

# STAGING THE SUPERNATURAL

Jonathan Saville

One did not have to be a Catholic, or a Christian, or a believer of any sort to be deeply moved by this scene.

*Everyman* is a late fifteenth century allegory designed to impress on its audience medieval Catholic doctrine about sin, death, and good works. It is also a very great play, taking its strength not only from the profound psychological insights of Christianity but also from the deepest layers of universal human experience. A conservative staging of the play—one that follows the text exactly and reproduces a medieval setting—is almost invariably successful. A more radical production—one which deemphasizes the local, the parochial, the specifically Catholic elements, and seeks to bring out the universal emotions inherent in the action—takes a great risk. Such a production may distort the play in the direction of a fashionable and trendy modernism. It may add modern costumes, modern slang, modern allusions—external frills which vulgarize the original and drag it even further from its dramatic roots. Or, with an intelligent director and skillful actors, it may make the play totally and immediately accessible to a modern audience without in any way damaging the author's intention or the essential integrity of his creation.

It was the latter kind of production we saw last week at the UCSD Theatre. Director Robert Benedetti of UC Riverside had gathered together a dozen young actors and actresses from the various campuses of the University, and together they had worked out a stunning version of *Everyman*, combining passages from the medieval text, mine of the most expressive art continually verging on dance, with an effective percussion music. This production—characterized by its own style and "dances" of immense inventiveness and power—was an once authentic Catholic, authentically modern, and supremely theatrical. The plot of *Everyman* is simple and relentless. The hero, who represents all men and women, is condemned to death by God because of mankind's sinfulness. *Everyman* desperately tries to find someone or something to accompany him on his dreadful journey—friends, relatives, riches, his strength, his beauty, his senses—but as he sinks towards death they desert him, one by one. In the end, he can take with him only his good deeds, love and faith as they are. A pair of examples must suffice to give an idea of the way this story was deepened and universalized in the UC production. How are God and Death to be represented on the stage? "By old men with beards? But what old man can convey the majesty of the creator of the universe, or the horror of the destroyer of

life? And in any case, how could any of these college-age actors play an old man effectively? The solution Mr. Benedetti and his students found was so brilliant that one might well attribute it to divine inspiration. God and Death were each played by two actors, a boy carrying a girl on his shoulders, the two of them speaking the character's lines simultaneously. Suddenly, without any beads, lightning flashes, echo chambers or puffs of smoke, there it was: Prime totem poles or Indian shamanistic totem poles or like stages of the dimity, two-headed, four-armed, double-souled, completely dehumanized, they stalked around the stage and evoked in an audience of casual Southern Californians that ancient religious terror that lies at the heart of all the great faiths of the world.

If this episode produced terror and awe with all the shock of a nightmare, the later episode of Confession called for a different though no less powerful set of feelings. The stage is piled high with lifeless bodies. *Everyman*, crumpled to the earth in sin. An actor, representing Confession, bends over one of the bodies, and with a look of infinite love proceeds to wash it clean with the sweat of her brow and the tears welling in her eyes. The body stirs, opens his eyes, and smiling in astonished thankfulness cries: "O glorious fountain that all uncleanliness doth clarify." Wash from me the spots of vice unclean. / That on me no sin may be seen. For joy I weep." The actress who played Confession now retreats to the edge of the stage, where she begins to hum a Gospel tune, and the actor she has brought to life assumes her role, choosing another of the dead bodies, and once again washing *Everyman's* sins away.

So the episode continued, the pile of bodies growing smaller, the circle of the resurrected around the stage growing larger, the Gospel song growing louder and more joyful, the beautiful invocation to the glorious fountain of Confession resounding again and again through the song like a clarion of almost unbearable happiness. One did not have to be a Catholic, or a Christian, or a believer of any sort to be deeply moved by this scene. The love and gentleness of the resurrector, the amazement and gratitude of the resurrected, the sense of fellowship and gladness in the ever more thunderous singing, and the spectacle of death being overcome and the dead bodies rising—all this made such a powerful appeal to the most deeply seated human longings that only someone completely mired in self-love and self-ignorance could have resisted it. For joy I weep.

As a constant theatergoer and reviewer I see a great many plays that please me, touch me, amuse to give an example of the way this story was deepened and universalized in the UC production. How are God and Death to be represented on the stage? "By old men with beards? But what old man can convey the majesty of the creator of the universe, or the horror of the destroyer of

# THE CRAZY CRISS-CROSSES OF LOVE

Kathleen Woodward

*Love and Marriage* Love and Marriage. They go together. Like a horse and carriage. And I tell you brother, You can't have one You can't have one You can't have one Without the other. Love and Marriage, that popular term that lies at the heart of all the hollowed advertising single-angle equation, has tumbled down. Joyce Carol Oates, prolific poet, novelist, short story writer, essayist, and critic who made the cover of *Newsweek* last December, has replaced it with one of her own: Marriage and Infidelity. One implies the other, one means the other, you can't have one without the other. If a real marriage is an intimate relationship, a close union, then, she suggests, it is to find oneself outside the polite middle-class contractual marriage and only through adultery. *Marriages and Infidelities*: This is the title of her latest collection of short stories, 24 in number, 497 on me no sin may be seen. For joy I weep.

Take the typical Joyce Carol Oates woman in a Joyce Carol Oates world. She is a white middle-class Anglo-Saxon, she is preoccupied with her woman's liberation, she is not self-conscious, she is not aware of her position, she is not employed, she is numb. She lives a life of habit under the dead wearing-down weight of domestic detail, the nightmare unreal allow-familiar world of Maxwell House Instant Coffee, Hamburger Helper, deodorants and cold capsules, bed baby food, subdivisions named Fox Hill, checking the toothbrushes to make sure the kids brushed their teeth, and the endless round of deciding what for dinner what to do for dinner what for dinner. Or take the typical Joyce Carol Oates man. He's a mediocre unimaginative professor who lives for his money, he's a 46-year-old car salesman at his job for a quarter of a century, who has never once allowed himself to dream.

As one of her characters says, "It is a plot, you imagine people in love—the lazy crisscrosses of love, bluffs, staves, tears." It is just this plot, not character, not style, which gives a Joyce Carol Oates story its reason for being. And the mechanism producing action is simple, invariable. For her characters it's either physical death by brutal act or escape by violence—whether violence be the form of a drawn out suburb directed at the children, a crazed adulterous passion whose intimacy may stand in for total and suicidal withdrawal, or a wildly neurotic



countless stories speak. Her passion is writing, as her mountain of books shows, and it's a perpetually hungry passion. Her stories burrow through their blunt, raw, crude prose often not even pausing for complete sentences, rushing to their conclusions so that she can start the next. She herself suppresses no detail, there is no such matter as good taste here. We hear of characters' less attractive habits—Paul's wife listening to him blow "his nose in the bathroom, first one nostril and then the other, carefully, seriously" or Marshall seeing "that queer silent smacking of his father's lips—again and again." In story after story we hear of fears of the flesh sagging and shifting, aging, as though all security depended on the firmness of the body.

And we read on compulsively, noting that the experiments in story-telling here and there, noticing double newspaper columns side by side on the page, noticing the self-dramatizing of the neurotic first-person narrator who is confused, and confuses us, about the boundaries of fantasy and reality, plot and life. But these experiments hardly matter. In story-telling here and there, noticing double newspaper columns side by side on the page, noticing the self-dramatizing of the neurotic first-person narrator who is confused, and confuses us, about the boundaries of fantasy and reality, plot and life. But these experiments hardly matter. In story-telling here and there, noticing double newspaper columns side by side on the page, noticing the self-dramatizing of the neurotic first-person narrator who is confused, and confuses us, about the boundaries of fantasy and reality, plot and life. But these experiments hardly matter.

But and nonetheless, *Marriages and Infidelities* remains a book more than well worth buying and reading. But buy this and don't be tempted, even if you are a novel reader, to instead pick up her just released, shocking-pink-covered, outrageously-expensive \$7.95, forever. For these characters, he's only real married thing in life is violence, exciting and disturbing, the Ernst Munck urge to scream and the doing of it.

In a Joyce Carol Oates story violence is not only the result of society's cultivated repression, it is preferable to it. Her characters are dangerous, sick, obsessed, but she asks us not to judge them, not to condemn them. Her vision is similar to, but not as acute, not as sharp, as that of Anthony Burgess in *A Clockwork Orange*. He is one step ahead in his belief that "it is preferable to have a world of violence undertaken in full awareness—violence chosen as an act of the will—that a world conditioned to be good or harmless." Whether drugged by dreary routine or high on passion, her characters are still asleep. It is an explosive reflex: They are not revolutionaries, they do not consciously choose violence but only blindly react to their situation.

And like them, Joyce Carol Oates herself seems to be asleep. She seems not an author in control but a medium through which

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## museums and galleries

**BRUCE MCCrackEN**, one-man show, through October 1, Ruth Gewart, mixed media, and Geoplinea Live, mixed media, October 2 through October 29, San Diego Art Institute, Babco Park.

**PAINTINGS** of ALFRED R. MITCHELL, "Dean of San Diego Painters" in 1950. Fine Arts Gallery, October 9 through November 4.

**SCULPTURE AND SERIGRAPHS** by Yannis Galis: also some collection of Peter Max lithographs, concerning Leslie Rockwell, Old Town Galleries, 2621 San Diego Avenue.

**ROBERT FERINE**, watercolors by the San Diego artist, Founders Gallery, University of San Diego, October 9 through November 2. Open weekdays 10 to 4 p.m. and by appointment.

**INDIAN SUMMER INSPIRED ACRYLIC PAINTING** by Robert Marrott and encaustic, abstract, silver-plated steel sculpture by Dale Watkins, Artists Cooperative Gallery, 3731 India Street, San Diego. Gallery open daily except Monday, 11:00 to 5:00, Sunday, 12:00 to 5:00, through October 19.

**PUEBLO INDIAN POTTERY MAKING**, Demonstrations and sales, presented by potters of Laguna Pueblo, Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico, San Diego Museum of Man, Balboa Park, through October 14, 10:00 to 4:30 daily.

**PAINTINGS** by Dick Robinson, Art Gallery, Southwestern College, Chula Vista, Gallery open Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, 9:30 to 9:30 p.m., and by appointment, Phone 420-1080, ext. 283, through October 26.

**FINE ETCHINGS** by J.B. Thompson, Water Cleveland, and Mary Tit, continuing, etching by Beth Van Hoesen, Orr's Gallery, 2202 Fourth Avenue, San Diego, through October 31.

**COLLAGE, ENVIRONMENTAL PIECE, VIDEOTAPE**, by Joel Gussman, DRAWING, PAINTING, SCULPTURE, by Carlos Gutierrez-Solana, ENVIRONMENTAL PIECE, VIDEOTAPE, by Paul Kos, La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, October 13 through November 21.

**FLUXUS PROJECTS**, a participating, live-story tall sculpture (branch of artist Ken Friedman), Malcolm Love Library, San Diego State, October 15 through November 16.

**THREE-DIMENSIONAL WORKS** by Jim Corsi, Art Gallery, Southwestern College, Chula Vista, Gallery open Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, 9:30 to 9:30 p.m., and by appointment, Phone 420-1080, ext. 283, through October 26.

**LARGE INK AND DYE ABSTRACTS** by Alice Marcus, Also, A Strange Collection of Assemblages and Graphics by Bert Kersey, prints by Kathleen McCord, and jewelry by del Castillo, Trind Gallery, 3701 India Street, near Washington, San Diego, Gallery hours: Tuesday—Saturday, 11—5 p.m.

**ROY LICHTENSTEIN**, paintings and graphics, Jack Glenn Gallery, 424 Fashion Valley.



DOUGLAS KNUISON, San Diego painter and graphic artist. Trind Gallery (India and Washington Streets, San Diego) October 2 through October 21.

**DIMENSIONS OF POLYNEZIA**, first major exhibition of Polynesian art to be shown west of the Mississippi, including both Polynesian art and works by Gauguin, LaFarge, and Matisse. Fine Arts Gallery, October 9 through November 25.

## GALLERY 8, open again for business, features traditional handicrafts from Peru, Nepal, and Africa, as well as unusual local and imported jewelry. International Center, Matthews Campus, UCSD, Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11:00 to 3:00 p.m.

**JIM KACIRK**, watercolor paintings of geometric shapes and patterns, The Athenaeum, 1006 Wall Street, La Jolla, through October.

## music

**LORI LIEBERMAN AND JOHN BATZDORF**, the Backdoor, Aztec Center, San Diego State, Friday and Saturday, October 12 and 13, 8:00 and 8:00 p.m.

**SAM CHATMAN**, the blues singer, along with Dave Evans, Folk Arts, Friday and Saturday, October 12 and 13, 8:00 p.m.

**ALCALA TRIO**, music by Mozart, Dvorak, and d'Indy, Camino Theatre, University of San Diego, Sunday, October 14, 4:00 p.m.

**MEZZO SOPRANO** Diana Davidson and violinist Phyllis Mazza, Fine Arts Recital Hall, Grossmont College, Sunday, October 14, 8:00 p.m.

**STRING CHAMBER MUSIC** OF HAYDN AND MOZART, part of S.D. Public Library chamber music series, third floor Lecture Room, San Diego Public Library, Tuesday, October 16, 7:30 p.m. Admission free.

**ALIRIO DIAZ**, master guitarist, Montezuma Hall, San Diego State, Wednesday, October 17, 8:00 p.m. Call 266-8477 for information.

## special events

**JAMES CUNNINGHAM AND ACME DANCE COMPANY**, UCSD Gymnasium, Saturday, October 13, 8:00 p.m. UCSD students, \$1.50, general admission, \$2.50.

**POW WOOD DAYS AND PARADE**, Sponsored by the Poway Chamber of Commerce and civic youth organizations. Parade, October 13 and 14. Carnival, consists of all sorts, barbecue, art show, and street dancing, October 13 through 20. Parade, October 20, 1:00 p.m.

**COLUMBUS DAY PARADE**, Sponsored by the Italian American Association and Central City Ass'n., floats, clowns, bands, gnomes. Parade a from North and Broadway to Columbia and in Downtown San Diego, Saturday, October 13, 10:00 a.m.

**NAVY DAY FAIR '73**, Celebrating 198th Navy Birthday. Three days of events at Broadway pier for public, Friday, October 12, 11:00 a.m. to dusk, Saturday and Sunday, October 13 and 14, 10:00 a.m. to dusk. Visit Navy Cruiser USS Chicago, submarine USS Salmon, two Navy PT boats and an aircraft carrier, all open simultaneously for public to board. Band concerts each day at 2:00 p.m. Invitational boat regatta at noon Saturday; races on San Diego Bay, final race at Broadway pier.

## theatre

**SLEEPING BEAUTY**, play based on Grimm's fairy tale, Actors Quarter, Saturdays and Sundays through October 14, 2:00 p.m.

**THE DEATH OF A SALESMAN**, Arthur Miller's play, Actors Quarter, Fridays and Saturdays through October 13, 8:30 p.m.

**GHOSTS**, Henrik Ibsen's play, Dramatic Arts Theatre, San Diego State, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, October 11, 12, and 13, 8:00 p.m.

**TEAHOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON**, presented by The Southeast Community Theatre, Lincoln High School Auditorium, Fridays and Saturdays, through October 27, 8:00 p.m.

**AND MISS REDDON DRINKS A LITTLE**, by Paul Zindel, Old Globe Theatre's Cassius Carter Stage, Tuesdays through Sundays, 8:00 p.m. (Also Sunday matinee on October 7, 2:00 p.m.) through October 28.

**NIGHT WATCH**, Coronado Playhouse, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through October 20, 8:30 p.m.

**SEVEN YEAR ITCH**, presented by the North County Community Theatre (1120 Grand Ave., San Marcos), Thursdays through Sundays at 8:30 p.m., and Saturdays at 2:00 p.m., through October 28. Call 744-4566 from 10:00 to 3:00 Monday through Friday for reservations.

**PUFF**, THE MAGIC DRAGON, presented by Puppets Please, Balboa Park Puppet Theatre, Sundays through October 28, 1:30 and 2:30 p.m.

**SMALL CRAFT WARNINGS**, Tennessee Williams' play, Mission Playhouse, Fridays and Saturdays through October, 8:30 p.m.

# OCTOBER 11 TO OCTOBER 17 THIS WEEK IN SAN DIEGO



**JABBERWOCK**, by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, Old Globe Theatre, Tuesdays through Sundays, 8:00 p.m. (Also Sunday matinee on October 14, 2:00 p.m.) Runs October 9 through November 11.

**CHRYSALIS**, a new, multi-media play, Crystal Palace Theatre, Fridays and Saturdays, 8:30 p.m., through November 18.

**THE PRISONER OF SECOND AVENUE**, Neil Simon's play, starring Van Johnson, Off Broadway Theatre, Tuesday through Saturday, 8:30 p.m.; Sunday, 7:30 p.m.; 2:00 p.m. matinee both Saturday and Sunday. Runs October 4 through November 4.

**THE LEGAL DEFINITION OF LIFE**, by Dr. Larry Alexander, USD Law School, Part of series "The Social Consequences of the New Genetics," DeSales Hall, University of San Diego, Tuesday, October 16, 7:30 p.m. Open to the public.

**REPORT ON UPF CONVENTION** by Gary Brown, delegate from San Diego Boycott Committee, Milani Forum, 4635 El Canon Blvd., San Diego, Friday, October 12, 8:00 p.m.

**"THE EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL LIFE OF CHINA"**, Dr. Maxwell Howell, donor, School of Professional Studies, CISUSI, and recent visitor to China, San Diego Public Library, 8th & Streets, San Diego, Wednesday, October 17, 1:30 p.m.

**STEWART L. UDALL**, former Secretary of the Interior, on "The Energy Crisis," Mea Hall, University of San Diego, Wednesday, October 17, 8:00 p.m.

## sports

**BASKETBALL**: San Diego Conquistadors vs. Memphis Golden Horn, S.D. Community Concourse, Friday, October 12, 7:30 p.m. Phone: 427-9100.

**HOCKEY**: San Diego Gulls vs. Salt Lake, S.D. Sports Arena, Friday, October 12, 8:00 p.m. Phone 224-4176.

**BOXING**: Two featured fights, The Coliseum, 1485 E Street, San Diego, Friday, Saturday, October 11, 12, and 13, 8:00 p.m.

**TENNIS**: 28th Annual Evening Thru Tennis Championships, Morley Field, Balboa Park, October 12 through 14, 8:00 a.m.

**BICYCLE RACE**: second annual Mission Bay Bicycle race, Fiesta Island, in Mission Bay Park, October 13 and 14, 8:00 a.m.

**FOOTBALL**: San Diego State Aztecs vs. New Mexico State in the annual Shrine game, San Diego Stadium, Saturday, October 13, 8:00 p.m.

THIS EVENTS CALENDAR IS COMPILED EACH WEEK BY THE READER AND IS A SERVICE SPONSORED BY THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FIRST NATIONAL BANK. ALL INQUIRIES REGARDING THE EVENTS LISTED HERE SHOULD BE MADE TO THE READER — 454-1052 — OR TO THE EVENT SPONSOR. PLEASE SEND ITEMS TO BE LISTED TO: READER, P.O. BOX 80803, SAN DIEGO, CA 92138 OR CALL 454-1052

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Schools and colleges are thinking in terms of special exercises for students, and local civic organizations and study clubs will have lectures and discussion groups on the history of the Commonwealth. Except in a few major centers such as Lexington, Louisville, and Bowling Green, resources for the study of Kentucky history are relatively weak. For over fifteen years the Lost Cause Press has been developing a basic library of Kentuckiana in microfiche, and it will be our contribution to the Bicentennial to offer some thousand fundamental pieces which are a cornerstone for study and research in our history.

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