

Claws And Hammers

Despite the franticness of some of his phraseology and the tone of bitterness which occasional showed in his letter of yesterday, Wyatt Helsabeck is correct in protesting that the English Department offers little help to the creative writer.

Mr. Helsabeck's accusation of "footnote factory," an obviously irritating label, probably will raise departmental fur when it ought to stimulate some departmental re-evaluation. "Footnote factory" is a catchword describing an English Department whose emphasis is on the historical aspect of language and its literature. The letter-writer's term of derision should not prejudice his case.

A Degree Of Frustration

It is true that the department offers nothing on the graduate level for creative writers. Although Antagonist Helsabeck didn't mention it, it also is true that the promising undergraduate writer is stymied. He can receive credit for but two (all the department offers) creative writing courses. There are three other creative writing courses offered (these in journalism by that old master, Phillips Russell), but here the student is frustrated by degree qualifications which say that these courses can't be counted as English credit toward his English major.

These split courses and split credit in creative writing, are matters themselves which need adjusting. If a student could take all five and get English credit it would be of great help to the creative writer. We need to coordinate these courses, not match them against one another.

Woman's College has an excellent setup for the creative writer. The degree in English may be taken in one of three fields: Dramatic art, English literature, or creative writing. To implement its writing courses, W.C. has several fine young writer-critics and in Randall Jarrell perhaps the best critic since T. S. Eliot, according to the New York Times Book Review Section.

Why Not Both?

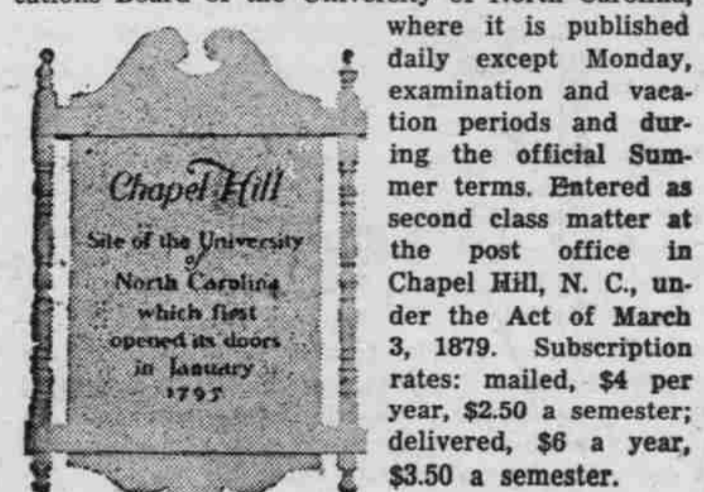
We like Mr. Helsabeck's point that the English Department owes its literary existence to creative writers of the past, and need not consider it odious to concern itself with the modern, for those who want it, while putting departmental emphasis on the past. And, we would add, many of the writers about whom such scholarly research is done were not scholars at all but creative writers.

A final suggestion: Where are the authors, poets, critics of today?; can't we hear them? Can't the department concentrate on the past and still sponsor some moderns? For that matter, why not some authoritative speakers on the past?

Let us not recoil at this tongue-lashing from Mr. Helsabeck. Instead, let us look to, foster, and promote the creative writer within the framework of credit toward his degree. Let us not discourage or be passive about a Thomas Wolfe or Paul Green who even now may be among us.

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It's Guinness

Again

John Taylor

Well, it was only a matter of time until Alec Guinness got around to bigamy. Never the one to ignore the challenge of an amiable crime, the redoubtable Mr. G. is now cavorting through "The Captain's Paradise," in which he takes a crack at a swing-shift marriage. The film will be at the Varsity through Tuesday.



GUINNESS

Mr. Guinness, whose endeavors in the field of the unethical change with the rapidity of Barbara Hutton's husbands, has, for the present, abandoned bouillon embezzlement for which he was noted in "The Lavender Hill Mob," mass murder of which he was on the receiving end in "Kind Hearts and Coronets," and the disruption of big business with which he occupied himself in "The Man in the White Suit," and has not settled down to making life beautiful for two ladies of extremely diverse nature.

The first of the two ladies in question is a sedate homebody named Maud, who resides in Gibraltar and likes nothing better than to provide her husband with slippers, pipes and an interminable amount of dumplings. On the other hand in Kalik, North Africa, there smoulders Nita, roughly the equivalent of an erupting volcano in a strapless evening gown. Both are equally available to the affable Alec by virtue of his being captain of a ship which sails between the two ports with no apparent regularity.

Effortlessly adaptable, the captain, a well-rounded man if there ever was one, accommodates himself with perfect ease and utter conviction to each of his women. All goes well until the volcano begins to feel the urge to stay at home and cook and the homebody begins to feel the urge. The captain then loses control of the situation and finally ends up before a firing squad. But never let it be said that a dozen men with rifles aimed at his heart would ever defeat as accomplished a rogue as Guinness, and he walks off into the dusk after one of the most outlandishly funny finales ever placed on film.

Guinness is, as usual, superb. There is something uncanny in his ability to make the most fantastic and criminal escapades seem as natural as getting drunk on Saturday night.



JOHNSON

When he perpetrates bigamy, he is not committing a crime, but is performing a minor service to mankind by making two women completely happy. This man alone has undoubtedly caused legions of police courts to be filled with impressionable hero-worshippers who have felt that "If Guinness can do it, so can I."

"The Captain's Paradise" is not, however, strictly a one-man show. As the two wives, Yvonne DeCarol and Celia Johnson are admirable foils. The former mambos and attempts to cook with almost ferocious vitality, and the latter pours tea and skips around with a Bikini with equal facility. As first mate and heir to the captain's paradise, Charles Goldner proves a master of the double-take and cockeyed humor.

There is nothing distasteful about the film. It is raffishly charming and logical in all departments and, best of all, it is still another Guinness lesson in cultivated illegality, which should be enough to pull anyone away from the television set.

Others Say

What other dungeon is so dark as one's own heart! What jailer so inexorable as one's self!—Nathaniel Hawthorne.

To be engaged in opposing wrong affords, under the conditions of our mental constitution, but a slender guarantee of being right.

'I'll Compromise And Make The Chain A Little Longer'



HERBLOCK ©1954 THE WASHINGTON POST CO.

Washington Merry-Go-Round

Drew Pearson

WASHINGTON — Republican leaders have taken an amazing step regarding the theft of about \$5,000,000 worth of grain, cotton and beans from government warehouses.

They have "terminated" the Agriculture Department officials who convicted the criminals, held up collection of money from those who illegally purchased the stolen farm produce, while Senator Butler of Nebraska, Republican, has introduced a bill which would prevent collecting money from the purchasers.

The theft of this grain, beans, etc., was one of the most brazen in the history of government farm price supports. Under the support law, the Commodity Credit Corporation, a subsidiary of the Agriculture Department, loans money to the farmer after he stores his crop in a warehouse. If he defaults on his loan, then the crop automatically reverts to the government. Every elevator operator, warehouseman and grain dealer knows this. Yet in Texas and the midwest, several deliberately sold government



PEARSON

grain, and certain grain dealers bought it with their eyes wide open. As a result, William F. Farrell, Dallas representative of the solicitor of the Agriculture Department, moved in vigorously, under direct orders from Secretary Charlie Brannan to prosecute. He secured the following convictions: C. M. Henderson, Farwell, Tex.—Four years in jail and \$1,000 fine, with \$1,086,000 still to be collected for the federal government.

Tenner's Inc., Cortez, Colo.—Harold Tenner, 18 months; Halworth Tenner, three years suspended sentence; R. R. Wilson, 15 months and \$10,000 fine. Total to be repaid the government: \$1,108,000.

Herman Dawson, Fort Worth, Tex.—Six years in prison and \$15,000 fine, with \$454,000 to be repaid to the government. O. L. Shannon, Sudan, Tex.—Five years in prison and \$15,000 fine, with \$1,043,000 to be repaid the government.

In other parts of the country, Francis Spellman of Rochelle, Ill., was given five years in prison, though later revised downward; while C. L. Bert of Clarion and Galt, Iowa, was given two years. The above companies owed the government \$313,000

and \$398,000 respectively. And with most of the warehousemen in jail, the former Democratic administration of the Agriculture Department had moved to collect more than \$5,000,000 from the grain dealers who purchased the illegal grain with their eyes wide open.

However, shortly after Ezra Benson took over the Agriculture Department, a special delivery letter dated March 30, 1943, was sent to William Farrell in Dallas, ordering him to hold up claims to collect this money.

The letter read in part: "Although you should continue preparation of cases involving third-party purchasers, you should not take any affirmative steps toward the institution of new suits against third-party purchasers or the making of additional demands for payment upon them until further advice is received from this office."

As of today — nine months later — no further advice has been received.

NOTE — Farrell, however, turned his cases over to the Justice Department and it's reported that some officials at the Justice Department disagree with the new Agriculture Department and are endeavoring to prosecute the claims anyway.

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The Easy Way Out

Robert Berkowitz
In Harper's Mag

Phillip was a veteran of World War II and a senior at an Eastern University when the Korean war broke out. He was also beginning the last year of an advanced infantry ROTC course. He had no particular desire to be an officer, but advanced ROTC cadets receive about \$30 a month, and this supplemented his GI-Bill checks. The Korean war, however, frightened and depressed him. The younger students faced the draft anyway, but he had served in one war and this time he wanted out.

Though the few other veterans in his ROTC class generally agreed with him, all cadets had signed a contract to finish their course or repay several hundred dollars in uniform and subsistence allowances. None had the money. Theoretically it was possible to be flunked out or to be dropped as unsuitable. With some others, he decided to try. He ceased to study; he began cutting weekly drill and showing up late to class. This got him nowhere; according to the semester grades, absence seemed to improve some students.

At the beginning of the next semester, loyalty forms were passed out for signatures. Phillip could have signed the loyalty oath without question, of course, but on the list of subversive organizations was one which had sponsored a public meeting he'd attended—perhaps more than one. That was ten years before; Phillip had been seventeen. He couldn't remember much about it except that he'd gone to the meeting in prurient and unsatisfactory pursuit of a girl whose name he'd since forgotten. Genuinely uncertain, he went to the Professor of Military Science and Tactics, a Regular Army Colonel commanding the ROTC unit.

The Colonel was stunned. Under his questioning, Phillip went back over the entire list. He hadn't belonged to the Black Dragon Society, nor to the German American Bund, nor to the overseas branch of the NSDAP (Nazi party). But other

names seemed vaguely familiar. There were Socialist groups, Trotskyite groups, anti-Fascist committees of this and that; he couldn't know what he'd signed in the years before military service interrupted his college career, when he'd been on all kinds of mailing lists. Scrupulously, he admitted this and noted each name which seemed familiar. He had been to see "Alexander Nevsky" at Harvard in 1947; he didn't remember if it was sponsored by American Youth for Democracy (subversive) or by the Liberal Union (non-subversive). On a visit to New York he had attended a showing of the film "Potemkin." Though he couldn't remember if he'd made any other accidental contacts he knew in his own heart he was loyal. Would the Colonel help him? The Colonel took copious notes and said he would.

He did. A few weeks before the end of the semester, Phillip was notified that he had been dropped without prejudice from ROTC. He made no appeal. He collected his check and said good-by. The class was commissioned and called up; most of them served in Korea.

Phillip feels a little guilty about dropping out of ROTC, since another cadet who had a similar record was less successful in calling it to the Army's attention; Phillip was the only one who got away with it. He knows now that it was the Liberal Union that put on "Alexander Nevsky," but if he made other such errors—and he doesn't think so—they were honest errors. All he'd done, in a sense, was to smear himself, quietly, judiciously. He still considers himself a normally patriotic citizen, and he calmly points out that it was the Army, after all, which made the decision. He was willing, or at any rate prepared, to serve his country. He still considers himself just as loyal as, say, the Colonel who commanded the ROTC detachment. Maybe a trifle smarter.

YOU Said It

Editor:

Mr. Wiatt's poem is most interesting. As regards the several explanations of this poem which you have printed, I should like to state that my interesting (but esoteric) friends in the English Department have, as usual, mangled the poem badly, and their interpretations are far short of the mark. As a distinguished and highly respected critic of dramatic literature (as well as a promising young playwright), I should like to modestly submit that Mr. Wiatt's piece is a *poeme dramatique*. This special category has been reserved heretofore only to the Greeks, Shakespeare and, indeed, Mr. Shaw himself.

The opening line (or word or letter—whichever one prefers), "X," is one of those choice and rare morsels which eternal poets hope for a lifetime that they may find. This opening not only gives the audience full exposition, but it also introduces the protagonist who, in this case, is a tragedian.

The second line, "Claw hammers," is one of the finest I have ever read. Aeschylus and Sophocles combined could not have introduced the antagonist and conflict more smoothly and euphoniously. Indeed, it has a sort of—shall we say—ringing sound which great actors spend many months attempting to gain the correct range, wisdom, and projection required of such a figure of speech.

"On the bathroom floor" brings us directly to the crisis, as it were, and leaves the reader (or spectator) anticipatory and wondering if the hero will defeat the villain. This middle-of-the-drama choice far exceeds the third acts of Shakespeare, Ibsen, and Flexler.

"Enswathed in" is a most unfortunate choice of words. By being unfortunate, it is most fortunate in that it serves as a relief (of comic relief in a weighty tragedy) to the continuous and augmenting suspense. Indeed, it is the suspense device of the play.

"Dripping towels" brings the tragedy to a triumphant end in which harmony, purgation, dignity, and elevation have all played a part. One imagines how Bernhardt, say, would deliver this climactic phrase.

In reading this work again, and after writing you, I have decided that Mr. Wiatt's work is more than a simple *poeme dramatique*; it is a five act tragedy in itself, and I shall send it immediately to one of my New York producers for immediate production.

Oh yes, while I am writing you, would you please contact the Grounds Department and ask them to tear down Hill Hall. I was standing behind it the other day, looking East, and my view of the Morehead Planetarium was obstructed by this superfluous music building.

Thanking you, I am

W. David Ashburn

Editor:

Everyone has been having so much fun on the bathroom floor in these pages during the last weeks, that it seemed to us on the *Carolina Quarterly* that our entrance in the debate would only cause overcrowding. But since an editorial has requested our opinion of the poem, "Clawhammers," etc., here it is:

"Claw hammers on the bathroom floor enswathed in dripping towels" are just what they say they are. Take it or leave it. The title, "X," stands for incorrect just as the mark does on classroom papers, and suggest that the author's own verdict was to leave it. We agree.

However, we have been much encouraged to see the intellectual agility that the various interpreters of the poem have displayed constructing something resembling interior logic around this group of words. It shows there is more mental liveliness on campus than is often supposed.

The only thing we cannot understand is how poetry which does contain interior logic remains so baffling to them when "Claw hammers" is so clear. Surely it is easier to uncover meaning where it does exist than to dredge it up out of nonsense? We hope the interpreters will try it sometime—and it would be nice if they tried it with an issue of the *Carolina Quarterly*.

The Carolina Quarterly

Editor:

I am writing in reference to the December 17th issue of The Daily Tar Heel in which John R. Carr, Jr., expressed his opinion on travel vs. a college education.

I, too, am an ardent travel fan; however, there are things to be considered before throwing out a college education in preference to world-wide travel. Mr. Carr simply failed to mention the fact that education and travel must go hand-in-hand. He may go to Europe, but without the basis of an education he would no doubt miss the culture which Europe offers.

With a college education under his belt he would recognize essential opportunities, he would connect what he sees and what his professors have talked about, and he would leave Europe with a real education. A college education may not be as dramatic and enjoyable as European travel, but it will give a background which can't be beaten. Get an education first, then see the world. Money—why work man, work!

What am I doing in college? Getting an education, then going to Europe!

Emily S. Boyce
Assistant Editor
"East Carolinian"

Great men gain doubly when they make foes their friends.—Edward Bulwer Lytton.

The success of any great moral enterprise does not depend upon numbers.—William Lloyd Garrison.

Whoso would be a man must be a non-conformist.—Ralph Waldo Emerson.