

1978

## Notes in Brief

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## NOTES IN BRIEF

To compensate for this lack of dramatic action, Branstner inserts "theatrical" routines, but these are neither integrated into the argument nor essential to it. They serve merely as barely humorous diversions from the lack of action and actually emphasize the static. Moreover, these interludes are distracting and, therefore, limit the auditor's ability to comprehend Tore-did's complex argument, so that one leaves the piece neither enlightened nor entertained.

The static nature of the play is regrettable, because it blatantly contradicts the very position which Branstner is trying to establish. Greatly oversimplified, his position is that it is the task of art (by which Branstner means literature alone) to help attain social conditions through which the human being may playfully alter reality to achieve gaiety, which is the human essence. To do this, art must itself play with present reality, so that the auditor becomes emotionally and intellectually involved in a productive revelation of reality's hidden possibilities. Art will have accomplished its task when human life is measured by aesthetic rather than ethical standards, when life and art become one.

Neither Tore-did's lectures nor the superfluous "theatrical" business forced into them can be considered playful, and while the argument is intellectually intriguing, one is not apt to become emotionally involved in it. Nor does one find much human gaiety in the piece. Indeed, the precious attempts at drama diminish the joy one might have had in unravelling the argument.

Worse, the mock dramatic structure disguises discursive reality within an artistic shell. An artwork is a created reality which follows its own logic, and within the artwork an argument succeeds or fails according to the laws of that created logic alone. To mask one reality as another negates the standards by which either can be judged true or false, and the auditor is led to accept logical failings as poetic license. Discursive and artistic legitimacy are thus destroyed. As a result, Kantine remains an academic lecture inappropriately clothed in a ragged dramatic costume.

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Heiner Müller's Cement will be performed professionally by a theater group in Berkeley in the Spring of 1979.

Prof. Richard E. Wood of Plymouth State College Plymouth, N.H. 03264 is the editor of the journal Sprachprobleme und Sprachplanung, an interdisciplinary medium devoted to human language as a world-wide social and political issue. Harry Spitzbardt of Jena has recently joined the editorial board, and articles on language policy in the GDR might follow.

The Eden Theological Seminary, 475 E. Lockwood Ave., Webster Groves, Missouri 63119, has created an archives of documents, papers, publications, and correspondence connected with the history of relationships between the United Church of Christ and the Evangelische Kirche der Union (GDR).