

Galley

June 4, 1965

The following petition has just been submitted to the Lit Faculty. Because of the pressing time element, this petition was not circulated widely. Anyone who would like to sign, regardless of her major field, is urged to do so. There is a sign-up sheet in the Post Office.

We feel that the Literature curriculum for next year, 1965-66, is unfortunately limited. There is only one course on the novel and several next year's seniors have already taken it. In the Fall there are three courses devoted to poetry. Poetry and the Imaginative Process, The Form and Function of Language, and Milton. Even though their emphases appear to be different, perhaps one of the first two mentioned could be sacrificed or put off until another year for a course which would bring greater variety to the literature program. Both Homer, Pindar and Aeschylus and Myth, Lit, & Rit handle ancient literature in the Fall, as does The Rise of Lit Crit in the Spring. Prose Fiction is a small, selected class restricted to creative writers; Shakespeare is limited to twenty sophomores. Mr. Golffing's Fall course also demands creative work. For a literature major primarily interested in the novel who has taken Classics of American Lit the choice of courses is severely limited.

Our purpose is not to criticize the offered courses in themselves, but rather to point out that the program is, as it stands, unbalanced. Unless students are competent in French or German, there is no opportunity to study the significant literature of these countries. Philosophical Themes, which did include this literature, was restricted to those having background in philosophy.

Why isn't there a course in the modern novel? There certainly are teachers here competent to teach Joyce, Proust, Mann, Conrad, and the other major modern novelists whom many of us are anxious to study here at Bennington. The philosophy that the student should get out and do the things which interest her is commendable, but not every student interested in literature is a competent creative writer and may not even desire to be so. We think it inappropriate that such an outstanding faculty gives us so little opportunity to explore novelistic literature. We feel that there should be more of a rapport between what the faculty teaches and what the students want to study.

There is a possibility that the Form and Function of Language will be replaced by a course in Utopian Thought. Couldn't such a course be given under the auspices of the Social Science Department as a Philosophy course, thus opening up a place, even for just one semester, for a modern novel course in the Literature Department? Or, finally, perhaps someone could be hired part-time either to teach such a course or to take over one of the Lang and Lit sections, thereby freeing someone in the Department to teach it.

C.V.W.