

Quadrille

OCTOBER 66

Bennington College
Bennington, Vermont

VOL. I. NO. 1

Alumnae Show Luksus

The first corroborative effort by Bennington Alumnae Regional Groups — a showing of the first fall collection by Tzaims Luksus at Bonwit Teller in New York last month — attracted 200 women and netted more than \$1500 for the Alumnae Fund.

The fashion show was made possible through the cooperation of Mr. Luksus and Bonwit Teller, and was the first project sponsored by the Regional Council, a federation of Bennington Alumnae Groups in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. It was also the first fashion show to benefit Bennington College. Bonwit's not only managed all the mechanical details but made their Collection Clothes salon available after hours — from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. — insuring maximum privacy.

Tzaims Luksus, a fabric designer whose printed silks won him a Coty Award and whose recent entry into high fashion design brought rave notices, houses his workrooms in Bennington, Vermont. He also has office quarters on New York's Seventh Avenue where he designs clothes under the label Tzaims Luksus of New York.



The showing began with elegantly tailored day-time clothes in striking checked or plaid smooth wool. The "costume", be it dress-and-coat, dress-and-jacket or pants tailleur, is the mainstream of current fashion, and Mr. Luksus' collection included all of these. He exploited pure shapes and unusual color combinations such as plum and yellow for a plaid coat-and-dress, and tomato red for a jacket over a navy dress.

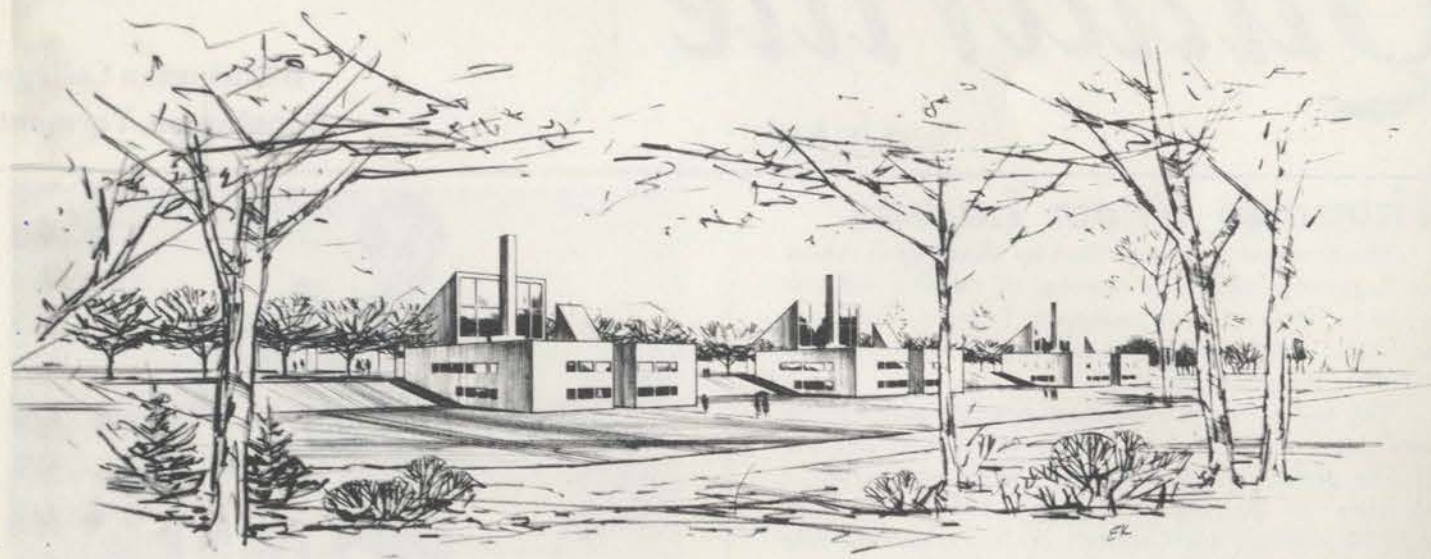
Last on the program were the gala clothes — vehicles for the famed Luksus fabric design talent. His bold, abstract printed satin crepes were used for flowing at-home pajamas and for long dresses with co-



ordinated silk mohair coats. . . . Floaty street-length dresses were done in fantasy print silk chiffons. . . . And perhaps most dramatic of all, Luksus abstract shapes glittered in allover sequin dresses done in stark black-and-white as well as vivid violet-and-gold.

Tickets to the showing were \$10 per person. The paying guests who saw Luksus' fashions were predominantly female, but the reception was swelled by a substantial number of husbands and escorts. This sequel to the fashion show took place at the Martin Foundation, just west of Bonwit's.





Ed. Note — On September 28 Bennington College awarded a contract for the construction of three new student houses to the H. P. Cummings Construction Company of Ware, Massachusetts, the low bidder at \$579,300.

The three buildings — a radical departure from the architecture of the twelve existing student houses — were designed by Edward Barnes and Associates of New York. Construction began last week, and the buildings are scheduled to be completed by mid-August of next year.

The new houses will be constructed on the west side of campus, between Bingham-Leigh-McCullough and the tennis courts. Each will provide living space for

30 women. The large upstairs lounges may double as seminar and class space; and basements may be used for studios.

At a cost of less than \$200,000 apiece, the new buildings will enable the College to relieve present overcrowding in student houses, and to boost enrollment to 430 students, the second stage in expanding the College to its projected size of 450. Construction of the new houses will also eliminate the need for Ludlow House and its Annex, located near the President's House, for student housing.

If, in a few years, the trustees and administrators of the College decide to expand further (to 600 students), three additional houses will be built on the opposite side of campus.

Since the main house was not originally designed as a dormitory, some of the rooms are spacious to the point of vastness while others could best be described as cubicles. On the second floor there is a small shelf-lined study to be used by those whose rooms do not have space for a desk. The ground floor is divided into a large living room, a bedroom, and a kitchen with a stove. The students in Ludlow have ample facilities to cook their own meals. However, since they are obliged to pay for the college meals, doing so would not be economical. Ludlow Annex, as it was designed for faculty, is naturally more luxurious, with wood paneling and a large well-equipped kitchen.

As far as Community Government goes, Ludlow House is on an equal footing with the other student

houses and sends representatives to the Legislative and Executive councils. The house regulations differ slightly from those of the campus houses because of the distance from Commons and the layout of the houses. Each student has a house-key; there is a sign-out sheet in each house for late sign-outs so that the Ludlow-ites do not have to go all the way to Commons or the Night Watchman's Booth. In the Annex, which does not have a living room, the hours for men in rooms are the same as those for men on campus.

Next September, when the new houses are scheduled to be finished, neither Ludlow nor the Annex will be used as student houses. The new houses, on which work has begun this fall, will each house thirty students in a style very different from that of the old houses. Situated between the West group of houses and the tennis courts, they will be protected, by an ugly but useful retaining wall, from any evil influences emanating from either Bingham or Well-

Although, in the architect's drawings they look like a cross between a smoke house and a chicken coop, it seems that they were designed with an emphasis on function rather than beauty and may, as a result, be very pleasant to live in. The living room, on the top floor, will have large windows opening onto a roof-top terrace. The house will be divided into six suites of four rooms each, three singles and a double. There will be no long noisy corridors as there are in some of the present houses. The basements will have ample room for studios, dark-rooms, and general work rooms.

The three new houses will cost nearly \$600,000 to build. In case anyone is in doubt as to the reasons behind the construction of six new buildings, we think that the administration has made it clear that in order to finance the additional classrooms and facilities required by an enlarged student body we must enlarge the student body.

Martine Cherau



Note From Alumnae President

As the new President of the Alumnae Association, I have just finished my summer reading program: three cartons of files and Gladys Dimock's book "A Home of Our Own". Now I must face the problem of living up to the reputation established by my predecessors. I've filled-in enough background on the alumnae and Gladys (the most recent President) to have become a staunch admirer of both. Their wit and style, warmth and informality is, indeed, a Bennington trademark.

This past year has introduced a challenge for flexibility and change in the alumnae role. President Bloustein has urged us to reconsider our purpose as an organization; discovering roles in addition to the obvious one of lending financial support to the College. It is obvious, as well, that we act as an important link in communication between the College and others, especially in the fields of School Service and the Non-Resident Term. Can we go a step further to provide assistance and information, professional or otherwise, to Bennington on the basis of our experience after college?

We are the testing ground of Bennington's strengths and weaknesses. A collective look at ourselves would indicate the effects of our education. Are we, a group of 3,500 women, ready to take on more areas of responsibility, both at the College and in the Community-at-large? If we are, in fact, capable of a more useful role we must indicate the desire to fulfill this capability and provide a guide for the future of the Alumnae Association. Many of us are beginning to gather in small groups for discussion of Bennington and our roles in its educational system, as alumnae as well as individuals intent upon our various vocations.

We can best begin to communicate with the College and with one another through this new medium: *Quadrille*. This paper can, if we choose, become a vehicle for our ideas.

We look forward to your comments.

— Carol Diamond Feuer '51

New Student Housing

In preparation for an expected student enrollment of four hundred, the size of the entering class this September was increased by thirty. Despite a feeling to the contrary expressed in a galley last spring, the powers that be had no intention of assigning the excess students to abandoned rabbit warrens on the hill. Ludlow House, which was used last year for faculty, married students and male students, was requisitioned for student housing along with Ludlow Annex, a newly constructed faculty house.

Ludlow, together with the Annex, accommodates eighteen girls in varying degrees of comfort.

Editorial Note

Quadrille will be published at Bennington College six times a year — in October, November, December, April, May and June. It is designed to reflect the views and opinions of students, faculty, administration, alumnae, trustees, parents of students, and friends of the College. It will be distributed to all the constituencies, and is intended primarily as a monthly paper in which members of the Greater College Community may expound, publicly, on topical issues.

The editors of *Quadrille* invite articles, statements, opinion and comment, letters to the editors, photographs and graphics, and reviews from members of all the constituencies.

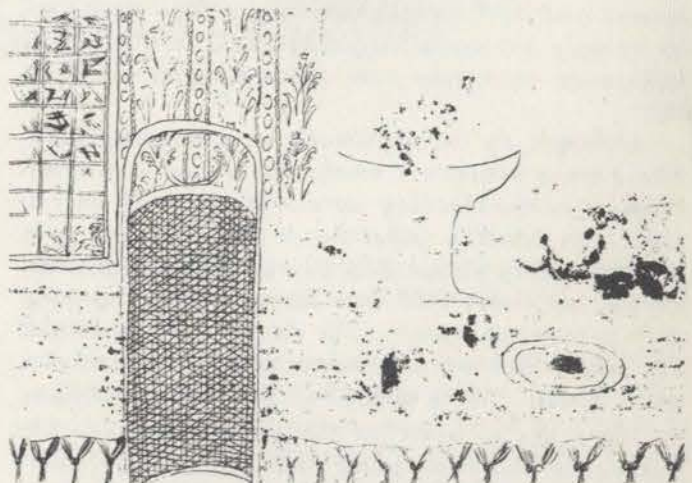
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—All photographs by Laurence J. Hyman

—Drawings by Danielle DeMers, Joyce Keener

"Will you walk a little faster?" said a whiting
to a snail,
"There's a porpoise close behind us, and he's
treading of my tail.
See how eagerly the lobsters and the turtles
all advance!
They are waiting on the shingle — will you
come and join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you,
will you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you,
won't you join the dance?
Her head was so full of the Lobster-Quadrille, that she
hardly knew what she was saying; and the words came
very queer indeed:—



Letters To The Editors

To the Editor:

Isn't it too bad that in an institution which prides itself on its innovations in the field of education, in a community which prides itself on taking part in what is happening in the arts today, breaking rather than following tradition, we have been bound by very traditional prejudices in selecting poets for readings. Some of the most important innovators in contemporary poetry have never been invited to read here. Moreover, when some of these poets have been suggested as possible speakers, certain members of the student body and of the faculty have vetoed the suggestions, because they "don't like that kind of writing" or because they won't recognize "that kind of writing" as poetry.

Why hasn't Charles Olson been invited here? Or Lawrence Ferlinghetti? Or Robert Creeley? Why hasn't Allen Ginsberg been here yet, when his name has come up year after year, when his work has had a dramatic influence on contemporary poetry, and when he has had readings everywhere else, from Harvard, to a YMHA camp in Pennsylvania this summer, to Prague,

Czechoslovakia? Why hasn't John Ashberry been invited to read here, when many people, some Bennington students and faculty within their number, consider him one of the most gifted and original poets writing today? Why is it that when Gregory Corso, stranded in the Vermont hills, hitchhiked to Bennington, and asked if he could give a reading for bus fare back to New York, the literature faculty turned him down, and sent him back on the road?

If, indeed, the literature faculty refuses to invite these poets and others to speak here, and if the Special Events and Student Meetings Committees are more concerned with political speakers than with poets, and if again and again they will veto such suggestions for speakers as Allen Ginsberg, then I feel that there ought to be a separate fund set up, possibly under the auspices of SILO, with the objective of introducing to the Bennington community exciting writers, who are either too little known to be acceptable, or well-enough known to be objectionable.

— Barbara Gates

To the Editor:

It is not uncommon to hear upperclassmen reminisce about "the old days" at Bennington. An increasing number of stories are introduced with "when I was a freshman . . ." or "just a few years ago . . ." and are followed with the conclusion that Bennington is not what it used to be.

These reminiscences could be attributed to incipient old age, but I am more inclined to believe that great changes *have* taken place in Bennington during the last few years. More than a few people have noticed the change in tone — the change has been alternately attributed to a change in admission, a change in faculty, and a change in entering students.

Some claim that the "old guard", the original faculty and administration that made Bennington a "progressive" school, is rapidly disappearing, and with them goes the idea of learning as an experimental process.

Others insist that the entering students are academicians so stable as to preclude any invention.

But the answer is more crucial, more encompassing than any one of these factors. What Bennington actually has lost is that touch of madness that transforms the common into something extraordinary.

— J.S.B.

To the Editor:

The "Education Program" section of the Bennington College Catalogue reads, "There are no requirements set in terms of specific courses a student must take at Bennington, but there are a number of educational expectations which the student must fulfill in planning a program that best serves her own interests and needs." In view of the difficulties many students have had with their program plans, I do not feel that this statement reflects the Bennington policy toward required courses as it exists and operates today.

It is accepted, I believe, that there are required courses with respect to pre-requisites. The college statement, however, does not present an honest picture of the situation: the entering student should be made aware of the fact that when her plan comes before her panel at the end of her sophomore year, she may be required to take courses in certain fields, *i.e.* mathematics or science, if she has concentrated in other areas. If this is official policy, the school should present it honestly in the catalogue, and not speak in generalities about the student's "best interests and needs."

Because Bennington is a liberal arts college, and not a technical or vocational school, students should realize that the faculty can rightly demand that they explore the possibilities in several fields before selecting a major, so that their education does not become unduly specialized. The emphasis upon a liberal education, however, should be made in the first two years, not when a student has finally selected a major field.

The case of one senior literature major is particularly relevant here. In her last term at Bennington, she must

take five courses (four plus her thesis tutorial) because she was asked to take a science. With respect to this situation, the college statement that, "As the student advances in her education, her program is expected to reflect a coherence and sense of direction that leads her to closer definition or redefinition of what she wants to establish as the focus for her own education," is ludicrous.

I am sure that many students besides myself have questions about required courses which simply have not been answered — it is not clear if an official policy even exists. As a sophomore, I want to know if I am expected to have included certain subjects in my program during the first two years; and if I have not done so, whether I will be required to take certain courses in my junior and senior years, when I feel it will be in my best interest to concentrate on what Bennington has to offer in my major field.

— Kathleen Norris

GALLEY

The Student Committee on the Future of Bennington College arises out of a critical need to develop some apparatus with which interested students can supply and demand specific information about the present and future operations and objectives of the College. What, for example, is the nature of the program to be housed in the new science building? How does it reflect Bennington's objectives for science as a liberal art, objectives at best broadly understood through the exchange between President Bloustein and Jacob Bronowski last October? The other primary motivation for the creation of such a group is the fundamental concern that in spite of the virtually unchanged student-teacher ratio, the traditionally close student-teacher relationship is becoming more and more difficult to maintain.

The Committee is voluntary, composed currently of approximately twenty-five members, open to any interested student, and meets weekly. The minutes of these weekly meetings are posted. Ad hoc subcommittees are formed as specific problems are sufficiently developed to warrant close examination. To date, the Committee has sponsored one heavily attended student meeting at which the President, Dean Pearson, and Lionel Nowak discussed next year's tuition raise; more meetings of this nature are anticipated. The efforts of the Student Educational Policies Committee and those of the Future Committee are expected to dovetail into a thorough exploration of the curriculum and its development.

Most important to the initial success of this Committee is the understanding by faculty, students, administration, and trustees alike that it begins with no preconceived notions of even where lie the problems, much less the answers. It seeks to make, finally on the part of the students, a rational, reasonable, and imaginative inquiry into the Bennington of today and the possibilities available to the Bennington of tomorrow.

We welcome subscriptions to SILO

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3 years (6 issues) — \$5.00

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SILO

Bennington College

Bennington, Vermont

Alumnae Board Meeting

The annual fall meeting of the Alumnae Association Board was held Thursday, September 29, at the Bennington College New York Office. Introduced to the Board at that time were Meredith Leavitt '65, Alumnae Director, Laurence Hyman '64, Director of Publications and Information Services, Lionel Nowak, Director of Development, and Phyllis Michelfelder, Director of the New York Office. President Bloustein and a group of the Alumnae Trustees were also present.

Discussion centered around two major issues: development and communication. Mr. Bloustein spoke to the first issue in terms of the current expansion of the student body which is now set at a maximum of 450 resident students. Miss Leavitt and Mr. Hyman presented a "mock-up" of *Quadrille* and explained the history of its conception and its purpose.

Shiela Gallagher Arnaboldi '55, Chairman of the Alumnae Fund, reported on the overwhelming success of the '65-'66 Alumnae Fund, which reached the unprecedented total of \$105,000, or an average gift of \$96. She also expressed the interest of the new Class Chairmen, and the importance of our raising our Fund total in the '66-'67 campaign by 25%, and our number of contributors by at least that.

Also discussed at great length was the problem of our Association's election procedure. It has been felt (particularly by our recent alumnae) that elections are rather undemocratic and the Committee on Constitution and By-laws, chaired by Kay Crawford Murray '56, has suggested some feasible alternatives to the present procedures. This discussion will be continued by the Nominating Committee which is now accepting nominations for Class Representatives for the classes of 1936-39, 1948-51, and 1960-63.

Regular business, including reports from all committee chairmen, followed, ending in a discussion on Community Service projects. This Committee remains ad hoc pending further information on a broader section of alumnae, their interest and their affiliations.

If you wish to nominate a member of your class for Class Representative to the Alumnae Association Board of Directors, please send her name and address to:

Mrs. R. Theodore Herz

8 Bittersweet Trail

Rowayton, Conn. 06853

Student Government

Student government, usually ignored by the inner-directed Bennington student, has decided this Fall to stage a comeback.

Our first offensive came at the suggestion of Nora Wilson Student Treasurer, who proposed a community tax to support student government activities. Last year, when payment of student fees was voluntary, only ten per cent of the upperclassmen participated.

After a passionate but profitable student meeting we submitted a revised proposal to the student body. Under Ann Noland's direction the referendum was widely publicized, resulting in a phenomenal (for Bennington) turnout of 84 per cent.

The approved student tax, \$3.75 per person, will provide more than \$1,500 for student government supplies and secretaries, the Recreation Committee and the Christmas Fund for College Employees.

To combat what we felt was a definite and harmful lack of communication on campus, this Fall we instigated the "New Wall," a bulletin board in Commons designed to supplement Galleys, College Week, and the Bennington oral tradition. The hope was that all members of the community — students, faculty and administration — would contribute. We welcome satire, opinion, dialogue between students and administration, continuous coverage of student government and divisional activities, and relevant news.

The Community Service Committee, headed by Betsy Devine, is continuing its Big Sister program this Fall. Thirty students have volunteered to work with children in the Bennington area on a regular basis. Included in the plans for the program is a spring carnival for little sisters and faculty and North Bennington children.

The Student Meetings Committee, led by Libby Meyers, has scheduled a weekend conference, early in December, on "Black Power." A group of active civil rights participants has been invited.

A new committee for cooperation with Williams College has instigated a column on Bennington activities to appear regularly in the "Williams Record." "College Week" is being posted at Williams and is itself carrying news of Williams events. Both schools are entertaining dialogue on possible mutual use of both academic and non-academic facilities.

Meanwhile the issues which have historically formed the bulk of Legislative Council business continue to simmer:

A proposal to extend hours for men in rooms until 1 a.m. Friday (Saturday morning) and 2 a.m. Saturday (Sunday morning) vacillates between students and administration. This month the administration rejected the student proposal, and the entire matter is now thrown in the lap of the Constitutional Council.

The search for a place for male guests to sleep

continues. Use of the Carriage Barn and New Studio (above the Brick Garage) was vetoed by the Administration. Nevertheless the need for accommodations for men is universally felt, and the Administration has promised to search out new possibilities.

The Student Educational Policies Committee, traditionally more highly regarded than more worldly governmental organs, has distributed a student questionnaire pertaining to general academic issues. The committee will use the results to formulate a more specific questionnaire for both faculty and students, supplementing reports of individual class meetings.

Both the E.P.C. and the Student Legislature have assured the newly formed "Future Committee" of cooperation in making constructive insights into the entire scope of the Bennington experience.

— Debbie Brown

COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA CONCERT

On October 13 the Bennington College Community Orchestra and Chorus presented an impressive selection of works in concert.

The *Canzon Septemi Toni* by Gabrieli began the program and served as an excellent balance — and contrast — to the Stravinsky presented at the conclusion of the concert. Gabrieli was vastly significant in the founding of modern instrumental art, and Henry Brant has orchestrated this particular Canzon for the strings and woodwinds we know today. The performance was, if not altogether clean in attack and intonation, straightforward and sonorous. The double-decker effect (winds on balcony rail, strings below) gave appreciable aid to the listener's ear in following the separate lines.

The Violin Concerto in C by Josef Haydn was fortunate in having as its soloist an excellent violinist, Mr. Eric Rosenblith, who shaped from its somewhat rigid, preclassical confines a warm performance which obviously delighted his co-workers in the orchestra, and apparently most of those present in the Carriage Barn. The Community Orchestra set a precedent in sound and precision. The last movement, the Presto, was spirited and provided unusually good support for Mr. Rosenblith's playing.

Henry Brant's *Concerto with Lights* is a branching out of the idea of combining of the arts, and an innovation of strictly the second half of the twentieth century. The piece is scored for winds, strings, percussion, and colored lights. It is divided into seven movements of contrasting moods. It is difficult to judge the piece by this particular performance, especially in respect to the lighting. Some movements seemed to work better than others: the integration of the lights and the sounds was good in *Cancrizans* (movement #2) and best in the *Ostinati* (#4), which also had some wonderful rhythmic devices. *Perpetuum I* (#3) was memorable for its use of the lights by themselves at the end. The *Recitative* (#6), impressive soundwise regardless of lights, was marked with solo violin playing double stops followed

by a section of trills, returning to the double stops. The piece is a fascinating exploration of audio-visual possibilities.

The Stravinsky *Symphony of Psalms* is undoubtedly a great work of this century. It is a choral and orchestral setting of verses (Psalms) the Vulgata. The work requires a full orchestra and mammoth chorus. The Community Orchestra and Chorus did not meet the



Henry Brant

demands of these requirements — either in size or strength. The performance suffered from a weak sound (the chorus — even though fortified by wind players in each section — was often inaudible) and both orchestra and chorus hampered the cohesion of the three movements of the piece by slipshod performance.

This is not to say that the Stravinsky was not a good "sound experience" or that the level of enthusiasm and spirit was disappointing. It is to say, however, that the piece probably would have been better performed at a later stage of development, for it clearly deserves all the attention and care that could possibly be given it.

— Celia Hudson

Marcelin Pleynet On Campus

On October 14, Marcelin Pleynet, a member of the editorial board of the literary quarterly *Tel Quel* ("such as it is") spoke in the Carriage Barn. M. Pleynet discussed the formation and ethic of the magazine *Tel Quel*, articulated some basic tenets of *le groupe tel quel* (a group of novelists, poets, linguists, critics, and philosophers who number among France's most potent and formidable thinkers), and provided insight into developments in French literature since the War. Pleynet is the author of three volumes of poetry (*Provisoires Amants des Negres*, *Paysages Plie's suivi de Lignes de la Prose*, et *Comme*), and is presently writing a book on Lautréamont, a writer who has substantial significance for *le groupe tel quel*.

While Pleynet was here he agreed to be interviewed. The interview, his first in America, will be printed in full in the spring issue of *The Bennington Review*. In order to indicate the direction and scope of Pleynet's remarks, we include here some brief statements from that interview.



Marcelin Pleynet

Marcelin Pleynet: "There are only two literary magazines in Paris at this moment, *Tel Quel* and the *Nouvelle Revue Françoise*. You could say that, in comparison to what has been done in the past, *Tel Quel* has introduced a spirit of inquiry, of theoretical inquiry, which has never before existed in the history of French literature. That is to say that it shares a common interest with psychologists, linguists, and anthropologists.

"... what concerns *Tel Quel* is not an aesthetic but an ethic, and in particular, in terms of the problem of *l'écriture* (language as written), this language viewed as object and not as subject.

"... the writer does not necessarily have to be the author, he can be the whole book. In other words, the writer can be within the writing and not outside it looking at it as an object.

"... There is no such thing as reality; reality is a projection, it does not exist, it is a projection of man's alienations, nothing more. As (someone) said the other day, that certain words, that all words have had moral taboos attached to them, that there were good words and bad words. Water can be dirty, right? But there is no water that is by nature dirty; it is man who has dirtied the water.

"Perception is subjective, objective perception does not exist. All is at the level of psychology, and of projections onto reality. What it all comes down to in the end is that there is nothing but projection, but alienation.

"One could say that reality is what we are capable of writing down, and nothing else.

(On the relation between *Tel Quel* and the *Nouveau Roman* of Alain Robbe-Grillet, Michael Butor, etc.) "I think that the New Novel was, after the War, after Sartre and Camus, a reappearance of a literary and theoretical consciousness (approach, awareness) in

France, and, as such, is very important and contributes a great deal to *Tel Quel*. But it seems to me that *Tel Quel* is logically the next step after the New Novel. . . . As Levi-Strauss said, one rejects one's father in order to be like one's uncle.

After M. Pleynet spoke, we asked some questions on the value and content of his talk of M. Georges Guy, a member of the Bennington faculty and the man who has been instrumental in bringing important French writers to the Bennington campus.

Question: Why did you invite M. Pleynet here?

Answer: Oh, I invited him here because I felt that he is certainly one of the most influential people in the literary world in France today, and that he represents a movement which is very important, and that few people know about yet in America. . . . Since Pleynet was invited to teach at Northwestern for a semester, it was possible to have him here.

Q.: How did M. Pleynet respond to Bennington?

A.: Well, in two ways. . . . He was quite amazed about Bennington students, their proficiency in French, their knowledge of French literature. And then he had heard a great deal about some of the people who are around Bennington, and he was interested in seeing them. He personally believes that people like Kenneth Noland and Jules Olitsky are doing something which is in a way parallel to what *Tel Quel* is trying to do.

Q.: How did you feel about the evening, was it a success?

A.: I think that it was a great success. Pleynet was pleased to talk to an American audience, to talk to people who obviously were interested in what he had to say. I was afraid that it would be a little above the heads of the audience and it was not. The direct questions which were asked were extremely pertinent. A very good question on Dante, one on Lautréamont. . . .

Q.: What are the main ideas that one should carry away from this brief encounter with M. Pleynet? What should one now know about *Tel Quel*?

A.: About *Tel Quel*. One should know that it is a literary movement which is extremely serious in that it tries to understand what literature is and to find a synthesis of all the different approaches which one can have to literature. It is the will of these writers to really get down to the essentials of writing, so as to create a literature which is more than superficially pleasurable, to create a way for the reader to really make himself — that is the ethic about which Pleynet spoke: the fact that they want books in which the reader will actually read himself.

Q.: Can we expect M. Pleynet back at Bennington at a future time?

A.: I think soon.

— Andrea Dworkin

(The full text of the interview with Marcelin Pleynet will appear in the spring issue of *The Bennington Review*.)

German Kabarett Reviewed

"Die Freimaule," a seven member Kabarett theatre group, visited Bennington in their five week tour of this country. Unfortunately, a major part of their performance was in German, making it difficult for the non-German speaking spectators to appreciate its humor. However, the Bennington audience did appreciate the dramatic aspects of their performance. "Die Freimaule" have made important innovations in German Kabarett Theatre presentation.

German kabarett groups have become a popular means of "legal" political criticism. "Die Freimaule" try to encourage their audiences to "think for themselves." Rather than make direct attacks against political leaders, (the usual method in kabarett theatre), they aim towards making their audiences uncomfortable. "Die Freimaule" suggest problems, allowing the spectator to formulate his own argument.

"Die Freimaule" feel that the popular kabarett reverts too often to old devices, particularly mime and black-outs, which have reduced it to less than a theatrical institution. In their attempt to bring back the "theatre" to their performance "Die Freimaule" were, for example, the first group in Germany to use pantomime. In the context of this objective the sequence of acts presented at Bennington may be better appreciated. The first, "Rheinfahrt," was done in typical kabarett style. The program then progressed through various methods of presentation, which included pantomime ("Lesung"), a Brecht parody ("Peggy"), and a parody of the Absurd Theatre with political overtones ("Feurio"), proceeding towards a suggestive act entitled "Maschine", in which they made clear what they thought about the kabarett. In their final act, "Black-outs," they returned to the old kabarett devices, this time, however, on an intentionally banal level; they presented a series of absurd jokes, concluding with a short circuit; the implication was clear — blackouts should be disbanded once and for all.

"Die Freimaule" were best received when their acts emphasized theatrical impact rather than verbal connotations, as witnessed in "Waisenknaben" which was probably the most successful. It was done entirely in German — sometimes incomprehensible even to a native — but reduced the audience to hilarity nonetheless because of suggestions implicit in facial expressions and gestures. It is unfortunate there were not more numbers like this one. Although the group made a point of arranging their American program to include numbers which could be easily translated, or, if in German, might be understood through gestures, intonations and props, even these selections could not make up for the language barrier. Puns and symbols, which for a German audience carry intriguing implications, suggested little or nothing to an American audience. The name of the kabarett is a case in point. "Die Freimaule" is an

elaborate pun. *Maul* means the mouth of a horse or dog — anything but a person. When combined with frei (free) Die Freimaule means "The Free Mouthers", or to draw on its connotations, "The Big Fat Mouths". Underlying this literal meaning is a play on the word Freimaule or Freemasons. The Freemasons are among the politically conservative organizations which come under "Die Freimaule" attack.

The difficulties inherent in bringing German theatre group to the United States go beyond the language problem. It is possible that we, as Americans, cannot comprehend the significance of this new trend, when we are not familiar with the traditional German kabarett. "Die Freimaule" feel that, although the comparison is important, it is not vital, and that they are capable of standing alone. I agree with them. Their performance was appreciated by an audience which understood, for the most part, neither their language nor many of their references. However, as one of the troupe remarked, the Bennington audience "received us more intelligently than most of the previous ones."

— Marilyn Sibley

ANSWERING BACK

"It is the Judas in Jesus, reason, the eternal husband, who at the end, having paid the rent for so long, begins to wonder if it is possible he has been forsaken."

Donald Finkel,
"Cocteau's Opium: 1"

Yes, he is a middle-aged man.

That's what all the talk of chaos was about. That's why it was necessary to couch the poetry in prose, to number verses and to enumerate insights, to list qualities and characters, to place Simeon on the flagpole and to heckle from below. Youth accepts chaos as the vehicle of pain, of anger, of whatever love there is, as a source of vitality, as a condition of awareness. Middle-aged men join academies and write poems, poems which are built on ancient mythologies, poems which are well-ordered, clever, and facile.

Donald Finkel read four poems aloud several nights ago: "The Hero," a poem of subtle sensibilities, an early



Donald Finkel

poem; "Simeon," a nearly endless collage of narrative, philosophy, and, on rare occasion, metaphor; "Three for Robert Rauschenberg," a poem which assaults one with its insignificance; and an excerpt from a work-in-progress, a moving excerpt, containing all of Mr. Finkel's

strengths and weaknesses, an excerpt which very much makes one hope that he is on to something.

Mr. Finkel described "The Hero" as an attempt to relate the concept of the mythological hero to his own life, and said that he came to the conclusion that "one hero is very much like another." The poem is divided and numbered according to the stage of development of the hero, and each section is prefaced by an epigram from Lord Raglan's work on the hero.

The poem is a combination of story and sensibility, a narrative driven home by vivid imagery, a poem shaped by the poet's own gentleness and complicated pain. Where Mr. Finkel leaves metaphor for direct statement, his statement is taut, and he integrates it fully into the poem. "The Hero" is strong and subtle, and one cannot help thinking that it is strong enough to stand outside of the mythological framework Mr. Finkel has imposed on it. The intellectual effort involved in connecting poem with epigram, of extricating oneself from the poem long enough to grapple with the next epigram, makes one unable to experience the poem in any total way.

The reading of "Simeon," Mr. Finkel's major work to date, was prefaced by a long statement on the nature of Simeon's sensibility. Simeon is charming and beautiful, he is the transient who pawned your typewriter or your raincoat, he sits on a flagpole, and he dies young. He is in fact Salinger's Seymour, stripped of his mysticism, kicked from his pedestal, and damned with what sometimes borders on a fatuous contempt. Simeon is youth, he cannot survive beyond youth, his life is the chaos which Mr. Finkel finds such a threat.

The poem moves in three areas. It deals with Simeon's sensibility, his irresponsibility, his relationships with people, particularly with his wife and brother. The brother, who is left to live out the prosaic consequence of Simeon's irresponsibility, somehow emerges as the real man, the sensitive man, the man who suffers with a certain quiet, and admirable, style.

Mr. Finkel approaches Simeon with a condescending wit which makes noble prose, perhaps, but which is inappropriate to poetry. In fact the poem frequently lapses into prose, and that is its most serious failure. It piles statement on statement, statements which describe but do not convince. "You can almost see him," Mr. Finkel tells us, but one cannot see Simeon. One can only see the distance between oneself and Simeon, be-

tween the poet and Simeon. The poem is in many ways a moral castigation, and moralizing and poetizing are antithetical.

There is one section of "Simeon," however, in which Mr. Finkel's power asserts itself with stunning force. The section is called "The Angel" and some of the metaphor is magnificent. Simeon, the angel, is "limp as a newborn child, he waits to be killed," "throw him the flank or entrails, he devours." Alas, Simeon the Angel dies young.

"Three for Rauschenberg" was described by Mr. Finkel as an attempt to impose meaninglessness. The question is, of course, from what, onto what? The meaninglessness of this poem comes from its insignificance, its sterility. This is idea poetry, overconceptualized, clever, facile. ("We call the fool divine/who first discovered wine./Like Leda he knew/exactly what to do/in case of assault by swan:/hang on.") One can admire an idea, one can admire cleverness. Inherent in admiration is distance, and distance reduces the importance of all things.

In his work-in-progress, Mr. Finkel is experimenting with a modified version of William Burroughs' cut-up method. The intent of cut-ups is to free the mind of unnecessary reliance on form, to open one up to new shapes and limitless possibilities. Mr. Finkel is in fact playing with a technique that can bring one into the central chaos of meaning. He is, however, so far, only playing, and not with very much daring at that. The piece which he read has energy and subtlety, and one can only hope that Mr. Finkel will permit himself, through cut-up and collage, to experience the spontaneity, and the attendant chaos, which gives meaning to experience.

In many ways, Mr. Finkel's reading was an entertainment. He made his jokes, and he made them well. The audience, in many ways a typical Bennington audience, laughed in the appropriate places, and were pleased with themselves for having done so. They left the theatre gratified, smiling the self-satisfied smiles of sophisticated literary cows who had spent an evening which had cost them nothing, except time.

Somehow, one must assert, one must insist, that entertainment is not enough, that to leave a reading unmoved, unchanged, is worse than not to have been there. Somehow, one must contend that the poetry itself should have reshaped those self-satisfied faces.

— Andrea Dworkin

ALUMNAE CLASS NOTES

'36 — Eldora Van Buren Boeve is currently a senior B.D. student at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

'37 — Drawing and sculpture by Elizabeth Beebe Klavun were in a group showing at the Bertha Schaeffer Gallery (N. Y.), September 20 through October 8. Esther Williamson Ballou has been appointed an

assistant professor at American University in Washington, D. C.

'38 — Martha Rutter Boynton has been appointed head of the boarding girls at Solebury School (Pa.) where she will also teach history.

'41 — Anne Eaton Parker showed an exhibition of painting and drawings during the summer at the Image Gallery in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

'45 — Audrey Stern Roeder is president of Children's Theater, Phoenix.

'47 — Marjorie Ann Neyland received her A.M. from Harvard University in March.

'48 — The first Hawaiian cookbook by an islander, "The Hawaiian Cookbook", written by Elizabeth Ahn Toupin, will be published by Silvermine Publishers this winter.

'50 — Betty Secunda Rich has been appointed part-time music teacher by the School Committee of Williamstown, Massachusetts.

Married: Jane Stewart Young to Edward D. Toland in June.

'51 — Married: Cecile Maddox Cameron to William E. Merritt in June. Mr. Merritt is a graduate of the University of Georgia and Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration.

'52 — Married: Sue Rayner Morrison to Felix M. Warburg 2d in June.

Appointed visiting lecturer in Physical Education for women at Middlebury College is Janet Gay Newman.

Diane Boyden Pessio and Husband (Albert) use sacred dance in the regular services of the Charles Street Meeting House (Boston).

'53 — Susan Edelmann has accepted the position as Director of The Experiment in International Living.

'54 — Carol Gewirtz Rosenthal has resigned her position as Director of Public Relations for the United Fund of Stamford, Conn.

'55 — Married: Josephine Brown to John Clarke Emery in September. He is a graduate of Harvard University and Harvard Law. Josephine is now teaching at the Church of the Heavenly Rest Day School (N.Y.C.).

Married: Helen Burgin Rogers to Griffith M. Buttrick in June.

Married: Jean Fager to Lowell G. Arnold in September.

'56 — Married: Lucinda Hughes to Gerard Cartledge in July. He is a reporter for the Baltimore (Md.) News-American.

Alyce Hastings Rogers signed her first professional contract with the Highfield Theatre, a summer theatre run by Oberlin College at Falmouth, Mass.

'58 — Married: Theresa Connelly to Fred Cavanagh Whiting in September. He is a student at Yale Law School.

Married: Carol Abernathy to Gilbert Carl Thelen, Jr. in August. He is a reporter in the Kansas City bureau of the Associated Press.

Born: Lisa Jane, 1st child, daughter, to Frances Allen Cooper.

Born: Elizabeth Helen, 3rd child, 2nd daughter, to Jane Eisner Bram (June).

Kathryn Kading Wheeler was appointed assistant Director of Public Relations for the American

Nurses' Association in September.

Wilma Greenfield Wasserman received her Masters degree in Social Welfare from the University of California at Berkeley in June.

'59 — Born: Jess Gabriel, 2nd child, 2nd son, to Ava Heyman Siegler (June).

Born: Rachel, 3rd child, 2nd daughter, to Ellen Hirsch Ephron (July).

An exhibit of paintings by Ellen Lapidus was shown in October at the Williamsburg Public Library (Brooklyn, N. Y.).

'60 — Married: Susan Berns to Van Wolf in October.

Married: Rosamonde Wile Fletcher to Alden I. Gifford in June.

Born: Lisa Amy, 2nd child, 1st daughter, to Rochelle Sholder Papernik (June).

Nancy Cooperstein is one of three producers of the new play, "Viet Rock", written by Megan Terry, which is opening in New York City at the Martinique Theatre on November 10.

Elizabeth Mamorsky showed her recent paintings in October at "The Contemporaries" (New York).

Patricia Kahn Light received her EdM. from Harvard University in June.

Potting on a professional basis, is Laurie Vance Adams, who handbuilt a wall for an MIT fraternity house and is now working on another.

Ellen Deegan, known professionally as Jocelyn Reed, runs *New Girl in Town*. Housed in New York City, this outfit helps the out-of-towner get a job, an apartment, and a man.

Mary Dee Humes Crowe and family are living in England while Clem is there teaching on an exchange program.

Alan Arkin has recently become famous in his role as the Russian submarine lieutenant in "The Russians Are Coming", and will be playing Yossarian in the film version of Joseph Heller's "Catch-22". He was also seen this fall on ABC's new "Stage-67" in "The Love Song of Barney Kempinski".

'61 — Engaged: Karen Egeberg to Richard Warmer of Oakland, California.

Married: Phyllis Martin to Harry Pearson in February.

Married: Lucy Sloan to Richard D. Ely, III, in June. Mr. Ely is a student in the Dept. of Geology and Geophysics at M.I.T.

Born: Anne Zoe, first child, to Judy Barsky Lieberman (September).

Penni Kimmel is in India with the Peace Corps. Judith Schneider Bond received her Ph.D. from Rutgers University in June.

Kay Reynolds is playing one of the female comedy leads in the film version of "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying".

'62 — Born: David Alan, 2nd child, 2nd son, to Joan Borkum Epstein (August).

Connie Tonken recently played a piano concert at Willimantic State College, Conn.

'63 — Married: Paula Zweifach to Edward Weinberger, a graduate of St. John's School, Annapolis, and a law student (August).

Married: James Payton to Susanah Newman in August. Jim received his M.A. from Ohio State University in September, and is now an assistant professor of dance education at Ohio State.

Married: Patricia Hempstead to Eric Barnsley in May. He has a Ph.D. in biochemistry and is on faculty of one of the University of London medical schools. She is working on her Ph.D. and will be finishing it at the University of Edinburgh. She is working with Dr. W. Hayes, the geneticist who heads the Microbial Genetics Unit.

Married: Janet Gohres to Walter Wykoff in June. Mr. Wykoff is a graduate of Williams College and studying architecture at the University of Pennsylvania.

Al Huang (M.A.) performed at Connecticut College in July.

'64 — Married: Susan Merrill to Jarvis Rockwell in September. They met in Rome, where Susan was studying.

Married: Mary Susan Pattison to Peter Victor Dawes in September. They will reside in London.

Married: Julie Rogers to John S. Gittins in June.

Married: Jill Mattuck to Robert J. Tarule in July. He is a teaching fellow at Harvard and is working toward his Doctorate.

Gretchen van Horne Ganz has moved to Montana, where her husband, Earl, is heading the fiction writing program at the University of Montana.

'65 — Married: Caryn Levy to James Magid in June.

Joan Kassman is teaching in Italy again this year. Ellen Fowle is teaching in a girls' high school in Izmir, Turkey.

Derwin Stevens (M.A.) is an assistant professor of Physics at Ulster County Community College, Kingston, New York.

Gail Mayer is in Padua, Italy, teaching English.

Katrina Edwards is teaching pottery at the Shelburne (Vt.) Craft School.

'66 — Engaged: Trudy Goodman to James Elliott Adel, a graduate of Colgate University and University of Buffalo Law School.

Married: Roberta Jossy to Keith Tichenor, a graduate of Wesleyan University, in August.

Married: Glynn Rudich to James Marini in June. He is a DuPont teaching fellow in chemistry at Tufts University where he is studying for a doctorate.

Married: Elizabeth Mason to Thomas W. Luckey in June. He is a graduate of Yale University and Yale Architecture School.

Married: Ruth Bauer to Steven E. Draper in June.

Married: Amy Stern to Dr. Bertram E. Stoffelmayr in August.

Married: Jean McMahon to Paul Alexander Humez. They are both candidates for the M.A. at Yale University: Jean as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow and Alex as a National Science Foundation Fellow.

Born: Aaron Fergusson, first child, a son, to Sally Brenner Cooley (September).

Jane Robinson is teaching at Chateaugay (N. Y.) Central School.

Karen McAuley was one of two winners of *Mademoiselle's* Poetry Competition judged by Robert Penn Warren and Stanley Kunitz.

'67 — Married: Janet Hewitt to Jere Wescott Whiting in June.

'68 — Engaged: Deborah Thompson to John Lamont Powell.

Married: Lydia Allen to Joseph Alan Feely, II in July. He is a student at the Graduate School of Architecture, Washington University.

Married: Alana Martin to Lewis Frumkes in June. Mr. Frumkes is with the Monarch Garment Corporation in New York and studying for a doctorate at New York University.

'69 — Married: Lucia DeLeon to Carl Johnson.

IN MEMORIAM

Gretchen Hutchins Moll '36 was drowned in a sailboat accident off San Juan Island, Washington, on August 25, 1966. Surviving are her husband, Dr. Frederic C. Moll and three children of 218 Dorffel Drive East, Seattle, Washington 98102.

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