

BARD WEEK

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THIRD PANEL DISCUSSES CURRICULUM

The third of a series of four panels on Bard education was held last Thursday night on the issue, Curriculum and Profession. The ultimate debate was centered in the issue of background courses for lower college students, and whether these courses, if given, should be required or not. In passing, many precise suggestions were made by members of both panel and the audience. Among these were recommendations that: sophomore reviews should be modified to include on the review board all teachers that a student had taken courses with, regardless of division; students who had shown themselves incapable of doing senior project work or who were interested only in pro-business education should be asked to leave; a lecture system formed by the leading members of each division devised to fill in background material for all students. All these suggestions and many more will be handed over to EPC for discussion and action. (continued on page 5)

DANCE WORKSHOP

(Editors' Note: Being a young newspaper we are inclined to make mistakes. But nobody can say we make petty ones. Last week, for example, we hopelessly garbled our coverage of the Dance Workshop. With deep apologies to the Dance Department, we print the correct information supplied by Miss Claire Weight, Frank Lemmon, and Sarah Cashman).

The title of Frank Lemmon's senior project is "NANNOS". It is a dance work in three movements based on a freely adapted literary theme. The title role of Nannos will be danced by Frank Lemmon and that of the other central figure "The Enchantress" by Renee Weiss. The remaining parts are danced by Zoe Warren, Phylliss Oram, Janet Gay, and Joan Kroll. The score of Nannos is by Gerard Samual a young American Conductor who studied under Paul Hindemith, has conducted at the Tanglewood Festival and is at present conducting a series of concerts in Paris.

Sara Cashman's senior project, "FROM MARAH" is also a dance work based on a freely adapted literary theme and involves three characters, A Child, A Woman, and A Man, danced by Gail Quinn, Sara Cashman and Frank Lemmon. The score of From Marah is by Theodore Prochazka. Ted will play his own music for the performance. The setting is being designed by Richard Burns.

The third work on the program is a composition in three movements by Claire Weight, entitled "TODAY AND TOMORROW". This work is an example of pure composition, i.e. it springs from mood patterns rather than from literary sources. The leading role will be danced by Miss Weight, the remaining roles by Sara Cashman, Robert Smith, Renee Weiss, Joan Kroll and Zoe Warren.

BARD WEEK

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DEAN'S (or GOLDEN ?) RULE VS. STUDENT GOVERNMENT

We have recently heard a statement to the effect that under Dean's Rule one can find oblivion and happiness in one's studies. These sublime scholars who don't choose to sully their hands with the mundane affairs of Government seem to ignore the fact that it is just this attitude that leads to corrupt and too powerful central administration. No doubt, one can bury one's head deeper in the sands of study, when one accepts the terms of obedience to some one else. This is all very well, providing the 'some one else' can be trusted to be the traditional benevolent despot. But as Jefferson said in his inaugural address, if people are not fit to govern themselves, are they then fit to govern others? Undoubtedly Dean's Rule could turn out a more intellectual scholar of English, or Biology, but such a person wouldn't be a good citizen in the full sense of the word. He owes something to whatever community he belongs to over and above developing to the utmost his natural abilities. He cannot take it for granted that the community will be interested in his welfare, if he ignores his relations to it.

The world is no longer a place where one can sit back and let some one else govern. The principle of progressive education arose from the felt need of better, more responsible citizens. One can no longer be respected for retiring to ivory towers of scholastic enterprise. Either we get interested in government, and actively participate rather than passively criticize, or we won't have any world to retire from.

A good citizen is responsible not only to the community, but for the community. As Confucius said: 'the highest principle of human civilization is government.' The practice of obeying, without being particularly responsible either to or for that person or system, is what leaves the world wide open to dictators and any totalitarian regime. It is much easier to be an irresponsible citizen, to destroy or let fall, rather than to construct. You first assume that the world owes you a living, peace, and somehow, appreciation. Next, you assume that pure study, or any separation from the community in order to be completely self-devoted, is the highest aim in life. You are then ready to condemn the community and justify further separation and exclusiveness. Clearly, this creates that attitude in which bigot, snobs, prejudices and other social evils thrive. I am certainly not condemning scholastic pursuits; I am condemning them when such self-interest excludes their social responsibilities. When citizens are not responsible for themselves, society locks them up. Scholastic snobs lock themselves up; they are as dead a loss to the community which provides for them as the criminal, or the insane.

Bard has the supreme advantage, theoretically, of both progressive education and student government. Both are being rendered completely futile and aimless by the policies of an administration that is afraid, and that doesn't practice the principles it preaches.

Being melodramatic, we could say we were lured by glowing promises, and then betrayed. On the other hand, we were given student government, and were then limited in purpose almost to the stage of a discussion group, and a reluctant rubber stamp. No wonder interest in this government waned.

Why are there so few 'educated' leaders in the world today? Partially because the people who have the educational advantages, and the knowledge, have been taught, and brought up in a system based on the separation of the scholar from society. Knowledge in its purest form must be virtually useless. The scholar must be aloof from the vulgar community.

Only in the college atmosphere itself, can the old rival interests of 'town and gown' be successfully learned and practiced together. We have that opportunity here, I hope it isn't allowed to disappear because of disgust with the present 'state' of affairs.

Barbara Wheatland

(Editors' Note: The following article by Mr. Stefan Hirsch is the fourth in a series written by members of the faculty.)

CROWS, SCARECROWS, AND OTHER SCARES
by Stefan Hirsch

In three weeks or so we shall perambulate down the hill, a procession of black crows scarcely showing a few specks of colored plumage and gilt, to lead a group of mournfully gowned seniors on their last collegiate walk.

Some of us without degrees will be dressed in a clerical garb to which we are not entitled and with insignia of rank we may deserve but have not earned in approved manner and ritual. We will give in to the argument that the esthetic unity of the occasion would be marred if we walked in our rightful mufti.

Anything and everything can be justified in the name of progressivism and democracy, even the right to be reactionary and undemocratic. The esthetic argument warrants scrutiny. It is a commonplace of esthetics that the sensible form reveals its own transcendent meaning. The insistence on the uniform of academism puts this college out on an esthetic limb, as long as we profess to develop the abilities of the student toward his integration in individualist, democratic society. The uniform is more characteristic of an hierarchic society if not a caste. It suppresses almost all individualism unless the pale faces in this procession of black, peeping out, as it were, from their cloth coffins, may be considered the last permissible vestiges of the personality in this significant ritual.

Indeed the main defense of this custom is: "Let us preserve the last vestiges of academic tradition left on this campus!" Traditions are valid only when they express living meaning. The tradition of Palestrina and Bach is alive in modern music; that of the eleventh century walls in our painting; Homer in our poetry; but not their forms - their spirit. Caps and gowns are vestiges of mediæval times, tied up with theologic concepts we no longer espouse. It would be far better to walk naked than so shrouded. The academic traditions we still observe are devotion to learning and creative action, to impartial search for truth, honor and beauty, by each in his own way for the good of all. We show ourselves in our work, not in clothes which are no longer truthful, nor, as I pointed out, necessarily honest, nor certainly beautiful.

Commencement is a festive occasion of achievement. If in past epochs death was the achievement of possible salvation and the black gown a "memento mori", we think of it differently now. Strangely enough mediæval paintings show few churchmen or scholars in black. It seems that Counter-Reformation and the Puritan revolution decided to scare their students and themselves in their flights. Since we are just getting over this thinking in America we ought to learn to pick our grains of wisdom without at least the fear of death.

So let us don festive clothes, the daytime garb of gay American men and women in the spring of the year. White and blue, bright and smiling colors, happy ties, discreet jewelry, no uniformity, no sloppiness, no exhibitionism. Let those who have degrees wear, like Hawaiian lei, their colorful hoods. Let the few who have to act out the ritual of awarding the degrees wear the old stuff if they cannot look dignified otherwise. Let even those who want very much to hide behind magic emblems wear the gowns, in God's or the other fellow's name. But let us show the first vestiges of a tradition which has broken with perpetual archaism. Next year at least.

WHY THE SENIOR PROJECT?

Now that the annual senior project 'fever' has run its course through the class of '49, there might be time to examine objectively some of the 'whys' and 'wherefores' of this famous feature of the college program.

Should a project be required from all students? What is its value in our education? These questions may be partially answered if we gain a clear perspective of the thing through a bit of historical research.

Back in the old days, from 1954 to 1938, when Dean Tewksbury instituted the principles of progressive education in the college program, instead of a project there was a Senior Comprehensive exam. These exams were intended to reveal the general development of the senior's mind and his competence in his major field as well as in two related fields.

Then, after '38, the Senior Comprehensive exam was replaced by the first Senior Project, which aimed at furthering the independent planning and executory ability of the senior. In those days the student could start work on the project as early as the sophomore year, but he still had to carry four regular courses as a senior. Occasionally, provision was made for substituting a fifth course for the project in his senior year.

Finally, seven years ago, the faculty resolved to set up the senior project as it exists today, after eliminating the fourth course in the last year, and adding the divisional review at the conclusion of the whole work.

So now we have it, or have had it, depending on your viewpoint. We may perceive how the project developed from the review type exams through a growing emphasis on the student's individual effort; how it transformed the role of the student from that of the relatively passive thinker to that of an active one. From this progression alone the project's educational value can perhaps be fairly evaluated. Then, in a sense, the senior was expected to be able to answer any question in his main field of interest. Now he is expected to be able to ask his own questions, formulate his own problems, and then answer or solve them himself in his project. In other words, the new emphasis is placed on the senior's ability to ask and project questions on material in his major field.

Whether the project should necessarily be unique, or whether it should be a definite contribution to the store of human knowledge might depend on the art or science a student chooses to study.

The Senior Project has proved its worth. Few other educational devices offer such an opportunity to learn to think creatively and coherently.

Jack Collins

OPEN HOUSE GETS AIRING

While the reception given the proposed open house regulations was not tumultuous, it was multuous enough to bring comment from a few experts. Prominent among these was Dr. Havelock Kinsey, an elderly scientist with venetian blinds on his spectacles. He was encountered on a recent evening wandering around Kruger's Island, ringing a little bell before him.

Later, in his tree-top office, Dr. K. answered a few preliminary questions with 'yes', 'probably', and 'Yah'. He added that he had taken advantage of the open window policy brought on by warm weather, and his notebook was full of facts and figures. (He took pictures, too) A publisher, recognized as one of the most random houses in New York, is sponsoring the good doctor's snooping.

To sum up, Havelock Kinsey had this to say: 'I'm against the door-ajar plan...my nose has been caught in the jamb too many times. And no intervisitation during weekend evenings. Lotsa guys take their showers then. the modest ones might raise quite a stink.' The learned gentleman might have continued, but a primeval cry echoing through the woodlands brought him to his bare feet. 'Got to goo', he smiled, 'the wife, you know'. He swung off through the trees with the haste that comes with anticipation.

Whitney Bolton

Last week I attended a panel whose purpose was to discuss 'open house', 'social living', and 'adjustment to the community'. After sitting through an hour and a half of this panel, I was quite perturbed. (Damn sore is more like it!)

As the panel progressed, it seemed more and more that the new open house program was being instituted solely for the benefit of the 'outside world', and that we should ignore our personal feelings, and accept those of the oft-mentioned 'outside world'. This is a bit difficult to swallow. It seems to me that we are passing laws which we don't want and which we will not wholeheartedly enforce.

Much time was spent discussing open house hours during the week. One member of the Committee claimed that intervisitation during the week was a proper and normal thing. He further claimed that social intercourse in private surroundings should not take place only on weekends because this is not done in the 'outside world'.

This is utter nonsense! People in the outside world work during the week and like to relax at night, while people here at Bard have classes during the week for which they study or, at least, should study at night.

Added to the program was a new phrase for our list of cliches: 'Open Door Policy'. Men and women entertaining each other in their rooms would be forced to leave the doors ajar. Since these visits are presumably for chatting, listening to records, etc., the 'Open Door Policy' would allow the noise to spread throughout the Dorm. Anyone trying to study would be just out of luck. The same situation would occur on weekends, and anyone engaged in his studies would have to seek a more suitable atmosphere. I don't think it's fair to chase a person from his own desk to the library or an empty classroom. Open House is wonderful - on weekends and with the doors closed.

The basic question raised by these discussions is one directed at our administration, who spend more time discussing the social life at Bard than the academic life. Is this college primarily for social achievement or academic advancement? If the former is our goal then we must, by all means, have open house and open doors, twenty-four hours a day, if desirable. However, I sincerely hope that it is not the aim of the students or the administration to make Bard a 'country club'.

The first goal of the students at any college should be knowledge. If a young man or woman doesn't come to college with that purpose, but just to spend four years with the Old Man footing the bill, he doesn't belong at Bard, or anywhere else.

Adjusting oneself to society and social living is of the utmost importance, but it should not be sought at the expense of education. If we wish to sacrifice our academic development in order to become a haven for socialites, let's send our administration and faculty down to Palm Beach to learn how it's done, and forget all about that thing of the past called education.

Mort Pesen

REMEMBER

CONVOCATION MEETS

Wednesday

at 4:00

In Bard Hall

PANEL (continued from page one)

The major debate, however, centered on the important issue of required courses. A strong group felt that the present free elective system fails to give the student adequate contact with the great themes and issues in fields outside his major. Others felt that the advisory system is an adequate instrument for student guidance. There was general agreement that students should be selected with more care, if Bard is to succeed as a progressive college. It must have the most creative and curious from the highschools. The meeting was felt to be important, though few were there, and no final decisions were reached.

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