talk alone to his wife. She is pregnant; he has been tortured; and both are under the death sentence. With fine sensitivity and great understatement, Mr. Scott and Miss Dewhurst grope toward the discovery of who they really are. It is a moving scene when he tests his wife's response to his suggestion that he confess and lie to the witch-hunters. "I cannot judge you, John," Elizabeth says, and confesses her own coldness to him which once caused him to slip from fidelity. With complete self-awareness, Proctor says: "It is evil and I do it!" Then he transcends that awareness with the discovery that he is willing to lie to save himself but not to turn on his friends and falsely accuse them.

In this last scene, with its interplay between husband, wife, honor, friendship, and fear, the playwright and the performers go beyond the story of Salem, rise above even the contemporary echoes of the McCarthy period and the new threat of punishment for dissent about the war in Vietnam. The play plumbs a truth that is not time-bound. A society that has stopped examining itself and searching for its identity knows only anxiety. In the search for and discovery of identity, anxiety dissolves. —ROBERT LEWIS SHAYON.

WIT TWISTER #9

By ARTHUR SWAN

The object of the game is to complete the poem by thinking of one word whose letters, when rearranged, will yield the appropriate word for each series of blanks. Each dash within a blank corresponds to a letter of the word. A sample, well known among lovers of anagrams:

Good landlord, fill the flowing
— — — —
Until their — — — — run over!
Tonight, we'll — — — — upon
this — — — —;
Tomorrow, — — — — for Dover!

(Answers: *Pots, tops, stop, spot, post.*)

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Now try this Wit Twister:

If — — — — — can be believed,
my dear,
Time cannot — — — — — your
seasoned charms.
Yet I would give at — — — — —
a year,
Could I but — — — — — to
younger arms!

(*Answer on page* 69)