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1960

## **The German Theatre Today**

Otto Zoff

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*The*  
**German Theatre**  
*Today*

BY OTTO ZOFF

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The text of this booklet was delivered as an address by Otto Zoff on October 6, 1959 at the Peter A. Brooks Memorial Union, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His appearance was sponsored by the Marquette University Institute of German Affairs.

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# *Introduction*

Dr. Otto Zoff was born in Austria, or rather—to be more specific, in the formerly Austrian city of Prague which was later to become the capital of Czechoslovakia. He is an American citizen by naturalization. This information would not normally be considered as coming under the heading of truly “vital” statistics, and would be rather incidental, or unrevealing, were it not for the important fact that Dr. Zoff, who is now dividing his time almost equally between Europe, especially Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, and his new “home town,” New York City, can rightfully be regarded, through his creative and scholarly work on both shores of the Atlantic, as a significant representative of what I like to call the “Euramerica of the spirit.” In other words, he is a well-informed, open-minded mediator between two civilizations rooted in the common heritage of occidental culture.

Dr. Zoff, who studied art history, archaeology, and philosophy at the University of Vienna where he was awarded his Ph.D in 1914, is a well known playwright, novelist, translator, stage director, literary critic, and radio commentator. Yet, for all his impressive versatility, he is first and foremost, and very eminently so, a man of the theater. The theater has been if not his first at least his early and certainly his constant love. In spite of various interruptions caused by material and political circumstances, such as the Anschluss and successive exiles which finally brought him to the safety of our shores in

1941, Dr. Zoff has remained faithful to the exacting theatrical profession. And, as it is both gratifying and edifying to see such fortitude and faith recompensed, I am happy to report that the theater has rewarded him, however belatedly, for such devoted yet often thankless dedication to its cause: For instance, Dr. Zoff's best known play, *König Hirsch*, or *King Stag*, a free adaptation or, better, a drastically re-emphasized and creatively remodeled new version of Carlo Gozzi's identically titled Italian play, after a tremendous initial success on such leading stages as the Vienna Burgtheater and the Munich Residenztheater, is still continuing its triumphant career. Another of his plays, *Die Glocken von London* or *The Bells of London*, based on Charles Dickens' novella *The Chimes*, premiered last December in Baden-Baden, and has been accepted by some thirty theaters in the German-speaking countries. (Incidentally, Dr. Zoff has been kind and generous enough to donate an inscribed copy of the original German version of *King Stag* to the Marquette Memorial Library where, I trust, it will find many readers.)

As his topic today, quite naturally, pertains to the contemporary German theater, Dr. Zoff will doubtless agree with me that, in his case, or at least for our purpose, "the play is *the* thing." Also, forgive me for mentioning only in passing his fine contributions to other fields in the world of arts and letters, such as, for instance, his novels among which *They Shall Inherit the Earth* is probably best remembered in this country; or his excellent Calderon translations; or, again, his portrayal of the lives of great artists through the juxtaposition of their own texts or testimonials.

We are indeed privileged to have with us here a real expert on the German theater of today for, through his regular and prolonged working visits to Europe, Dr. Zoff has become intimately familiar with everything that is and has been going on during these last years on the representative stages of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland: as an author and director himself; as a member of the working press, attending significant premieres or return engagements; and backstage as a friend and colleague of actors and producers.

Ernst Erich Noth  
Professor of Modern Languages  
Marquette University

# The German Theatre Today

IT IS ONE OF THE OLD traditions of Germany that every town wealthy enough to have a public library, a concert hall and an art gallery, also has a playhouse. These playhouses receive a subsidy from the community itself, from the state or from the *Volksverband*, an association of middle class people interested in cultural activities. The subsidy is always substantial. The theatre is an important part of culture, of education, of national pride, of representation; and if a citizen has the right to a museum or to good high schools, he has a right to good drama as well. It simply is a matter of course that a city of thirty or forty thousand inhabitants has a good theatre which is always, without exception, a repertory theatre. During any one season it first has to produce some of the world classics; second, some of the contemporary writers, and third, some lightly draped pieces. To show you immediately what it means for the theatres to enjoy the protection of the state or the municipal authorities, I have to first make it clear that there is not a single authority which does not prefer a highstanding and expensive repertory to a lowstanding but profitable one. Let me give you an example:

Last year I spent some time in Munich in Bavaria and talked with the intendant of the Residenz Theater. An intendant is a general director and chief adminis-

trator, the man who is more or less the dictator of the institution, and the Residenz Theater is the theatre of the Bavarian state. This important man in Munich, a Mr. Henrichs, told me of a meeting which he had with the Secretary of State two or three days before. The secretary of state in Bavaria is also the secretary of culture and education. He was polite and full of understanding, but he complained that the repertory in the last three months had been too commercial. When Mr. Henrichs explained that the subsidy of one and a half million marks would be too small to produce only the classics and highbrow plays of Claudel and Strindberg, the Secretary of State said: "Such a viewpoint doesn't interest me at all, my dear friend. Our people are spoiled, they expect to get high literature—and now, please, see here the letters which they are writing us—here they are. They are angry. More than angry. I am sure that the parliament would be willing to increase the subsidy, but it would not be willing to see more of such cheap stuff."

This viewpoint may be the reason why the German theatre is the most versatile, the most far-reaching. Please don't misunderstand me. I don't want to say that it is the best theatre of Europe; it certainly is not the best of Europe, but its *repertory* is the best of Europe. Now you will get the impression that I am on the edge of serious overstatement, and that I have not been completely objective. So I have to call a witness. In a recent issue of the *New Yorker*, the noted English critic Kenneth Tynan said:

"What is astonishing, not to say eerie, is that in range of repertoire and general excellence of production, there is no theatre in Europe to match it. Where the German theatre ultimately wins, is in versatility, consistency and national extensiveness."

I would like to repeat in order not to be misunderstood: I do not believe that German actors are the finest in Europe. Two or three countries have stage directors as good as Germany's best. No German actor has the range of Gielgud, of Olivier or of the French actress, La Feuillère. You can see outstanding stage directors in Helsinki, Finland (a country of the most remarkable achievements in art). And furthermore, I also realize fully that the German playwrights of today do not have

the range of their American, English or French counterparts. I have to emphasize these statements. However, as Kenneth Tynan explained it: *in the range of repertory and the excellence of the performances in even the smaller places, no other country can match the German theatre.*

There are other witnesses. One of them is Harold Clurman, the noted American critic and stage director. In an article written three years ago he said: "Yet there is no escaping the fact: in quality of production, in scenic creation, in variety of repertory, in solidity of organization, the German theatre at this moment makes the English, French and other stages of the world look like little theatre activities."

The repertory is the chief concern. Its ecclesiasticism is the result of continuous efforts. This is not only true of Berlin or Munich or Hamburg—no! And to prove my contention let me, by chance, pick out the city of Cassel with a population of 200,000. Here is a representative sample of the repertory of Cassel's Staatstheater during a week in September, 1959. The week started off with a showing of *Private Secretary* by T. S. Eliot. *Mary Stuart* by Schiller was presented Tuesday, and Wednesday's offering was *Biedermann und die Brandstifter* by the modern Swiss playwright, Max Frisch. On Thursday night Eliot's play was repeated, and Friday night's audience saw *Le Misanthrope* by Molière. *Biedermann und die Brandstifter* was repeated Saturday night and Eliot's play again on Sunday. Let us see, too, what the Municipal Theater of Wuppertal was playing in the same week. Wuppertal is a city in the heart of the Ruhr known for its iron and steel industry. Out of every ten playgoers, seven or eight are factory workers. On Monday the theatre presented *Amphitryon* by Molière. Tuesday and Wednesday's play was *Vor Sonnenaufgang* (*Before Dawn*) by Gerhard Hauptmann, and on Thursday *Amphitryon* was repeated. Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* was offered Friday, Hauptmann's play again on Saturday, and on Sunday, *Don Carlos* by Schiller.

Of course, these performances in Wuppertal or Bremen or Nuernberg or Tübingen cannot be compared, as far as quality is concerned, with the performances of New York, Paris, Hamburg or Milan; but they are in any case so good that even a spoiled theatregoer can

enjoy them. All these stage directors in the smaller towns, mostly young men in their thirties, are extremely ambitious; they work hard, and they are all convinced that no other theatre in Europe can equal the German theatre with which they work.

There is in Schleswig Holstein, a northern country near the frontier of Denmark, a little theatre in a small town called Rendsburg. This theatre travels through more than sixteen cities and villages in Schleswig Holstein—we call it *eine Wanderbuehne*, a company on the road. I recently received word from this remote theatre that they planned to perform one of my plays in November and requesting that I come to lecture in Rendsburg about the poetical theatre. In one of my letters I asked the intendant what other plays he planned for November. He answered: *Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams and *Minna von Barnhelm* by Lessing. I presume it will be an exciting experience to be together with the actors of Rendsburg.

You see, the German repertory in every city offers the *widest international choice of plays*. This was always so. It was true under Kaiser Wilhelm I and Kaiser Wilhelm II, and it is even truer now that Germany is separated. You will find in the West: Sophocles, Shakespeare, Schiller, Calderon, Goldoni, Chekhov, Giraudoux, Brecht, Anouilh, Dürrenmatt, John Osborne, and Tennessee Williams. Among those writers whose works are regularly presented in the Eastern zone are: Sophocles, Shakespeare, Schiller, Chekhov, Farquhar, Brecht, Anouilh, Buechner, Shaw.

In West Berlin, there is the state-supported Schiller Theater, a modern building on the site of the old building which was destroyed in the air raids. It also has a smaller house in which intimate plays can be seen. The repertory two years ago, when I visited Berlin, consisted of Schiller's *Die Raueber*, Goethe's *Faust*, Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, Anouilh's *Ornifle*, Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood*, and a dramatization of Tolstoy's novel, *War and Peace*, and Richard Nash's *The Rainmaker*. In addition to the Schiller Theater, there are five smaller theatres (it is a pity, because the big and beautiful houses of Max Reinhardt are in the East zone) and these five theatres have an excellent repertory too. The Theatre am Kurfuerstendamm, with

perhaps not more than 300 seats, is very intimate and tasteful. At the time I was there it produced the plays of the Austrian classicist Ferdinand Raimund, of O'Neill, of Lessing and of Max Frisch. You could easily walk to East Berlin and see in Bert Brecht's exciting theatre his *Mother Courage*, then a play by the English Farquhar, followed by a play of Gogol.

Now, something about the organization of such a repertory theatre. As I already told you, the top man is the intendant. He engages the company, selects the plays and has to deal with all the authorities of the state, town and citizen associations. In most cases, he had been a stage director, and he is supposed to direct the two or three outstanding plays of the season. If he is not expected to do so, he does it anyway because he could not stand the idea of other people getting the applause. He may be the finest man of the nation, but jealousy and ambition will be his driving forces always.

The intendant's most influential assistant is the dramaturg. And believe me when I say it is difficult to explain the scope the dramaturg's activity. He is a man whose first duty is to read the manuscripts submitted and to choose the eight or ten which he considers most important or the most amusing or those which have the best role for the actors. He implores the intendant to read them as quickly as possible so that no other theatre should get them. The intendent promises and never keeps the promise. The dramaturg must not forget the special circumstances of each situation: a city with a chiefly Catholic population is different than one whose citizens are predominantly Protestant; workers have a different approach to the arts than business people; the North has other interests than the South. First of all, then, the dramaturg has to consider whether his theatre has the right actors for the play he prefers. It's not a secret that the theatre never has the actors. Even the Burg-Theater in Vienna or the Schiller Theater in Berlin never have the actors for just the play which the directors have proposed to do at this moment. The right actors are always and legitimately in every other place on earth. If they are here, then you may be sure that they have just asked for a leave of absence or that they have just received a wonderful offer from television or

the movies. Furthermore, the dramaturg has to talk over accepted plays with the stage director, suggest changes and adaptations and cuts to the author, and a hundred more duties.

I, myself, when I was twenty-eight, was the dramaturg-in-chief of the Muenchener Kammerspiele, the most driving theatre of the twentieth century for the generation of the expressionists. I had two assistants, but we three were never able to read all the manuscripts and all the chief classical plays of five centuries. It will interest you (please take it only as an audible aside) that one of the young men who helped me as a reader was the young Bert Brecht, a student of Augsburg who had moved to Munich. We, however, considered his judgments too unreliable. I complained to him about his superficial work. He answered: "I think you are right. I hate to read plays which I haven't written." At the time we didn't know that he was serious. Some months later, however, we staged the world performance of his first drama *Trommeln in der Nacht*. Overnight he was famous.

At the last count, West Germany, with a population of 53 million, had 121 theatres; and East Germany with a population of 18 million had 86 theatres. Most of these German theatres could not continue to exist if there were no subsidies. New theatres and new opera houses, experimental innovations of the most daring architects, have been constructed in a number of cities. Experimental productions are encouraged. The taxpayer never objects to the fact that money out of his pocket goes to the theatres.

The subsidy is not an invention of modern times or of this or that nation—I have to emphasize that. The ancient Greek theatre was subventioned, this we all know. In the Middle Ages, it was the church that helped the theatre with money and with a secured large audience. In the archives of Frankfurt you can read that the performances of the *Miracles*, especially of the *Passion*, were supported by three monasteries, and as early as the fifteenth century by the magistrate of the city.

With the Renaissance the aristocrats took over. We may read in the biographies of Molière, for instance, that not only the king, the *roi soleil*, or his brother,

the duke Gaston of Orleans, were the maecenas; no, there were also the princes of Buise, the duke of Epernon, the Marshall Villeroy and twelve or fifteen other noblemen. In the German countries, each of the feudal courts had its own *Schaubuehne*. Two of them became famous throughout Europe: the Burgtheater in Vienna and a hundred years later the theatre of Meiningen. As far as the Burgtheater is concerned, it is reported, and we have some witnesses for the story, that the Emperor Joseph II, who reigned in the last years of the eighteenth century and who subsidized the Burgtheater, became very upset when the public preferred light comedies to serious and poetic productions. Finally, he let it be officially known: "If you do not learn to appreciate good literature in the next few weeks the Burgtheater will be closed for good."

As you see, this was already the same attitude which the Secretary of State in Munich expressed to Mr. Henrichs a year ago.

At the end of the nineteenth century the citizens replaced the aristocrats. Rich industrialists and merchants lent a helping hand to the arts. Private funds were made available or corporations were reminded of their cultural obligations. For instance, the three theatres of Max Reinhardt, with their considerable deficit every year, are financed by two business men: the one a newspaper owner in the province, the other, a sawmill owner in Silesia.

Today, the associations of various professional groups are—beside the state and the town—the theatre's chief supporters. In the years after the second world war, labor began to play a bigger part, and this part is still increasing. In the Ruhr area, the grandiose district of coal and steel in Western Germany, the unions take all the seats in the house by contract four or five times a week. The theatres of Essen or Bochum or Gelsenkirchen or Wuppertal are now princes among the German theatres. There, big houses have a capacity of 1500 to 2000 persons, and the workers insist on good plays. There, too, the actors are extremely well paid. In Bochum, for instance, they rarely ask for leave of absence in order to make money in the movies. The theatre of Bochum is now as important as the theatre in Frankfurt—an unthinkable situation 30 years ago. A radical metamorpho-

sis has taken place. The left-wing workers get the plays of Bert Brecht, and the Catholic workers, who are very powerful in the Ruhr, want to see Claudel and Calderon. The standard is very high.

In other cities (Hamburg or Bremen, for instance) the professional associations take over the house. On Monday, hundreds of hairdressers will see *Charley's Aunt*, and on Thursday high school language teachers will see the same play. This situation is not, in my opinion, a healthy one. When I directed in Hamburg, I suffered extremely under it. The hairdressers had, of course, a quite different approach to *Charley's Aunt* than the language teachers. Monday's audience was often full of laughter, while the following evening not one single person was amused. The actors were confused by the contrasting reactions. We never knew, to put it simply, what was up. Only a mixed audience can tell you whether the performance had made the right impression or not.

Some remarks about the once famous company of the Duke of Meiningen which I mentioned before seem to be in order at this point. It was the most celebrated European theatre company of its epoch. It was admired as much in London as in Moscow. I have to mention it again because it was the perfect model for the subsidized institution.

It was founded in 1866, when George II succeeded to his family's title and became Duke of Saxony-Meiningen. He was a talented designer, but designing with him was much more than a hobby. In the first months of his reign he began to reform the court theatre. He knew what he wanted. He aimed at something great. The intendants acted as his assistants. It was he alone who gave the theatre style and direction. Four years after its founding the old-fashioned, boring court theatre was lifted to a new dignity, and the duke sent the company on the road.

Seventeen glorious seasons followed. People throughout Europe considered the Meininger the best in great theatre playing. The Meininger traveled through Austria, Russia, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, England, Denmark and Sweden. In 1890, upon the serious illness of the last intendant, Mr. Kronek, the Duke disbanded

his company. He himself was now old and tired and had lost considerable money.

Under his wise and tyrannical regime, the Meininger got their wide scope. Shakespeare was the most performed poet. *Julius Caesar* was the biggest success-maker. Next to Shakespeare was, of course, Schiller. The Duchess of Saxony-Meiningen, a former actress, was the chief-dramaturg, the chief-researcher, the chief-secret-adviser. In staging, the company's greatest effort lay in the direction of searching out, discovering and reproducing realistic detail—realistic detail in historical setting. In later years, when strict realism was blooming, the Meininger were ridiculed because they had created a stylish pathos. But during their own time, they were esteemed and praised as the creators of realism—I would say, of classical realism. The great Constantin Stanislavsky came from Russia to see the Meininger and the great Antoine came from France. These uncompromising reformers, prophets of a new era with modern stagecraft conceptions, attacked vehemently what they saw in Meiningen, but they admitted that only the Meininger had made progress possible. The piling of fact upon fact that Stanislavsky had asked for, was prepared in Meiningen.

There were many failures, of course; and there were many empty seats. One evening in 1886, a play by Wiltenbruch was an extraordinary flop. Stanislavsky, just arrived from Moscow, was shocked at how vehemently the public reacted. Afterward he talked with the Duke. The Duke was well composed. He said: "This failure taught us a very important lesson. We have had too much success in the past. Our audience yesterday broke benches, they were disconsolate; they had come happily prepared to fill themselves with the miracles of art, and the loss seemed to them intolerable. We have to be stubborn: we have to think over why this happened."

You see, the subsidized German theatre—like the French, like the Italian, and like the English—has its roots in a very energetic and stable tradition. Now you will ask me: What about the modern playwrights in this repertory? Who are the contemporary playwrights most esteemed by the German theatregoer? What about the new German playwrights?

First of all, there are no new German playwrights whom you would like to compare with the masters of

forty years ago. Gerhard Hauptmann, Frank Wedekind, Heinrich Mann, Georg Kaiser, Ludwig Thoma, and Wilhelm Schmidtbonn are dead. Most of their plays are still produced, and those of Hauptmann and Wedekind have become classics. However, the new playwright—there we still have sub-zero. The two successful writers are Swiss: Dürrenmatt and Max Frisch. Another playwright with considerable talent is the Austrian Fritz Hochwaelder. His drama: *The Holy Experiment* was performed some years ago in New York. However, where are the young men from Germany itself? There is Karl Wittlinger. He is considered a good writer of light comedy. His comedy: *Kennen Sie die Milchstrasse?* (*Do You Know the Milkyway?*) was almost a hit. I did not have the opportunity to see it. But I was told that it was full of charm and wit. However, the plays which followed from his pen were pure disappointments.

Of course, there are a lot of new names. Dozens of them. Each of these young men is very happy to get a world premiere in Augsburg or Essen or Luebeck. The critics deal with them harshly or benevolently but the play disappears as quickly as it arrived. Maybe a second or third city will accept it but that is all.

This lack of talented German writers is one reason, perhaps, why the Germans with their most detestable nationalism are at the same time the nation of translators. They translate all the rest of the world's literature. Every year they translate hundreds of novels and non-fiction books written in English, French, Italian, Russian, Bulgarian, Swedish and Chinese. The hunger for internationalism is never stilled. To illustrate, as I read only yesterday, during the 1959-60 season they will produce 200 first performances of foreign plays. It is certainly too many. I am convinced that the greater part of these 200 will not be valuable enough.

I don't necessarily intend this as a compliment but it is a fact that the most esteemed among the playwrights of today are American.

The reasons for this predilection are simple: The Germans think (and not only the Germans) that an American play of today sheds more light on the political, economic, domestic and personal concerns that absorb us. And that is just what the theatregoers of our epoch are looking for. The *Zeitdrama*—the *Gesellschaftskritik*

(the analysis of society) that is the thing. There you have the reason why American playwrights hold a willing audience spellbound. They certainly are not at their ease in writing about all the queer characters who make up the world of today, but they have the courage to face them. They are at home on every social level and are aware of all human pretensions.

O'Neill, Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller are much admired. William Inge, however, does not share that distinction. It is true that these writers have somewhat disappointed the Europeans with their last plays. However, even these are still productions of penetrating analysis compared with French or Italian or German plays. We all know that their stories are often sick stories, and that their approach is one of materialistic shock; however, their people *are* people, and that means a great deal. They touch a contemporary nerve. They are devoted realists, and they ask us to verify what they offer out of their experience, out of our experience. And there was never a century in which such *Zeitkritische Schau-stuecke* (contemporary dramas) were not acclaimed as the most important. However, it often happens that a different judgment is rendered in subsequent periods.

As a consequence, the German repertory is full of O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Gibson and Inge. As I just explained, you will always get the same response if you ask for the reasons: these Americans tell us something about ourselves, their way of looking at the world is—in spite of the different milieu—*our* way of looking at the world. Maybe the German playwright is willing to analyze the same common plight; however, he translates it into another sphere, he looks for romantic escape, or he exaggerates. More precisely, he contrasts his audience with caricature instead of reality—as do the two Swiss playwrights Dürrenmatt and Frisch. They are cartoonists. They are *not* realists. They see a distorted world, not the world as it is.

On the other hand, there are many Germans who are opposed to this kind of literature, and I have to explain this too. The realistic drama so much looked for can never satisfy the whole appetite. Many of the German theatre-lovers ask: Where is the idea in the American play? Where are the radical and exciting new ideas of a theatrical avant-garde? And where is the poetry?

The American play most in demand is *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder. This masterpiece, in my opinion, is one of the favorites of the whole German repertory. Since 1947, it has been produced again and again, in theatre and on radio and television. The sincere and deeply moving blend of small community existence with the supernatural belongs under the same roof as Gerhard Hauptmann's *Hannele* or Wedekind's *Fruehlingserwachen*. Strange as it may sound, the Germans have the feeling that Thornton Wilder belongs to them, that he is not a foreigner. The two partners respect and admire each other. Each year Wilder remains in Germany or Austria or Switzerland for lengthy visits. You will meet him in Frankfurt, in Baden-Baden, in Vienna, in Zurich. His last play, *The Alkestiade* (I consider it another masterpiece), premiered in Zurich and was wonderfully performed in ten or twelve other cities.

I don't want to talk about the tremendous success of the *Diary of Anne Frank*. That success, as you know, is based on exclusively human reasons. It is an excellent play, but it was not its dramatic value that made it a success. Rather, it was the shame and the pity that it generated. *Glass Menagerie*, *The Touch of a Poet*, *A Long Day's Journey into Night*, *The Matchmaker*, *Come Back*, *Little Sheba*, *Teahouse of the August Moon*, *The Crucible*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *Two for the Seesaw*—there you have the pillars of the German stage. Only the plays of Paul Giraudoux and Jean Anouilh are in the same class.

Alas then, if you would ask me—and I think you *will* ask me—to what conclusion we should come regarding our American theatre after having heard some positive facts about the German theatre (granted that there are some negative aspects), I would find it difficult to give an answer. Every flock of birds has its own chirping. We should be cautious when we start to compare.

Perhaps I can begin by observing that there is certainly do with show business. Only the private theatre has which could be imitated. And that is this: it has nothing to do with show business. Only the private theatre has to look for financial gain. What we therefore need here in the United States is to keep our sense of theatre as a place of marvels, of inspiration, of escape from the humdrum. This, however, remains a vain dream as long as

the drama or the comedy has to seek wider and less discriminating audiences, as long as a play must run for at least a year to make up costs.

The non-creative unions—the managers, stagehands, press-agents, the musicians—are squeezing the American theatre to death with their demands. The worst of them all is the producer and his collaborators. They stick to a tested formula, the formula of the *money-getter*, and even the elevator man of the theatre seems to be a greater expert than the author. Therefore, there is no other way out than for outright support to come from the state, the city, the community, associations and other such groups. Only such subsidies can make it possible for a play to be called successful after no more than forty performances instead of four hundred. Forty performances, or even less (with wonderful actors), of the plays of Molière, of Shakespeare, of Sheridan, of Claudel, of Calderon, and, of course, of the plays of today's writers—this is the key to the riddle.

No doubt, the American theatre is on the way to that goal. There is a new healthy trend in the making. There is the ambition of still unknown young writers to transcend the family crisis, the sexual conflict and the individual psychosis; and there are also the young producers who want to support these young authors and who hate the Broadway which maintains its compulsive need to keep the audience in an affable frame—too often with works of diminished honesty. These new people have it hard, I know. However, they veer toward more grandeur, more color, more complexity of the theatre.

No doubt, the American theatre is on the right track. As in all other countries of the world, the American audience *always* knew what distinguished art from entertainment, literature from current drama. The American youth knew it as well as the French or English youth but they never got the support of the state or the city or of wealthy private citizens. This support is in the making, I am sure, and when it matures it will become a widespread, deeply felt national duty.