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} acc. to Yale 71-2, 74-S directories

October 3, 1985

HAROLD
BLOOM

Dear Harold Bloom:

John Hollander told me that the enclosed text--The Responses, a dramatic poem about a responsa-writing rabbi--was one of the few American plays that had interested him over the past twenty years (two of the others being, as I recall, James Merrill's The Immortal Husband and something of Jay Wright's). David Bromwich has also read and expressed admiration for it.

I know your writings well, from the Shelley book on, and have often felt better sustained and more ruggedly challenged by them than by work in my own unhappy "field." (It is difficult being an American playwright to whom, say, Jables and Edgar Bowers mean a great deal, and David Mamet and Marsha Norman, very little.) Much as I would like you to know my work, I would not thrust it before you this way if I were not sufficiently aware of your preoccupations to suppose it might hold some interest for you.

By way of personal introduction: I taught in the Yale English Department from 1969 to 1975 and also ran the undergraduate Theatre Studies program during most of that period. My plays have been done off-Broadway (at the Circle-in-the-Square and the American Place Theatres, among others) and regionally. My book, The Theatrical Event, was published by Wesleyan in 1975 (paperback 1977). My doctorate is from Harvard (1969) with a dissertation on "Thomas Lovell Beddoes: Playwriting and the Romantic Imagination." Other plays of mine include The Moments of the Wandering Jew (1978) and The Gods of the Theatre (1983), which deals with a deus ex machina in the Greek theatre who can't find his way down onto the stage. At present I am completing a second book, Acting as Reading, an account of the actor's work-process as a kind of physicalization of the act of reading.

I have never made much of an effort to seek readers for my plays beyond a playwright's natural "readership" of actors. But the sorts of responses I have had from John and David and other readers outside the theatre have made me feel I should like to reach more of them--and none more than the "strong reader" around the corner to whom I feel indebted for poet after poet.

Sincerely yours,

David Cole

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