



FEATURES



A STUDY IN ABSURDITY

Dalhousie Gazette

Something has been happening lately across the country. We are referring to the sudden change from Mickey Spillane and Space Adventures to the deluge of paper cover "good books" which have been appearing in ever increasing numbers in every drugstore, newsstand, etc. Now, it is not that we have anything against such "good books"; but it is our firm belief that everything has its proper place and that once it gets "out of joint" it either becomes absurd or harmful. Such is the case with these paperbacks—they are becoming absurd.

As we are writing we have about 25 of these books before us. All with multi-coloured, beautiful and exceedingly cheap-looking covers, in other words, characteristically American. Seventy per cent are written by famous authors, ranging from Flato to Whitehead. Let us look closer at these books and try to determine their social value (for that is the value they are supposed to have—"Mentors").

The first one is our good friend Niccolò Machiavelli's misleading and misunderstood Prince. Now, as everyone knows, the understanding of the Prince depends entirely on the careful perusal of his major work—The Discourses, and a thorough acquaintance with the Italian Renaissance. In other words, the reading of the Prince must be preceded by an acquaintance with Villari, Burckhardt and Symonds. Without that the Prince remains meaningless and, at best, obnoxious. The question arises: how many of the "ordinary" people buying this book have the necessary prerequisite to really enjoy and understand the little treatise?

The second book is one of the best we have read in a long time. We are referring to H. J. Muller's The Uses of the Past. The following words are written on its cover: A Bold Analysis of the Meaning of History. What does this short sentence imply? That to enjoy and appreciate this little classic the reader is expected to have a good acquaintance with Western History. For example, ch. 5 deals with the highly fascinating period of Greek Pericles, Socrates, Aeschylus and the other Immortals. The discussion

in this chapter is concerned with criticism of some of our notions of that particular period. The criticism is excellent but it presupposes a good, to say the least, knowledge of that period. Otherwise this chapter and most of the others tend only to confuse the reader or at best to give him a wrong impression of what the author is really saying. Again the question arises—how many readers of this particular edition are going to gain anything from this admirable survey of our past?

We could cite a score of other books to illustrate our point but two or three more will suffice. For example, Alfred North Whitehead's Aims of Education. A thoroughly enjoyable little volume but only up to a certain point. Approximately one-third of the book deal with subjects so utterly esoteric that its appearance in such an edition fails to be justified in any way. Whitehead devotes chapters to such "obscure" subjects like "Fields of Force", "Time and Space" which contain sentences like: "A sense-object is part of the complete stream of presentation. This concept of being a part is the statement of the relation of the sense object to the complete sense-presentation for that consciousness."

Again, S. K. Langer's Philosophy in a New Key contains an abundance of references at the bottom of each page. A few examples: Russell, A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz, Harrison, Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion; Die Sprachphilosophischen Werke Humboldts.

Yet, surprisingly enough, some people, labourers, office workers, etc., are buying up these books—not to read them but to keep them at home for everyone to see what a "smart" person its owner is. But what is really infuriating is the fact that very frequently these books are the object of contempt and ridicule. The "smart alecs" recently delighted themselves in deflating verbally a Pocket volume of Patonic Dialogues to the great delight of a number of bystanders in a drug store. "Is this not carrying 'popular education' too far?"

It is a good sign that crime and sex are disappearing from the bookstands. It is a bad sign that really fine books are being circulated indiscriminately, undergoing worthless "criticism" and creating a class of "quasintelligentsia." Every thing has its proper place. Remove it and it becomes worthless.

THE HUNT

It wasn't many years ago That wilderness was here; When, with gun and powder, men; Would hunt the fickle deer. But things are very different To what was practiced then: The dears go round with powder now, And hunt the fickle men.

Antigone

Reviewed by Desmond Pacey

The UNB Drama Society began its fiftieth season by presenting Jean Anouilh's "Antigone" at the High School Auditorium on November 23, 24 and 25. It was a good but not distinguished production.

The play itself leaves much to be desired. Under the conditions of the Nazi occupation of Paris, when it was necessary to resort to all kinds of subterfuges to declare oneself for freedom, this oblique, tortuous, and muffled allegory may well have had a strong impact; but today it seems unnecessarily involved, pompous, and even, at times, absurd. The Chorus, in particular, is sickly with condescension and replete with platitudes. Much of the dialogue—for example the long conversation near the beginning between the nurse and Antigone—has little to do with the theme of the play. The result of these two facts—that the chorus is boring and the dialogue often irrelevant and always diffuse—is that the play moves slowly and never attains that state of urgency and tension which we demand of tragic drama.

In other words the play has no real climax. Another factor contributing to this lack is the essential imbalance between the two main conflicting forces. It is all right for Anouilh to argue, through the chorus, that tragedy is inevitable; the fact is that great tragedy manages at the same time to seem evitable and inevitable, to make us feel that two roughly equal forces are in conflict and that the issue may turn either way. But in Anouilh's "Antigone" there is no such suspense; it is merely a matter of waiting for the end. Creon, not only has all the power on his side, he has almost all the logic too. To counterbalance this, the heroine would have to be a figure of the utmost spiritual and moral grandeur; but she often seems, in fact merely a headstrong and hysterical girl.

I have written at such length about the play because I think its faults largely account for the feeling of dissatisfaction with which I left the UNB performance. Given the play, the director and cast did just about all that we could expect of an amateur group. The set was striking and efficient, the lighting was most attractive, the costumes in most instances were suitable and pleasing, and the acting was generally of high amateur standard.

My only criticisms of the set are that the platform was too high and that the central column (because of its too apparent width) did not give the illusion of a column. There were one or two occasions when the lighting changed for no very clear reason and thus became obtrusive. Antigone's dress was just right in colour and cut, but Ismene's seemed rather too staid for the glamorous sister. I suppose evening dress was as good a choice as could have been made for Creon and the Chorus, though the anachronism of a Greek king in tails did bother me a little. I did not like the pure white shirts of the guards; they looked more like waiters. Why not suggest the parallel of ancient and modern tyranny by putting them in Fascist black shirts, or Nazi brown?

Now for the acting. Professor Shaw, as the Chorus, was his usual clear-voiced, collected self, but I felt that if anything he exaggerated rather than mitigated the pompous, condescending tone of his lines. Alda Mair, as Antigone, spoke clearly and forcibly and achieved some fine emotional effects, but

Confidentially

Last week-end Kelly's pool hall had a visitor—a stray kitten. Apparently one of the girls was sitting on the back porch at a late hour when a wee bundle of fur hurled himself into her lap, much to the surprise of the girl and her escort. Evidently, the cat didn't like the accommodations at the barn, because it departed bright and early Monday morning.

The football party was a terrific success—what with liquid refreshments being contributed by a well-known brewerage company, and various other things! Mrs. McCoombe and her son John certainly have our heartfelt gratitude.

Overheard at breakfast:
Mrs. McA. to Mary Lynn—"What did you and that boy talk about last night?"

Mary Lynn—"We talked about our kith and kin."

Pauline—"They sure did. He said 'kin I kiss you,' and Mary Lynn said 'Yeth, you kin'."

With football season over, hockey comes to our attention. Now all hockey players have gone up 20 points in the rating list and the ball carriers are on the shelf until next season. How lucky we are to be able to pick and choose as we so desire among the overwhelming male population.

One of the professors commented on the looks of the fair sex at this esteemed institution. His reason is too daring to be outlined here; however, one may rest assured that it has to do with that age-old art of love caking. For further comments, pay a call on Dr. Cogswell.

Diane Johnson promised faithfully this morning that she would learn all about football before next year. Don't blame her for losing that first play-off game to the Tomies. It was all by mistake that she was standing behind our players bench rooting for the enemy. Yes, we assure you that by next year she'll know enough about the rudiments of the sport to cheer for the Ottawa Roughriders when the Bombers are playing St. Joe's.

Wee Willie's parents are here for the Centennial Bopspiel last week. Mr. Wilson was checking up on Sandra and Mrs. Wilson was checking up on me.

We are pleased to report that Gail Wilson has recovered from the depths of illness and is back in the dining room at meal times.

The combined and strenuous efforts of pill-doser MacArthur and sponge-bather Coughie pulled old Gail through, several pills to the good and much dirt down the drain.

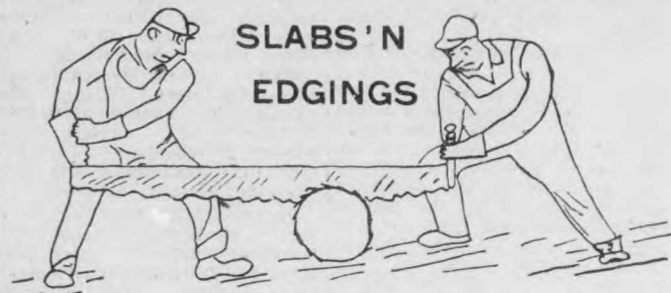
One final word. Harvard has nothing on UNB. All it has is Boston, taverns, night clubs, beautiful libraries and Radcliffe. UNB has Foresters!

she needs to pay more attention to her posture. Her tendency to slump her shoulders and to carry her arms detracted from the effect of grandeur her part demanded. Mrs. Boby as the nurse did almost all that could be done with some horribly unrewarding lines. I wonder if by any faint chance that role would have made more body if it were played farcically, to provide a kind of grisly comic relief? Esther Harrison as Ismene and Walter Macdonald as Haemon, were average student performers; well intentioned, sincere, but stiff. They did not convince me that they were really living their roles. Iain Barr, as Creon, came much closer to true dramatic creation, but he marred what might have been an outstanding performance by muddled diction. It is a great pity that he cannot learn to enunciate clearly, for in all other respects he is an unusually fine actor. The most completely satisfying performance of the evening was that of Jack Sheriff, as the First Guard. He lived the role from beginning to end, and was a delight to listen to and watch. The remainder of the cast—Neal Hargrove, Elsworth Briggs, Robert Hawkes, Lloyd Higgs, and Elizabeth Cattle—played their minor roles quite satisfactorily.

Far from a perfect production then—but a very interesting one. It is a great pity that more students did not take the opportunity to see the play, for such opportunities are rare enough in these parts. Had there been larger and more enthusiastic audiences, it is probable that the play would have achieved a far more intense dramatic effect.

Sigma Lambda Beta Rho

In memory of Dr. W. Gordon Jones, B.Sc., LL.B. (U.N.B.)
Dean of Residence, Professor of Mathematics, who passed away on the evening of Dec. 2nd, 1954.



by Jack, Jim and Paul

With only 10 more chopping days before Xmas, we would like to remind everyone passing through Montreal on his return trip to U.N.B. in the bright New Year, that if he is looking for someone to spend the afternoon with, all he need do is go to the Peel Tavern on Peel Street and sit down for a few minutes. Soon enough he will be joined by someone from U.N.B. This is the place, and time of the year where and when all faculties intermingle; that is, the peasants intermingle with the Foresters.

The senior foresters start writing exams on the eleventh of December. After the pleasant announcement to this effect, the "Whistler", it is stated, started whistling the funeral march.

Seniors—Let's beat the Engineers in getting Year-book photos, and write-ups to Bill Barwick. Give Barwick the support he deserves!

Foresters Lacate and Baskerville deserve a hand for winning the Price Bros. scholarships. A willing hand will be extended if they wish assistance in celebrating the event.

A Forester's wife, having received word by telegram that her husband was returning from the woods after being out in the field all summer, brightened herself up with a bit of make-up and donned a stunning negligee, and was sitting knitting in the living room. "I'm in here, darling. I've been waiting for you"... There was a pause for a moment, then a shuffling of feet and a choked voice replied, Pardon me madam, but I'd like to let you know that I'm not your regular milkman".

The Association wishes Professor Irwin the best in the New Year when he goes to the United States where he will be taking his M.Sc. in Wood Products.

We issue Season's Greetings from the Forestry Association to the Ladies Society, and also will lower ourselves to wish all other envious readers "A Forester's Merry Xmas".

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THE INCOMPLETE POGO

BY WALT KELLY

Yes, Oyez, here's the brand new book on the hilarious stalwarts of the Okefenokee swampland. It's not better than "Pogo", "I go Pogo", "The Pogo Papers" or "The Pogo Stepmother Goose" just never. Be prepared for more wonderfully enjoyable episodes from the same little people who are making the same, and more, big people happier.

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