

Prestige

In a letter to The Daily Tar Heel two days ago, Dr. John J. Honigmann, professor of anthropology, cited A. Whitney Griswold's speech on athletic scholarships and used it as a text for pointing out that the University here and education in general needs a re-examination of its values before the monetary appropriations will do any real good.

He pointed out that this reexamination is more important in many ways than the question of whether the University will win money from "donors or legislators".

A similar tack is taken by a Big Ten school representative writing in this week's issue of the Saturday Evening Post when he asks whether the colleges of the United States are being turned into playgrounds. In a sense, playgrounds would be more appropriate.

Not too many weeks ago, the Baptist Student Union held a discussion on campus values, and one of the major questions that was brought out in the discussion was the question of the criteria for prestige on this campus.

It is unfortunate that the criteria are so low. As Dr. Honigmann pointed out one of these criteria is athletic prowess, and this can easily be ascertained when one sees how many students listen to the ball game and how many attend a budget meeting or a humanities lecture.

Having a friendly personality is another criteria for prestige, while in the male group being able to tell the tallest story about what one did with what girls on the weekend is also an important prestige factor. It is the girl who has the sweetest smile or who can keep up the best conversation, no matter how inane, that wins the plaudits of her peers.

It is the student leader who can best mouth the platitudes that all candidates are supposed to say that will win the votes, although in rare occasions this rule of thumb does not work.

It is the party that takes precedence over the class or the library. It is the gymnasium that takes precedence over the books, the classroom building, or even a student union. It is the Tempo Room or the Rathskellar that takes the place of the discussion table or debate floor, and it is the movie that takes the place of thought.

Before the editor gets accused by some candidate running for election as being opposed to liquor, sex, athletics, social activities, and entertainment, it must be said that each of these have a place in University life, but all are subordinate to the pursuit of knowledge.

In other words there needs to be a reorientation of people to different goals. One of the present goals to be shattered is the vocation. Another is enjoyment. Another is escape. All of these at some time or another are to be counted in, but none of these can be considered a substitute for work in the primary areas of college life — the academic areas.

Not too long ago, two to three years at the most, a University official stood before a group at an orientation meeting and said that he felt that not more than half the student's waking hours should be spent in pursuit of knowledge in a vigorous academic sense, and perhaps this has validity in that there are many other intellectual outlets on campus and within the University community. Taken in its context, however, this statement was almost an incitement to riot, and riot in a minor form is what students have done.

Unless the solid academic undercoating of the University is reemphasized, the University will be far from a community of individuals committed to the pursuit of truth. Unless the attainment of knowledge is the prestige factor in this University, it will be extremely difficult for it to justify its own existence.

Vocational factories are a dime a dozen. Athletic prowess can be had comparatively cheaply. But an academic reputation is hard to attain and even harder to keep.

In whatever future planning the University might want to do, it might keep these goals in mind with the added footnote that largeness may very well make the solution more difficult.

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Editor CURTIS GANS
 Managing Editor CHUCK FLINNER
 STAN FISHER
 Business Manager WALKER BLANTON
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Moliere Play Style: Epic Realism

Russell B. Graves

(Dr. Russell B. Graves is a visiting member of the faculty of the Department of Dramatic Arts. He directed the Playmaker production of "The Would-Be Gentleman" in a style strange to the sensibilities of most members of his audience. In the following article he discusses his intention.)

A number of members of the audience at the recent Playmaker production of The Would-Be Gentleman expressed curiosity about the style of production employed. Questions about the songs, the projections, the setting, the style of acting, costuming, and make-up have been asked. It is in order to clarify some of these issues that this article has been prepared.

There are several possible approaches to the production in the modern theatre of a great classic from the past, we can attempt to recreate, in so far as possible, the original production; or we can "stylize" (weasel word!) our production; or we can bring the whole thing up-to-date, going under the assumption that once bright ideas and theatrical devices have lost some of their sheen and that it is up to us to refurbish them for the modern audience.

For our production of The Would-Be Gentleman we selected a fourth alternative; we assumed the validity of Moliere's insights for our own time and place (otherwise why do the play at all?), and further we assumed a particular theoretical approach to realism in the theatre. The approach we selected was that of Bertolt Brecht's epic realism (or epic theatre or narrative realism). The selection of this particular approach to production grew out of our study of the organic nature of Moliere's play; we particularly wanted to avoid the imposition of a mode upon a piece for which that mode was not appropriate.



Briefly stated, Brecht maintained that the theatre can best speak to its audience when it does precisely that. He rejected the hypnotic effect sought through the modern technique of empathy, and turned instead to his conception of the sources of Greek, Elizabethan, and Oriental theatrical effectiveness.

Basic to his conception of epic realism were two dicta of particular significance for this production: first, the theatre is most realistic when it acknowledges that it is a theatre and when the audience is encouraged to participate in the performance as a rational entity rather than as a group of hypnotized individuals; second, drama functions most successfully when it takes as its point of departure some attitude toward man as a social being.

Let's take up the second point first. In re-reading Moliere's play many times, and in going through the process of translating it anew,

we discovered that it was not quite the epitome of happy delight the text-books say it is. Underlying the surface charm of the play is a hard-core of socio-economic reality. In The Would-Be Gentleman man is not a political animal as much as he is an economic one. Every character in the play demonstrates some facet of the corrosive effect of great inequality in the distribution of wealth. This is the theme we selected as our point-of-departure for this production. Note particularly the emphasis on the economic inequalities represented by the kowtowing demanded by Mr. Jourdain of his various mentors; note the patches on the teachers' clothes; note the bitter economic cynicism of the lyrics of the songs. These, it seems to us, are consistent with the play handed on to us by Moliere; not ideas imposed upon it by hindsight.

Now for our first point — the assumption that the only ultimate

reality of the theatre is the reality of the audience confronted by actors in an auditorium. Epic eschews completely the idea of empathy growing out of Aristotle's theory of catharsis. In its stead, it substitutes the principle of alienation—the putting of the audience at some emotional distance from the actors. Rather than calling for a high degree of identification of the listener with the actor, it asks him to sit back and observe, as a medical student might observe an operation in the hospital amphitheatre.

In the Playmaker production we used many devices to assist the audience to establish this particular relationship with the actor—the relationship of objective contemplation rather than emotional identification. Among them were: the delivery of speeches to the audience in the character of the actor playing the part rather than in the character of Mr. Jourdain

or the Dancing Master or Nicole; the interruption of the proceedings by songs, which served as interpolations which commented upon the play rather than as extensions of the emotion embodied within the scene; the calling upon the actors to perform at their own chronological age rather than to feign the supposed age of the characters; the elimination of wigs; the introduction of slides, which called attention of the audience to the point of the scene; the use of highly artificial methods of shifting scenery; etc.

Many other elements were used to force upon the audience an acknowledgement that they were indeed in the theatre and not in seventeenth century France. At every point the measuring rod against which we evaluated our solutions to various technical problems was that of frank acknowledgement that this was a theatrical production and not a dream of some kind. We pointed up Mr. Jourdain's pretensions through the use of fanfares . . . but we allowed all the scratch on the original recording to be heard to disabuse the audience of any idea of magical trumpeters lurking in the flies. We used electric lights, of course, but we let the audience see the instruments providing the illumination in order to avoid any suggestion that they were some kind of magical effulgence from heaven. And we used clear white light to show that our costumes were costumes; our actors, college students; and to avoid any sense of surprise-pink miraculousness.

The extent to which we succeeded in making our social points is certainly problematical, but these are the ways in which we attempted to make them. It has been rewarding for us to make the attempt . . . more rewarding we feel than the museum-like recreation of a past era or the simpering coyness of a sophomoric "stylized" production.

Letters

Editor: "Practice what you preach." —An old saying but an appropriate one.

I quote from your editorial of March 3, 1959: ". . . how you as a student spend your money is something that is a purely personal decision, and not something that somebody else can say how you ought to do it."

Yet the title of your editorial is "DON'T CONTRIBUTE". That sounds like an order. Aren't you dictating to the students how they ought not to spend their money? Have you any more right to decide for the students than has the Campus Chest?

Moreover, the pleas of Campus Chest collectors will be: "Would you like to contribute . . ."; not "DO CONTRIBUTE." Contributions will be voluntary. No one will order a student to contribute.

If your implications of discrimination against the Negro are true, why weren't the Gottingen Exchange Scholarships dropped this year? Surely the Editor recalls an item in last week's DTH announcing the award of a Gottingen Exchange Scholarship to a Negro. Perhaps the Campus Chest feels that the school for retarded children in our own Orange County is a more needy organization than last year's scholarship program. Perhaps the Chest feels that this item will bring more student awareness to the fact that there are needy persons and organizations in this world. In short, perhaps the Campus Chest is not the "money-grubbing," glory-seeking organization that you picture it to be.

You are right in one thing. The charities are worthy ones. This year's goal is high. Only co-operation from all the members of our University Community can assure its attainment. I urge that co-operation.

T. BUIE COSTEN

Editor: As a member of the Campus Chest Board, I feel compelled to answer your searing accusations in this morning's Tar Heel concerning our work. This answer is purely personal and is in no way a part of the board's action; but as a member of the board I feel qualified, even more so than you, to explain our work and purposes.

First of all you claim that it is "presumptuous" of the organization to select the charities to be given to. I say not at all. If you will kindly look at the organization of similar charity drives in the various cities surrounding us, you will see that in almost every case there is some board which must determine which charities to give to and how much to give to each one. It would be impossible to function without some such method. There are thousands of worthy organizations in need of money, and it is impossible to give to all of them. The line must be drawn somewhere; and it must be drawn by people who have carefully studied the situation, looked into the needs of each charity, and finally determined which of the charities are the most worthy and in the most need. These higher boards also determine the percentage of money to be given to each charity on the basis of a similar study. Without such a method the drive would result in complete chaos with hundreds of organizations appealing to a bewildered public. Someone has to do the choosing. Just as higher boards are organized for such a purpose in municipalities, so the Campus Chest Board has been organized and approved by the legislature for that purpose in our college community.

Furthermore, Mr. Gans, I cannot help but believe that your editorial appeared against the Campus Chest solely because we did not incorporate the National Negro Scholarship fund into our program. I happen to know that you offered us good editorials if we would make it a part of our program. Denouncing us as you have simply because we failed to consider your own special wishes in contrast to our feelings after thoroughly studying the matter is, I believe, an act of exceedingly poor sportsmanship on your part. Proceeding along that same line, I should like to clarify the board's action on the matter. As you stated in your editorial the World University Service, which helps students all over the world, and the Gottingen Exchange Scholarship, which provides for an exchange of students between the University and Germany, are an annual part of our program. I will not go into the reasons for this since you seem to have no quarrel about it. There are usually three organizations supported by the Campus Chest, and the third varies each year. This year the home for the mentally retarded children was considered by the board to be the most worthy of a number of organizations considered including the National Negro Scholarship fund. First of all, let me point out that in choosing the mentally retarded children's home to sponsor we have in no way discriminated against the Negro. Help to the Negro student is given by both the World University Service and the Gottingen Exchange Scholarship, neither of which are discriminatory organizations. Just because the Negro has not been included in our third project does not mean that he has been left out. Secondly, it was believed by the board that since the National Negro Scholarship fund is supported by many other organizations and the children's home by none, the children's home is far more needing of our help. You yourself have recently filled up a great deal of space concerning our budget disappointment. Well, this school's budget has been disappointing for a number of years, so disappointing, in fact, that fourteen year old children have mastered pre-primary readers not because they can read them but because they have memorized them after several years of studying the same books because there are no funds to buy new texts. I can see no room for complaint in our choosing to help this organization which is sponsored by no other group and which is every bit as worthy, if not more so, as the National Negro Scholarship fund. Thirdly, let us look at it from a local standpoint. This home is right here in Orange County, and its neediness is worthy of our consideration as inhabitants of Orange County. The other two organizations sponsored are more on the international plane as is the National Negro Scholarship fund. Even though any of these may touch us here at Carolina, as the Gottingen very definitely does, they are still more far reaching than just at this university. Therefore, why not be concerned with an organization that is right here within reach and deserving of our attention? After all it is better to clean up your own backyard before you go meddling around your neighbor's.

BETTY COVINGTON

A Frightening Far Future Forecast By Frank

March Wind

Last week, you may remember, I suggested that UNC students build a small blast furnace. I thought that this was one very practical way that we could learn what is going on behind the Bamboo Curtain which encloses Communist China. This was a kind of a cute idea, but unfortunately the gremlins who infest our print shop garbled the whole piece so that it was almost incomprehensible. Well, as Mort Sahl says: "Onward! Right?"

This week I propose to discuss a novel from the latest issue of Good Housekeeping magazine. I don't, as a rule, read this category of periodical. However, the work in question, Pat Frank's "Alas, Babylon!" is just too good to pass by.

The intriguing title comes from an old Negro preacher who always climaxed his denunciations of sin with the shout: "Alas, Babylon!" You can imagine then the protagonist's shock when he receives a telegram from his brother, a colonel in the Strategic Air Command, informing him that the colonel's wife and children are coming to pay a little visit. The telegram ends: "Alas, Babylon!" The protagonist is thus tipped off that World War III is really coming, the balloon is really going up.

Pat Frank is no literary stylist. Indeed, his "style" if it can be called that is positively pulpy. The great merit of his book is that it makes World War III absolutely credible. This is precisely the way it can (and probably will) happen. And unlike previous novels on this subject, notably Nevil Shute's "On the Beach," Pat Frank does not exaggerate. World War III does not bring an end to all life everywhere. Life goes on, even in the United States and Russia, where isolated little enclaves survive.

The Russian plan is what the military calls a "TOT" — time-on-target — on a world-wide scale. "They'll use only missiles in the first wave. They plan to kill every base in Europe, the U.K. and Africa with their IRs. They plan to kill every base on this continent with their ICs, plus missiles, launched from subs. Then they use their jet bombers to mop up."

The protagonist then asks: "Can they get away with it?"

swers: "Three years ago, they couldn't. Three years hence, when we have our own ICBM batteries emplaced, a big fleet of missile-toting subs, and Nike-Zeus and some other stuff perfected, they couldn't. But right now, we're in what we call 'the gap.' Theoretically, they think they can do it. I'm pretty sure they can't. But that's not the point. Point is, if they think they can get away with it, then we have lost. The only way to win a modern war is not fight one. Our whole raison d'etre was deterrent force. When we don't deter them any longer, we lose."

This is about as clear an explanation of the contemporary military situation as it is possible to get. There is considerable evidence that the so-called "missile gap" is at least as much the result of brilliant Russian planning and determination as it is our own lazy carelessness. It is entirely possible, in other words, that ten years ago the Russians made a conscious decision to "peak" their military program right now, knowing full well at the time that a projection of easily visible trends would catch America in "the gap."

Seen in this light, the ticking Russian bomb labelled "Berlin" takes on a new and sinister meaning. The Russians know as well as we do that the cold war cannot continue indefinitely. Sooner or later, it must degenerate either into hot war or cold peace. What better time than right now for the Russians to drive for a showdown?

Well, this is the way that Pat Frank sees it. And this is the way that hip Americans like Acheson and Kennan see it. The feeling is growing that this time the Russians are not kidding. This time it's either deal or fight.

In Frank's book, there is no deal. The fight takes place. The ostensible "cause" is a young American ensign who is chasing down a "bogey" that had been shadowing his carrier in the eastern Mediterranean. The eager ensign goes a shade too far — he violates the territorial waters of Syria — and when he finally lets go with a rocket the damned thing misfires, blowing up a main-line train instead of the "bogey." Back at SAC headquarters in Nebraska, the A-2 says: "Worst foul-up on record. Glad it's the Navy, not us."

As it turns out, the ensign's

little goof" really had nothing to do with "causing" the war. The Russians were already far advanced on their countdown. The Russian subs were within a day's run of all coastal cities and targets; the missiles were emplaced and calibrated.

Along the eastern seaboard, the attack takes place at "first light." The protagonist wakes up, rushes outside, and "his senses refused to accept a sun rising and a sun setting."

The colonel's ten-year old son, wise and tough in the way that only ten-year olds have, asks casually: "What do you think they clobbered?" This precocious kid knows immediately of course that his dad, back in "the hole" at Of-

utt, has been hit by at least "three five-meg ICs," and is therefore vaporized.

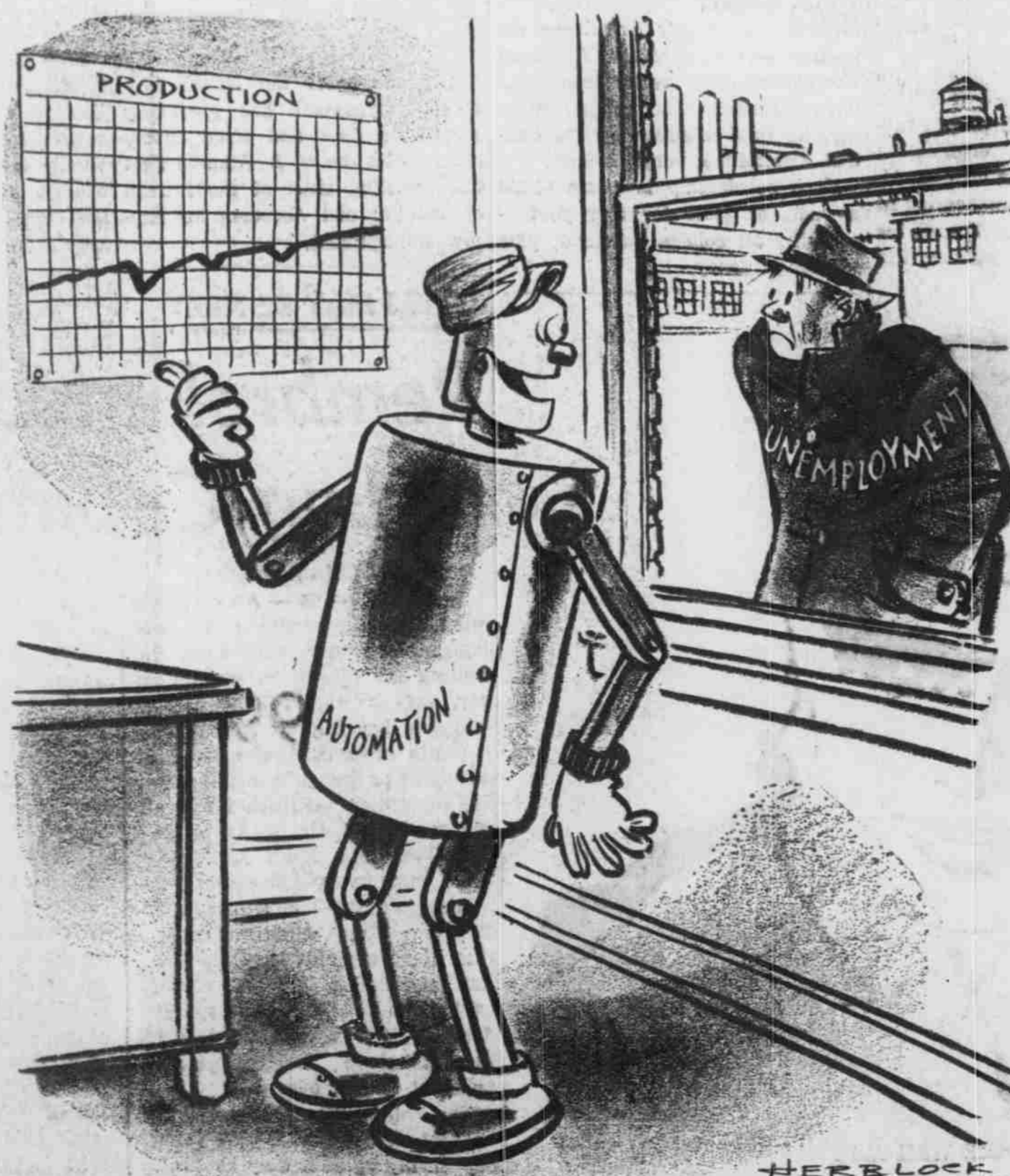
Is this what the future has in store? Frank's Negro preacher seemed to think so.

"And I'm tell you right now,

If there is a technical flaw in Frank's book, it lies in what I regard as his great under-estimation of all wife swappers, whisky drinkers, and crapsshooters are going to get it! And all them that come out of sin palaces on the beach, wearing minks and jewels and not much else, they is going to get it! And them fast steppers in yaller roadsters, they is going to get it! For it says in The Book that great city that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, that great city was burned off the face of the earth in an hour. One hour! Alas, Babylon!"

Oh yes, preacher man. We dig you bringing the word.

"Look — Thinks Are Picking Up"



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