

Editorial

THE WAY WE WERE: a review

Not since "Last Tango in Paris" has there been a film so powerful as this one. Set in the United States during and after WW II, "The Way We Were" had, in fact, nothing to do with that era; it used that setting to facilitate the expression of its themes. Starring Barbara Streisand and Robert Redford, "The Way We Were" was one of the finest expressions of the existential themes: courage, commitment, involvement, purpose and meaning.

Streisand (Katie) was a committed activist in the Communist Youth Group, common on campus during that era. She was involved in the political problems which most everyone else passed off. Characteristic of her commitment and her involvement she possessed the courage to respond without which her commitment would have been to no avail. Life did not come easy to her: she couldn't pass her time engaged in idle talk or idle pursuit because these reflect the opposite and negative aspects of a committed life. She was reflective and contemplative regarding everything she did -- which she did seriously!!

Redford (Hubbell) on the other hand, was quite the opposite. He was the classical Bourgeois - liberal all-American boy. Typical of this kind he found it quite easy to follow the line of least resistance, to compromise himself to attain his end, etc. Responsible reflection was foreign to him. He was the opposite to Katie. He was, in other words, without substance. Courage, commitment, involvement, & meaning were just a hassle. Katie remarked to him "things come easy to you," this is characteristic of one without substance, of one who does not reflect.

What Katie was to realize eventually was that there was no real ground for maintaining their relationship - even though she had genuine love for him characterized by those qualities I mentioned earlier. The break (they were married with a child at this point) was much easier for Hubbell than it was for Katie; and she had to take the initiative. Their marriage came easy to Hubbell, but not to Katie. She would suffer a loss -- not him.

Such is it when one like Hubbell who is of little substance encounters one of substance such as Katie. It is the perfect recipe for a tragedy -- and that's what "The Way We Were" was -- a tragedy.

It was far more than just

a movie, however; it is contemporary and reflects a painful reality of our time an age when the youth are, for the most part, lacking in the development of Katie's qualities -- who are indeed, much like Hubbell. But the solutions to the contemporary problems require Katie's qualities.

The Capitalist-Bourgeois who have cultivated an individualism among everyone so as to facilitate the manipulation of the economy has led to a "do your own thing" philosophy; it has led to a separation of one from the other to the point where each is in his own individualistic shell -- and no one dare interfere!!

When our youth were given

the values of success, prestige, status, worth., domination over others, the inevitable result would be the competition of one with another and the development of sly tactics to facilitate the actualization of those values. To attain the actualization of these values one does not need courage, commitment, involvement, purpose or meaning; indeed, all one needs is expediency, "knowing the right people", how to compromise, etc.

Capitalist values prevent the development of the real human qualities -- thus you get Hubbells not Katies. But, the contemporary problems demand the presence of Katie. I think we're in trouble!!



By Auth for the Philadelphia Inquirer

'The charge is assault with a deadly weapon... Truth.'

Letters to the Editor

Dear Mr. Editor:

The Tuesday, March 26 edition of the Cadre carried an editorial concerning the recent on-campus lecture of Jean Vanier, to which I feel motivated to express a reaction. The writer of that editorial, Stan Dalton I assume, takes a hefty swing at Vanier for failing to identify in his talk the "true" reason for the problems of our society - namely, the domination of the many people of the lower classes by the few people of the upper class, the economic, political and military elite as the writer calls them. This is a poor basis for criticism of Vanier's lecture. The main thrust of Vanier's talk was that every person must take more responsibility for the well being of his fellows. He might have been able to drag in what the writer of the editorial deems essential, the supposed domination of the oppressed by the wealthy capitalist. Why did he not

do so? Probably because he did not feel that aspect of our society to be essential to the message he wanted to bring to his hearers. So why criticize him for this? Everyone marches to a different drummer. Just because Vanier did not pound out the same tune as the writer of the editorial pounds out week after dreary week is no reason to run him down.

The writer of the editorial is, I think, correct when he says that Vanier, in identifying the problems of today, told his listeners little that they didn't know already. The greatness of his talk (and I do mean greatness) lay in its presentation. He was really able to bring home to people that which he had to say. One could see he is a man who practices humanity as well as talks about it and, as such, he deserves praise and admiration rather than the criticism he received in the pages of the Cadre.

Richard Ellis