

'J. B.' Hailed In NCC Production Student Self-Evaluation Calls For Introspection

By Harrison Willoughby

Just what can be said about a play such as "J. B.?" And, most of all, how do you say best that which has to be said? This play, written by Archibald MacLeish, was presented in B. N. Duke Auditorium, March 18, under the direction of Miss Mary Bohanon. "J. B." is surely one of the author's finest plays and is perhaps his most difficult.

In the first place, "J. B." is a different type of play. It is different in dramatic structure—which is somewhat unique, and different in its theme—which is grand and searching. MacLeish, in a piece to the **NEW YORK TIMES**, says of his work: "A man may be forgiven for dramatizing an incident from the Bible, and even forgiven for modernizing it a bit . . . I have badly needed an ancient structure in which to build a contemporary play which has haunted me for the last five years; and the structure of the story of Job is the only one I know into which our modern history will fit. I have therefore constructed a modern play inside the ancient majesty of the Book of Job."

"Job's search," continues the author, "was for the meaning of his afflictions—the loss of his children, the loss of all of his material possessions, and the loss of his wife's kindness, who turned upon him in his agony with those ineradicable words: 'Curse God and Die!'. And in this agony Job cries poignantly again and again, 'Show me my guilt O God!'. He wants justice of the Universe. He needs to know the reasons for his wretchedness." Job seeks, like us no less, reasons for his sufferings when he asks to be shown his guilt. He can even be shown pity for his lack of recalcitrance, and for his remonstrations to his comforters who undertook to persuade him against his own inner convictions that he was—indeed, had to be—guilty of transgressions against God. If he could not be guilty, then there could be no reasons for his punishments.

The setting for "J. B." is the broken-down remnants of a traveling circus. The play is put into motion by two "has-been" actors who are now circus vendors, and who, upon stumbling upon an empty circus stage, believe that the play being presented there (J. B. is a play within a play) is the Book of Job, and that one of them should assume the role of God and the other Satan.

To stage the kind of action that follows much stagecraft is demanded; and here is where the difficulty begins. The action has to ensue and wrangle itself in between two, and perhaps three sets of focuses. On the one hand, we have the discussions and arguments of God and Satan. On the other we have the presence of the hero "J. B." and those about him. Added to

these two focuses, we have a prompter whose voice booms in from the rear of the auditorium or playhouse. The action on the stage jumps from one set of characters to another and in doing so the forces play upon each other.

Since "J. B." as a stage vehicle calls for a relatively full floor of characters—employing not only several focuses of action but for stills, imagery, and even bits of pantomime, a very smooth and facile group of actors is needed. Just how well did the North Carolina College Thespians handle themselves in this difficult play?

The hero, called "J. B." after the current fashion in business, is one of those vastly successful American business men. He is not a particularly devout man. But he is, at the beginning of the play, prosperous, powerful, and possessed of a lovely wife and fine children—everything a man could desire. As the hero of this story, Rufus Horton is to be roundly applauded. In a role that demanded quite a range of emotions he managed to bring it off very impressively as he demonstrated strong vocal control and remarkable facial and body expression. In his latter scenes as a prostrate, shattered and torn figure, he was able to generate genuine pathos. Norma Sutton, as his wife, Sarah, has once more demonstrated her deftness, her versatility, at assuming a role and bringing out the very best with it. Her ability to bring forth the subtleties, the nuances, of whatever character she has assumed is commendable and rare in the Thespian group.

One is pleasantly surprised at the performance by Gary Grant. Indeed, one has watched Grant, with pleasing regard, grow from his shallow performances in other Thespian productions to a very fine performance in his portrayal of Nickles (Satan). He had just enough Satanic villainy to cause you to hate him a little; yet you could not help appreciating his cynicism, his despair with the seemingly in-

(See 'J. B.' Hailed, Page 6)

Track Team

(Continued from Page 2) concerned. Their concern is summed up in the following statement: "We are inquisitive about the matter of finance for the reputation of the track field."

It is doubtful that mentors of our thinclads would invite other colleges to this school to compete on such a "tried" track in its terrible physical condition.

Where (if it has been appropriated) is the money that the state has allocated for the improvement of athletics and the maintenance of existing facilities? It is the Administration which has the answer to the problems; however, until action is taken, Tate, Roberts, Johnson, McCrae and those "winged footed" Eagles to follow, have no where to run.

By Bob Seldon

The following statements may or may not have meaning to you! If they do strike you as being worthwhile, let your everyday actions, show it, but if they do not have any significance to you, then maybe an analysis of your whole state of being as an individual is in order. The following statements could have been made by anyone, anywhere, and at anytime. The values and concepts that are involved are well-worth proclaiming time after time.

1. "You have come here with many ambitions and goals—what will you be . . . Dare dream!"
2. "Whatever your past may have been, you are united in the present with a common wish for the future—to live the best possible life you can."
3. "How can North Carolina College best help you fulfill that ambition?"
4. "What might you expect to receive here (NCC)."
5. "North Carolina College expects that its students will be first of all men and women."
6. "... you will find that NCC them by working with his fel-

students have respect and appreciation for scholarship."

7. "... you came here to learn, then learn well!..."
8. "... a good education is essential for the new opportunities which the physical bread and the social revolution have opened up."
9. "... give them (your professors) a chance to let you show them how good you really can be."
10. "You will find that getting an education is like putting money in the bank—you get out what you put in, with interest."
11. "... you will find that here we expect NCC students to be responsible people."
12. "This sense of responsibility then carries on into life."

As was stated in the beginning, these are worth-while statements that may be put to very good use. The student body as a whole takes a definite stand for its state of being. Thus, each individual student must begin to realize his ambitions and goals in life and propagate

lowman for the interest of all concerned. N. C. C. can fulfill these desires by exposing you to as many of the technical, intellectual, and cultural aspects of this civilization that it possibly can. Your attitude toward these properties of an advanced people will in great part determine whether or not your life—and in many cases the lives of others—are vigorous and fruitful or sluggish and barren. This is nothing more than a sophisticated extension of the "survival of the fittest" role.

A realization of one's true meaning and purpose will automatically better equip one for the newer, greater responsibilities of our society. This is in keeping with the universal constant-CHANGE, (assuming you realize that everything changes) it is on this basis that the students of today's N.C.C. can demand extended hours, participation in more off-campus activities, and tear away from the decaying "apron-string-ideas" of the Administration.

In closing this columnist wishes to instill in every individual a drive to better the in-

(See Self-Evaluation, Page 6)

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Social Protest

(Continued from Page 2)

have contributed toward creating the image we now bear. Since we all share the guilt, we should all share the task of reconstruction. This is not the task of one office, but the task of students, teachers, administration, and staff. This is our final hope for unity and preservation. If we cannot accept this challenge without vindictive measures by those who disapprove of this column, then we are truly "in our darkest hour."