

“SHYLOCK AND SAMBO” HITS BROADWAY

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This fall, a play called "Shylock and Sambo" will appear on Broadway. An advance copy of the script says that it features gay Jewish slavemasters who sodomize their obsequious black slaves. Though it is often vulgar, it is nonetheless a major work of art. The theater company that is producing it receives federal, state and local funding.

The response from gay, Jewish and black groups has been to denounce the play as bigotry. But an editorial in the New York Times exclaims, "That there is a native strain of bigotry, violence and contempt for artistic expression in this country is not news." Moreover, noted playwrights have rushed to defend the play, citing freedom of speech and respect for the arts.

Now if this isn't fairy land, nothing is. The artistic community would never dream of offending gays, Jews and blacks, and the New York Times would never write such nonsense. But when it comes to a play that features a Christ-like character having sex with the apostles, a different standard emerges: the Times quote that was mentioned was exactly this newspaper's reaction to the Catholic League's protest of Terrence McNally's "Corpus Christi." Not a word was uttered about Christian bashing.

Indeed, the editorial was labeled, "Censoring Terrence McNally." Question: who are the censors? Gays tried to shut down the movie, "Cruising," Jews sought to stop the publication of "A Nation on Trial," feminists blasted "Smack My Bitch Up," Puerto Ricans rallied against "Seinfeld," etc. Were any of these groups branded as censors for registering their moral outrage? So why the double standard?

The Catholic League does not want the government to shut down "Corpus Christi" (the producers should gut it). But it does want artists to put an end to their hate speech and bury their anti-Catholic hatchet once and for all. Legal rights are not necessarily moral rights. So let the debate begin, with one standard for all.

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