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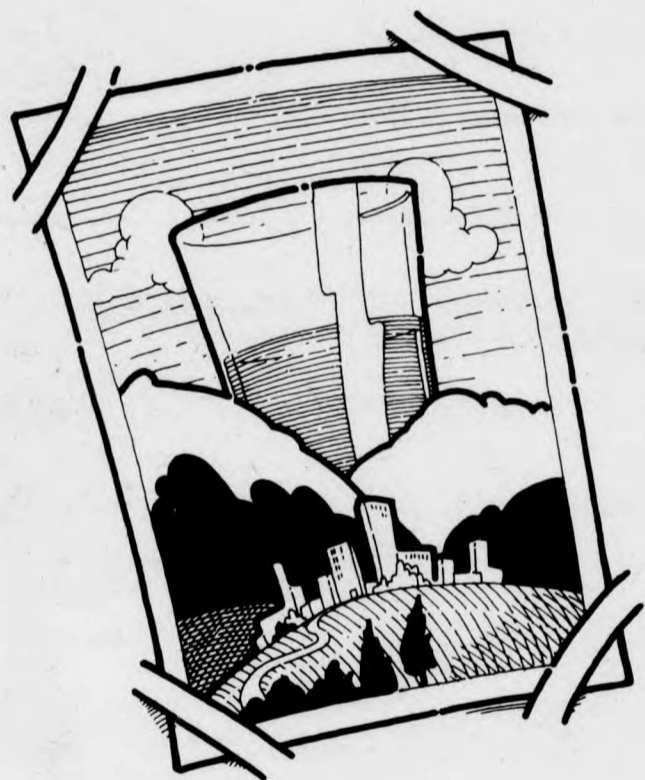
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Creeps example of observation, fails to probe basic problems

By GAY WALSH

We exist in rooms. Day after day, we find ourselves, existing, moving through our lives in rooms. Depending on who we are or what we prefer, we find ourselves in different kinds of rooms — lecture halls, dining rooms, ballrooms, bars, bedrooms, offices, studios, attics, classrooms, kitchens, libraries, and so on. We carry these rooms around with us. In all of the rooms, we act out a lifetime of fears and desires, struggles for needs which create anxieties. And it is in one special room, one certain closed space that we sit and observe those needs and anxieties — this special room is called a theatre and the place where we observe those fears and desires is called a stage.

These is one other closed space; it is the instigator, the master, the surgeon, the inventor, the mother of all action in these rooms. I call it the "mental room": I call it thought.

ROOM FOR CONFLICT

It is as equally closed, as equally defined as the physical rooms. It is in this room that fears and anxieties, needs and desires emerge and with them comes resulting conflict. It is in this "room" that we manufacture, deflate, poison, decipher, dilute, and finally grind out our indecisive, conflicting day to day actions. It is in this room that we spend a lifetime sweeping up, dusting, waxing and tidying our thoughts.

We exist a lifetime in this mental room, never questioning or re-

examining these fears and desires, but instead merely attempting to put them in order, only tidying the room, making a semblance of mental order, while tolerating the mental confusion. And it is the manifestation of this mental confusion that we go to observe in the theatre.

IN THE CAN

Creeps exists in a wash-room . . . and at the TWP Theatre. The playwright, David Freeman, has written a play in which four Cerebral Palsy victims exist in the messiness of their mental rooms. We sit observing Freeman display four confused men, giving us a small glimpse into their "rooms" and how they attempt, not only as human beings but as handicapped human beings, to clean and put it into order.

That's the gimmick. That's the ticket. The form is rearranged but the content is once again unchanged. We are confronted with the dirt and dust of their world; and the fact that the handicapped are also human beings contaminated with the same dirt and dust that we carry around in our "rooms".

So what? That is a valid question. So what if Tom and Jim (two of the spastics) want to leave the handicap workshop and set out for better things? So what if they are afraid of failing, of leaving the workshop, or their friends? So what if Pete, severely affected by Cerebral Palsy of the hand is afraid of failing at carpentry work? So what if Sam is

eaten up with bitterness or jealousy?

We sit watching, observing as Freeman exposes his characters. He shows them falling, stumbling through their fears and desires and he shows me how I do the same. But so what? How is this affecting me? How does it affect the way I carry on with my falls and stumbles. True, a few of the performers, such as Bob Dermer (Tom) and Patrick Christopher (Pete) were quite effective and do merit mentioning, but as a play — how important, how valid is the content, the impact?

The worth of the play is determined by the confrontation and the comparison of Cerebral Palsy victims to the public and the simple problem they have of being treated like human beings. Yes, there were one or two moments when the production captured not only my attention but also my emotions; and yes, a few characterizations were well done, but I can't help but ask — so what?

As a production Creeps is fair; it is its function as a play (and all similar theatre) that I must question. For, Creeps perpetuates the tidying up of our mental rooms instead of opening up a window in those rooms. I don't know what or where that window is. I don't have conclusions. But I do know that this continual surgery, this rearranging, this cleaning up of our thoughts and then displaying them at a theatre is just not good enough. We microscopically study, observe, describe, the fibers of our thought instead of surgically re-opening, rediscovering communication with ourselves. Then we go to the theatre and evaluate how others grope around in the same confusion and it all goes nowhere.

ONLY SKIN DEEP

And so, theatre touches epidermically, rarely going deeply into anything. Theatre has become nothing more than an observer of human nature with all its weaknesses and strengths, rarely a vital questioner of their birth. Creeps is a prime example of a theatre that delights in standing afar, observing and describing instead of pleading, groping, chancing, begging, reaching, stretching out to the window, the path out of those fears and out of the confusion they breed.

So, open the window, let a meteor shake up the room, breath coloured air, suck new blood into the mental veins — let's leave the Spastic Club behind.

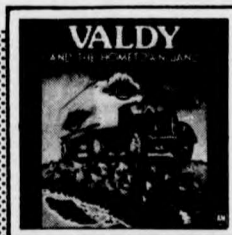


Victor Sutton, Bob Dermer, Sharon Noble, and Larry Lewis from Creeps.

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