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Mieklejohn's Philosophy Of Kant

Kant is to the Modern World intellectually as Plato and Aristotle are to the Ancient. Because he states the great problems of the Modern World a knowledge of his work should lie well entrenched in the mind of anyone who seeks an understanding of it.

He is known to us primarily as the philosopher of Reason, but there is another side to him. Along with his well known interest in Mathematics and Physics went an intense interest in Anthropology. The entire structure of Kant's philosophical edifice is devoted to the intellectual fructification of his parents and people like them: simple, poor, and pious. Rousseau had a great effect on the young Kant, serving to snap the young scholar out of his contempt for the mob. He considered one thing alone capable of giving his life some meaning, the establishment of the rights of humanity. Kant is the philosopher of the Common Man.

When Kant faced the two questions: "What is?" and "What ought to be done about it?" which face every man upon finding himself in the world, man had just created the Natural Sciences. Reason had found itself very succuessful in seeking out the mysteries of Nature, and now Kant was to find out what Reason is. The result of his thinking about both questions is the "Critique of Pure Reason" and the "Metaphysics of Morals."

The most important thing about the Critique is the distinction between two types of knowledge: phenomenal, that is, knowledge of the world and self, and noumenonal, in terms of ideas, another kind of knowledge by which we might know the world and self. The essence of Reason is activity, the actviity of ordering the sensuous, which has no order in itself. The mind forms (connects in accordance with rules) the materials presented by the senses. The basic of the mind is the transcendental unity of apperception. The idea of unity is essential to mind, it abhors disorder and lack of unity. Kant has extended the principle of contradiction thus: Everything in mind must fit into one system, which is the Kingdom of Nature, a single body of judgments.

How do you know your unifying principles are true of the world? The answer is simple: you create the world by thinking it, and so it is what you think it to be. The levels of knowledge of the phenomenal world are: 1.The blind creative imagination, producing the phenomena in time and space, which are the conditions of phenomena. 2. Understanding—putting phenomena into concepts by means of the categories. 3. Reason—in the problems of metaphysics and theology Reason involves itself in contradiction and dilemna. The materials of these sciences do not lie in experience, and hence the connective principles of the mind are not applicable to them; therefore they are impossible as sciences.

The phenomenal world is the world as we know it. The world of things in themselves, noumena, is the world as we don't know it. The noumenal world is the account that would be given by a satisfactory Reason. If you could think of a mind which could take in the Universe at a glance and think it as a whole, that mind would be the Universe thinking itself.

In the Metaphysics of Morals Kant is intellectualizing the human quality which commands human respect. Moral activity is again the bringing of order out of chaos,—the categorical imperative is the unifier of behaviour. Kant gives three formulations of the principle of morality:

1. Act only on that maxim which enables you to will that it be a universal law.

2. Regard another man as an end, never as a means.

3. Inasmuch as all men are things in themselves, humanity should be regarded as a kingdom of ends.

This last formulation is also a statement of the Republic of Learning and the Dialectical Society of Messrs. Buchanan and Barr, for the citizens of those societies are men who recognize one another in terms of the Critique of Pure Reason and the Metaphysics of Morals. In Perpetual Peace Kant is looking toward such a society, comprehending all men.

Man should be free in mind and spirit; but freedom is impossible in the world of phenomena, for the mind is machine-like in its determination of intuitions. When man is being free, i. e., willing his maxim to be a universal law, he escapes from the phenomenal world to the noumenal. (It is here that the lecturer disagrees with Kant. Mr. Meiklejohn says that one can in no way escape the phenomenal world, but one can be free in it.)

There are two phenomenal views of the self:

1. The self is a mere creature of circumstance which cannot be known as a phenomenon. From a certain phenomenal point of view the self is a trivial, unwarranted next-to-nothingness.

2. The self is the creator of the world, it brings about human society which is, or at least is in, the world of noumena.

In these two aspects of the self Kant has stated the problem of the modern world. The first view is the primary concern of Anthropology, the second that of the Philosophy of the Creative Self.

Just as most modern colleges ought not forget the creative aspect of the self, St. John's ought not forget the Anthropological and Sociological aspects of it.

Mr. Meiklejohn repeatedly said, as is of course true ,that an exposition of Kant's whole philosophy is impossible in one lecture. It ought to be noted, however, that in his understandable haste to get to the problem of Freedom the lecturer made some changes in Kant which he had not time to justify. For example, that phenomena are created in the time and space media without any external stimuli. As we understand Kant on this, the things in themselves, i. e., the real objects which exist outside of the knowing self, are the cause of the phenomena, the phenomena being what we have of the object. So the process is not one of complete creation, but rather of the forming of phenomena in accordance with rules. Though the thing in itself as cause is a famous contradiction in his philosophy, Kant is quite insistent upon it, especially in the Prolegomena. For if there are no things in themselves there is no morality or freedom, because then I, the self, cannot cause my action, and my action is in the phenomenal world.

—T. J. C.

Vineland!

PART ONE

Would to God we were not men, squeezed from flesh; would to God we came as puppets mightily shot from skies. Swung by our heels around and round, hurlt spinning towards the earth, and into a berry bush.

O palely in the wild wood to be, in the lavender chill dawn! (There to wake, when in the dawn cold birds sing.) There to feel first bubbles from the brain, and there loin sweetness first!

Coming again one day, I will come thus, I know (in the wild wood a-sprawl). In me I will feel first creepings of sweet heavy juices; my bent head I will raise, stiffly at first with creakings, then easily.

The stupor will be fled. Slowly I'll crane my neck to look. Slowly I'll see.

Alarmed, I'll cruch. I'll start. Wildly I'll stare. Things unutterable will be seen.

Ah God! It's then under the sun my teeth will be seen newly, seen truly,—white and exquisite—for gravely I will smile.

And I will stand.

PART TWO

O first! First-imagined of the beauty that has been!

Ocean broke on the beach; on the beach, near the thunderous breakers, Leif stood. Arms akimbo, he gazed on the forest which fronted the beach. The breakers' foamy wash skidded near; gazing still, he moved towards the wood.

Reaching the underbrush, Leif stooped to break off a twig. He held it close to his face; with narrowed eyes he examined it.

Wind gusted down the beach and chilled the pond'ring Leif. Behind the tangled vines—what? How far? 'Neath what gods and where feasting?

In the fierce blasts of wind his blond locks blew; now Leif cast away the twig, again turned blue eyes towards the forest, squinting.

Then he turned and walked back down the beach towards a boat. Near the boat his men were clustered, talking in low tones. In a low tone, Leif said, "It shall be called Vineland."

PART THREE

In Vineland once, deep in Vineland, cross streams and Appalachians (far from the beach of Leif), cross prairies and piedmont (far, far), up into rocky mountains a man came, men came. Would to God I had been the first. The first to come did stride along a peak in Montana, did jostle a pebble off the peak (the first, in such a way, by such a one) and the pebble bounced noisily down the mountainside, the only sound in all that silent valley.

And newness was under the sun. The pebble for centuries had lain atop a crag, had never dreamt of newness. Then came a strider, a giant of a man, and moved it far.

Americans! Many men have come and paced the peaks, many more are still to come. Many pebbles have bounced into the valley, still more will do the same. Americans! This mountain and valley will one day be, not as a plain, but everything (peaks and gully and cliff and trees) will be the perfect plane.

Now Leif could not utter it, and Whitman barely; both knew it. Vineland becomes perfection; this is its only reason.

Without this, we are meaningless; without this, we are steel prisms and a babbling of hollow voices.

We have been through hell. We, the people. Chains in Asia, in France the Bastille. In all the lands of earth my father's lying in the wilderness, a puff of dust. Near him lie the ankle-bands, imperishable.

Mister, does your wrist hurt? Mister (stare at it a long time), can you not see the withered flesh? Do you not see the purpled flesh? Or can't you remember? Have you forgotten agony in all the lands of earth?

They call us mongrel. Good. We are every race on earth. Disguise it as you will (with "money" or "nomadism"): only a vision can bring every race on earth together. the vision is perfection.

It will come. Man will become: the soul of man. Not now. Soon. Demagoguery, intolerance: possibly these are essential parts of the coming; possibly perfection comes only through a process of exhaustion, a vast series of reductios.

It comes, though, and will come to us, that day in Vineland when in the dawn we wake.

PART FOUR

When I was a child (and a foolish one) I followed an unknown path into a forest. I did not know the forest's depth. When for almost a whole day I'd followed the path—I figured I had gone between eighteen and thirty miles—the path suddenly stopped. Whoever had made the path had not proceeded beyond this point.

I was alone. It was dark. Ahead was the black unknown forest. I did not turn back; I set out to get to the other side of the forest, which side, I felt, must exist.

God alone knows how far I wandered that twilight and the whole night following it. I found no ready-made paths in the entire time.

Many times I followed what I thought were paths, but they were only natural lanes. Many times I careened into cypress trees, many times I cried out in pain. Brambles cut through my sandals, cut my feet; cut, too, my side, my wrists. My wrists were purple with bruises and cuts. Low-hanging vines, studded with thorns, brushed on my brow.

I must have believed, as a child will, that God walks right near us, can be talked to. I cried (aloud, I think), "My God, O why fail me like this?" Adding, so as not to offend, "O please don't fail me!"

I reached the forest's far edge, bloody and crawling, just at the moment of chill dawn, when cold birds sang. I stared at the meadow: I saw my home there.

The End

—R. C.

Culture!

107 East Bellefonte Ave.
Alexandria, Virginia
January 23, 1945.

Fellow mortal,

You mentioned you might be able to use one of my verses in the COLLEGIAN, and, although this was probably spoken more in jest or from empty curiosity than sincerity, I have enclosed a recent endeavor.

It constitutes the first such attempt I have undertaken in a good while, confining myself, as I have, to formal exercises, translations, and analytic studies. It was influenced by no contemporary poet to any appreciable extent, except perhaps Valery who is strongly classical in approach, anyway. Whatever "modernism" it may possess derives from the devices with which Baudelaire, and to a lesser extent, Rimbaud enriched poetry, and not those by which La Forgue, Pound, and Eliot, despite their virtues, corrupted it.

The exterior form was dictated by the exigencies of space and column width: I did not, however, cramp my idea into a sparse frame, but selected a basic theme and its symbolic structure of such duration and quality as to fit the rather brief stanzas.

The theme itself is not especially difficult to grasp, at least in its essentials, and I will not bore you with an explanation: it having been my experience that more attention is paid the exegesis than the poem.

The passage from Dante may be deleted with no loss to the poem in any way: unlike certain of my contemporaries, I complete my meanings and carry my symbols to their logical extensions, and do not rely on quotation strewn through the poem to convey my message. I have attached the tercet hoping thereby to strengthen the otherwise feeble efforts of some to comprehend. In any case, it, like all of Dante, is fine poetry.

In remembrance of the clanger and the vodka, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

THOMAS MCDONALD.

THE WOMAN AT THE WINDOW

". . . Questo misero modo
tengon l'anime trist di coloro
che visser senza infamia e senza lodo"

Alone she sits against her view,
the window only thrust between,
inclement as unbroken through,
it guards her placid from the scene.

And through the bleeding window pane,
her eyes extend a touching hand,
that only finds a heaving plain,
and turns to ice the warmest sand.

She wonders where she might belong,
if flowers blaze she cannot see,
and yearns to mingle day its song,
and from its sterile echos flee.

But by her window held encased,
with hesitation's only claim,
she lingers from her view defaced,
and only knows its spoken name.

THOMAS MCDONALD,
January 23, 1945.

Appeal

There are more Britons studying liberal arts programs in German prison camps today than there are in the universities of Britain. These are, of course, mostly students who had their education interrupted by armed service, although some of them are civilian internees. They are being granted degrees by the University of London and Oxford if they complete the required work. One thousand Polish students are studying in the universities of Switzerland.

Some members of the world-wide Republic of Learning have formed an organization in order to supply the materials for the continuance of studies which were interrupted by the conflict. The World Student Service Fund aids not only students in the situations mentioned above, but also aids in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the universities and colleges of liberated areas, in order that the pursuit of knowledge may be resumed as quickly as possible. This organization has its headquarters in Geneva and relief administering offices in New York, London and Chungking. It is of, by and for the learning community.

The W.S.S.F. supplies American prisoners in Germany and (needless to say) German prisoners in the United States with books and other study materials. In some areas, like China, the Fund also furnishes food, clothing, housing and school buildings. The University of Kiev in Russia is being rebuilt with the aid of this fund. It will undoubtedly be of interest to some members of this community that the Fund is supplying food and clothing to the students of the recently re-opened Sorborne.

It hardly seems necessary to present members of the St. John's community with reasons why such work is important. We all know, for example, that education is necessary to provide the good political leaders who are needed in the formation of the policies and constitutions of their post-war countries.

At the end of last term a traveling secretary from the W.S.S.F. visited the College and spoke with some of us. As a result the people listed below are conducting a campaign to raise a contribution from the college:

Mr. Chi—Collecting in East Pinkney.
Mr. Finnegan—Collecting in West Pinkney.
Mr. Benedict—Collecting in Paca-Carroll.
Mr. Cameron—Collecting in Chase-Stone.
Mr. Cosgrove—Collecting in Randall.

Arts

The Good Fairy. The title role in this fairly recent American picture is feminine, played by Margaret Sullavan, and Herbert Marshall portrays Herbert Marshall. The picture is worth attending merely for the sake of seeing Margaret Sullavan, who plays extremely well the character of an innocent young maiden.

Meet Me in St. Louis. We will shudder in our boots on Sunday afternoon as we watch our readers march en masse to the Circle to see the above mentioned picture, about which MGM says, and we quote, "This colossal production is the most stupendous musical comedy filmed by Hollywood cameras in the last twenty years," end quote. The transliteration of this into St. John's jargon is that it partakes of the mephitic. The picture is lousy with hit songs such as *Jug, Jug, Jug Went the Trolley,* etc. That we should waste space telling you who is in it, *gavult!*

Cowboy and the Lady. Cowboy meets girl. Cowboy throws girl in pool. Cowboy goes out West. Girl goes out West. Father rides into setting sun shouting, "Hi ho Silver." For those who admire Gary Cooper's slim, lithe, pantherlike muscle we recommend it wholeheartedly.

Republican Trilogy: *Dancing in Manhatton, The Unwritten Code, Let's Go Steady.* These Aristotelian tragedies arouse in the spectators sometimes pity and sometimes fear but mostly nausea.

To Have and to Have Not. We have not as yet seen this picture, and by some strange coincidence we do not even have any opinions on it, textually that is. However, we are told by those who know that, although it does not follow Ernest Hemingway's novel upon which it is based, it is to be recommended. This is borne out by the fact that the principle actors, Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, are above the Hollywood norm.

Once and for all the serial problem must be settled. St. Thomas Aquinas, the extreme pedant, in his Summa Theologica ontologically defines the beautiful as requiring three things: *integritas, consonantia,* and *claritas.* Applying this universal principle to the serial, we find it fulfills all conditions; *Integritas:* we translate this as integrity, which, as any fool can plainly see, the heroine retains throughout fifteen exciting chapters.

Consonantia: This we translate as consonance. Here we admit there may be some frailty to our dialectic, and so we skip on to the next point.

Claritas: We translate this as clarity. Obviously the serial is so clear that even a moron can appreciate its greatness.

Having thus demonstrated ontologically the beauty of the serial, we refrain from the psychological demonstration, because of the Poetics and all other derogatory opera on the subject of fine and pugilistic art.

—JOE ESTHETE.

Sonnet

First-born, he feared that which was not divined:
The surging tide and earth's vibrating quake,
Faith, he cried, with his flaying fire enshrined,
Yielding all to these which could not take.
But light must follow dark as wrong does good,
The Son of Man came to the child of God
Again the everlasting standard stood
For concord tranquil in his footsteps trod.
Now are the prints effaced by man-made fear,
Man has, inapt, exiled too soon his light,
Comprising not, he gropes, bewildered, blear
Thus searching resurrection of his might.
"Lift up thy voice, throw down thy gory sword,
Then shalt thou find the knowledge of our Lord."

—MICHELLE PYNCHON.

BACKCAMPUS

We have just been reading an account of some gamblers and how they have been "fixing" college basketball. It seems that since horse-racing has stopped, the big time bookies have turned their attention to other big fields of swindle. The big thing in the whole story, however, is the fact that they have been giving college basketball players big sums of money to lose games. This interests us, especially since people around here are notoriously broke. Consequently, if an Annapolis bookie wanted to fix a game between Chase-Stone and East Pinkney for example, he could do it for about fifty cents and a pack of cigarettes. So you see how vulnerable we are to this vicious sport. Turning from the dark side of sports as they are here, we take you now to a report on last week's activities.

On Thursday, that day of days, hour of hours, the long-awaited Randall-West Pinkney game was played. Our prediction was right as The game itself was a festive occasion. Randall got the short end of a 42-21 score, sidelines were full of yelling, cheering spectators, Randall's leading citizen was there wearing a beautiful blue shirt with Windsor cravat and cuffs. Also a flashy pair of moleskin shoes. Other noted attending personages were the Assistant to the President, and the head of the athletic department. The game itself was somewhat similar to the Paca-Carroll trackmeet of the day before. Matteson and Davies were both on and racked up sixteen points each. Schleicher gamely tallied seven points to lead the losers in scoring.

On Friday Paca-Carroll was defeated by the amazingly small score of 13-12. Paca-Carroll seems to be sort of a hard luck team and this rounded out a first round record of no wins and four losses for them. Paca-Carroll had the leading scorer of the game, however, in the person of Julian Dorf, who is getting to be quite a star as he leads his team to defeat. All of Chase-Stone's men seemed to have a hand in the scoring, but only one—Hooker—made more than two points. He racked up four. It was generally a dull and uninteresting game.

In marked contrast to this was the game played on Tuesday between East and West Pinkney. The players of East Pinkney seemed to make up an inspired team as they racked up an 11-3 lead in the first half. They were unable to hold it, however, and they went sadly to defeat by a 20-16 score. It was really exciting to see the boys from West behind and they played like demons to get the final victory. Davies was high-scorer with eight points. Ray led his team with seven.

The West Pinkney boys went home and read the Republic for a while until eight o'clock that night. Then back to the basketball court they went to lose to a well-coached Annapolis High team by the exciting score of 36 to 30. Matteson led the losers with eleven points, while a fast little fellow named Evans racked up eighteen for Annapolis. Then the West Pinkney boys went to the last show at the movies. Do *you* see time for any work in this schedule? Then again maybe these fellows didn't come here for the same reasons as the rest of us did.

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