

March 31, 1969

# Pastiche





# THE DRAMA MESS

else could the success of our Workshop be evaluated?

The Workshop seems to me, given its many difficulties, to have been more than worth the attempt to make it happen. It was (and is) admittedly an experiment in teaching as well as in making drama. Though an advanced workshop in Drama, its doors have been open to dancers, painters and even to students in the social sciences. It allowed, as it developed over the semester, a number of choices. Two students taught new drama forms to children at the North Bennington Elementary School. Several chose to work with existing "avant garde" material (Beckett, Ionesco, etc.). But the entire class, at one time or another, was involved in the attempt to create from scratch a series of new theatrical forms.

Several public theatrical events took place during the fall as a result of the Workshop. One was an outdoor event on the night of Halloween, performed in the orchard and at the pond, based on Tolkien's "Fellowship of the Ring." Everyone who came automatically became part of the performance, which was conceived and directed entirely by the students. A second was a concert reading in the Carriage Barn of my play "Rites," performed by two faculty members, myself and Joseph Juhasz, and four drama students. A third was an evening in Commons Theatre, featuring a work by Jane Evans called "Boxes."

I had seen Jane's work early in its inception and it was the one time all semester long that I had seriously encouraged a student to prepare a public performance. "Boxes" was performed towards the end of the semester and it seemed to me, as well as to many members of that audience, an extraordinary work. Where one would put "Boxes" in the college catalogue, I haven't the foggiest notion. It's part "theatre," part "dance," part "sculpture," part "music." Sidney Tillim who saw the last rehearsal of the work was tremendously moved and told me he thought Jane had conceived "a promise of startling originality."

How did the President evaluate the success of the Workshop? Was he pleased or dissatisfied with the Halloween event? Pleased or dissatisfied with my concert reading? Did he agree or disagree with Sidney Tillim's estimate that Jane Evans had conceived an extraordinary work? I can't say. For the President was not present on any of these occasions. The President was, as far as I can tell--busy. And where were his advisors on these occasions, those who have now helped him formulate plans for drama at Bennington? Also, doubtless busy.

We are all busy people at Bennington. If the President is busy fund-raising and sitting on various committees, I am busy teaching and carrying on my career as a playwright. But I did find time in December to prepare a rather detailed document, at the request of some of my colleagues, outlining a new drama program at Bennington. My proposal was, though in some sense radical, not nearly as radical as it might have been, had I not also given careful consideration to the lives of those of us who are still

laboring for drama at this college. I did not want to present sweeping changes, which I could easily have done, though I felt that even the few radical points in my program that were presented might outrage some in the community.

But in fact no one seemed outraged by anything in my report. I assume the report, which was presented to the FEPC at a rather late date, was read. To what degree it was then considered, I have no way of knowing. Neither the President, nor anyone else ever officially consulted me about it, questioned me about it, showed the slightest interest in the fact that one of the three members of the division had prepared a new program for the community to consider. To this day, aside from several colleagues who read my report and advised me about it as friends, no one has bothered to take it seriously. It is as if I had never written it.

It must be obvious by this time that I am more than a little skeptical about the President's burning interest in drama at Bennington. Also that I am more than a little skeptical about the plans the President says he has for drama at Bennington. On December 27th the President, in accepting Judy Raffael's resignation and indicating that he was not going to renew my contract, stated in positive fashion that "we have other plans for Bennington College." But what are those plans?

The FEPC minutes for December 9 speak of a need for an actor-director and a director-producer. No one has bothered to tell me how these hyphenated combinations were arrived at, but what really intrigues me is the word "producer." Does the President (recall that he chairs the FEPC meetings) mean that he wants to bring a young David Merrick to Bennington, someone who will advise our students on the intricacies of finding backers for a show, hiring directors, tracking down "stars", etc.? Interesting plan. Or is it that the President plans "in the Spring Term (to) invite some professionals from the outside, including some of our former faculty members...to work with those on the drama faculty to devise a plan for the future of drama at the College and then to consult with the committee (FEPC) on such a plan."

Without laboring the rather offensive assumption that the present drama faculty is not composed of "professionals," the FEPC document appears to say that the President's "plan" is to try to find some former faculty members, whoever and wherever in the world they are, to return to Bennington to sit down with the present drama faculty, two of whom he asked not to return because of his new plans, to help formulate new plans. Or if the FEPC document is not to be taken at face value, one may then properly ask of the President just what his plans are and how he has availed himself of the privilege of "firing" not only one, but two faculty members, based on his superior wisdom in these matters?

So much for the letter of Jan. 2. The President's plans are becoming clearer. He wants, as the Drama Faculty well knows,

to get rid of the troublemakers, that is, the present Drama Faculty, as their contracts come up for renewal. That means myself now and Paul Gray in two years. Judy Raffael's resignation was an unexpected windfall for him. He wants, as far as we can determine, to get rid of all this experimental bullshit, to have good, solid plays at Bennington and good, solid people who won't make anyone nervous. It seems evident that he's already chosen the people he wants, or will do so shortly, though he's going through his usual motions of setting up committees so that everyone (some faculty members and some students) can enjoy the fiction that they were "consulted" about the new faculty.

Mr. Bloustein recently informed a delegation of drama students that the budget simply wouldn't allow for the teaching of playwriting any longer. The budget will also not allow for the teaching of design. No playwriting, no design -- lots of acting, and presumably directing. So there goes about three-fifths of the present drama program. What about the students who came here to study playwriting and design? Too bad.

But why is it too bad? Who decides how the monies are to be allocated? At present there are approximately fifteen playwrights at Bennington, five of them doing advanced work. What calculations take place inside the President's head that dictate the abandonment of the playwriting program?

I'm afraid the playwriting teacher has made the President uncomfortable by 1. accusing him of forcing a loyalty oath on the student body in a stormy faculty meeting last May; 2. pushing for the establishment of a student newspaper, a paper which the President did everything in his power to keep from happening, including the refusal to contribute any funds until he was finally embarrassed into doing so, the suggestion that the editors might better put out an issue of Quadrille instead, and even the imputation that one of the two editors was doing too poorly in her studies to be allowed to edit a paper; 3. suggesting during Self-Study Week and later in Quadrille that the President had largely rigged the week to serve his own interests.

I get the feeling that it's impossible for the President to separate what's good for Bennington from what's good for himself. It's impossible for me to take at face value anything he says. If the school is facing a financial crisis, why is the drama division the only division in the college to have its staff (faculty and assistants) reduced? If we are in such dire straits, why not do away with the division entirely?

It seems to me sheer tokenism to keep performers and to turn one's back on the writers who help create what the performers do and the designers who create the environment for the performance. I don't think the President should be allowed the luxury of saying he is building a department when he is in fact wrecking a department. I don't think the future of drama at Bennington should be allowed to remain in his hands.

Arthur Sainer

I've been asked to write an article for Pastiche on the state of drama at Bennington. Let me say at the outset that if Bennington devoted as much time to the arts as it does to bullshit politicking about them, the college would be a lot healthier and so would the arts.

No need here to rehash the Sainer-Gray rhubarbs. In some dumb way Paul and I seem to respect each other and in recent months we've even found a way of living alongside one another, with only occasional monumental outbursts.

The state of drama at Bennington unfortunately seems to be tied up with the state of Bloustein at Bennington and here I'd like to quote at length from a document I submitted to the Board of Trustees and other interested souls on Jan. 2:

Very late last spring, because of the constant warfare within the Drama Division, its members met with Harry Pearson and agreed to a trial "separation" for one year. Paul Gray would continue the Ensemble, Judy Raffael and I would operate an Experimental Workshop.

Each of the three faculty members then spent a goodly part of the summer trying to work out programs, personnel, rehearsal space, financial problems, etc., all with a view towards getting the trial programs on their feet come September. Then in late August the President, who by this time had also taken over the duties of Dean of Faculty for one year, told us that he wanted us to abandon our plans, that the one year experiment simply "didn't look nice" in the eyes of the outside world. We insisted that the experiment had to be attempted, that the disruption of the program at this point would produce nothing but chaos for everyone involved in drama. The President gave in.

But the President also informed me at this time that, contrary to the aims of the Experimental Workshop (essentially that our students be encouraged to experiment without impending public performance hanging over their heads), it was rather important that we have public performances, for how



# HOME INC. ATTACKS LOCAL POVERTY

Because rural poverty does not manifest itself in the concentrated slum areas of urban ghettos, poverty in Bennington is often overlooked. It has been estimated, however, that 30% of the residents of Bennington live below what has been nationally set as the poverty level.

The scattered instances of poverty make it possible to begin to attack the housing problem by isolating small areas at a time; this is what HOME is doing.

HOME, Inc. (Housing Opportunity Mission Ecumenical) is a private corporation whose purpose is "to provide pleasant and adequate housing at reasonable prices to the elderly, the handicapped, and those of low income".

HOME was founded last winter by the North Bennington Congregational Church. However, it is stressed that this is a corporation in which the entire community, not only the religious institutions, is becoming involved.

The founders have said, "It is not our intention to try to solve people's problems for them, but rather to be a catalyst for people to solve their own problems."

Public or federally-financed housing is not available in Bennington due to the absence of any housing or building codes. While this issue has been raised before the state legislature, HOME has already begun to work on the problem.

In an attempt to involve private capital in the public sphere, two kinds of stock are being sold. Class A stock can be bought by any individual or any profit-making organization. The stockholders elect from among themselves nine voting directors.

Class B stock, of which Bennington College owns fifty shares, is available to non-profit making organizations. A purchase of ten or more shares entitles the organization to elect one non-voting director to assist the corporation in an advisory capacity.

All stock is \$25.00 per share. Individuals can contribute money to HOME through a non-profit making organization to receive tax deductions, but establishing a subsidiary non-profit making corporation is being considered.

HOME was originally founded as a profit-making corporation to attract certain possible investors.

Recently HOME has purchased Beech Court, which consists of nearly twenty apartments, and is in the process of renovating it. The remodeling is necessarily extensive, including the installation of central heating in what are all presently unheated apartments, plumbing, paneling, cabinets, stoves and refrigerators.

People from Beech Court have been employed as carpenters, where possible, but much of the work force is volunteer. High school students are donating labor as part of their vocational training program and students from both the high school and the college have been painting on weekends.

No one has been evicted for the period of renovation. Of the nine apartments on which work is now being done, seven were unoccupied; places are now being found into which the two remaining families can temporarily move. When the work is completed, the Vermont Housing Authority will subsidize rent payments of the families.

Certain minimal requirements will have to be met: the family must prove that they have a low income, no pets, and that no more than two persons will occupy any one bedroom. People living on the unrenovated side will have priority in moving into the remodeled apartments.

HOME also has plans to renovate a duplex house which can be used for families with a large number of children.

HOME depends on volunteers; no full time workers are employed. If you are interested in painting at Beech Court or in selling stock to local industries and unions, please contact Sally Fischl, Box 419.



## Happenings

Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut

Monday, March 31; film, The Member of the Wedding, 8:00 p.m., Shanklin Hall.

Boston

Friday and Saturday, April 4 and 5; Pop Festival, Blood, Sweat & Tears, Chuck Berry, Charles Lloyd, Steppenwolf, Arthur Brown, others, Boston Arena.

New York

Friday and Saturday, April 4 and 5; Chambers Brothers, Fillmore East, 8:00 and 11:30 p.m.

Friday and Saturday, April 11 and 12; Blood, Sweat and Tears, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Aum, Fillmore East, 8:00 and 11:30

Sunday, April 6; Newport Jazz-Festival-sponsored jazz night, Fillmore East, 7:00 p.m.

# WOMEN'S LIBERATION: "hypocr

Until I went to the Liberation meeting on Wednesday night, March 19, I had held the opinion that the "movement", as it likes to be called, was a white, middle class, radical campaign. But after I left the meeting I realized that the movement is really a white, upper middle class, pseudo-radical, neurotic campaign.

Five other Black students and I, in response to a galley questioning the Black women's role in Women's liberation, sat disgustedly in on the meeting while the typical Bennington bull shit was tossed about.

The discussion ran like something from True Confessions. Sex frustrations and someone's sudden awareness that being a woman was acceptable, were the main topics, until the Black students were asked to join in the conversation.

Whereupon the Black women asked for the purpose of the movement and the relevancy of it to Black women. The answer in essence was that the different objectives of Blacks and Whites made the movement irrelevant to Blacks and that if the Black women present didn't like the tone of the discussion they could leave.

We left.

To acknowledge the limitation of the Liberation movement to white women is to acknowledge the aims and character of the movement. White women want to be "liberated" from their self-cleaning ovens, from padded bras, from Helena Rubenstein, and from John Meyer of Norwich. Black women don't have to be "liberated" from any of these problems. These are problems of White society.

And then again, it's highly questionable whether these stereotypes can be termed as problems. I mean, in this country there is an idiot for a President, there are thirty billion dollars being squandered on an illegal and inhumane war, there is rampant racism, and there are between 40 and 50 million poverty-stricken. Yet the women's liberation is regarded as a major problem and receives more concern on this campus than any of these issues.

I also find it odd that the only time this campus shows any solidarity is over the issue of sex. Or maybe it isn't so odd. This is Bennington College. The Liberation movement is as much a sex issue as the men in rooms proposal. It's a case of women wanting to play an aggressive role to refute their femininity, or to condone their lack of it. Sex is the grit of the issue.

Another thing that needs to be examined is the terminology of the "movement". All of the "hip" talk in

it was stolen from Black people. The Black expression for organize, "get together", the Black words uniting the race in a common cause, "brothers" and "sisters" are now part of the movement's vocabulary. Even the Black expression for talking love was used and spelled "wrap."

Is there anything that "Whitey doesn't pick up on"?

The Women's Liberation Movement is nothing but a hypocritical, worthless hobby for women who have nothing better to get uptight about, uptight because biology played a trick on them. Dick envy. But take it slow. All we may have, as Brother Eldridge said, is pussy power, but baby, that's some heavy shit.

Daria Vaughan

## Outasight sounds

It was the first time I had seen a group of cellists, violinists, violists and one flutist sight-reading the same piece at the same time. When someone lost track of the music, the group stopped and picked up at a convenient point. And when the first two pieces were finished, the group didn't seem certain whether the audience wanted them to continue. So Martha Siegel, the organizer of the Bach Birthday party, and also a cellist, asked the listeners to applaud if they wanted the music to continue; and it continued.

The Bach Concert wasn't a concert of the usual nature. I can only speak as a member of the audience, but I felt a certain looseness, or composure in the air; I think that the performers were very relaxed and because of their calm I was calm.

We weren't listening to musicians grinding out a performance so much as listening to people enjoying something they were creating and sharing with us. We could feel talent and hard work on the musicians' part and still not feel left out because it was as important to appreciate the talent and its product as it was to create such beautiful music.

After the concert was over and the Birthday cake was eaten, a rock group, The Pure Lard, played. The dance was fantastic.

The relaxed feeling of the concert carried over to the dancers; all the social normalities of a dance were dropped. Everyone danced with everyone. As a matter of fact, one didn't have to dance in particular, but merely be there.

Groups of people sat down in the middle of the floor spontaneously, and then howled - spontaneously, just as the musicians who performed during the concert had played spontaneously.

There was no question of whether the howling was right, wrong, good or bad; it was what some people felt like doing at that moment, and therefore that howling was the best and only thing we could do at

## White Music

Jazz as played by white musicians was not the same as that played by black musicians, nor was there any reason for it to be ... The music of the white Jazz musician did not issue from the same cultural circumstance; it was, at its most profound instance, a learned art.

Leroi Jones  
Blues People

The New Collegiate Jazz Band had learned its art well. It has taken from Miles, Shepp, Coltrane. It has grooved on Parker, on Dizzy, even on Guy Lombardo. In fact, it's taken everything Black from Black people but the people themselves.

And it is ordered like cotton in a row, behind metal and music stands. Shaking their heads and patting their feet, getting in there grooving, grooving hard. And sweating, under hot, white lights that you'll never find in nobody's real set. Standing up in a row like cotton with legs. One, two, three. All together now.

Grooving hard and blowing into that brass, making noise, long and hard. Noise with no feeling. Nothing mellow. Blowing hard. Blowing so hard something's got to come out of it. Spit.

But the instruments are still metal, hard, whole. They don't melt into sweet candy, women, wine. They don't laugh, don't cry. Don't call for God, for Momma. Imitating hard, but not making it. Spilling it. Trying though.

Got to give you credit. Eh man, grooving hard. Got everything going for you. Got all the records in the world you'll ever need. Just ain't got no soul, Baby. And I can't tell you where to go to get some.



that moment, and therefore that howling was the best and only thing we could do at that moment.

By the end of the dance, everyone was ecstatic and exhausted. We didn't have music pounding in our ears so much as our own sweaty excitement pounding through our veins.

We had become so open and real and unhung up that we gave and took everything we could. After it was all over you realized that you hadn't been dancing but just jumping up and down for three hours, and it didn't matter, because it was you.

Sarah Wallman



# "critical hobby" or societal struggle?

The purpose of this article is to explain briefly why we feel there is a need for a women's liberation movement both generally and at Bennington.

First of all, we want to make it very clear that we are not female chauvinists, we do not hate men, nor do we want to be men. Our interest is to break down the role of women in order to develop potentials, that is extending and changing women's ideal of themselves.

We want to abolish the arbitrary roles which society has constructed for both men and women. This would leave the responsibility for defining one's self on one's own terms, rather than on sexually defined expectations.

Society demands that we act according to prescribed roles. Such sexual delineations must be re-evaluated in our relation to society in general, towards each other, to men, and in regard to our expectations for ourselves as women.

Recognizing that such problems are societally based is the first step. What we must do, then, is to find ways to reform and change such conceptions in order to arrive at our own solutions and goals - based on our potential and performance, rather than on arbitrary "sexual" divisions.

We feel therefore, that to deny that our society does have such prejudices, and to hold the position that "everyone can accomplish whatever they set out to do", is unrealistic. In more specific terms, we must evaluate our expectations for ourselves.

For example, here at Bennington there has been much talk about graduate study/professional goals. One of the first things that we can see is that statistically a very small percentage of women successfully enter professional and business circles. In fact, some of us are stopped even before we enter those fields, due to quota systems which work against women in graduate and professional schools.

Another problem that many of us are aware of, is the fear and guilt that we feel in regard to "competing" with men; and more immediately, in our relationships with men.

One thought that is often heard is: "I feel like a pretty strong woman. Men are attracted to me for my strength, but these relationships don't work out because the man feels that I am competing with him."

The validity of this may be questionable, but it is a very real concern for many women at Bennington. What we have to understand is that if these sexual divisions did not exist, there would be a very different sense of "competition" - perhaps we could avoid the whole concept (war). We must start feeling good about ourselves as women, we must begin to accept ourselves in order to build upon that sense of self.

Another phenomenon that we are all party to, is

the sense of panic many of us feel in regard to marriage, or "a meaningful relationship". This is certainly something that we look forward to, along with being mothers (having children), but what we must examine is the fear that is felt by so many women - which is that so many of us enter into such relationships to avoid and escape from our sense of insecurity, to find our sense of adequacy primarily in those terms.

The point is to somehow be secure enough in ourselves, to find meaningful alternatives which would allow us to lead happier, and more fulfilling lives.

Both of us have sensed the competitive and hostile relationships with other women that seem to exist at Bennington. These feelings extend to every part of our life here, and seem to promote a collection of isolated and alienated individuals.

What we are trying to accomplish, then, is a fuller realization and understanding of each other within a community.

Women here at Bennington have been talking about some of these problems. We are having large weekly meetings which will be centered around different topics, films and lectures. In addition, we are breaking up into smaller groups to deal with specific actions and discussions.

There are groups which will meet to work for changes in legislation, on the state and national level. Another group is concerned with establishing a day-care center in Bennington. One group is concerned with establishing an office at the college which would deal with career guidance.

Other groups will meet to talk about things on more personal levels - our conceptions of ourselves as women - to attempt to define what is "feminine", what is our sexuality; how women are portrayed in the media, etc.

These meetings will all be announced in galleys or College Week, and are open to any woman who would like to come. We welcome suggestions, questions, and criticism.

We hope that this will be the first in a series of articles. We will be glad to answer, defend, change, respond to and with any of you. There is a place for anyone, there is no "party dogma" - anyone who wants to become involved in any part of this is welcome.

Susan Unger  
Deborah Shapiro

Cover: Amy Handler

# The Bomb in our Own Back Yard

Polly Barnes and Peggy Getchell

Plans are underway for the construction of a nuclear reactor in Easton, N.Y., twenty-five miles from Bennington. Such reactors serve the ostensibly innocuous purpose of generating electricity, but there are serious ramifications of which people of the Bennington community ought to be made aware. We are situated within the proposed reactor's sphere of influence.

Here are some reasons why we should be concerned:

1. Radioactive waste products released into the atmosphere by these reactors endanger the ecological balance of nature by affecting vital links in the whole life cycle, e.g: poisoned vapors condense into poisoned rain, which poisons the streams it feeds, which poison the algae they produce, which poisons the fish on which it feeds, etc.
2. The concentration in man of iodine and strontium isotopes from these same atmospheric waste products can cause leukemia and cancer of the thyroid gland.
3. Large quantities of plutonium are recovered from the operations of nuclear reactors. "The plutonium must be turned over to the Atomic Energy Commission, which in turn makes it available for atomic and nuclear weapons production, at present the only known use for significant amounts of plutonium. Thus, it would appear that all nuclear power plants (and there are over 100 under construction and on the drawing boards) are plutonium factories and their operation is directly tied to nuclear weapons production."
4. Safety regulations governing nuclear reactors go no further than those governing regular industry.

"Another hazard is associated with the process of the exchange of new fuels for those which have been 'spent'. It should be borne in mind that these 'spent' fuels are still radioactive and highly toxic. 'Spent' fuels must be transferred from the reactor and transported to landbased or oceanic burial grounds. These and other radioactive wastes are sealed in containers which pre-

sumably will not break open or develop leaks. In the past, however, such containers have released radioactivity which subsequently have been found in micro-organisms which make up the food of larger organisms and eventually may constitute part of the

human diet."

Unmarked cars are used to transport the waste products over road and railroad. One can only be thankful that so far collisions involving these vehicles have not occurred, and that the radioactive burial grounds have not been interrupted by faults or earth tremors.

Mr. Larry Bogart will speak to the college on March 31 at 8:00 p.m. about the problems which face our community. He will also be at Mount Anthony Auditorium the same day from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

If you are interested in a community action program, you may sign up with Mrs. Kirkpatrick. There will also be a table at both of Mr. Bogart's speeches will also be a table at both of Mr. Bogart's speeches.

Dr. Lyons and Mrs. Foster's most interesting articles, excerpts of which appear in this article, appeared in the Bennington Banner March 13. Anyone interested in the problems of nuclear reactors will find them of use.



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To the Editors:

Stop thinking about getting "credit" for working on Pastiche, for conducting free university classes, for doing poverty work, for reading, for thinking, for taking showers. Stop thinking about getting credit.

The money situation will not "ease up" -- for Pastiche, for Bennington College (as the faculty have recently been made aware) -- until those responsible "face up" to it. Your future as a viable financial enterprise calls not so much for continuing grants from the community as for a serious and independent financial policy, or cultivating regular advertising perhaps, or soliciting subscriptions.

If the fruits of the NRT TOUR amount to nothing more than the "proposals" included in Pastiche (I do not say that they do), then our money, and the three NRT's, is wasted indeed. These "proposals" contain no argument or discussion and are vague beyond belief. "GRADES. Abolition thereof." Indeed! How about: "SLAVERY. Abolition thereof." This is a proposal? How? Why? Ones immediate apprehensions on this issue alone are considerable. The issue deserves, and demands, sober and thorough analysis, and detailed program; students cannot ignore these deserts at the cost of being ignored. As for the rest -- it is an insult. We are asked to introduce a summer program. Why? "Presumably" to recruit low-income students. "Presumably".

I take it -- I hope -- that my complaints above are to be directed to Pastiche's reporting. If so, I say take heed. The community's (severely limited) resources cannot be allocated to a forum for discussion of this level.

John B. Cairns

To the editor:

It was implied in your article concerning the three seniors' NRT mission on behalf of Bennington College, that somehow they were able to dispell the assumption held by students at other schools that we are isolated, elitist, "irrelevant to current problems."

There are some of us here who require the same service.

G.M. Surette

## KLH

## Pastiche

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