



Vol. 4 MARTLET MAGAZINE No. 4

# The Measure of 'Measure for Measure'

by A. Jenkins

*This is the last WEEKLY Martlet Magazine. Due to financial difficulties, the Magazine will now be printed only once a month, but will consist of twelve pages instead of four. We are disappointed naturally, that this has happened; however, we can try out some new things with the twelve-page issue that, due to space problems, would not have been possible before, such as short stories, a greater selection of poetry, and longer features. The deadline for the next issue will be November fifteenth. The December issue will necessarily require an earlier deadline, about which you will be informed. Happy Halloween!*

**NOTE:** These remarks are certainly not meant as a definitive pronouncement on the aims of the present production. They are simply my own reactions (as an English prof.) to some of the problems in Measure for Measure and my own explanations (as one actor in a very large cast) of the way we have tried to deal with those problems.

Measure for Measure is not an easy play to get across to a modern audience. Every time I've seen it acted, I remember being drawn into Isabella and Angelo's conflict and being entertained by Lucio and the pimps and bawds of Vienna, but the rest of the play seemed rather flat and tiresome. Thinking back to the last time I saw it done at Stratford-on-Avon, I can't even remember who played the Duke nor do I recall what he looked like. In other words, because of the way it is usually presented, with the Duke being played very much as "the old fantastical Duke of dark corners", the action (and the audience with it) tends to sag after Act III, once Isabella has learnt Angelo's true nature.

Some academic critics attribute this falling off to the fact that Shakespeare lost interest in the story and botched the last two acts; in which case Shakespeare's "nods" last considerably longer than Homer's. Others would have it that the Duke is not meant to be a character at all, but is simply an "instigator of the action." But none of this is much use to an audience that has to sit through those last two acts watching an actor on stage embodying the symbolic Duke as a flesh and blood character.

If the play is simply an allegorical exploration into the nature of justice, then theatrically at least we grow to care far too much for Isabella and Angelo as individual people, and it is difficult to stomach the way that Isabella (a psychologically interesting character) is married off to the Duke (a symbolic personage) at the finale in order to satisfy the air of general reconciliation that the over- neat ending creates.

One way of resolving these contradictions is to play the Duke as a comic character, and this is what happens in the present production. The Duke is made as human and as fallible as the rest of the characters, and his reappearance in Vienna disguised as the Friar is played for all it is worth as the complex game of a man who is concerned with justice but who enjoys the sight of a hypocrite trapped by his own double game. Rather than falling away, the action gathers tempo after Act III when the plot is played as "a plot"; it becomes the Duke's play from beginning to end.

Theatrically, such a reading does not divert our attention from Angelo and Isabella; instead, it widens the focus of the play and sets their story in a framework of general duplicity and frailty. The Duke is as vain as the rest of them. Thinking himself "a scholar, a statesman, and a soldier," he is jolted to find that characters like Lucio have very little good to say of him in his "absence"; a fact which perhaps explains the Duke's harsh treatment of Lucio at the play's end.

Humanizing the Duke unifies the tone of the play, but it still does not quite solve the ambiguity of Act V where the characters pair off in abstract patterns. To counter this, we've extended the obvious artifice of the Duke-Friar's plot into Act V, playing the resolution at top speed before a large crowd grouped all over the multi-level stage. It becomes a noisy, public spectacle. Angelo and Lucio are disgraced in a ceremony that is as ritualized and as rowdy as a bull fight, and the audience is not required to "feel for" the characters any more than it is when the characters link hands in couples and walk off stage.

Dr. Allen's production makes the crowd one of the play's major "characters." Justice, mercy, charity and chastity are not absolute things; human appetite tends to divert and pervert them. We have therefore aimed at an impression of life spilling over into the action, and anyone familiar with the text will be surprised at the number of crowd-scenes that the production affords.

As a specific example, the text of II.i. requires a private room in which Elbow brings Pompey and Froth before Angelo, Escalus and the Justice. We played it that way for about three weeks of rehearsals until it was suggested that we bring Mistress Elbow on stage and let Pompey go through his double-talk before an actual jury. The results of the change were remarkable. What had been a piece of vaudeville patter became a meaningful comment on the play; justice in the abstract has to be meted out by humans who are willful, prejudiced, confused or plainly stupid.

Finally, we tried to unify (and comment on) the play through the colour scheme of the costumes and the set. We've endeavoured to underline the way that Puritan chastity and animal lust infect each other by bler ding icy blues with hot oranges.

Measure for Measure gives us a cruel look at mankind. We've tried to bring out the comedy as well as the blackness not only to fit the fashion of the contemporary theatre but as a legitimate reflection of 17th century intellectuals like Hobbes, who saw that "the nature of man is solitary, fearful, nasty, brutish and short."



# Comment

by e. yani

She would not give  
her blessing  
to a marriage of words  
and mouths  
that do not really fit,  
that do not even close.

She would not  
take away her curse,  
their love.

And so he would  
be content  
with living  
uncomfortably - - - noiselessly.

# Poem

by Winnifred

you are a merman  
strong in your element  
of river, lake and ocean  
while I  
race landbound  
up hills at dusk  
to where willows spring,  
silver embryos  
swinging in the dark.  
(where are you, merman?)  
see me sway  
in the topmost fork  
chanting at the moon  
washed with mist.  
(I am a dream  
unless you touch me, merman)  
sit then on wet stone  
for a time  
to merge two worlds—  
you can still dive  
and I may climb . . .

# A Message from the Medium

by Anonymous

The time seems to have come when it is fashionable to don the proverbial mantle of Jeremiah and speak plainly from the SUB steps.

The traits that make up a good student leader have been high-lighted to me through the study of the literature and talent available, including the Martlet. There is no doubt that student leaders have shown and continue to show many noteworthy attributes. They are tenacious, and this, coupled with a refusal to be sidetracked by either logic or maturity but depending more on hysteria and delinquency, has baffled many of their opponents. Most people, in fact. Their flair for fantasy, often brilliantly impulsive, places them in the very forefront of propagandists. Their determination that the rights of others shall not deflect them from the pursuit of their own produces an unwavering demeanor. Finally, eloquence and bad language, unimpeded by humility, and arguments which concentrate on the present rather than stressing the future, make of them leaders whom other student leaders will follow to the end.

Mr. Frketich, Mr. Green, am I right?

Let us for one moment accept with the Board of Governors the premise that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, and substitute Columbia, Berkeley, SFU, Victoria, for either Waterloo or Eton. Now add to this the view that spending public taxes on a bunch of scruffy, indolent scrim-shankers is a wicked sartorial waste and you have successfully empathized with a member of that august and noble body. The logical step for the Board of Governors to take towards stopping all this student "nonsense" is to put in a reactionary president at UVIC.

Simon Fraser will soon have its new reactionary Chancellor. Thatcher has warned Saskatchewan what will happen there. The last thing UVIC needs now is a reactionary with a veto on everything. Imagine that to yourself. It's the last thing the faculty wants and it's the last thing the students want. There is no need to list the reasons; and the progress of the last three years. Progress is in the air, there is no doubt about it. The only thing that can halt it, no, put it back at least three years, is extremism shouting at the top of its voice and informed by a lack of foresight.

I think there is a great deal too much agreement — of the 'silence gives consent' variety — supporting our student "leaders". The desire to be inconspicuous, to take on the colour of our surroundings, motivates most students, most student leaders and most specialists. Of course the phraseology is different for each group. It varies from a silent shift from foot to foot when anybody mentions a new idea, through cliches like "Be cool" and "Don't get uptight," to the really heavy stuff: "Don't you feel you are restricting yourself in your interpretation? Surely the phallic symbol is open to contrary possibilities, entertains an essential quality of obfuscation, reminiscent of . . ." The jargon of articles in student publications, the colourful cliches of the activists, and the pseudo-erudite drivellings of lab reports and term essays are all similar in one respect: they appeal to nobody but the writer, nobody except perhaps somebody who shares the same pocket of knowledge and the same hang-ups. Where all these groups mix and remain apart and silent towards each other, there can be no "community of scholars", no real university.

And yet at the same time there are whimperings for a reduction in requisites and compulsory courses: first the science, then the foreign language, and now English. All I am interested in is Chemistry, the man says, and signs himself I A&S. "To know only one thing well," wrote Robert Graves, "is to have a Barbaric mind." Soon a spectral yearning for the third century is seen emerging from the catalogues in the Library. Subjects are necessary, but to equate education, BA, BSc, or whatever, with the knowledge of one subject is a disaster. Is there a person at this university who can honestly say that all he wants to be is only a qualified rat-catcher or picture-gazer or poem-reader or circuit-breaker or nose-picker?

There is a simple point here. A university education, if it is to be of value, cannot and should not be attained either quickly or easily. It requires time, study, and thought. That is the sand in the oyster, the pea in the Hans Andersen story. It takes a long time to read Plato's 'Republic', it takes a long time to read 'Paradise Lost' — let alone the works of one author, let us say Kant, Freud, or Shakespeare. And beyond this, when studying a work of literature, is it not more productive to take a philosophical, historical, psychological, scientific, sociological point of view rather than only a literary one?

University has become a four year curriculum chase, a very unacademic business, that results in knowing of things, of being able to talk about them and of learning to include them in extensive and impressive bibliographies. Students by and large are dissatisfied with the educational system they find at university. After high school they expect something better than the muffed-bird-horse game of TRUE or FALSE, the crippled juggling trick of ABC-matric. But no. University is just one more balancing act on the way to the top. It is the civil service ladder in miniature: mouth on the feet of the man above, feet on the face of the man below. No wonder both faculty and students alike are cynical, no wonder academics has lost its intrinsic value.

At heart education is Socrates questioning on the street corner. But what do we have at UVIC? A computerized, encyclopaedic, fragmented dispenser of knowledge. A treadmill where everybody fights to stay where they are. In many courses the student has not time to think, no chance to discuss with professors and older students, no time to argue: it takes all the time to learn the facts. Society may demand a headfull of facts, but the person who has a headfull of facts and a degree is not educated, not even in the specialist sense. University has become a union ticket to a firm manufacturing let us say Panty-Hose, in Peoria, Illinois, it has become a shop like everything else in North America.

University is now a massively financed business in which students, professors, faculties, contend for priority treatment. Politics, tenures, publish-or-perish, career aspirations, money-grubbing, mark-kissing and an endless stream of committees, councils, assemblies, have taken over the heart of our universities.

The organizations of education has become the prime function at all levels — from the Board of Governors right down to the Students' Council and even into the classrooms. The 'needs of society' the 'opportunity supplied by the taxpayers', spin through the head of the student who must spend four years just trying to stay where he is. But I do not think student power is the answer. Very few want power as such or a share in the organization of the business. That I think is interpreting the degree of apathy at UVIC the way it should be interpreted. It is time the mirrors were taken out of the AMS offices, time the horizons of a few little people were widened. Most students simply want to register the fact that they as persons are at university. That they are what the whole thing is for. At the moment they are being ignored more by the AMS than by the Senate.

I believe there is a solution, though, or rather a series of steps that could be taken towards solving the problems I have described. Universities in B.C. are just another department of Government attached to the Ministry of Education. First year students are admitted here, at SFU and at UBC, not on the results of entrance exams set by the universities, but on the scaled marks of Government matrices. The reason for this is economic and also obvious. High schools can neither afford nor do they have room for many Grade twelves to repeat a year. So Mr. Bennett's functionaires scale matric marks to the saturation point at universities. And this is where we start to kick: classes are too large. A five-dollar parking fee is extorted to build parking lots for the greater number of students.

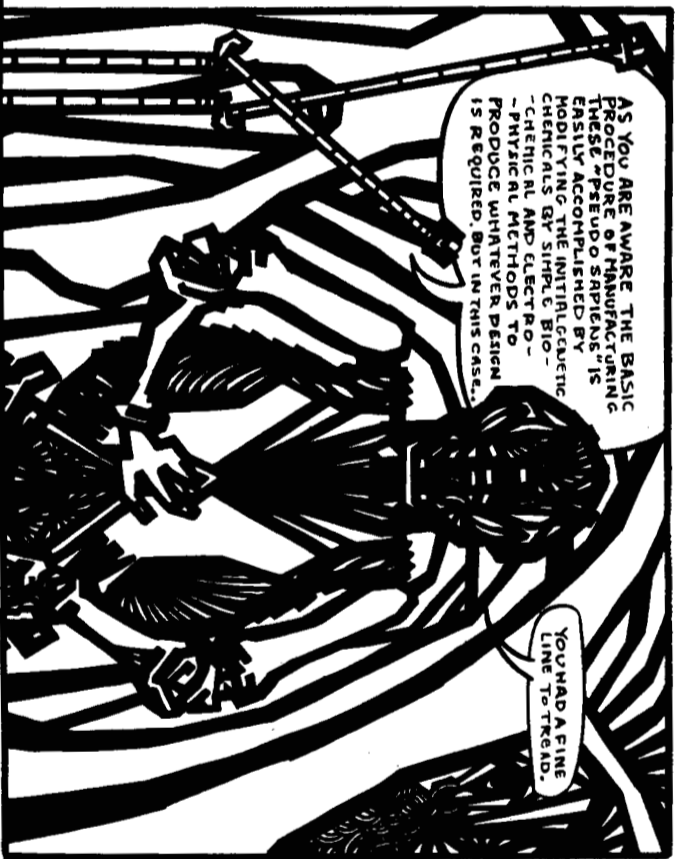
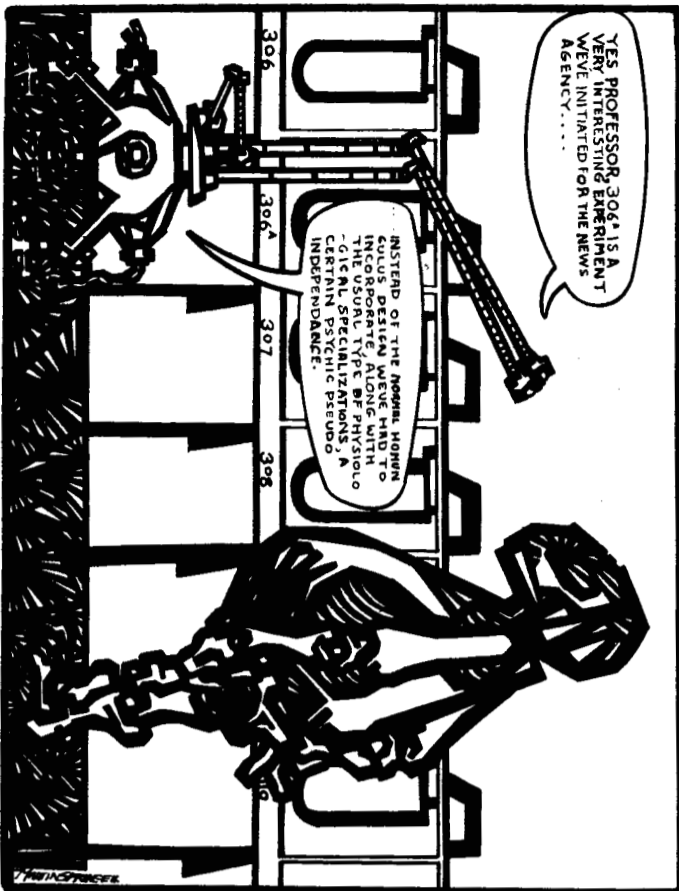
The answer is that many students who are here should not be here. For many of us it is a fool's paradise.

The answers are these: University exams, set by the university, with higher standards, and perhaps the extension of the required subjects to include philosophy, a science (not necessarily lab), a foreign language, and English. With this the technical colleges should be recognized as having an equivalent status to universities, rather than forcing universities to be technical colleges, as is now the case. And finally, the training of recruits should be put into the hands of big business. More and more the money in this society is being concentrated in the hands of Mr. Shell and Mr. Eaton and others like them, and more and more Mr. Shell and Mr. Eaton are asking for BA's and BSc's to do their work. This is fair enough. But if Mr. Shell, for instance, were asked to train his own research staff, then our first year Arts and Science man who is only interested in Chemistry, would be given the opportunity to go straight to Mr. Shell, where he will probably end up anyway.

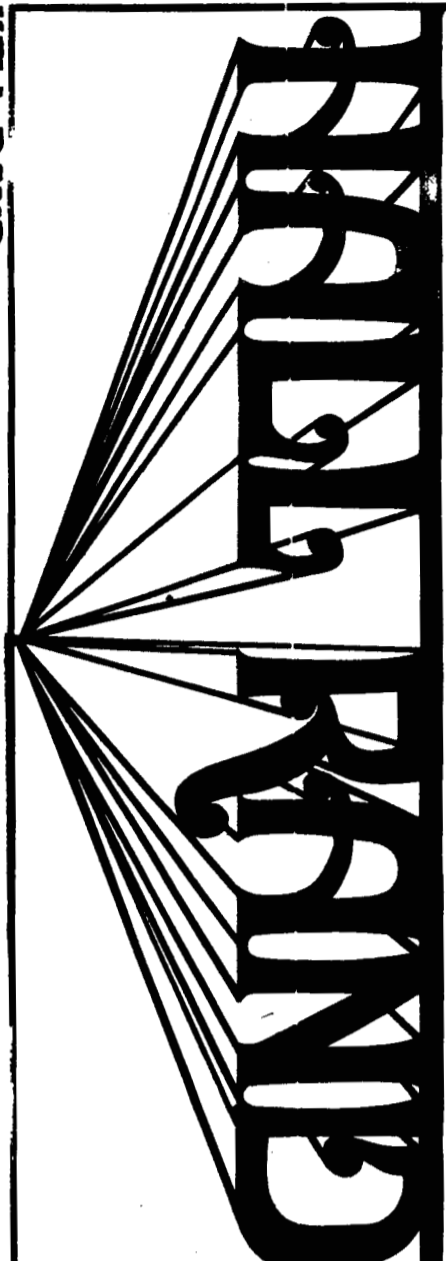
Most of all we must have our belief in a university education restored. Despair is not the only tenable conclusion. We must accept, like Socrates, the horizons of our own knowledge and learn judgment somewhere along the way. Judgment, after all, is what university is all about.







HALL RAND. DRAWN BY MARTIN SPRINGETT. WRITTEN BY DAVID SHELTON.



### CUS continued

University Teacher's censure), UNB (the president's firing of a professor without stated reasons), Windsor (Administration interference in the student newspaper) have all shown students that they must fight for their rights to decide for themselves what type of education they want, and how the university will be run, and by whom.

So, the Canadian Union of Students has become involved in the real issues which face students, and which affect their lives from day to day. What this means is that the visible work by CUS are not as obvious as it once was. Questions like "what do we get for our dollar?" cannot be answered with a glib list of services which you are offered. We do offer some. (see below). We do not, in fact, want to defend the CUS as an entity in itself. What we want to do is discuss the issues which CUS is facing, issues which affect all students. And this can only be done in practice, working together on campuses to change the systems which are exploiting and manipulating the student and the community. Thus self-determination is needed in education, over housing plans, in the choice of professors and administrators, in the university's relationship with the community outside. And that is the concern of CUS.

#### Services

CUS has developed various services which members can use to their advantage.

1) **Publications:** We have a publication service which produces papers and articles on education, co-ops, communications etc. which anyone may use. This, along with lists of resource people, tapes, films and bibliographies, offer the student a chance to discover for himself the current ideas on education.

2) **Co-ops:** For the past two years CUS has had a full time co-op fieldworker who has helped campuses set-up co-ops for their students. Focusing on membership education as the key to developing the movement CUS has been working at two levels — the first is the establishment of a theoretical framework through discussion; the second has been technical assistance and advice to these already working with co-ops, and those about to enter into that area. Coops exist at present in Halifax, Fredericton, Moncton, Kingston, Toronto, Waterloo, Guelph, Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton and New Westminster.

In addition, CUS is working with the Canadian Labour Congress and the co-operative Union of Canada in the formation of the Co-operative Housing Foundation.

3) **Research Service:** the office has files on most subjects which are important to the student, both at the council level and elsewhere. Information on communications, organizing, university relations, structures of the university etc., can be supplied on request.

4) **Life Insurance:** While CUS does not adhere to the concept of life insurance, we do offer a special student insurance rate for members. The offer is made through Canadian Premier Life who has a representative for every member campus. If you are interested, contact him through your student council for more information.

5) **Travel:** CUS has a travel department which organizes flights to Europe and elsewhere. Last year over 1,000 students made use of the flights and other services. (Eurail passes, car hire, etc.). This year 19 flights are planned, going to London, Rome, Moscow and Tokyo. These leave from Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. There is also a possibility of flights to Cuba also.

More information may be got from: CUS Travel Department, 44 St. George Street, Toronto 5, Ontario.

6) **CUS Lobby:** CUS has a lobby in Parliament which has in the past resulted in the Student Loan Plan, Air Canada half-prices, housing legislation, among others. Briefs on taxation, broadcasting and housing have been presented this year.

7) **Fieldworkers:** There are now four regional fieldworkers, one each in B.C., the Prairies, Ontario and the Maritimes who work with students, student councils and national Council Members to discuss and work on the issues facing the student today. The National Council, consisting of 14 representatives from the regions, a Program Commissioner, a Finance Commissioner, the Past-President, the President, Vice-President and President-Elect, is the top decision-making body in CUS between Congresses.