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## *Tulane Drama Review*

a turn toward more innovation, more efforts to build a multi-class audience. Hopefully, yes. And what about the gradual alienation of indigenous talent, I see here—people trapped within their professions having opportunities only in amateur theatre? I fear this singularity of taste is being fostered by an attitude among some foundation people that *one* repertory company is adequate in a community. Such a theory seems to preclude the possibility of more professional theatre even more than does the tendency to expect a theatre group to be financially successful before a grant is made.

*J. Richard Taft  
Editor,  
Foundation News  
Washington, D. C.*

### **The Editors:**

A comment on "Ford, Rockefeller, and Theatre."

While I am in accord with Professor Schechner's suspicions of incompatibility between various foundation grants and theatre, I am rather surprised that in his very next breath he proposes a program which invites its own suspicions.

The artist's relationship to society is always characterized by an unmitigable ambiguity. I believe it was Edmund Wilson who likened this ambiguity to the story of Philoctetes, the Greek warrior, who was shunned by his countrymen because of the offensive odor of a suppurating wound; yet, Philoctetes was a brilliant archer and was sought out by his countrymen because they needed his unerring skill with the bow. Any overture of philanthropy to art provokes our critical vigilance because it is so easy for the

## LETTERS

philanthropist to believe, and for the artist to wish, that the wound and the bow are not by painful necessity of the same package.

Professor Schechner is right to warn us that when foundations offer money to theatre, a palliative to that anguished ambiguity of the creative function is apt to be part of the deal. Reading his article, I was reminded of Irving Howe's opening paragraphs to his "Mass Society and Post-Modern Fiction" (*Partisan Review*, Summer, 1959): "Raskolnikov is lying on his bed: feverish, hungry, despondent. The servant Nastasya has told him that the landlady plans to have him evicted." Staring moodily at the ceiling, Howe continues, Raskolnikov entertains thoughts of liquidating the miserly pawnbroker. It must be done! "Suddenly . . . the doorbell rings. A letter. Raskolnikov tears it open. Dear Sir, It is my pleasure to inform you, on behalf of the Guggenheim Foundation, that you have been awarded a fellowship for the study of . . ." Etc.

Professor Schechner asks, "Does all this mean that we reject foundation aid?" His answer is tentative. He does not know, but hopes not, "if only because what we now have is better than what we had ten years ago." Only when he speaks of his "multi-class" theatre, his ultimate solution to the "impossible relationship" the foundations urge between artist and institution, does Professor Schechner grow more declarative and optimistic.

But the point is that there is no solution to this "impossible relationship." The relationship of the artist to institutions, patrons, consumer or whatever must perforce remain "impossible"—or, as I prefer, *ambiguous*. The very zealotry of Professor

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Schechner's counter-proposals hammer theatre into doctrine as threatening to ambiguity as the Ford Foundation. Nor does it matter on this score, that his anvil resides in the abode of the angels.

"It shows nice feeling to wish that all our artists could be supernaturally fed, by Elijah's ravens or the spirit of the Medici"—this was Jacques Barzun some fifteen years ago (truth comes out of strange bottles)—"Let us not press so hard for results, for geometrical adjustments of artist to situation and situation to art. Let us not have too many theories—but rather empirical judgment and the nerve to seize happy chances."

*The nerve to seize happy chances.* With this and some tongue-in-cheek as you extend your needy palm, I say take the damned money. As for the strings attached, *caveat emptor.*

*Donald M. Kaplan*  
*New York*

**ERRATUM: T30**

**The Editor:**

A correction: when checking the transcript of the interview with John Cage which I did with Richard Schechner, I could not resist the impulse to clarify my feelings about Allan Kaprow's *The Courtyard* [T30, p. 69]. I added a sentence stating that I consider a good portion of that work to be an allegorical play. Somehow "allegorical" became "alogical" in the published form, making exactly the opposite point from that which I had intended.

By "allegorical" I mean a unification of dramatic symbols through a story-like continuity. "Alogical" on the