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Kierkegaard

Mr. Howard Johnson's lecture on Kierkegaard was remarkable for clarity, vividness, brilliance, humor. But to say this is folly. It is more aestheticism. It is aestheticisms of the same sort as that of the man who reads great books in order merely to see and enjoy what they say without caring whether it is true or false or whether it may have good or evil consequences in human lives. The enjoyment of great ideas like the enjoyment of excellent wine and like all other enjoyments that belong to the aesthete's way of life, only conceals boredom, despair and angst. For such enjoyment can provide no support against the individual's awareness of the insecurity of his existance, of the fact that he will one day die.

This aestheticism was the first of the "existential possibilities" that presented themselves to Kierkegaard as a way in which the individual might use the time between now and death. But since aestheticism leads to despair, it is not really a way. There is another way, the ethical. The man who follows it does not lose himself among transitory joys; if he were to do that, it would be only just that nothingness engulf him at the end. No, he resolves to do his duty, come what may, so that it may be a damnable injustice when nothingness does finally engulf him. But this does not remove his despair because it does not remove the waiting nothingness.

Another "existential possibility" appears in what Kierkegaard called Religiousness A. In religiousness A the individual postulates the existence of God as the author of a divine law. He postulates his own responsibility to the law and so his own freedom without which responsibility would be meaningless. He also postulates immortality as the reward and fulfillment of obedience. He has, then, as absolute end to pursue, i. e. perfect obedience to the law of God. But there are also relative ends, and the task is simultaneously to maintain an absolute relation to the absolute end and a relative relation to the relative ends. Alas, the individual finds that he is involved in an absolute devotion to relative ends. So he has first to practice renunciation. He discovers, however, that no matter how many things he may renounce, there is still that relative end which is himself. He has to mortify himself, to destroy pride; but pride is always returning even in the very act of the destruction of pride. Meanwhile time has been passing, and he has to make up for the past. He finds that his failures are not isolated and accidental; they are all connected by a sin that is deep in his soul and of which he cannot rid himself. He is guilty, condemned by the law, and with death can expect only misery.

This leads to Religiousness B. When every human reliance has been exhausted, when it is apparent that with men salvation is impossible, then only does the individual wait upon the mercy of God. The law by telling a man the bad news about himself makes him attentive to the good news. The good news is that God has appeared in time for him and for his salvation. But the appearance of God in time is the absolute paradox, and one can relate oneself to it only through the leap of faith. Jesus Christ, the Crucified One, is an offense to reason; and faith in him always involves opposing the offended reason.

Before making a general comment upon the lecture the reviewer would like to point out a one-sidedness in Mr. Johnson's picture of what he called "legalistic Judaism." He cited "legalistic Judaism" as an example of Religiousness A, representing the Pharisees as inevitably involved in an absolute devotion to relative ends because of their attempt without grace to obey the law. It must be said, however, that although from the Christian point of view the law is only the wrath of God since it brings the knowledge of sin but does not redeem, from the Jewish point of view the law is itself grace and Spirit, and through the law and obedience to it God has appeared and is in time. What, then, is there to prevent the Jew from understanding his religiousness as Religiousness B?

From Mr. Johnson's presentation one might infer that in the writings of Soren Kierkegaard the road to Christianity is straight and clear for all to see. Such an inference, however, would

leave unexplained the fact that, although many Christians have found in Kierkegaard a way to restate (if, indeed, it is not more than restatement) orthodox Christianity, other men have been able to adopt what they think is the essential (or existential?) truth in Kierkegaard and at the same time reject Christianity. Surely Kierkegaard was passionately concerned for himself, whether or not he were a Christian and what it might mean for him to be one. For this reason his example is extremely useful for anyone who because he is a respectable American citizen or skilled in the liberal arts or a member of some church takes it for granted that he is a Christian and so rests comfortably in unbelief. On the other hand, Kierkegaard was not a Christian apologist; he was not trying to persuade men of the truth of Christianity. And if, as appears to be the case, he was finally a Christian, he still left each other individual to find his own way, since it could not be otherwise.

But was the Christianity of Kierkegaard really Christianity? Beware of easy answers to the question: What is really Christianity? This question and this warning are indeed within the spirit of Kierkegaard himself. We may, then, wonder whether or not a Christianity which has as its basis man's concern over the nothingness with which death threatens his being is really Christianity? Also what sort of thing is Christian faith? If the meaning of existence is not reason but Jesus Christ, is it necessarily also true that faith in Jesus Christ requires the opposition of reason? Is reason, after all, that important? —*J. W. Smith.*

Philosophy, Poetry, McKeon

I hope the reader will excuse this which is like the last and feeblest emanation of the One, being only a commentary on a commenator who commented on a whole series of illustrious commentators running all the way back to our fathers Plato and Aristotle from whose commentaries on Being, etc., we have still not quite recovered. On the other hand I hope Mr. McKeon will excuse the above bit of malapertness on precisely that kind of treatment of his subject matter that he himself expressly avoided. The phrase "history of thought" is both vague and vicious; vague if it is used metaphorically, and vicious if it commits one to ignore that the order of ideas, if such exists, is not a temporal order. For example, Plato's philosophy is poetic, and this is important; Aristotle's is not, and that is important, but what difference would it have made if the two philosophers' relation as teacher and pupil had been reversed? Not one whit. The ideas remain unshakeably the same.

It is this very importance of the distinction between the two methods (shall I say?) that Mr. McKeon was dwelling on so forcibly last Friday evening. This lecturer has a way of stimulating our memories, and even his question period performance did not exceed his presentation in the lecture itself. He recalled to our minds that the Platonic lawgiver's reason for dismissing the poets is simply that he is afraid they will ruin his own beautiful poem (the polity) and substitute ugly poems (Homer?) in its place: that Aristotle would merely dismiss the bards with an outward frown of warning and an inward smile of contempt—no more. For Plato, if Socrates comes to an understanding with Thrasymachus, they had both come to an understanding of the nature of things. Aristotle merely remarks that truths simple in themselves are not necessarily simple to the understanding. Plato's dialogs are dramatic; he never lets us forget that philosophy is a *doing* also, and that understanding them requires an *active participation* on the part of the reader. The works of Aristotle are analytical; he is said to be the father of science, or rather, of sciences. In general the poetic philosopher tends to assimilate distinctions; the non-poetic one to make them.

In the centuries immediately following, Plato is almost unanimously acclaimed to be the greater of the two, and a multitude of conflicting doctrines are read into his work, ranging from the mysticism of Plotinus and the magic of Iamblichus to the mathematical systems of Nichachus and Proclus. Carneades, the lecturer said, extracted from the dialogs the doctrine if *verisimilitude* which on the surface says there is no truth but only probability, and, esoterically says that if this is so, then there are some *veritas* to which the verisimilitude is similar. All this, paradoxically enough, is to confuse terrible people like Zeno. The only inference your reviewer is left to draw from such a statement is that the conflict between philosopher-poet and philosopher-non-poet was already well begun in those far-off ages.

In the twelfth century climax (of the lecture) the relation is a very close one, and even the philosopher who writes against poetry writes poetically. Four kinds of Platonism, or poetic philosophy, emerge from this tradition.

The *cosmologists* take their stand from the Timaeus. Their views, as one might expect, are very broad, on poetry as on other things. One of them, Macrobius, writes a commentary on Virgil, the exemplary cosmological poet before Dante's time in which he calls Virgil a philosopher as well as a poet, and in this connection citing the line from Horace where he says poetry is both pleasant and useful, useful meaning here instructive. The *humanists*, or I suppose rationalists, maintain on the contrary that there is no such things as poetic, or poetry in itself, but that poetry to be good must be reducible to the liberal arts. The other two schools stem from a kind of original schism in Augustine, himself perhaps too heavily influenced by the Platonic poetry. Peter Abelard was the champion of *rational theology*, of the strict and non-poetic variety; yet even he indulged in such a fanciful notion as the Doctrine of Signatures, i. e., that the nature of this world consists in signs of the next. His opponent, the *mystic* St. Bernard, to crown it all, used the same arguments against rational theology, and philosophy in general, as Abelard uses against poetry. Thus is completed the twelfth century circle of philosophic poetry and poetic philosophy.

With the discovery and circulation of genuine Aristotelian texts in the thirteenth century, a sharp departure is taken from the Platonic tradition, both in doctrine and in method. Bonaventura reduces poetry to a mere mechanical art, and both his and Thomas' methods of writing is analytic.

With Dun Scotus' criticisms of Aquinas in the fourteenth century, a return to a closer relation between philosophy and poetry is already begun, though the impetus of the scholastic tradition carries the last of it through five centuries or more.

In the Renaissance the relationship is as close as it ever was, except that now it is reversed. Poetry ascends over philosophy and "metaphysical lumber" is strictly on the way out. (Witness the weak-minded scepticism of Britain's philosophers, compared with the power and majesty of her playwright.) For the ancients concerned themselves principally with the forms of things; the moderns with the matter of the same.

The lecturer would have us understand that three kinds of conclusions are to be drawn from his story, to wit, of subject matter, of form, and of criteria. The subject matters of both poetry and philosophy insofar as they coincide is self-knowledge, originating from the famous Socratic motto. The differences in form or method consist in the 'forementioned manner of making or assimilating distinctions. For criteria Mr. McKeon and I refer you to Dante's four levels of interpretation. The reader must excuse his reviewer for not understanding very well this part of the lecture or its relation to the other parts; he (the reviewer, that is) hasn't as good a memory as some other people, neither is he as adept at making distinctions.

In the question period, it developed that the unity of poetry is very different from that of philosophy, and the lecturer seemed to be saying that they are not interchangeable, that a poem cannot be interpreted to jibe with any particular philosophy without doing some violence to both, and vice-versa: for example, a purely dramatic reading of the Platonic dialogs if entertaining, would also be inaccurate. Even the myths are to be taken philosophically. The dialectical context always shows clearly enough how they are to be read. The poetic truth is of particulars, be they persons or actions. The philosophic truth takes its origin from non-temporal first principles, and if the philosophy is to be clearly consistent, the relation of its language to its concepts must remain fixed. The lecturer himself may deny it, but it must be obvious to all what category he himself belongs in. It is only surprising that the word "mathematics" did not play a more explicit role in the lecture, appearing say, in the title of the same, since the mathematical arts and sciences are such perfect models of that same philosophic truth that the lecture talked about so well last Friday evening. And if your reviewer is not always so clearly consistent, Mr. McKeown must take part of the blame too, must he not? for not making a myth about triangles this time. What does the reader think? —*Gormly.*

Lecture

Here, too, you are not obliged to be in authority, however competent you may be, or to submit to authority, if you do not like it; you need not fight when your fellow citizens are at war, nor remain at peace when they do, unless you want peace; and though you may have no legal right to hold office or sit on juries, you will do so all the same if the fancy takes you.

A wonderfully pleasant life, surely, for the moment.

And, furthermore, every man will develop in whatever direction he pleases, his aim to become as rich as possible. He will know much of the trades and skills which are current and nothing about himself and other men. In such a state a large police force will be necessary to keep the citizens from fighting with one another. And since the police themselves are like the citizens, they, too, will be watched and carefully guarded.

Sometimes elements in the state will get out of hand because they lack this elemental understanding, and despite the police, there will be a war. Because wars are based not on reason but unreason, the losers will stop fighting only when they can see no way of winning. But both sides will remain unchanged. And since the winners, as well as the losers, fight only because of wealth, there will be a decline of effort after the fight.

Because of wealth and fear of the police, who are too much like themselves, the victors will demobilize as many of the police as they dare. Why do they fear the police? Because they, living as they do under a tyranny of wealth, are very sensitive to all other tyrannies, and this they know: that give the police great power and they will dictate the terms under which they will protect the citizenry against one another.

Their only solution is to make the police as weak as possible and pray that there will be no revolts. They can do this or they can have what may be described as universal military training.

In such a state the first solution is dangerous because, it being possible for some to gain a greater share than is proper, the rest of the state will grow jealous and rise against the lucky few.

It is clear that in such an irresponsible state no laws can exist; if they do, they are weak and frequently violated. Thus all agreements will rest on the force which each contracting party can bring to bear. Potential success will be the determinant of the kind of action to be pursued in all situations. Occasionally, if the power is there a citizen will do what is correct. But if he lacks the power which seems necessary, he will do what seems to him to be the wisest.

Each will be treated in accordance with the humours which beset him. Humours are such that they can be both illusive and creative: thus, they may create certain illusions in others and these illusions may, in their turn, go toward creating us. Reputation, therefore, will be the second principle of this state: the kind of reputation which lives on wealth and its attributes. Along with it will go fear when it is successful. When it is not, it will be accompanied by laughter and general disrespect.

This is what has been and not what should be. This has been a history and not a poem. What should be? A state in which the citizens are educated to their responsibilities. What does this mean? That you visit the crossroads and confess your sins.

But you may now object: these are not the exact words which Major General-Citizen Hersey used.

I confess it, but then this report is, insofar as you believe such to be the case, a poem and not a history.

A. S. W.

On Borrowed Time

For those existing in a world of illusion where the arrival of radioactive waves of atomic power heralded the dawn of the "new day" of hope for the "common man," the Sunday evening talk of Dr. Alexander Sachs on "Man and the Atomic Age" might have served as the shock necessary to break the spell of such beatific vision. Dr. Sachs, as most of the rest of us, classifies this dynamic new phenomena as an "either/or" proposition, and as a man of an extremely sophisticated political outlook—he spends most time in an examination of the "or," better understood as its negative potentialities. He is what political writers constantly refer to as a "realist," being very reluctant about becoming ensnared by the ideological cliched phrases of the liberals. He speaks not only with an imposing, sometimes egotistical conviction, but also with a good deal of authority, invoked by virtue of his close association with the higher echelons of the behind the scenes affairs of state. He is what Damon Runyon would call an "inside man"—"a gear." Serving with the Office of Strategic Services during the war, he was heavily involved in the planning and execution of the Manhattan Project, and knows whereof he speaks when talking of the atomic bomb thus far. However, it is as a student of History and Political Science that he addresses the problems of the Atomic Age, and here his authority rests on his opinions—certainly a potentially more vulnerable position.

Mr. Sachs believes that the war, in any comprehensive sense is certainly not over, but has merely advanced to a transitional period where resumption of the shooting war or the establishment of a real peace are both impossible. The determining factor in reaching either of these alternatives is the role of the United States in World Politics. We are, he claims, potentially a super-power, acting at present with degrading, suicidal impotence. Russia on the other hand is wielding its power aggressively over Europe and Asia, forcing International squeeze plays—acting, as he characterized, like "introverted imperialists." We must draw the lines and plug the holes before it is too late, backing Britain in a determined resistance against further Soviet political and territorial expansion. Failure to do this will lead to a "second Munich," the loss by default of the physical and psychological frontiers of the Western democracies. By doing it we can achieve a balance of power, which, for Dr. Sachs, is desirable insofar as it is a realizable goal that would at least insure peace in our time. The extension of balance to concert of power might prolong this period until men advance to the capacity of world citizenship. (Definition—Concert of Power—a mutual agreement between powers, in this case Britain, the United States and Russia, to respect each others' spheres of interest.) Our foreign policy should be directed towards the realization of this goal. This may not be easy to achieve in our present "schizoid and disintergrating democratic culture," but the individual is challenged to make himself heard above the claque of the Gallup poll, and the wisdom of his opinions felt in government which must put these policies into effect.

It is difficult to quarrel with Dr. Sachs' analysis of the present state of affairs in the realm of real politick, yet his solution to this multiplicity of problems is lacking the ideas and the spirit that might beckon a better world. We believe with Dr. Sachs that the time for decision has been greatly foreshortened by the advent of atomic power, and that the present is in all probability an infinitessimal period of time, borrowed from the men who died to give us a fighting chance at its solution. The exasperating paradox is that although his present recommendations seem to contain some sort of an immediate solution to an increasingly threatening obstacle to peace—rapidly expanding Russian imperialism, they also contain the negative germs of eventual complete world chaos, disorder and destruction. The horns of the dilemma are that such a division of power is the contradiction of lasting world peace. Where unity under law is needed—diversity without law is offered.

Peace in our time can well mean death in our children's, and that isn't a good bargain, nor an honest one. Is not America's primary interest the achievement of a *just* peace and thereby a lasting one, and her mission on borrowed time the use of her latent power to struggle towards this goal? If need be let us oppose Russia, and align ourselves with Britain in the interests of justice and real world peace, but not in an attempt to awaken the corpse of European power politics.

—*Goldsmith.*

Concord Conference

There are two roads to Concord. One involves shadowing the person, who, in your opinion, seems most likely to be going in the proper direction; the other requires a compass and a map. Needless to say, it also requires that you know how to use them. Mr. Nelson, Mr. Benedict and myself took a subway, a trolley and a bus. This is not an entirely satisfactory method. It is long and it is tedious. Our bus deposited us opposite the Wright tavern. I don't know about other New England taverns. This particular tavern has good but expensive food and candle-light. It also has a very curious door-bell, which only rings after you have carelessly slammed the door. You are very cautious about the door because of the terrific clanging which may descend upon your ears.

Next door to the Wright tavern is the 1st Parish church. I thought for a while that "1st Parish" and St. Paul's might have something in common. But since St. Paul's does not tell you when the church was built and 1st Parish tells you that it was built first, I had to abandon my theory. This church happens to be Unitarian. The conference met in its basement for four days to write the student federalist policy and to determine the nature of the charter under which the federalists will pursue their policy. In one of the upper stories of the church I discovered a pamphlet describing Unitarianism.

Unitarianism embraces all religions without favoritism. A Unitarian believes in religion. How he believes and how much are his problems. As the conference proceeded we found unitarians in our midst; they believed in world government, with certain reservations. Sometimes these reservations threatened to destroy the possibility of a world government.

The first evening we listened to the keynote addresses. Most of the delegates with whom I talked that evening were worried about the distinction between thinking and doing. The answer which they reached after unhappy moments was that they were at Concord to combine two methods through which man acquires habits: that of learning and that of imitation. At the end of four days there was general agreement that the habit which everyone should acquire was that of world citizenship.

On the second day Mr. Benedict suggested that national sovereignty is dead. Mr. Nelson added that national sovereignity is the power to protect the state and the rights of its citizens. Sovereignty ends with the cessation of this power. No state, he pointed out, can make this promise today. The policy committee agreed that national soverignty was the enemy. It did not agree that it was dead. Some of the members felt that it was too much alive.

The issue was carried to the assembly itself finally. Almost everyone present disliked some aspects of national sovereignty. It was obsolete; an illusion, but it was not dead. The Unitarian was worried. If it were dead, what would happen to the United States? The assembly voted that the sentence on national sovereignty should be struck out and the statement of policy sent back to the committee. The issue of national sovereignty never die. Throughout the conference, in and out of committees, the argument was carried on. When the policy committee found its policy, it was able to define a world government: it must have authority over individuals; it must be capable of making, interpreting and enforcing world law, and it must be able to prevent the secession of any nation.

Moreover, it became increasingly clear to some of the assembly that any world government would not do even if it were able to prevent national states from attacking each other. There must be equality under the law. One boy frequently rose to inquire whether the assembly wanted a world government merely because of the atom bomb. There are other things which a world government can do. There is starvation in the world. There are people without homes. These are terrible things.

On the 11th of February the federalists presented their statement of policy:

"We must make world citizenship a political fact. Existing governments have demonstrated that they are incapable of preserving peace and protecting human rights in an interdependent world. The atomic bomb blasts forever the illusion that power politics can give us peace.

"Only a new world sovereignty based on the principles of federalism can destroy the irresponsibility of nationalism while preserving national identity.

"The United Nations Organization is not a federal government. It has no authority over individuals; it can only make recommendations to or negotiate treaties with member nations; and it cannot prevent the secession of any nation. It will not be adequate unless it is capable of making, interpreting, and enforcing world law.

"Therefore, a federal world government must be created, either by calling a convention under Article 109 of the United Nations Charter or by other international action.

"We recognize frankly that the United States and the Soviet Union are the two chief obstacles to such action. Either is powerful enough to take the lead.

"To awaken America Student Federalists will:

"1. Stimulate thinking on the urgent need for federal world government;

"2. Educate our generation in the principles of federalism;

"3. Find, train and organize the necessary leaders, and

"4. Support all steps which will lead to a federal world government."

That afternoon Mr. Benedict and Mr. Nelson rode to Boston in a chauffeured limousine. Since I managed to ride there in a car of more modest means, but still a private vehicle, it would appear that between arrival and departure our fortunes enjoyed a surprising improvement.

—*Witwer.*

Feuillets

That a column of this kind should suddenly appear where nothing like it ever before appeared might demand explanation, but being at heart a simple sort, we shall neglect the metaphysics of our sudden birth, and proceed with our purpose: information concerning book-world activity of likely interest.

Culling temporarily only from the Publishers' Weekly (we would appreciate receiving special information anyone may have) a long enough list, but hardly an impressive one, of notable Spring publications follows:

Pantheon will publish this May an important addition to the already distinguished body of French Catholic literature, *Selected Writings* of Leon Bloy, philosopher and hermit. The editing is done by Jacques and Raissa Maritain who were strong influenced towards Catholicism by this man. Pantheon is also publishing, in a French edition, a new work, *Thesee,* by Andre Gide.

Of special interest to the College is the long awaited republication of Newton's *Principia Mathematica* by the University of California Press.

If there be any Dickensians on the Campus, the latest and most definitive biographyof him by Una Pope-Hennessy should not go unnoticed. I am well informed (by the one Dickensian I know of here) that new information about his marriage is included. We are not particularly interested in Dickens' marriage, but we remember that once, in the salad days before the war, a steady clamor of battle from England on this subject could be heard by sensitive ears. Published by Howell Soskin. English literature in general: a reprinting by Henry Holt of Mark Van Doren's fine study of *John Dryden;* the Shaw touch blatant in *Crime of Imprisonment,* Philosophical Library (this edition of the famous penology report boasts illustrations by William Gropper); a 2 vol. Random House edition of the *Pepys Diary;* for students of modern Irish literature, Macmillan offers Lady Gregory's *Journal.*

The Yale Press will shortly publish Ernst Cassirer's last book, *The Myth of the State,* which seems the only new work in philosophy worth mentioning. (Russell's new book has gathered few friends.)

A novel, *And He Hid Himself,* by Ignazio Silone (Doubleday); *The Condemned Playground,* a new book of essays by Cyril Connolly (Macmillan); *Brewsie and Willie,* by Gertrude Stein (Random); *The Great Divorce,* more religious satire by C. S. Lewis of "Screwtape" fame and a treatise, *The Incarnation of the Word of God,* by St. Athanasium (both Macmillan) complete our list.

Among art books, Marc Chagall and Picasso, both Modern Museum publications, and Pantheon's folio of 12 Picasso drawings seem most noteworthy.

For the big spenders, the Haldeman-Julius Company publishes in its Ten Cent Classics, *What Great Men Have Said About Women, What Great Women Have Said About Men* and a necessary item in everyone's vest, *Pocket Theology.*

E. V. Thau.

A Comment on the Local State of Music

I suppose the "Music Lover," starry-eyed and approaching St. John's, is destined for no more "confusion" than the ordinary boy. Yet when he can find only the Music Director's family, when the singing at his initial beer party makes him wonder if there ever *was* a trained chorus, when he can discover only a handful of records and scores in a state of riotous disorder if not disintegration, when he waits four terms for any mention of music in a lecture, when the lab tutor comforts those few earnest ones who attend the music labs by saying, Don't worry if you don't get it, it isn't awfully important—there seems to be a certain reasonableness in his confusion, and the reasonableness lies in the incommensurability of all this with what the catalog had suggested to him.

Suppose this freshman, now grown (not unrecognizably) into a sophomore, by dint of hopeful attendance at question periods and surreptitious eavesdropping on the conversation of notables in the coffee shop (sometimes impressively referred to as "dialectic"), discovers that among the long-standing intramural feuds is one between a rather odd looking bunch of aesthetes and a prominent member of the administration over the fine arts being poisonous and illegitimate, and music being somehow all a matter of symbols and ratios. With a somewhat puzzled respect for this theory, he might wish he could understand it; he might admit music as a subject for discourse and think good liberal artists should be good critics; he might even think that

the mastery of Palestrinian counter-point is a discipline as rigorous and valuable as mathematics; and yet wonder if there isn't somehow a more simple-minded approach to the problem, a level however low on which all could come to some agreement.

Music, in the words of Paul Gorman, is pretty nice to listen to. ("Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." Mat, 21:16.) The failure of the College to solve satisfactorily the relation of music, "fine and liberal," to the Program does not seem justification enough for depriving us altogether of the pleasure—and I think it is a simple one that has nothing to do with beatific vision or walpurgish orgy—some of us get from listening to it. The College without great expense could arrange concerts of good and "alive" music; you do not have to hear Schnabel to bear Beethoven. For those who haven't learned yet how to listen to music, there certainly are lecturers who could illuminate this problem as adequately as and in an analogous manner to Mr. VanDoren's lyric poetry lecture of last term. String quartets in the King William Room might not solve the world's problems, but it might make thinking about them more endurable. —*WCB*

While culling assorted pieces of incidental information that had appeared in old Collegians, this letter, from a member of Mr. Hutchins' school, to us, struck our eye. In the light of some of the political questions on campus at this time we thought it worth reprinting.

Sir: I have long been a zealous partizan of the New Program at St. John's, so you may conceive of my dismay when the following rule in the college catalog was brought to my attention by an offensive pragmatist of my acquaintance: "Students bringing women into the dormitories are subject to summary expulsion."

"Surely," he said, with feigned surprise, "the students and faculty of *St. John's* cannot be ignorant of the Oxonian Decretal!"

The shining 'scutcheon of St. John's was smirched—what could I say to him? The Decretal he referred to is, of course, No. 52 of the Decret. Consist. Univ. Oxon. Anno 1579, which states in part that—"Universitie Men, Which Keep Whores In Their Chambers, May Not Be Expelled For That, Because It Ought To Be Presumed Before Hand, That Scholars Will Not Live Without Them."

The discrepancy between the generous common sense of the Decretal and the cruel and unnatural ruling in the catalog is just another example of how the wise laws and salutary maxisms of our fathers have fallen into disuse and oblivion in these parlous times.

"We have lost our heritage!" cries Barr; yet in St. John's, right in his own back yard, so to speak, flourishes a most disgraceful and flagrant example of that same Kulturbolschewismus he so justly deplores.

Trusting that my letter will incite the students to take this matter into their own hands, and vindicate the honour of the college.

I remain,

Outraged Trivialist.

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