

# Right to death dramatized

Whose Life is it Anyways?  
Garneau Theatre

review by R. Peter

Obviously the patient is in the right and the doctor is in the wrong. This is the picture that *Whose Life is it Anyways?* entertainingly paints.

Richard Dreyfuss plays Ken Harrison, a talented sculptor, who becomes paralyzed from the neck down after a near-fatal automobile accident. After six months in the hospital, Harrison begins to realize the enormity of his predicament.

John Cassavetes is Dr. Michael Emerson, an idealistic physician who becomes Harrison's foil. Emerson considers it his sacred duty to save and maintain lives at all costs. After a patient in a hospital dies, he tells a group of third-year medical students, "That is the enemy and the enemy has won."



It is only natural that when Harrison decides he no longer wants to remain hooked up to the hospital machinery, Emerson objects.

Dreyfuss is endearing in his role of Harrison. The film is built on his verbose humor and his ability to put so much dynamic appeal into his static role as a quadriplegic. Since he is unable to move anything but his head and mouth, he has only his vocal cords to make up for the energy the rest of his body cannot use.

Yet Harrison's plight is not humorous. He was a sculptor. His life consisted of forming thoughts and desires with his hands. After the accident all this is gone. The essential part of him is dead. Humor is a safety valve. Dreyfuss also successfully portrays this.

Harrison, as the film portrays him, is all too justified in wanting to retain some sort of control over his life. Yet most of the medical staff in the hospital ignore his opinions and decisions.

Cassavetes, as the idealistic Doctor, is something of a cold fish.

"It is your moral obligation to accept my decision," Harrison screams at Emerson as the doctor injects him with Valium to 'calm' him down. Doctors are shown as cold mechanical machines. They are not there to save people but to maintain the status quo.

The conflict between Harrison and the hospital, especially Emerson, is too black and white. Harrison is in the right from the beginning and never falters in his conviction to sever his lifeline. The screenplay by Brian Park and Rosalind Cook eases up on the intractable hospital staff a bit by adding some understanding staff members who support Harrison's wishes. Yet Emerson's determination to keep a patient alive is never explored as is Harrison's wish to die.

*Whose Life is it Anyways?* is one-sided in its presentation. But through it all, Dreyfuss still gives a performance worth seeing and Cassavetes does as good a performance as possible in the role of antagonist, considering the limitations of the script.

# Troupe guilty of rib-tickling

Second City Revue  
Point After

review by Allison Annesley

*The Rates of Wrath, or, There's No Prime Like the Present*, now being performed at in Chuckles at the Point After, is a hilariously cynical show which makes some cutting comments about contemporary issues.

The show opens with a brief history of Edmonton entitled "Our Town" or "Giverville" introduced by Rosy Running Shoe (Sandra Balcouski). Rosy is a large inebriated woman of Indian persuasion who serves as narrator of some of the pertinent events in Edmonton's past, including a spoof about the pioneering exploits of the RCMP as they tried to determine what duties they should perform:

"Let's open some mail."

"Let's strip search someone."

There are also some not-too-subtle references to Doc Allard's apparent ownership of half the landscape in Edmonton.

Another skit deals with the proliferation of automated machines in modern society. Depicted are two illiterate car wash employees faced with technological advancement which will make their job obsolete.

Colin and Doris, the two hapless victims are portrayed with humor, pathos and irony by Bob Bainborough and Sandra

Balcouske.

The only other jobs available to them are two positions at the post office, where they believe there is no technology.

Yet another skit takes a few stabs at the Alberta Board of Censors. In it the guardians of public morality delete all the lewd and objectionable portions of "Little Red Riding Hood."



The cast also does a series of improvisations as part of their performance, the first line of which is provided by the audience.

Speaking of one-liners, many in the show are priceless. For example: "Billie Jean King tennis racquets swing both ways."

There is even a musical number - a take-off on local news programs - called the Blooz Nooz. Paul Johnson graphically plays the alcoholic sports editor and Carol Sinclair does an excellent impersonation of Ricki Lee Jones.

This comedy show requires a little general background knowledge to be fully appreciated, but if you have it you will get most of the jokes, and have no choice but to leave laughing.

# ARTS QUIZ



Match the work with the author.

1. *Germinal*
2. *How to Talk Dirty and Influence People*
3. *Silent Spring*
4. *Darkness at Noon*
5. *The Golden Notebook*
6. *The Incomparable Atuk*
7. *Hell's Angels*
8. *Heroes and Hero-worship*
9. *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*
10. *Gosta Berling's Saga*

- a. Arthur Koestler
- b. Mordecai Richler
- c. Hunter S. Thompson
- d. Doris Lessing
- e. Thomas Carlyle
- f. Rachel Carson
- g. Selma Lagerlof
- h. Emile Zola
- i. Barbara Tuchman
- j. Lenny Bruce

answers on page 2

# Help Wanted Help Wanted

In about a month or so the *Gateway* staff will be choosing a new Arts Editor for 1982-83. So far, two of the most regular and Arts page contributors have declined to apply, as has a third person: an English major who is a rabid Captain Beefheart fan, a modern art connoisseur (ouch!) and the only person I know of who scored higher than 3/10 on any of my intermittent Arts quizzes (he managed 7/10).

I actually cranked up my eloquence to its maximum horsepower to rope this fellow into running for the job, and after some initial waffling he finally agreed during an interlude of intoxication, only to back down again when he sobered up.

So the race for the job (if it can be called that) is still wide open.

What are the qualifications?

Well, the following attributes would be desirable:

— The willingness to drop all, or nearly all, university courses for a year.

— A deep devotion to some standard of good art, and the ability to withstand large doses of other kinds.

— A talent for writing clearly, knowledgeably, entertainingly and critically about these things, under pressure of deadline.

— A knack for recruiting reviewers, keeping them supplied with assignments, putting up with them when they take review tickets, books, records, etc. and don't return reviews, proof-reading and copy-editing their stuff, and not developing an ulcer when they claim you are stifling their artistic freedom when you change a chatty "we're" to a more literary "we are."

— Some knowledge of makeup and layout, since you will be responsible for laying out the Arts page.

— The ability to throw press releases into the garbage faster than they arrive in the mail.

If the criteria seem somewhat demanding, keep in mind that they are somewhat idealistic, and that it could be quite convincingly argued that the present editor falls short of the ideal on many counts.

In point of fact, any intelligent and literate person is basically qualified for the job. The inside dope about newspaper operations can be inculcated in a week or two, and training will be provided to any prospective candidate.

The job currently pays \$300 a month, which may be raised next year to something approaching a living wage.

Intelligent reviewers are also welcomed with effusions of gratitude (but no pay). Whether you want to regularly cover a certain area, such as advance screenings of new films at the Princess Theatre, or you only wish to review occasional events, or perhaps even just do a one-shot critique (say, on "Intimations of the Real World in the Novels of Tom Robbins"), the *Gateway* Arts page is the place for you.

Perhaps the biggest illusion I possessed when I began as Arts Editor a year ago was that volunteer reviewers would inundate me with their copy, and I would have the dubious luxury of picking and choosing what I printed. In fact only a small (but steady) trickle of reviews comes in and very often Arts space must be dumped onto the news or sports department, or filler employed to complete the page. On rare occasions there was too much copy but there were probably less than five such instances over the past year.

Why the dearth of material, in an institution with large English and Fine Arts departments?

Certainly it couldn't be that potential contributors are intimidated by the professionalism of the Arts page because it must be obvious to any reader that the entire newspaper staff consists of amateurs learning their trade.

Perhaps the reason is fear of walking into our offices and volunteering; or, as some people have suggested, mortal dread of approaching the monster behind the Arts desk. If so, I can only point out that the monster prints virtually everything he receives, and that at least half of it I disagree with or have reservations about.

But I suspect that apprehension isn't a major factor. People who have strong doubts and convictions generally have the courage to put them forward, even in the face of possible dissent.

The real reason for the lack of reviewers, I think, is that even among those U of A students who have chosen the arts for a career, the feeling for art is lukewarm at best. Writing about art, therefore, is not a cathartic way of describing one's ecstasy or agony, but simply another dull chore like finishing a term paper.

But this is a theory which requires lengthy elaboration. Suffice it to say here that I hope there are some undiscovered people on campus who see the criticism of art as not just another job, but rather a joyful imperative like participating in the rituals of love. J.A.

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