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Fall' Production [Review of Arthur Miller's Play
After the Fall at Teatro Maria, Milwaukee]

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'Fall' production

by Curtis L. Carter

It is difficult not to see Arthur Miller's "After the Fall" as a kind of autobiographical thinking out loud. This in itself might be interesting, but not necessarily the makings of a substantial play.

The action of the complex drama currently being performed by the Marquette Players, is self-reflective dialogue reconstructing through flashbacks events of childhood, the recent past, and the conscious present, revealing the deliberations of Quentin, a middle aged man.

Reflections are on fundamental questions of life's meaning — the place of guilt, innocence, exploitation, political intimidation, friendship and loyalty, love. These themes arise in the context of Quentin's relations to women — his wives, mother, girl friends — and a few of his men friends.

References to Marilyn Monroe, the playwright's former wife, are obvious, though not to be overplayed in interpreting the play. Maggie is a vehicle for examining themes of innocence and the exploitation of the female as sex symbol. We see in Maggie's rise to stardom and her resulting disintegration a commentary on the debilitating effects of commercial exploitation of glamor and

female sex. Actually, though, Andy Warhol's silk screen of "Marilyn" captures in a single image more of the tragedy of this than Miller is able to achieve in his play.

The Marquette Players' production is definitely worth seeing. Acting is balanced throughout with performances often exceeding expectations of college theater.

Kathy Valley as Maggie advances her acting achievements immensely in this production. The life of Maggie flows in various shades of innocence, vulnerability, joy, and tragedy as Miss Valley presents the character.

Joseph Golden as Question also gives a creditable performance in a difficult role. He projects well the tentative passivity mixed with guilt, self-absorption, and conflict which identifies the character. The rest of the cast, including several new-to-me faces performed with sensitivity to their respective roles.

Overall, director Leo Jones and assistant director Jan Johnson give the play a reading which laces the ideas of the play with strong expression of feeling, a technique which happens to serve well Miller's style of drama.

"After the Fall" continues through November 21 at Teatro Maria, Marquette.