

# Barnard Bulletin



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## Atkinson Reflects On Radical Feminism

By Judith Barnard Gilbert

On Thursday February 10 at twelve noon, Sulzberger Parlor in Barnard Hall was filled to capacity with students, professors and other interested members of the university community, curiously awaiting Ti-Grace Atkinson's address, "Reflections on Radical Feminism in 1983." Atkinson, who is presently a prefect of philosophy at Columbia, was a founding member of the New York chapter of the National Organization of Women (N.O.W.) and a foremother of radical feminism in the late sixties and early seventies. She is also the author of the movement's manifesto, *Amazon Odyssey*, a collection of essays and speeches written and delivered between the years 1967 and 1972.

The afternoon event was co-sponsored by Thursday Noon and the Women's Studies Program. Atkinson, a slender, poised woman, was introduced to the audience as "Miss Atkinson" by Professor Debra Miller, coordinator of Thursday Noon. Atkinson spoke for 15 minutes during which she cited and defined the major problems within the contemporary feminist movement before opening the floor to questions.

She explained that the primary cause of the relative inefficiency of the movement over time is the conflicts between various cultural and political feminist groups which compose the Women's Liberation Movement at large. Their attempts to address individual problems for women instead of working to abolish the existing social structure and rebuild a new classless one is the major obstacle in the movement.

"How can you define liberation if you don't understand oppression," Atkinson asked her audience with conviction. "If you can't agree upon what's primary, you can't agree upon what to attack."

When asked what constitutes disengagement from the existing confused and misdirected organizational process, Atkinson responded that "it's frightening to realize that part of the problem is within yourself, that we enable it to continue. The only way to make change is force. You can't just separate yourself from the world. It's like bowling: you have to knock down a lot of pins at once, and that kind of thinking is not yet a part of the women's movement."

She continued to explain that the reason for the slow process is that much of



Ti-Grace Atkinson

what must be done to force change is "painful for women because we've been forced into an artificial role. We've been trained to cry and hug each other, but not to force change." One example of the social institutions Atkinson seeks to abolish is marriage. She defines marriage as being, "... a con-

tract of the state. Why do you have to lock someone in someplace in order to be friends?" She explains that women who do get married probably do so out of conditioning to which they have been subjected by society. Getting married is considered to be a matter of course, especially for a woman and doing so is therefore following the path of least resistance. For women, she says the institution of marriage has "absolutely no merits. It's a form of complicity. It's a kind of surrender. It's giving up. Maybe fifty years ago it was understandable, but now it's harder to say it's not free choice. Marriage is not a genetic compulsion. Quite simply, if women didn't get married we wouldn't have this institution. It's like slavery, you don't work within the framework to change it. You abolish it."

At this point in the discussion, sociology professor Mirra Komarovsky raised the question, "Couldn't it be that this whole idea is Utopian?" Atkinson paused for a moment, and then gracefully responded, "Well, it is a dream unless somebody finds it and realizes it. At this point historically, women are so discouraged that they've got to have hope. They won't reorganize without the hope that they're driving the chisel into the floor."

## Dean Sponsored Junior Weekend to Begin on Feb. 24

By Randy Kaplan

The desire for increased cooperation and unity between the undergraduate divisions of Columbia University has prompted the creation of "Junior Weekend", a weekend of festivities which, for Barnard and Columbia Colleges, is being fully financed by their respective deans. The School of Engineering's contribution will be made by its student government. According to Jennifer Hall, president of the Barnard Class

of 1984, "There are a lot of problems with cooperation between the schools, because they are literally three separate bodies with different activities, budgets, account numbers, deans, and structures of their student government organizations. This event shows a new element of cooperation between the deans, the activity officers, and the student governments."

Dean Schmutter is also enthusiastic about the upcoming weekend. "It is a nice thing

to do. Last year the dinner was a nice occasion and it gave people the chance to get together," she said. She went on to explain that "last year's junior dinner was partially subsidized by Barnard, but this year, Barnard is fully funding the event."

The class presidents of all three colleges agree that more cooperation and class spirit are needed to bring a greater sense of cohesiveness to the University. Jacques Augustin, president of Columbia's junior

class also noted that "This type of event is really most effective in the junior year because it gets the junior class together before Senior Week." Barnard's junior class president, Jennifer Hall, adds, "This event will, hopefully, instill some class spirit into Barnard students that isn't there now." Dean Schmutter agreed that, with the exception of Senior Week, Barnard has few class events, and both hope that the upcoming Junior Weekend will encourage other students to plan similar programs.

## TJ Offers Diners Atmosphere and Ambiance

By Cindy Kaplan

"Imagine a small, intimate room aglow in candlelight. Now imagine yourself seated with a small group of select friends at a table covered with linens, china and silver being served by a courteous waitress." An advertisement for Windows on the World? No, it's the poster for James Room Cafe, scheduled to open on Thursday, February 17th.

The café is "an opportunity for students and faculty to intermingle in a nice sit-down dinner atmosphere without paying the exorbitant street prices of restaurants," says Joe Coyte, Assistant Director of Food Services for T.J. McDermott at Barnard. Advertised as "a weekly happening to challenge the adventurous palate," the café will feature "a different exciting menu every two weeks." Although it will be catered by the same service as the BHR Cafeteria, the food will be different from

that usually served.

The Grand Opening Menu will include Ratatouille in Puff Pastry, Spinach Salad, Prime Rib Au Jus, Baked Stuffed Potato, Whole Green Beans Almondine, Hot Popovers with Butter, Fresh Strawberry Shortcake, coffee, and tea. Other menus will feature entrees such as Chicken Kiev and Sliced Sirloin Tips.

Keith Burd, Director of Food Services and coordinator of the project, said that its purpose is to "provide students with a change of pace." Burd has wanted to try this program for two years but an appropriate location was never available. "A small intimate room is essential" says Burd, who will use partitions to make the café's location, the James Room, smaller. Coyte says that the project's aim is "to shoot for something in tune with a private atmosphere."

Limited to a maximum of eighteen

people, Burd expects a great demand for the required advance reservations. The program will be operated at cost and if it's successful it might expand, but only to twenty-five places, since a second waitress would have to be added to accommodate more people and the exclusive atmosphere would be lost.

Asked if they thought the program would be a success, both Burd and Coyte were reluctant to make predictions. They assert that a lot of effort has gone into the program (they have been working on it since October) and that the results should be positive. Yet Burd says that at some time the "novelty might wear off—people tend to forget that something is available." In a similar vein, Coyte says that possibly the Café "may not go over at first, but the Food Service is willing to continue it almost indefinitely. Sometimes the students know about a special service but don't take ad-

vantage of it." Similar programs have been set up by T.J.'s at other schools and have been successful.

Burd has distributed six hundred copies of the Grand Opening Menu in BHR mailboxes and has left copies in the cafeteria. "We'd like to do something special for the students," stresses Coyte.

The price for the meal is \$3.50 with a meal card, and \$7.50 without one. Diners may bring their own wine and the Service will chill and serve it. Bon appetit!

### Apologia

Cindy Kaplan was the author of the story last week on the status of the Modern Greek program. Unfortunately her name was left off the story. *Mea culpa*

# FEATURES/REVIEWS



Archie Shapiro

## A Chorus Line Is Still in Step

By Dorothy Kauffman

When it first opened on Broadway in 1975, *A Chorus Line* appeared—and indeed it was—unlike any other musical ever seen before. With a cast of unknowns, a lack of conventional romantic interest, and minimalist scenery, the show startled both the public and critics alike with its daring innovations. The musical was subsequently hailed as an important step in the ever-evolving art form of American musical theater. Few musicals really break new ground, but like *West Side Story* before it, and *Sweeney Todd* afterwards, *A Chorus Line* did just that.

The people responsible for molding *A Chorus Line* from a work shop production downtown to the cohesive and dynamic

Broadway hit have all earned their places in Broadway history. The Joseph Papp/ New York Shakespeare Festival production of *A Chorus Line* is essentially the creation of the gifted Michael Bennett. He conceived the idea for the musical, and then became its choreographer and director. *A Chorus Line*, winner of the 1975 New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Musical, the 1976 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and nine 1976 Tony Awards, has insured Bennett a secure niche in Broadway annals.

Bennett followed *A Chorus Line* with the short-lived musical *Ballroom* (starring Dorothy Loudon), again as producer, director, and choreographer. He has recently triumphed with his smash musical *Dreamgirls*, which won 6 Tony Awards in-

cluding one for Bennett for Best Choreography.

The composer of *A Chorus Line*, Marvin Hamlisch, has achieved additional success on Broadway for the musical *They're Playing Our Song*, and has provided the scores for movies such as *The Sting*, *The Way We Were*, and the current *Sophie's Choice*.

Since its memorable opening night, *A Chorus Line* has become a Broadway phenomenon and the archtypical modern musical. The series of impressive statistics associated with *A Chorus Line* is the envy of every Broadway producer: the musical is currently entering its eighth year of performances at the Shubert Theater and doesn't show the slightest intention of

slowing down. It has become the third longest-running musical in Broadway history with *Fiddler on the Roof* #2 and *Grease* #1. It will surpass *Fiddler* in late May 1983 and *Grease* in late September 1983. On October 24, 1982, *A Chorus Line* reached a memorable milestone: it played its 3000th performance on Broadway. There is every reason to believe that *A Chorus Line* will still be playing at the Shubert Theater long after most of the recent Broadway shows have receded into memory. The marquee of *A Chorus Line* has become such a well-known theatrical landmark, that it would be difficult to imagine the Great White Way without it.

The elements which have kept *A Chorus Line* thriving for so long consist of the show's utter realism and simplicity. Indeed, what could be considered more simple and yet more revolutionary than the plot of *A Chorus Line*? The action consists of an audition for a spot in a chorus line, one not dissimilar to those found in several Broadway shows. During the intermission-less two hours we meet the hopefuls who give it their all to win that coveted place on the chorus line. This group of dancers represent but a dozen out of hundreds of would-be actors who flock to New York every year, each one craving a chance to dance in a chorus line, with the possibility of winning a small speaking role, and perhaps even becoming the understudy for the star who might twist an ankle on opening night and... well, you know the rest. In watching *A Chorus Line* one realizes that art has imitated life since the performers in the musical had to endure the same kind of trial and sifting out process in real life as the characters that they portray on stage.

The success of *A Chorus Line* has inspired many similar shows and programs (a couple of years ago, *The New York Times* ran a piece on all the various spin-offs of *A Chorus Line*, with the movie *Fame* being an example) that certain parts inevitably seem a bit clichéd by now. The group of hopefuls, for instance, is a veritable United

Nations mixture of religions, races, and backgrounds, a phenomenon which has since become almost mandatory in the many forms of the American media. There is an Oriental woman, a black man, a tortured Hispanic, a married man, a blonde hussey, a sassy dancer, and a couple of homosexual men, just to name a few of the "types." This does not imply that diverse races and lifestyles are not found among Broadway's chorus lines, but it does seem a bit contrived to have such a spectrum in the final dozen or so dancers. Obviously, this spectrum forms a shrewd dramatic convention, allowing for soliloquies about one's past, some ethnic humor, and a slice-of-life realism. It certainly does not constitute a major flaw.

In an age of revivals and re-hashed plots, many of the innovative aspects of *A Chorus Line* remain as fresh and startling as ever. Unlike *Woman of the Year*, for example, this musical does not depend upon a single star's performance for success. How many people would see *Woman of the Year* without a Lauren Bacall or a Raquel Welch? There aren't any star names to be found in *A Chorus Line* and therein lies part of its strength. The actors' very anonymity makes their situation all the more believable. One of the most amazing aspects of *A Chorus Line* is that the numerous cast changes over the years have not weakened the quality of the show.

Unlike *Cats*, the smash import from England, this musical does not dazzle or overwhelm through means of costly scenic design. Indeed, the very sparse and realistic "scenery" (if one could call it that) of *A Chorus Line*, equates solely of full-length mirrors which are used to great effect. They transform the stage into a rehearsal room and, at one point, lend a striking effect to the "Music and the Mirror" solo.

The opening of *A Chorus Line* remains as exciting as ever. The men and women of the audition endeavor to get the steps of a dance combination correctly. Some goof up. One man persistently looks at the floor even as he leaps. Others are having trouble

keeping time. Strained and sweaty faces smile with determination through the grueling elimination process. All are nervous and their fear manifests itself in doubt and mild paranoia. "I Hope I Get It" is the name of the opening number and it perfectly illustrates the desperation, hopefulness, confidence, and worry which accompany auditions.

Anyone who sees the show will leave with a favorite moment. The most famous song of *A Chorus Line* is "One" which I must admit has always sounded too pat and overly commercial to me. My preferences are "At the Ballet," a number in which three women discuss their reasons for turning to ballet as an escape from personal unhappiness, and "Nothing," a long soliloquy describing a young Hispanic woman's comic difficulties with her former "Method" acting professor. The beautiful "What I Did for Love" is another vocal highlight. There are several other memorable numbers: the frankness of "Hello Twelve, Hello Thirteen, Hello Love," the humor of "Sing!" the passion of "The Music and the Mirror," and the saviness of "Dance: Ten; Looks: Three."

The acting, while always consistently good, rarely reaches a high level, with the exception of the long and moving scene with the ex-female-impersonator. The continued attraction of *A Chorus Line* lies in its realism and modernness; grand histrionics or mannered theatricality would be sorely out of place here. The star of *A Chorus Line* is and has always been the choreography, and it is in the domain of dance that the show most fully comes to life. Everyone in the company is a skilled and often electric dancer. Passion and commitment come through in every leap and jump.

There was a very wide range of age groups in the audience for the performance which I attended. Many members were clearly out-of-towners for whom *A Chorus Line* meant Broadway. Others were revisiting the show for the third or fourth

Continued on page 3

### Essay:

## Futter on "Having It All"

By Julia Lisella

"I honestly believe that this is one of the most exciting moments in history for women, that we really do have loads and loads of options available. And I also believe very much that it is possible to blend career and family successfully." So opened President Ellen Futter's discussion of "The New American Dream: Career and Family" at an informal gathering of 40 Barnard students last Tuesday evening in the BHR living room.

Invited by Resident Assistant Amy Applebaum and her freshman floor of 4 Reid to discuss, in an informal way, "something other than Barnard," the president decided to discuss her lifestyle as college president, wife, and mother, offering solace and advice on "how to do it all."

It is not easy," warned Futter, "to try to please everyone and to try to answer to all of the people to whom you are responsible." Nevertheless, President Futter remains confident that "doing it all is absolutely sensational" and "singularly reward-

ing both personally and intellectually." When asked about some of the particular problems associated with pursuing a career and having a family she observed, "The thing that the mother still does more of is what I call anticipation. They have their antennae out to think of the next step. A lot of parenting requires the antennae, requires that kind of thoughtfulness and thinking ahead. It's not that the men are unwilling, it's that they've not yet gotten to the stage where that antenna is as instinctively sharp... A man, generally speaking, has not had the experience. They're quick learners. They can figure out when the diaper needs changing. I'm not belittling it, but there are some things you can see and some things you have to feel instinctively."

"But a young woman who has never had a child before has never had the experience of taking care of a child necessarily either," interjected one member of the audience.

"No, that's absolutely true," agreed

President Futter, "but there's an instinct there, whether it's subtle conditioning. I can't tell you. But you will come to this far better equipped than you may anticipate. Take it from me, you know more than you think."

Fears allayed? Among other issues raised by the listeners were economic resources. Did President Futter believe that "having it all" would be equally rewarding or even a viable possibility for those starting out, not yet entered on the "fast-track" of their careers? And what of the single woman (who, as was pointed out, headed more than half of American households)—was she, too, presented with "loads and loads of options?"

President Futter agreed that economic resources play a large role in options opened to women and pointed toward the social developments we could hope to see in our own time, "creative solutions" such as day-care centers, a more developed notion of flex time, and the admittance of children to school at a much earlier age. As for herself, she acknowledged that she had it "much easier than other working women" in that she could afford and does have full-time help at home.

Early in the discussion Futter made it clear that "... there are certain realities, and that people would be doing you an

enormous disservice if they didn't try to make some of these realities concrete for you so that you know what it really does mean to blend family and career." But in the course of the evening the "realities" seemed unclear and largely undefined. "Having it all" itself became ambiguous terminology. What does it mean for a woman in 1983 to have it "all"—career, husband, children? Is this the "New American Dream" for the woman of the 80's? One wonders if acquiring the ability to answer many people—employers, husbands, and children alike—is exactly what our foremothers, bastions of women's liberation, actually had in store for us.

"I believe," said Futter, "not only in the notion of what we have come to call in this country women's liberation, I believe in human liberation. Yes, there are 'certain realities' that President Futter herself forgets. Concerning women's attitudes toward work, she reasons that women go to work for two reasons, for money, either to support themselves or their families and for a sense of satisfaction. "They expect to enjoy it," says Futter. "They go to work for fun." Men, on the other hand, "don't ask themselves as frequently, 'Am I enjoying my job?' They fundamentally go to work because they believe they are supposed to." President Futter asserted that



Richard A. Green

President Futter Speaks in BHR

## Happy Birthday Wanda June

By Jennifer Kaplan

Kurt Vonnegut's *Happy Birthday, Wanda June*, has been revived once again. It is the first production of the Equity Library Theatre's 40th Anniversary season. On one level the 1970's play is a satire of American life. Penelope Ryan is a spry young "widow" who has been left behind by her husband who disappeared eight years before on an odyssey through the African jungle. Joyce Cohen's portrayal of Mrs. Ryan is a highlight of the show, she is wonderfully convincing and as impressive as the role permits. The memory of her husband, Harold, who is presumed dead, does not hinder her desire to create a future for herself. Her apartment, however, stands as a shrine to him; decorated in Early White Hunter the apartment holds everything expected from the bearskin rug and lion-roaring doorbell to an umbrella stand filled with swords and double-edged hatchets (unfortunately, the mounted heads of wild animals look distractingly mangy, and are consequently far from fright-inspiring).

The personality of the apartment serves its purpose. It discourages and humbles one of Penelope's suitors, Herb Shuttle (James Mathers), a vacuum cleaner salesman. It disgusts another suitor, Dr. Woolly (Dale Place,) who mists the place seethes with jungle rot.

It's Harold Ryan's birthday. Mrs. Ryan chooses to ignore this fact, but her ten-year old son cannot. In a fit of hysteria he runs out into the darkness of the park. Herb Shuttle follows the boy in hot pursuit, and comes back with a cake that says

"Happy Birthday, Wanda June"

Who is Wanda June? She is a little girl, played in a wonderfully naive fashion by Victoria Gabrielle Platt. She had been hit by an ice-cream truck and did not make it to her birthday party. At all times during the play, heaven can be seen through the window.

The boy comes back home, and so does Harold Ryan. After eight years in the jungle he returns with his faithful companion, Colonel Looseleaf Harper Ward Asquith does a fantastic job portraying the wide-eyed nerve-struck man whose greatest claim to fame is having once dropped a bomb on Nagasaki. As the most interesting character, he is intended to represent the confused moral conscience of society.

*Happy Birthday, Wanda June* is a post-Vietnam War meditation on life, death, revenge, heroism, dignity, danger, self-deception, prejudice and compassion. The serious issues which faced America in the 70's are regrettably still relevant today.

It's quite difficult to pull off a revival successfully. The play has been produced many times and has been made into a movie. Unfortunately this production falls short. *Happy Birthday, Wanda June* is a wonderful work. The production at the Equity Library Theatre can be commended for its determination and social consciousness. If you can see the movie see it. If not, the script remains intact and this revival conveys the messages and provokes the thoughts as was originally intended.

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## Chorus Line

*Continued from Page 3*

time. The audience, which interrupted the final number at least five different times, was clearly delighted with the proceed-

ings. Two small reservations: I wish that some of the actors would develop better diction when they sing, so that *A Chorus Line's* frequently clever words could come through with greater clarity. Also, the am-

plification system should be toned down considerably.

Otherwise, every self-respecting New Yorker, visitor, or theater enthusiast should attend *A Chorus Line* at least once. The *Playbill* contains the following sentence: "This show is dedicated to anyone who has ever danced in a chorus or marched in step... anywhere." I would add that *A Chorus Line* should be seen by anyone who has ever loved a musical... anywhere.

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