

Ripley's book merits reading

Newspaper journalism is a most impermanent medium of communication. Partly because its subject is always the "news" and partly because the first dictum of journalism seems to be that you write down to your readership, nothing is less meaningful than yesterday's paper. In a college paper like the "Tar Heel," this is especially true of columnists. Lacking any outside sources of information, the conservative columnists usually begin the year unveiling the mysteries of Edmund Burke to us—though for some reason they seem never to go past two columns of this; the liberal writers, sensing, perhaps, that they are in the majority, tend to begin their spiel, "Well, the War's still on," and continue from this with astounding complacency and unreason in general condemnations of everything; and a "tertium quid" offers us humor (alas!), or anecdotes, or a character sketch which seldom is either pointed or relevant, and which, in default of these qualities, is sometimes a little gamy.

Passing by this year's editorial page, last year's featured at least two columnists who in some degree overcame the obstacles mentioned: Bobby Nowell and Ken Ripley. I am aware that two more different people could hardly be found. What they shared, however—at least on the printed page—was a strength and attractiveness of character which informed everything they wrote. Indeed, this critic usually found Nowell's columns verging on the shoddy, as if they had been tossed off (as they probably had) amid too many responsibilities and distractions. Yet, the man's character always expressed itself, however imperfectly, and I never left off reading

one of Nowell's columns in the middle, as I am inclined to do with this year's writers.

Ripley is still with us—in fact, he's National News Editor—but his writing for the Tar Heel has been drastically curtailed. I lament this at the same time as I take notice of the publication of "Soul Food and Perples" (privately printed, one dollar), which is a selection of Ripley's columns from last year. It comprises fifteen religious columns and ten occasional ones, and is an excellent introduction to what Ripley has been trying to do as a writer these past two years—and, even more so, to Ripley himself.

But let's be frank. As I have said elsewhere, it is a critic's responsibility to enable his reader to judge what is being reviewed objectively. Hence, in all fairness, if you are entirely put off by Ripley, if you find him preachy or vapid or simply irrelevant, this volume is not for you, and I don't mean to deceive anyone into thinking otherwise. Yet, the fact remains that this critic finds "Soul Food" rewarding for reasons its author would certainly abhor and that you can give Ripley a fair hearing without converting.

"Soul Food and Perples" (the name is a total loss) is a document of its author's intellectual growth. It contains many promises that are not fulfilled, and which time and greater maturity will have to come to grips with. Yet it is a work of compelling, if youthful, insight. Ripley's target is this nation's waning spirituality, and his aim is often unerring: "Religion without relationships," he writes, "ritual

without relevance, the institutional church has not been able to provide any alternatives to the emptiness, loneliness, despair, frustration, guilt and fear that infect people in this chaotic and tumultuous world." People, he adds, "have become worshippers of the power of belief rather than of the belief itself," and the result has been the "spiritual quackery and dogmatic confusion of the church."

"Religion," for Ripley, "has to be stripped of its religiosity and forced back into the world. The chaos, disorder, injustice, and inherent evil of the world have forced Christians to paint or get off the ladder." The answer is Jesus, that "fantastic, relevant, fulfilling way in which we can FLESH OUT our definition (of religion) and apply the love and grace that God gave us to the way we live in and influence the society around us." (Emphasis mine.)

This need to make religion a living part of one's life is the core of Ripley's thought; and this critic finds it appealing and cogent—as a metaphor for involvement in the world and honesty to oneself. This, to me, is Ripley's attraction. He is sincere, concerned, relevant, and perhaps unconsciously, tolerant. In many ways he is not traditionally Christian, perhaps mostly in his conception of evil as a social phenomenon. I imagine that Ripley speaks a language that Eugene McCarthy, for instance, would understand. His "Soul Food" columns are good reading for Christian and non-Christian alike.

Two-thirds of "Soul Food and Perples" is devoted to religion, and the rest of Ripley's occasional columns. For whatever reason, Ripley has been restricted to Soul Food in this year's Tar Heel, and it is a loss to be regretted. These occasional columns reveal another side of the writer and, as they appeared last year, were bright spots on the editorial page. They are still enjoyable, but it must be admitted that, in bulk, they are less impressive than the Soul Food columns.

Religion seems to galvanize Ripley's mind—and, except for an infrequent essay like "A Perfect Bracelet," the non-religious columns lack the force of

intellect revealed elsewhere. Probably this is because Ripley conceives of religion as subject enough for controversy, and avoids treating the implications of his beliefs—avoids, that is, writing overtly political columns. Whether he ultimately will go the way of Billy Graham, or opt for more active involvement in social issues, even at the cost of losing some of his readership, will be an interesting question to see answered.

Two other quibbles. It seems to this critic that the unfixed of Ripley's theology leads him into uncertain attitudes toward unbelievers. Perhaps if he decides who, ultimately, will be admitted to heaven, he will firm up his thought on this subject. Also, Ripley's discussion of evil in social terms slight his consideration of innate human limitations, or, if one will, original sin.

But these, as I said, are more quibbles than objections. Ripley is compelling, intelligent, and readable, and his book is worth looking at.

"To Be Young, Gifted & Black" plays tonight only at 8 o'clock in Memorial Hall. A professional road company will present Lorraine Hansberry's story as assembled by her husband Robert Nemiroff, from her letters, diaries, notebooks and parts of her plays. She wrote "A Raisin In The Sun" and "The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window." Lorraine Hansberry died all too soon at the age of 34.

"Woyzeck" opens tonight at 8 o'clock in Graham Memorial Lounge Theatre. Georg Buchner's play has been newly translated by director Bruno Koch.

Campus calendar

Poet Jonathan Williams will read and comment on his work during "An Evening With Jonathan Williams," presented by the UNC Graduate English Club, tonight at 8:30 in 101 Greenlaw.

"An Ear In Bartram's Tree" (UNC Press, 1969) is his most recent book of poems, described by critic Guy Davenport as a collection, the beauty of which "is that of the times: harsh, elegant, loud, sweet, abrupt all together." He has published six other books of poems, and numerous chapbooks and occasional books, many of which are hand-printed collector's items. His own Jargon Press has become a name synonymous with beautiful books, offering a carefully selected series of fine poets in handsome limited editions.

Publisher and poet, Williams is many other things. His wide travels prompted Buckminster Fuller to comment, "He is our Johnny Appleseed—we need him more than we know."

And Guy Davenport writes about his diverse activities: "He publishes poets, introduces poets to poets, poets to readers, professors to poets, poets (perilous business) to professors, and he photographs poets. He is an ambassador for an enterprise that has neither center nor hierarchy but whose credentials are ancient and respected."

In addition to his activities with the Jargon Society at Penland, Williams is also a scholar-in-residence at the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies. The University community is cordially invited to spend and enjoy "An Evening With Jonathan Williams."

Anyone interested in taking colloquial Arabic next semester, contact Joan Wallman-967-4982.

Attention: The UNC-Boatclub will hold its first meeting next Monday night at 8:15 at the Union. Freshmen and sophomores are especially invited to make this an established UNC sport. For more information, call Balint Kokas at 929-7232 or Jack Carpenter at 942-2881.

The Christian Science Organization is sponsoring a lecture entitled "Commitment: A Christian Science Approach" to be given tonight at 7:30 in the Student Union, meeting rooms 202-204. Anyone interested is invited.

The results of a sociology experiment on "Weapons on aggression-eliciting stimuli" are now available in room 407 of Alumni Hall for participating students. Dr. Desmond Ellis, who performed the experiment, announced that Chuck Fry has won the \$15 prize which was given randomly to a participating student.

Lost: On campus, December 2: Dark blue wool knit hat. Call 942-6135. Ask for Margaret or leave message. Please.

Found: Ten speed bike in need of repairs on brakes or gears. Call 933-5391, ask for Tim.

Lost: A brown billfold in or around Davie building, sometime Saturday afternoon. If found, please call the following number: 966-5021. A reward is offered.

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Wanted: Female roommate to share apartment with two grad students. \$50 a month plus 1/3 utilities. Walking distance of campus. 929-6207.

For Sale: Fender Stratocaster—white—like Jimmy Hendrix's—great condition. Call 967-4747 after 5:00.

Need person to share apartment—Royal Park—available Dec. 1—\$70—No deposit necessary—Call 929-3540 David Stollmack (between 1-6 p.m.) or 929-7060 nights.

WANTED: Roommate wanted for 2nd semester to share a 2 bedroom furnished apt. 10 minutes from campus. Call 968-6354 bet. 5 & 7 p.m. and 12-1 a.m.

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1967 FIAT 850 Spider Conv., Light blue, new tires and back window, good condition, economical, must sell, \$850, Call 967-5104 after 6 p.m.

1 AKA Registered German Shepherd Puppy, 12 weeks old, male, black and white. Largest litter of 6. \$65.00. Call 967-3854 after 3:00.

67 Mustang GT Fastback Disc Brakes H.D. suspension 4 spd. 4V. Body damaged. \$650. Call Pittsboro 542-2819 after 6 p.m.

Studded snow tires, used; 7.75x14, mounted on Skylark rims; about 60% use remains. \$20 the pair. 929-3142, evenings.

Wanted: Female laundry mat attendant and counter help. For dry cleaning plant. Apply with Gene Hancock at Koretzing Cleaners Kroger Plaza, Chapel Hill.

Will trade—room in trailer 2 mi. off campus for dorm room; \$250.00 plus phone & heat for spring semester; Call Gene 967-5081.

ATLANTA: Riders wanted. Leaving some time Wednesday. Inquire by calling 942-2981.

Anyone interested in attending the first meeting of the new UNC Sailing Club on Dec. 9th, please call Ian at 967-4655 after 6 p.m.

1967 VW Bug—excellent condition—Family growing must sell—\$1150. Call 942-6717.

Spend Christmas vacation on Continental Europe, \$195 round trip. Dec. 19th to Jan. 3rd. Open to Carolina students and faculty. Call Steve Riley, 205 Ruffin, 966-2303.

SINGLE STUDENTS—meet members of the opposite sex at UNC. All dates in Chapel Hill. Free details write: Nationwide Dating Service, P.O. Box 77346, Atlanta, Ga. 30309.

1967 Ford Econoline Van Great for camping and traveling. Motor and body in perfect condition. New tires—\$1095. Call Bill Ippock, Sigma Nu House, 966-9077.

Wanted: Expense-paying passenger for drive to Atlanta (or points between) Dec. 9—Call Mrs. Pinkerton, 929-3168.

Ride desperately needed to Columbia, S.C. or anywhere near on Dec. 11. Will help pay gas. Please Call Tricia Lewis 933-1814.

STEREO—Garrard turntable professional series, 100 watt amplifier, AM-FM tuner, 6 speakers, air suspension. Sacrifice \$200. Also have 8-track tape deck and 3' handmade speakers for sale. 489-8191.

Wanted: A place to live next semester for female. Will share rent, telephone, utilities, etc. Call 942-7097 after 5 p.m.

For Sale: Panasonic stereo auto tape-player and speakers, 4 months old. \$100 or best offer. Call 966-3252.

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