

Poor audience comprehension

"THE CAGE" — shocking but ineffective

by Alison Manzer

Jive crawls across the stage to Hatchet and, crying in fear and pain, asks to be released, to be freed from the walls of this cage. Hatchet grasps him by the throat and slowly squeezes as Jive jerks convulsively and then stops.

Hatchet kneels behind the toilet bowl, screams his final words and collapses across the toilet. And so "The Cage" finishes.

Dramatic and shocking, "The Cage" makes its point. Prison problems and possible solutions are the central theme of this play. The cast, consisting of ex-inmates of San Quentin Penitentiary, attempts to point up areas of conflict by presenting a day in the cage.

Guard cruelty, homosexuality, inmate violence, and insanity are brought out by showing the interactions between four inmates and two guards. A stream of insanity prevades throughout the entire play and the basis of the insanity seems to stem from the

nature of prisons. Prisoners wanting sunlight, guards kicking crippled inmates direct sentiment to the inescapability of an adverse situation.

Specifics in the play do not exist and the power of the presentation comes from the overall impression. Emotions are tied in by direct violent assaults on individuals and slightly petty situations such as depriving an epileptic of his medication.

The play seems to build a fear in the audience by portraying insanity in the actions of Hatchet. The final dramatization also tries to reach for this by finishing in violent tones.

The effectiveness of the play should not be measured in terms of dramatics but rather by its stimulation of social concern. The purpose of the play was to point out prison abuses and possible solutions and the play should be judged on this basis.

The play brought forward certain points. Unfortunately I noticed most of these points



Local newsman Andrew Cochran talks with two cast members of "The Cage" and Dorchester Rep.

Elio Dolente/ Dal Photo

because I had been thinking of the issue in preparation for the play and not because of a forceful presentation. The audience's comprehension of the play was lost at times as many of the scenes dwelt within the insanity framework. The combined actions of Hatchet and Al focused attention on the specifics of an action rather than the ramifications of these, as the audience laughter indicated.

People were laughing at

situations which, in a narrow context were slightly humorous but in the broader context of the play were more pathetic than funny. This could be interpreted as an understanding or an emotional release but struck me as being misplaced.

"The Cage" did bring out some important points and perhaps started people thinking about this type of situation.

The realization that there is a problem is an improvement

over the previous attitude of blissful ignorance, but will only become socially meaningful if some concrete reforms are realized.

* * *

Those interested in prison reform might like to see "Fortune and Men's Eyes" playing now at a local cinema. The film is based on a Canadian play similar in content to "The Cage" and Pier One's fall production "Keep Tightly Closed in a Cool, Dry Place".

Gesundheit!

by Uncle Walt

The lustre of fine linen is dimmed by the failing eyes of the lacemaker.

—Helen Keller

Our eyes and ears are very sensitive, and should be carefully protected from damage.

Never look directly at the sun or at a welder's torch. Read and work in a well-lit area free of glare. Headaches often indicate eyestrain.

If you get something in your eye, don't rub it. Rather, find a mirror and use the corner of a clean cloth to get the foreign object out. If you get a chemical in your eyes, wash them under cold running water. Then see a physician.

If you wear eyeglasses, have them made of unbreakable material. Don't wear contact lenses if they irritate your eyes.

As with other aspects of your health, proper

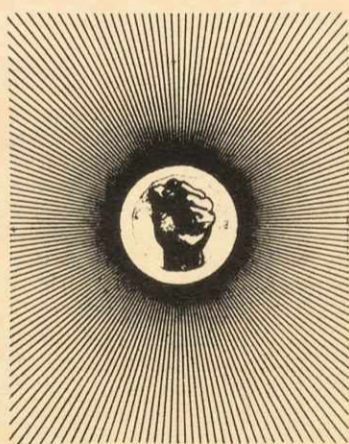
nutrition is necessary for good eyesight. In particular, vitamin A is needed for night vision. This vitamin is plentiful in eggs, milk, carrots, sweet potatoes, and other vegetables.

Take good care of your ears too. Do not expose them to very loud noises such as machinery or rock bands. Deafness can result.

In winter keep ears warm with a scarf or hood to prevent infection. There are few things more painful than an earache. When you have a cold, blow your nose carefully so that you don't blow mucus through the Eustachian tubes into the middle ear and start an infection.

Don't poke objects into your ear. The eardrum is a sensitive membrane. If your ears are plugged with wax, get a doctor to clean them out.

Be sensible with your eyes and ears. If you take care of them, they should last a lifetime. There is no substitute for good vision and hearing to make life enjoyable.



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