

St. John's Collegian

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Army Seminar

This week we asked Mr. Kieffer to tell us about the experimental seminars held at Fort Meade during the summer. Mr. Kieffer led a few of them himself and was present at those conducted by Mr. Barr.

The librarian at the Service Club No. 3, he explained, had managed to persuade the director of special services that there was nothing intolerable about talking; so the first group got together early in June, with Mr. Ford Brown as leader. Unfortunately, Mr. Brown was soon called away by the navy. Mr. Neustadt took over for an evening, and after that Mr. Barr continued for the remainder of the ten weeks scheduled. Meeting once a week, the seminar finished the following great books: the Odyssey, the Apology, the Crito, the Phaedo, books II and VII of Thucydides, Hamlet, King Lear, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, and Gulliver's Travels. The librarian at Service Club No. 2 also started a seminar, under the direction of Mr. Kieffer and Mr. Schofield, but the men of the 76th division were on active training and too tired at night to come. So only one group, at Service Club No. 3, continued to meet and to read the twenty copies of each book St. John's had donated to the library.

Mr. Kieffer said there was nothing particularly surprising about the seminars; they were very much like those of St. John's freshmen, like, say, the first few meetings of the present junior class, many of whom had been to college before coming here. People expressed, for the most part, the same ill considered views. They assigned selfish and practical motives to all human actions and refused to believe that Socrates, for example, gave up his life for any nobler purpose than to achieve fame or posthumous glory or to satisfy some lowly wish to die. The economic interpretation of history, too, was a favorite at the reading of Thucydides. This naive cynicism, Mr. Kieffer said, dominated the first

discussions to the usual degree, but relatively little progress was made away from it, so that Mr. Barr, at the end of the term, felt that everyone had enjoyed the meetings more than they had learned from them.

But there were some ways in which the seminar differed from those at St. John's. The soldiers were more immediately preoccupied by the war than we; they were profoundly concerned and confused about what it is that leads men to fight. But no one questioned the rightness of our cause or the necessity of our victory; our war aims were accepted without question but, it appeared, not so completely understood. However, the group seemed less in danger of becoming Babbitts of the American Legion than most soldiers of the first world war, despite their uncertainty as to the real nature of the liberal cause for which they will fight. There was, on the other hand, a certain restraint in the expression of opinions which might appear a criticism of the army; no one maintained a pacifist position. One man, after having attacked fascism, expressed doubts to Mr. Kieffer about the propriety of what he had said. The army policy, he explained, has been to consider the means of the war but not its end.

In any case, what was to be observed, both good and bad, among the members of the seminar was not necessarily typical of feelings among most soldiers. The experiment was perhaps more interesting as a seminar simply than as a seminar in the army; and Mr. Kieffer said that the most remarkable thing about it was its similarity to those at St. John's.

The hope of continuing the work is not bright, for men in the service will be increasingly occupied with military business and will have little time left over for other things. In any case the experiment this summer has proved illuminating to those who conducted the seminar and pleasant to all those who participated. It was, moreover, helpful to army morale.

College Meeting

College Meeting last night followed almost exactly the pattern which the war has apparently destined for it. It contained another explanation of how to keep out of the army by getting into it, a reminder of the long term and short term plan, and a sufficiently ambiguous hint that the College may not be able to stay open through the war. Sandwiched between the first and second was a plea by Mr. Nabokov for more active participation in the Chorus. Rehearsals are Monday and Friday at 5:15.

Mr. K. W. Smith opened the meeting by enumerating the various requirements for the different reserves—if you don't know what they are yet, see Mr. Smith. The Navy and the Marines will be here on Thursday to give their physical examination, and the Army Air Force will give their aptitude test here next Tuesday between 10 and 1. Mr. Smith emphasized that if a student fails the physical examination which is necessary before he can enlist in any branch of the service, he is then in no way connected with the service branch in which he tried to enlist. He is still a civilian.

Mr. Buchanan announced that the language reading examination would be given on Oct. 20, and the delayed annual examination on Oct. 24. He then urged us to read newspapers very carefully, and to remember that Congress is an institution dear to the American heart. They may seem ridiculous, but men deliberating important things always do. He also showed concern over the fact that students seem very unenthusiastic about being drafted. The Dean was more concerned with the fact that they could there use their knowledge on other people than with patriotism. He closed by saying that we should not lose sight of our long term plan—education—in our immediate concern, the war.

PETER WOLFF.

War Discussion

By now the average freshman must be convinced that the conductors of the "Revolution: War and Peace" series are determined not to let the fact that the meetings are held on Sundays interfere with his intellectual travail. We say freshmen because we hope that by now the seniors have arrived at a stage where they consider it recreation to be furnished with the raw materials from which to fabricate their ideas, enjoying them doubly because they are their own product. But whether it be considered recreation or effort, the Sunday evening meetings seem to follow always the same course in this respect: The listeners enter King William Room wondering what the problem hidden behind a mysterious title is going to be, and they leave wondering what the answer to the problem is. Bad tongues will say that this is due to faulty rhetoric on the part of the orators; we like to believe that it is part of the St. John's educational program. Reviewing the situation briefly, we find that in the first lecture Mr. Buchanan convinced us all that we were revolting against an authority, adding that incidentally we'll probably never have a chance to find out what it is. Then Mr. Martin drove our inquisitiveness to its peak by assuring us in a very intriguing manner that he didn't know certain things which he obviously did. Last Sunday, Mr. Nabokov found himself confronted with the problem of saying something new about one of the most talked-about subjects of the past two years: The mystery of post-war France. He presented to us a number of highly interesting facts and opinions, at the same time tempting us to find out how they were related to each other and how they could be put together to make an intelligible whole.

Some of the points made are well worth mentioning: Mr. Nabokov, who has lived in Alsace and Paris for ten years, started out by saying that when we attempt to understand France we must remember that no other country offers such a striking contrast between unity and disunity. Every Frenchman is somehow closely bound to every other Frenchman, yet there is not one France, but many Frances.

The rural, bourgeois, working, catholic, anti-clerical and intellectual Frances were discussed in more detail by Mr. Nabokov. Every one of them has interests clashing with those of others, hence the unbelievable turmoil of French politics after the last war. There was a general feeling that the Versailles Treaty was disastrous and would bring back war sooner or later, yet no one government dared to take actions consistent with this feeling, because it never had a unified country in back of it. In the same way, everybody knew that social reforms similar to our New Deal were an imperious necessity, but the laws were never passed. (This explains the topic of the lecture: "The Thwarted Revolution of France.")

Talking about more recent events, Mr. Nabokov said that the essence of the drama of France was expressed in the emotions betrayed by the faces of her people during the tragic twelve hours of the Munich episode: Despair and weariness at the prospect of a new war, joy at the possibility of peace, and shame at its conditions. Mr. Nabokov believes that Daladier and Chamberlain were at that time truly representing the will of their people. He also reminded us that we who are so eager to blame France for her collapse should not forget that had we or England been in her place, we would have acted in the same way, and he concluded rather ambiguously: "I am sure that there is today a tremendous underground movement in France, but I am not so sure whether the French people want just an Allied victory."

We doubt whether Mr. Nabokov was able to make history out of mystery for all of his listeners, but he certainly made the mystery more fascinating.

K. W. P.

Try-outs and recasting of the King William Production of *Oedipus Rex* will be held on Saturday, October 17th, at 2 p. m. in the Great Hall. Since the K. W. P. hopes to present the play at some date near Thanksgiving, it is imperative that all students interested attend. Important readjustments must be made in the cast, as many people have left school who were in it before.

Arts

(It's just dawned on us that there are some very funny things about the COLLEGIAN, and we take great pride in the fact that we are at once the funniest and least funny. You've no idea what a feeling of comfort it gives us when we take our typewriter in hand and begin pounding these borrowed phrases. We know, in a curious and certain way, that none of our public give a damn what we say, as opposed to our companions on the staff who are in constant fear and trembling that their words are not fraught with imposed intentions or intended impositions. We hate to feel like the Pharisee in the Temple but we do thank Zeus that we can write a light-headed phrase now and then without having our paramours second-guessing as to our intentions of loving endearments.)

There are two films starting at the local movie houses worth mentioning—one to be seen, the other to be avoided. The first is film version of Ruth McKinney's book and play, *My Sister Eileen*. Not only do we heartily recommend it, but we stick that battered neck out to say it's the best comedy to come out of Hollywood in too long. Although not quite as believable as the book or even the play, the film has that same pleasantness and (here we go again) charm. At the Capitol beginning Sunday and later in the week at the Circle.

That second film is *Cairo* with Jeanette McDonald and Robert Young. We don't know a thing other than that about it. What's more, we're not interested and can't think of a single reason why anyone else should be. *Cairo* plays the circuit in reverse order: the Circle and then the Capitol.

Thornton Wilder has written a new play, a comedy called *The Skin of Our Teeth*. This one comes with scenery and Tallulah Bankhead. The list of theatre names involved in *Skin of Our Teeth* is quite overwhelming, Fredrick March, Florene Eldridge, and Florene Reed as well as the inscrutable Tallulah. That woman with the chronic chest cold was last seen in a terrible *Clash by Night*. We hope that Mr. Wilder has provided our favorite actress with a vehicle suitable to her talents. More of this later. At Ford's in Baltimore, opening on Monday for a week.

On The Lecture

To consider Kant as having effected a Copernican revolution in philosophy (in that he is said to have removed God from the center of the universe and to have substituted man in His place) is, according to Mr. Buchanan, a misunderstanding of Kantian doctrine. The formula of subjective idealism frequently applied to Kant, which would maintain as his position the creation of the universe in terms of the categories of the mind under which experience, in light of such a creation, must occur can leave us with an understanding of Kant only in terms of what would be called "conflicting systems" in the history of philosophy. Mr. Buchanan, choosing to ignore the label of "subjective idealism," attempted a presentation of Kant as a philosopher whose problem is an understanding of the universe to be attained through the discovery of certain unities to which the apparent multiplicity of the world will conform.

Kant's unities are five; first, the unity of experience inferred from the many-ness of the objects of experience. Every experience is one and complete; there are no gaps, nor are there parts in experience not united to each other to form a whole. Secondly, time and space as conditions of our perception serve as unifying principles by ordering our experiences in sequence. Third are the categories of the mind which are the conditions of experience prior to experience and by means of which judgments become possible; they are groupings of the intellect under which experience is experienced, so to speak. No judgment is possible without the categories, and for every statement concerning the universe the corresponding categories which it employs may be found. It is through this third unity that a science of the physical world becomes possible—we can know our experiences by means of these categories since it is only under these categories that experience is at all possible. Fourth is the unity of regulative principles, the concepts of purpose and cause and effect, not immediately embodied in experience as are the former unities, but remaining above experience as concepts which we may use in order to understand, although they are not the conditions of our understanding.

The ideas of pure reason are the fifth unity into whose realm the intellect may proceed, leaving behind the intuitions of experience under the former unities and venturing uncritically (for there is no longer a criterion of judgment) towards an intellectual infinity. As evidence of the fruitlessness and futility of such a procedure we are presented with the antinomies, insoluble contradictions at which the intellect has arrived through right reasoning and based upon premises equally satisfactory. That the mind by its own nature must arrive at a contradiction since it is at all times transcending experience (as evidenced in Greek tragedy) seems to have escaped Kant's notice. Metaphysics is tragic in the Kantian sense when the mind, bent on infinity, has transcended a criterion for its judgment and is therefore led to antinomies; in terms of practical action, the necessary transcendence of experience can be equally tragic.

But these five unities are principles which order the world that we may know it. What is the problem of practical action for Kant and what is its solution? Kant, although accepting a determinism of the outer world, finds a moral world within man; his problem arises from this dual criterion of practical judgment which results in conflict. The solution must be, then, a unity of the two principles made possible by man's accordance with the universe when the laws governing the world are known. Man is free to act only when these laws are understood, for without such knowledge action is in conflict with the world and is, in that respect, impossible; true freedom lies in the subjection of man to the law since action is possible only under the law. Kant has adopted Montesquieu's definition of political freedom—a freedom from restraint in doing what one ought—the latter being determined by a knowledge of the laws. Thus, whatever one is free to do, one must do, since freedom implies accordance with the law which must be obeyed if any real freedom is to be attained. "What one can do, one must do" simply means the recognition by the intellect of the determined order, the consequent recognition of the limitations of human nature, and the resultant necessary submission of the

practical will to the discovered truths. Mr. Buchanan's lecture seemed to be concerned mainly with a presentation of a statement of Kantian doctrine rather than with a critical analysis of Kant's work. A comment upon Kant's objections to the reason's transcendental operations would have been clarifying. Had not the question period been hampered by an unreal problem of the conflict of the "objective realism of St. Thomas" with the "subjective idealism of Kant," (a problem posed by those who insist upon seeing a philosophical system as true or false, which is to see it only as a system, rather than as a term of the truth in which all philosophies participate, and by those who insist that the intellect rest in a single work as true to the rejection of all else, as if, existing in time, one might in a given finite period of time grasp the truth in its entirety) such a comment might have occurred.

JOURNET KAHN.

Tonight

Kant will again be the subject of the formal lecture—"Kant and the Arts." As a member of our faculty Mr. Hammond will speak for the first time this evening, though upperclassmen will remember from last year his lecture on Aristotle. Perhaps the most important thing the lecture can accomplish is to make clear the connection of the terminology of the ancients with that of Kant. Mr. Hammond has published some very interesting work on this subject. More generally, the lecture will be an application of the distinctions between the liberal and useful arts to Kant's theory of knowledge—in other words a Kantian theory of morals.

Sports

It is urgent that anyone who has had tournament fencing would see Earl Bauder, Paca 203, as soon as possible.

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STANDINGS—OCT. 17, 1942

	9:30		
Seniors	vs.	Sophomores	
Freshmen	vs.	Juniors	
Team		Won	Lost
Juniors		3	0
Sophomores		2	1
Freshmen		1	2
Seniors		0	3

Community Frolics at Saturday's Dance

The dance, held in the gymnasium this past Saturday by the Cotillion Club, was, thought craftsmanlike, derivative, combining the influence of Arthur Murray with that of certain antique festival motifs. In any historical perspective its importance was, to say the least, slight, and it is only in terms of particular contemporary mores that it rewards analysis. Analogically, one may say that the fustian rhetoric of the piece, with its bacchic figures, febrile and gyring, fubbed to a point those sedentary worshippers who find their alliance in the cult of the *femme de chambre*; while, viewed from the vantage point of an Eliot or a Dowson, secure as they are in the vessel of tradition, one may say that it was, anagogically, consumptive. The eschewal of saints and martyrs, however, need not embarrass our consideration of a work so profoundly at one with what has come before and what, barring the interference of world debacle, will follow after.

Folly is innate, and joy difficult. It is necessary to protest, perhaps now less than ever before, the contention of what is in essence a political minority that an abandonment of traditional usage or the encouragement of those among us who continue, in the face of natural urgency, to bivouac will in any way assist us to a solution of problems concerning, to use Plato's metaphor, the men of lead. I believe, therefore, that such work should be encouraged, in so far as it is usual and gay, and that the grander the grape the bigger the berry. Such lines as these are apt and revelatory:

"The hand is quicker than the eye,"
or again,

"'Curiouser and curiouser,' said
Alice."

Whimsy, they call it.

Calendar

St. John's College

Fri., Oct. 16 — Sat. Oct. 24, 1919

Friday, October 16:

8:30 A. M.	Chapel Service	Great Hall
2:00-3:15 P. M.	Infantry Drill	Back Campus
5:00 P. M.	Chorus Rehearsal	Humphreys Hall
8:00 P. M.	Formal Lecture — <i>Kapt and the Arts</i> —Lewis Hammond	Great Hall

Saturday, October 17:

8:30 A. M.	Chapel Service	Great Hall
9:30 A. M.-12:00 M.	Athletics	Gymnasium
10:30 A. M.	Faculty Meeting.	McDowell 24
2:00 P. M.	K. W. P. Try-outs	Great Hall

Sunday, October 18:

3:00-5:00 P. M.	Recorded Concert	Humphreys Hall
8:00 P. M.	<i>Revolution: War and Peace. Series I, No. 4</i> —Speaker to be announced	King William Rm Woodward Hall

Monday, October 19:

8:30 A. M.	Chapel Service	Great Hall
2:00-3:15 P. M.	Infantry Drill	Back Campus
5:00 P. M.	Chorus Rehearsal	Humphreys Hall

Tuesday, October 20:

8:30 A. M.	Chapel Service	Great Hall
2:00-3:15 P. M.	Infantry Drill	Back Campus
5:00-6:00 P. M.	Recorded Music	Humphreys Hall
7:00-8:00 P. M.	Bible Class	McDowell 21

Wednesday, October 21:

8:30 A. M.	Chapel Service	Great Hall
2:00-3:15 P. M.	Infantry Drill	Back Campus
7:00-8:00 P. M.	Bible Class	McDowell 21
7:30 P. M.	Meeting of Cotillion Board	Paca-Carroll Socy Room
8:00 P. M.	Orchestra Rehearsal	Humphreys Hall

Thursday, October 22:

8:30 A. M.	Chapel Service	Great Hall
2:00-3:15 P. M.	Infantry Drill	Back Campus
5:00-6:00 P. M.	Recorded Music	Humphreys Hall
7:30 P. M.	College Meeting — Attendance Voluntary	Great Hall

Friday, October 23:

8:30 A. M.	Chapel Service	Great Hall
2:00-3:15 P. M.	Infantry Drill	Back Campus
5:00 P. M.	Chorus Rehearsal	Humphreys Hall
8:00 P. M.	Formal Lecture— <i>Mythologicus</i> — John S. Kieffer	Great Hall

Saturday, October 24:

8:30 A. M.	Chapel Service	Great Hall
9:30 A. M.-12:00 M.	Athletics	Gymnasium