

'Strange reality of an interesting story' uncovered

by Dr. Jerome H. Stern
UNC News Bureau

Editor's Note: Dr. Stern earned his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina and edited the "Carolina Quarterly" in 1962. He is now an assistant professor of English at Florida State University.

A writer has to start getting accepted somewhere. And over and over America's little magazines have been that somewhere. The writers go on to bigger money and greater glory. The literary

magazines remain behind, constantly on the verge of bankruptcy or nervous exhaustion.

The editors of these journals are assaulted with manuscripts (but are rarely besieged with readers). They must read hundreds of stories and snare those that seem to be successful. No program is possible; considerations of form, of meaning, of literary history are less important than the strange reality of an interesting story. That quality might be achieved by prose style, or atmosphere or sheer nuttiness. So these stories in the "Carolina Quarterly" have revealed

themselves as "different," and different they are.

The winter edition of the "Quarterly" is now on sale on campus, at the Bull's Head and Intimate Bookstores.

The unsympathetic reader cannot figure out exactly why they are gathered together. One Robbe-Grilletish little thing by Ursula Molinaro, one Sensitive Southern Story by Kenn Keffer, one Crazy Lady Monologue by Irene Schram and one Son of Portnoy Black Humor Leonard Michaels Extravaganza by Luke Walton. Couldn't the editors have stuck to bread?

The answer is no, for each of these stories has its own validity and interest. Each author manifests talent that might be allowed to develop in longer works. Luke Walton's exploration into awfulness is repulsive, but his manipulation of the reader is interestingly outrageous. This is not gothic landscape: The cliched realism of mom and dad and high school science fairs heightens the idiotic horror of the story. Ultimately, we find ourselves offended not so much by the events as by the style. Molinaro's story also uses form and language to make us see things freshly.

There is a kind of boobism in

dismissing a story like Keffer's because of the familiarity of the subject and the language. Perhaps the reader is annoyed by his emotional reaction to this quietly effective story, for he becomes conscious that the form has not exhausted itself.

Some of the poetry is fresh and striking. There is small point in stating here my impressions of the good guys and bad guys. But it is worth saying that most of the poets are unacademic, audacious and still take seriously the possibilities of poetry.

That last point is important, for the very idea of literature is under attack.

Many students are arguing that the printed word is dead, that literary magazines can only contain epitaphs for outmoded linear thought. Serious fiction, they continued, is at the movie and serious poetry is rock and roll music.

But it turns out that an incredible number of people are still writing and writing with an attention to what they are doing which argues that the printed word continued to be a vital mode. The avant-garde literary magazine has always been a precarious affair, and never been fully appreciated for what it is—the front line of the American imagination.

Theater of the Deaf enlivens words

by Frank Parrish
Feature Editor

The National Theatre of the Deaf reminds us that language is animated through and emanates from the body. Its performance wove large the importance of gesture and bodily control in making a text more meaningful than literal direction and polished albeit heartless and unfeeling acting could ever make it.

The Company's grasp was sure and firm Thursday night in Memorial Hall. The first part of its program was "Journeys," some children's writing collected by Richard Lewis. Children's fantastic visions could appear ridiculous as made concrete in the theatre. It rounds to the National Theatre of the Deaf's credit that these visions did not. The players invested the children's writing with skilled stagecraft.

They made artifice seem less artificial. They brought out the wonderment inherent in the writings. Their second presentation, Georg Buchner's "Woyzeck," was an equally challenging piece of theatre. "Woyzeck" tells the story of a jealous lover's murder in a manner as fragmented as the modern experience.

No perfectly timed curtain drops occur. The events leading up to and including the murder of Marie by Woyzeck are unraveled in a frenetic, numbing succession of scenes. Normally, "Woyzeck" consists of about 28 scenes. The Company had culled them down to 20, without a noticeable loss of dramatic

tension. And perhaps there was a gain in clarity.

While the National Theatre of the Deaf managed to capture "Woyzeck's" details—Woyzeck tormented by his Captain and a Doctor who berates him for "pissing on the wall," Woyzeck preyed upon by his surety of Marie's infidelity—it missed little of the broad outline.

The National Theatre of the Deaf created sympathetic magic between itself and the audience in performing "Woyzeck." Marie, "a fine piece who would be excellent for breeding a whole regiment of drum majors," became identifiable as any woman who uses men and is in turn used and abused by them. Phyllis Frelich played Marie. In a telling look at her bastard child, actually a wooden prop, she conveyed the pathos of Marie's plight, caught in a half-world she didn't make.

Patrick Graybill, as Woyzeck, was also exceptionally fine. As he sees the Drum Major's "hot hands" on Marie and as he laments that, "Everything goes to hell—men and women alike," his portrayal is intimate and moving.

Miss Frelich and Mr. Graybill

communicate through the language of the deaf—sign language. Their gestural communication harmonizes perfectly with the narrators' spoken communication.

Themes like the senselessness and futility of life adumbrated insightfully. With the National Theatre of the Deaf, we see language and it doesn't matter whether it is German or English. It is transmuted into universality. And the Theatre of the Deaf's use of an explicitly universal language—music—bears comment.

In both "Woyzeck" and "Journeys," the Company employed Francois Baschet's sound sculptures. They look like triangulated pieces of aluminum. They catch motes of light and shine brilliantly. But M. Baschet's sculptures aren't entirely decorous.

They serve at least three invaluable functions. Along with the actors' performances and the simultaneous narration, they musically underscore, for the hearing audience, thoughts and emotions manifest on stage. Some of the Baschet sculptures' vibrations are felt by the deaf actors. Thus, they provide cues. Then too, they are attractive stage properties. Their size varies—from 12 feet

tall and six feet wide to a two-foot gong and a quite unobtrusive xylophone-type instrument.

In "Journeys" the sound sculptures supplied bright or mock-serious music. In "Woyzeck," they touched in more solemn tones. "Journeys" embraced subjects like the pervasive problem of fungus, the creation of the world or a dragon and how it got its firepower.

With or without the sound accessories, the National Theatre of the Deaf, one feels, embodies some possibilities of successful co-ordination as a group and the body as instrument, as individuals. The players effectively demonstrated precision doesn't have to be unfeeling. Another clue to their theatrical prowess was what the members of the company did who were not the focus of attention in a given moment.

They took their positions and became, like the audience, interested onlookers, aware of theatre's artificiality but passionately involved in it. They were thoroughgoing professionals. Thursday night, their professionalism made the Fourth Wall a much less imposing intermediary.

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Crossword Puzzle

Answer to Saturday's Puzzle

ACROSS

- Intended
- Underground excavations
- Bread spread
- Put on one's guard
- Bone
- Jog
- Musical instrument
- Devoured
- Expels
- Guido's high note
- Of the same material
- Blemish
- Printer's measure
- Attempts
- Raising
- South African Dutch
- Reach across
- Reached its highest point
- Locations
- French article
- Doctrine
- Gull-like bird
- Man's nickname
- Sword
- Fish eggs
- Cripple
- Allowance for waste
- Prefix: down
- Strips of leather
- N.Y. Mets pitcher
- Weird
- Man's name

DOWN

- Summon
- Latin conjunction
- Unit of Siamese currency
- Roman tyrant
- Food fish
- Parent (colloq.)
- Prefix: not
- A state (abbr.)
- Great Lake
- Took unlawfully
- Brag
- Jargon
- Former Russian ruler
- Choice part
- Cravats
- Breaks suddenly
- Sumptuous meal
- Characteristic
- Satiates
- South African Dutch
- Bury
- Girl's name
- Bivalve mollusks
- Refund
- Amount owed
- Wears away
- Scoff
- Brief
- Ireland
- Walk unsteadily
- Deface
- Siamese native
- Greek letter
- Compass point
- A state (abbr.)

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PEANUTS

AW DAD SAWS THAT I AM "A RARE GEM"

I AGREE WITH HIM

YOU KIND OF LIKE ME, DON'T YOU, CHUCK? I'M GLAD YOU DON'T COME RIGHT OUT AND SAY IT, THOUGH... I RESPECT YOU FOR THAT

THAT'S ALL I NEED... "RESPECT" *STRETCH*

WHAT DID YOU SAY, CHUCK? DON'T MUMBLE...

I SAID, "YOU ARE A RARE GEM"

YOU KIND OF LIKE ME, DON'T YOU, CHUCK?

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

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