

# The Professor's Diary



**Monday:** You'll never guess where I've been for two weeks, dear diary. I can only say, it pays to be smart around here. (Come to think of it, that is what they pay me for.) Anyway, a few weeks ago I stumbled on a little-known clause in the faculty salary agreement allowing for a one week paternity leave. Quick as a flash I applied. The fact that my only child was born twenty-seven years ago was a mere bagatelle, and the fact that my leave happened to run back-to-back with Mid-Semester Break was irrelevant - or was it a hippopotamus? I effervesce at my cleverness.

**Tuesday:** I get a lot of stupid questions from my Tuesday-Thursday class for some reason. Today, in exasperation, I told them to ask me a really stupid question, one so obvious that everyone in the room, including me, would at least know the answer. This was to teach them a lesson. Of course, smart-ass Gallant - for whom drawing and quartering would be too sweet a punishment - immediately asked, "Please sir, what's a stupid question using the word umbrella?" I didn't know this was a self-referring question, and it took me the longest time, as I stood there, to figure out why they were all laughing.

**Wednesday:** The students are putting on some fool play this week, aided and abetted by one or two of my colleagues. I just got a note from one of the latter, "begging my indulgence", she says, because one of the actors has to go to the dress rehearsal instead of to my evening class, forsooth. What poppycock! I ask you: what will that student remember better ten years hence - this play or one of my lectures?

**Thursday:** All kinds of exciting faculty elections going on this week: Chairmanships, Senate, Board of Governors, and, of course, Parking Committee. I sit in my office day after day waiting for a draft. Unfortunately the only thing of that kind so far comes from my cracked window, and I seem to have caught a slight cold.

**Friday:** I understand the Budget Committee is still hard at it, looking for necessary funds in faculty salaries. They are trying to be as rational and as fair as possible. Among the alternatives currently under consideration are: (a) fire all the Protestants; (b) fire all those who are balding; (c) fire all those who are not balding. It will be good to see the university define itself at last.

# UNDER MILK WOOD

By Robyn Hume

To be perfectly honest, when I first heard that Under Milkwood, intended as a radio play, was going to be done on UPEI's stage I was more than skeptical. A radio play has no stage directions, lay outs or exits or entrances. Putting on a play is a difficult enough task in itself without having to build it from voices alone.

Before I attempt to give any constructive criticism of the play I want you to know that I am not a critic or very well skilled in theatrical technicalities. This will be an average person's account of a night at the theatre.

The lights dimmed then opened to reveal a play in a series of vignettes with no plot but rather individual accounts of the lives and dreams of 69 people living in the small Welsh town of Llareggub.

The characters used 4 stage levels which represented a number of homes, an inn, a schoolyard and the city streets. This produces a good visual effect. The director and artist deserve credit for stage design.

The play was narrated by two voices, Jim Gormley and Tracy Mahar who set the mood. They excited, subdued and enticed the audience throughout the whole performance.

The cast gave involved performances and while they were all good there are a few people who deserve special mention. Owen Aylward was wonderful as the old crusty sea captain, blind Captain Cat, who had a sense of humor and a sarcastic wit.

Nick Grant's Rev. Eli Jenkins (an eccentric poet) and looney Lord Cut Glass, were excellent and funny. His characters were smooth, well poised and distinct.

Mr and Mrs Pugh played by Mark Stevenson and Carolyn Meincke were, to me, the most memorable couple in the play.

Mark's mild mannered, scheming husband was a fine counterpoint to his evil shrew of a wife. I looked forward to every scene with them, waiting to hear what cutting remarks Mrs Pugh would address to her husband then waiting to see what poisons and viles of death the mad

scientist side of Mr Pugh concoct for his wife before returning to his facade of meekness. Though Mark at times was too loud and spoke incoherently, his performance as a whole was strong.

Mrs Ogmores-Pritchard's (Anne Reynolds) cold and wicked control of her two (now dead) husbands was wonderful to watch. David Moses as a former husband overacted and detracted from the scene though his debonair and handsome Mog Edwards was well done.

Polly Garter, (Renee Blanchette) the whore with a heart of gold and a penchant for babies sang a beautiful lilting song of a love lost which added a nice touch to the play. (Actually the play was full of "nice touches").

Of all these actors there are two who deserve honorable mention, Anne Reynolds and Theresa McKenna who struck me as having the most versatility and magnetism. They could change from housewives to schoolgirls to lover to neighbor and back again as quickly and convincingly one hardly noticed that they were the same actress.

Though many of the men's voices were lost or garbled and the music was a bit too sugary (not the songs in the play) everyone contributed his or her versions of each character to make the play a well rounded and captivating portrayal of the eccentrics in a small town.

The blocking was superb with entrances and exits so well timed and smooth that I didn't even notice them. Terry Pratt, the director, deserves a lot of credit for bringing this radio come stage play off so well. In fact I heard one engineer remark, "Gee, what a great play. I don't see how they'd ever do it on the radio. It wouldn't be half as good."

On Sunday night the play closed to three curtain calls and it deserved them all. I applaud the hard working actors, stage crew, light crew, director and everyone else involved in the making of Under Milkwood for bringing to us a play UPEI and the people of Charlottetown can be proud of.  
**ENCORE!!!**

## Enjoyed Under Milkwood?

What would you like to see next year? Come to a theatre planning session for 1982-83 in the Staff Lounge (basement of Main) Thursday, March 25, at 5:30pm. The Theatre Society invites your direction.

