

THE TRICORN

NEWSLETTER published jointly by the BOSTON •
LONG ISLAND • PHILADELPHIA GREAT BOOKS COUNCILS
February, 1984

Colby: Mann's Journey

A new departure — instead of exploring 6 books at Colby, 4 discussions will traverse a single work: Thomas Mann's **The Magic Mountain**. The readings for the first two days, **The Tao of Physics** (Fritjof Capra) and **The Irrational Man** (William Barrett) will find several roads into the monumental Mann book: the relativity of space and time; the difference in the development of Eastern and Western thought; their reconciliation; and the existential position.

Though several novellas by Mann have found their way onto Great Books lists, his long novels have been far too weighty for a two-week reading interval. Assigning four days to **The Magic Mountain**, with the two supplementary readings, will at last give participants a chance to know this great work.

Mann himself has written about the major aims of the book, which he first conceived as a brief companion piece to "Death in Venice." Here are some of his thoughts:

I return to something I spoke of before: the mystery of the time element, dealt with in various ways in the book. It is in a double sense a time-romance. First in a historical sense, in that it seeks to present the inner significance of an epoch, the pre-war period of European history. And secondly, because time is one of its themes: time, dealt with not only as a part of the hero's experience, but also in and through itself. The book itself is the substance of that which it relates: it depicts the hermetic enchantment of its young hero within the timeless, and thus seeks to abrogate time itself by means of the technical device that attempts to give complete presentness at any given moment to the entire world of ideas that it comprises. But its pretensions are even more far-reaching, for the book deals with yet another fundamental theme, that of, "heightening" enchantment You will remember that my Hans is really a simple-minded hero, the young scion of good Hamburg society, and an indifferent engineer. But in the hermetic, feverish atmosphere of the enchanted mountain, the ordinary stuff of which he is made undergoes a heightening process that makes him capable of adventures in sensual, moral, intellectual spheres he would never have dreamed of in the "flatland." His story is the story of a heightening process, but also as a narrative it is the heightening process itself. It employs the method of the realistic novel, but actually it is not one. It passes beyond realism by means of symbolism, and makes realism a vehicle for intellectual and ideal elements.

Colby should be the perfect place for the study of Man(n). Parallels between the settings of Mann's mountaintop sanitarium and the Colby College campus are manifest. Though the Colby sojourn is only one week while Mann's consumptives live for years on their mountain, both sites offer intense heightening atmospheres far from the normal worlds of their visitors. Small isolated societies form in both places. Colby participants should far more easily enter Mann's world than isolated readers in their own overstuffed chairs.

The Annual Great Books Institute will be at Colby College the week of August 5, 1984. The all-inclusive cost is \$250.00, \$150.00 due with registration. Checks payable to Colby Summer Institute Committee should be sent C/O Isadore S. Wachs, 1521 Walnut St., Phila., PA 19102. Please see the insert for further registration information.

A Southern Connection

Beachcombing is delightful, especially when everyone back home is iced in, but too often Great Books people feel guilt along with their pleasure. First of all, they miss the intellectual stimulation of their Great Books discussions; then, too, they feel like deserters, knowing that theirs won't be the only empty seats at winter meetings. Jean Larkin, in her winter quarters in Florida, can't fill those empty places back home, but she can offer full or part-time participation to Great Books travellers and winter residents in the group she has inaugurated at the Percy White Library on Hillsboro Boulevard, Deerfield Beach, FA. If interested, write to Jean at 2090 SW 16 Circle, Deerfield Beach, FA 33441. No calls, please.

A Quiz Kid Meets Great Books

In her recently published book, **Whatever Happened to the Quiz Kids?**, Ruth Feldman (known during her Quiz Kids years as Ruthie Duskin) traces the paths through life of her fellow contestants. Her purpose is to learn what sort of childhood best equips highly gifted children for a full-flowering adulthood. In a Philadelphia radio interview, she was asked whether she found as a college student that she had acquired understanding as well as information. She replied that it was not until she became involved in Great Books that she truly explored ideas and made important connections between them.

In her book Ruth Duskin Feldman writes:

My renewed sense of self-assurance and self esteem derived in part from the twelve years I spent leading Junior Great Books discussions and coordinating the program in my suburban community. The emphasis in Great Books is on thinking for oneself; and my preparation sessions with co-leaders who became intimate friends yielded delicious moments of self-discovery.

BOSTON NEWS

Boston Spring Institute Weekend

History-and-culture-laden Salem, Massachusetts, is the setting for the 1984 Boston Spring Institute Weekend, April 6-8. The Hawthorne Inn is just down the road from The House of Seven Gables, and only a glance away from several museums. The theme: "The Dancer and the Dance." The books: **The Wisdom of Insecurity** (Alan W. Watts), **Zorba the Greek** (Nikos Kazantzakis), and **Riddley Walker** (Russell Hoban). The \$142 double occupancy charge covers books, discussions, 6 meals, and all gratuities.

To register: Fill out and mail tear-off with \$42 per person deposit before March 5. Cancellations before March 19 will bring refund less cost of books and mailing. Send this form and check (payable to Spring Institute Committee) to: Virginia Thurston, P.O. Box 299, Harvard, MA 01451.

Name (s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Roommate Preference _____

Other Boston Events

Past: The Annual Fall One-Day Institute was held on Saturday, October 22, at the Dana Hall School in Wellesley, MA. **The Lost Steps** and **Shikasta** both proved very discussable as well as readable. About 75 Great Bookers from New England attended. As usual, the weather and surroundings added to the pleasures of the day.

At the Annual Meeting held in conjunction with the One-Day Institute, the following officers were elected: President — Eleanor Jensen, Vice President — William Shea, Treasurer — Ann Mogan, Secretary — Christine Silva.

Future: In the works is a winter event — a theatre party on March 6, 1984, at the Lyric Theatre in Boston. The play will be G.B. Shaw's **You Never Can Tell**, and as in previous years, the cast has expressed a willingness to remain and discuss their interpretation of the play after the performance. Connie Lawson is chairing the event, and it is good to have her back in the planning of the Council.

Leader Recruitment

The Boston Council has been concerned for some time about the shortage of leaders and the general unwillingness of participants to take on the task of leading a group. It has been suggested that the term "leader" may be daunting some prospective candidates, and we wonder if any consideration has been given to changing the title. "Expediter" and "moderator" are possibilities. If anyone has thoughts regarding this we would be open to suggestions regarding either the title or how to interest people in undergoing training and, more importantly, in agreeing to "lead" a group once they are trained.

Adam Finkel

Other Thoughts on Discussion Leading: Inspired by Thoreau

"That leader is best who leads as little as the group requires, and when the participants are ready for it, they deserve to have a leader who leads not at all."

Would you, as a leader in adult discussion, subscribe to this paraphrase of Thoreau's famous individualist manifesto? Does it not propose the ideal toward which discussion in a "gathering of equals" should move? This ideal was suggested in the original Leader's Guide of the Great Books Foundation: "Have a well-prepared plan (written or mental) and at the same time be willing to throw it out the window! If you discover the group itself is shaping the direction and issues, along lines you had not planned, don't be alarmed. If those issues and directions **are relevant to the text**, let them go. If you, on the contrary, insist upon moving as you planned, the group notwithstanding, you'll discover you have inhibited, even antagonized, the group."

If we are indeed, in some meaningful sense, a gathering of equals, the leader deserves recognition as **primus inter pares** only for his responsibilities to insure progress of the discussion and for protection of the rights of the individual participants.

The admonition in our "Guide for Meaningful Discussions" which says "We hope you will give your attention and thought to the Leader's questions" also focuses undue emphasis on the leader's role. I would feel much better if it went on with "as well as to the questions and contributions of other participants."

I wonder whether some of us have not lost sight of the "gathering of equals" ideal through the influence of the wide publicity given to Mortimer Adler's seminars. But who among us can display his credentials?

Aaron Bechtel

LONG ISLAND NEWS

Long Island Group Reaps Publicity

Under the headline "Persisting Joys of 30 Years in a Club of Bookworms," the New York Times last November 2 described a meeting of the Sands Point, Long Island Great Books Group. Leader Kathryn Forman, who is 76 and a charter member of her group, told of its evolution from its convening in 1952. James Joyce's **Ulysses**, read over the long summer vacation, was being discussed at the meeting visited by the Times reporter.

Two weeks later, the Times printed a letter from Juliette T. Benton of New York, who wrote, "Thirty years. Pish tosh. I have been a trained leader of a literary group for the past consecutive 52 years. The group was organized in 1932." Since Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler had not conceived of Great Books at that date, we cannot claim Juliette Benton for one of ours.

Philadelphia last month inaugurated a new group in the Newmarket complex in Society Hill. When co-leader Debbie Kline learned that the community room had a splendid table but no chairs, she said, "I've heard of long-standing Great Books groups, but this is ridiculous!" Debbie's group has since been seated, but there are indeed a number of long-standing local groups, vying in longevity with the Sands Point group in Long Island.

L. I. One-Day Institute

The Theme: **History and Human Life**

"... once again we accustomed ourselves to living not human lives but 'history,' and once again, as after all so-called great times, history has left us with a feeling of horror and disgust."

Herman Hesse — 1946

The Readings: **Group Portrait with Lady** by Heinrich Boll

A novel that unveils the mystery of a woman's personality, and through her, the riddle of pre- and postwar Germany.

If the War Goes On . . . by Herman Hesse

Reflections on war, politics, and the destiny of self.

The Place: The Welwyn Conference Center and Woodland Preserve at Glen Cove, L. I.

The Date: Sunday, June 17, 1984

The Cost: \$16.00, which includes books, coffee at registration, lunch, and post-discussion refreshments.

Mail to: Long Island Great Books Council, P. O. Box 821, Port Washington, NY 11050
Please mail before April 1, 1984.

Please reserve _____ places at the Long Island Institute at \$16.00 each.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

1984 GREAT BOOKS SUMMER INSTITUTE



COLBY COLLEGE CAMPUS

Suppose that there is a species of fish which looks vividly multi-coloured, slightly glowing perhaps, at a depth of a thousand feet. I ask you what its real colour is. So you catch a specimen and lay it out on deck, making sure the condition of the light is just about normal, and you find that it looks a muddy sort of greyish white. Well, is that its real colour? It's clear enough at any rate that we don't have to say so. In fact, is there any right answer in such a case?

— JOHN L. AUSTEN

SIDELIGHTS: Swimming, boating, tennis, golf, summer theaters, warm hospitality of a staff who look forward to our return, and a clambake.

What's Special About Great Books Summer Institute at Colby?

One participant's impressions - - -

Our week at Colby melts away the walls we sometimes tend to build around ourselves in the pell-mell, competitive world in which we live the other 51 weeks. At Colby, it's safe to be open, even on first meeting. Laughter is always **with**, never **at!** Ideas are eagerly shared, and appreciated. The books, often illuminated by others' insights during the discussions, are a real, personal growth experience that builds from year to year. It is a week of renewal, an annual boost to my sense of well-being. There's also tennis, swimming, the corridor parties, the sing-alongs, classical concerts, talent shows where **anyone** can shine, and sunbaths on the lawn — but the deepest impression I take home with me is a warm, peaceful feeling of rapport with 250 marvelous beings, plus a heightened faith in myself that glows throughout the rest of the year.

WHERE AND WHEN:

Colby College, Waterville, Maine — August 5-11

THEME: MANN'S JOURNEY

READINGS:

Capra — THE TAO OF PHYSICS

Barrett — THE IRRATIONAL MAN

Mann — THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN

COST:

\$250.00 which includes room, board, and readings. Books, travel information and schedule of events will be sent upon receipt of deposit.

ELIGIBILITY:

Any adult who desires to spend a relaxing week, which includes the reading and discussion of books.

WE REGRET:

We have no facilities for young children.

We cannot accept registrations for only part of the week.

APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION

Mail to: Colby Summer Institute, Committee
c/o Mr. I. S. Wachs
1521 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19102

Enclosed herewith is \$_____ for registrations of the following persons at Colby Institute:

First Name Please Print Last Name
Address _____
City State Zip Code

Deposit of \$150.00 required for each participant; balance may be paid at any time prior to or at registration at the College. Deposits will not be refunded after July 1, 1984. Make checks payable to Colby Summer Institute Committee.

PHILADELPHIA NEWS

The Classics Are Alive and Well in Philadelphia

"No need to quit reading the classics after four years, just because Chicago won't publish any more," says Eva Bix, who heads Council's Books Search Committee. "We've discussed classics of our own choice for years. All it takes is a little extra legwork."

The Elkins Park Great Books Group, whom Eva serves as secretary, used the old 9-year series twice around before it began to pick its own. While not unique, the group's experience may help others to try it and like it.

How to start? When in doubt, form a selections committee of a half dozen or so participants. Agree on a definition of a classic reading: if it has survived fifty years, it will fly. Your choice now ranges from the books dropped by the Foundation to the literary giants of the 1920's. Next, set your distributive limits: roughly so many works of philosophy, science, religion, and fiction; also a play or two. Chicago's defunct lists offer a well-balanced pattern you can modify as you go.

The committee's real work must start no later than March or April, when each member brings a list of suggested titles to an opening session. The most important presence at this meeting is a current volume of **Books in Print**, found in the reference section of every library. If your library will not let it circulate, your committee may have to meet in the library. You can hardly do without this guide to what is available in paperback and which publishers offer the lowest prices, before discounts.

Before their next and final meeting a few weeks later, committee members should read their own suggestions to judge their promise of a rewarding discussion. When everyone settles for a suitable mix, let your entire group see a tentative list of next year's readings and collect all moneys before your summer break. Eva's group mounts 14 classics for less than \$25.00 per discussant. The set is sometimes padded out by a "free" Bible reading or some photo copies, in keeping with copyright laws when confined to a few pages, of poetry or other brief excerpts.

Now to contract with publishers or jobbers, or even with your local bookseller-- whoever gives you the best deal. The magic words "for re-sale to a non-profit organization" will command discounts up to 40%. If a vendor insists on a minimum order of 25 copies and you have collected only 18 checks, ask your coordinator to find another Great Books group with whom to share your venture. This year's all-classics readings for Elkins Park were bought jointly with the Haddonfield, NJ group, adding up to 40 sets and listing Blake, Stravinsky, Ibsen, Eliot, Confucius, and Kleist among other authors.

Go thou and do likewise. Anyone seriously interested in lists of classics that have worked well over several years is invited to get in touch with Eva Bix at 215/836-2049.

Another Modest Book List Proposal

If your group has worked through all the classics lists available from the Great Books Foundation, you wish to continue with similar readings, but you have neither the time nor the energy to design your own list for next year (as elaborated in the preceding article), a one-year set of classics will be available for purchase by your group. This Tri-Council-sponsored set of books is not quite complete yet, but under consideration are **Varieties of Religious Experience** (William James), **The Epic of Gilgamesh**, **The Koran**, **On the Nature of the Universe** (Lucretius), **The Republic** (Plato), **As You Like It** (Shakespeare), **Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man** (Joyce), **Eugenie Grandet** (Balzac), and **The Red and the Black** (Stendhal).

If you are a group leader or secretary, consider presenting this option to your participants. If you are a group member, bring this proposal to your next meeting if it fits your needs. And equally important, please let us know if you're interested, so that we can get our final list to you as soon as it is ready. Despite the great natural law that states "Whenever things appear to be going well, you have overlooked something", we expect to have an excellent, well-balanced list of classics available in the spring of 1984 so that orders can be filled for next fall. The total cost for 14 books should be around \$25.00. The 15th and 16th readings will be from the Bible (your own, or check in at a nearby hotel), and a Xeroxed sheaf of poems. To receive the completed list, call Sibyl Cohen at 215/568-9827, or write to her at 1812 Penn Center House, 19th and J.F. Kennedy Blvd., Phila., PA 19103.

Philadelphia Leader Training

Sibyl Cohen, Leader Training Chairperson for Philadelphia, announces a new training class starting in March and continuing for 6 Sundays, to meet in her center-city home. Please consider this course if you want to become a more skilled participant or a group leader. Call Sibyl at 568-9827 to register or to get more information.

Philadelphia Coordinator Resigns

It is with real regret that Philadelphia once again says thank you and farewell to its coordinator. Ruth Abel cannot remain in the job after this spring. Once again we hope to find someone like Ruth with a real love for Great Books and the time and interest to make the program grow. Anyone who would like more information about the position please contact Norma Oser, 635-3504.

Annual General Meeting

All Philadelphia Great Books members are invited to the Annual General Membership Meeting on Sunday, April 1 from 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. at the Elkins Park Library, 563 Church Road. Officers for the following year will be elected.

Philadelphia's 25th Annual Spring Seminar

How should a man live? How should a man die? Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher constantly pondered these two questions. Instead of setting forth dicta from the heights, he humbly examined his own mind and heart, often finding himself short of the moral standards he hoped to reach. His **Meditations** record both the struggle and the standards.

Carlos Fuentes' Artemio Cruz is a warrior also, but he is an iron opportunist whose introspection begins only after he has conquered his Mexican world and lost his soul. On his deathbed Cruz examines his life, testing each critical choice in the light of his final reckoning. His own history recreates the history of modern Mexico. In **The Death of Artemio Cruz**, Carlos Fuentes, the Mexican master novelist, has created a book that is powerful, original, and beautiful.

Body and Soul is the theme of the Philadelphia Council's Silver Anniversary Spring Seminar, at which these two books will be discussed. Once again it will take place at Chestnut Hill College, Germantown Pike below Northwestern Avenue.

The date: Sunday, May 6, 1984.

The \$17.00 fee includes books, luncheon, and refreshments. For further information, call Sue Ross, 885-3450; or Etta Nussbaum, 886-5955.

Please enclose check for \$17.00 per person, payable to Phila. GB Council.
Mail to Harold Moll, 7657 Wyndale Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19151.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Total amount \$ _____ for _____ registrations @ \$17.00 each.

How to Discuss Music (Part II) and Humor

On Saturday, November 19, 1983 (or was it a week later?) Charles L. Ferrara of Long Island, who pronounces all his t's as d's, demonstrated leadership techniques for discussing music and also humor, at a meeting of the Philadelphia Leaders Club held at the home of Sylvia and David Perelman.

Mr. Ferrara distributed the first 19 bars of Beethoven's Symphony #5 in C Minor and then performed it on a red plastic nose flute, *allegro con brio*. Next he raised a major issue for music discussants (Should the G Cleff be included in the discussion?), and provided the group with the universal opening question for all music discussions (How does it go?).

His basic questions for the discussion of humor included:

"Why did the sheep claim to be a vegetarian?" and
"What's so funny about Anne Margoulies?"

Toward the end of the discussion, Mr. Ferrara, who had had a few, demonstrated how a distracted leader can regain control of the group by asking participants, "Would you please repeat the question?" His final question, asked as his wife steered him out the door, was, "Where am I?"

John Greenblatt Whittier

Wilmington Spring Seminar

Now that winter has shown himself for the windy bully he is, Wilmington's Spring Seminar, **An Exploration of Comedy**, sounds more appealing than ever. Laughter, both light and dark, will be served up on Saturday, March 24, at Archmere Academy, Philadelphia Pike, Claymont, DE. Books: **Laughter** (Henri Bergson), and **Travesties** (Tom Stoppard). Books, morning coffee, buffet lunch, and final punch are all included in the \$18.00 cost. Send checks by March 1, payable to GB Council of Delaware, to Joan Himber, 816 Clausez Ave., Claymont, DE 19703.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Some random quotes after reading Aaron Heller's Thoughts on Metaphor in the July Tricorn.

In Proust's **Remembrance of Things Past** Marcel has these thoughts on seeing Elstir's seascapes: "But I was able to discern from these that the charm of each of them lay in a sort of metamorphosis of the objects represented, analogous to what in poetry we call metaphor, and that, if God the Father had created things by naming them, it was by taking away their names or giving them other names that Elstir created them anew. The names which designate things correspond invariably to an intellectual notion, alien to our true impressions, and compelling us to eliminate from them everything that is not in keeping with that notion."

"Metaphor. The figure of speech in which a name or descriptive term is transferred to some object different from, but analogous to, that which it is properly applicable." Oxford English Dictionary, 1971.

Transferred values . . . "correspond to the more fanciful types of simile and metaphor in poetry . . ." Alfred C. Barnes, in **The Art in Painting**.

"No work of art in its integrated makeup or, for that matter, no piece of creative endeavor, whatever the medium of expression or the field of human activity be, exists that does not involve transferred values . . ." Violette de Mazia, in "Transferred Values," The Barnes Foundation Journal of the Art Dept.

If it has no metaphor, it isn't art, or, more inclusively, if it has no transferred values, it isn't creative.

Rita Heller

Dear Editor:

When I am not preparing for discussions of Kant and Lagerkvist, I am an assistant professor in the biology department at Moravian College in Bethlehem, PA. I am writing to pass on an item of college news that I know will be of interest to fellow members of Great Books.

The year 1992 marks the 400th anniversary of the birth of John Amos Comenius, educator, philosopher, theologian, encyclopedist, and bishop of the Moravian Church. Comenius has come to be called "the Father of Modern Education." To celebrate the occasion, Moravian College is awarding a Comenius medallion and honorary degree each year until 1992 to individuals who have made an impact on contemporary society similar to that of Comenius in his own day.

The first recipient of the Comenius Commemorative Honorary Degree will be Mortimer J. Adler, who will be honored at a special convocation on Tuesday, February 28, at 8:00 p.m. A reception will follow Dr. Adler's address. Also planned (date not yet final) is an educational forum to discuss Adler's ideas on educational reform in his recent book, **The Paideia Proposal**. The public is welcome to join the college community in honoring the founder of Great Books. Further information is attainable from the office of Dean Martha Reid, 861-1349.

Kathleen Steele

TRICORN	Norma Oser 7933 Heather Rd.	REGIONAL	Long Island: June Ferrara 14 Bay Second St.
EDITOR:	Elkins Park, PA 19117	CORRESPONDENTS:	Islip, NY 11751 5 Cutler Ave. Cambridge, MA 02138

14 Bay Second St.
Islip, NY 11751