

Catharsis

SOME YEARS ago, psychologist Dr. Eric Berne formulated the theory that within every personality there exist three ego-states: Child, which is uninhibited, creative and emotional; Parent, which reiterates the view of Authority; and Adult, mature and

reasoned balance and self control.

In Catharsis, Bristol Revunions have devised a piece which aims to demonstrate the fine dividing line between sanity and madness, by representing the three ego-states of two sisters, one in an asylum, the other not.

The concept works well for a time, but breaks down when the actresses swop characters, now playing one ego-state of one sister, now one of the other. Flashback scenes designed to illuminate the family environment which has contributed to their mental state show us nothing more unusual than ordinary parents who say the sort of thoughtlessly cruel things most of us end up saying to our children, in spite of ourselves.

Overall direction by Lin Woodacres was tight and interesting, but the end result still had the look of a series of acting exercises, expressing a simplistic view of a problem which required much more depth in its approach.

Floyd Kennedy