

INTELLECTUAL RECREATION AT MID-YEAR

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I WENT to twenty-three galleries and eight museums, attended four special meetings, and heard sixteen concerts. This is not counting the five Billy Wilder movies I saw at the Museum of Modern Art."

"I made it to the Duchamp retrospective and Duchamp himself was there. Although I didn't want to seem so Mickey Mouse as to ask him for his autograph, it was very refreshing to see such a legendary figure in the flesh."

"The opening at the Staempfli Gallery was a real experience; strange people and free liquor all lead to an interesting and worth repeating time."

It is interesting to speculate on what the men who in 1819 founded Colgate University, to train young men for the Baptist ministry, would have thought of these excerpts from the diaries of Colgate undergraduates who spent January 1965 in New York City on an experimental cultural binge, learning what they *wanted* to learn.

On the campus it is officially known as the January Special Studies Period. Plans for it had been in the works for several years, and the results were so successful that another one took place this year. In a prospectus which lists well over a hundred different independent study suggestions proposed by Colgate professors, the January Program is described as one which will "permit the student to pursue single-mindedly some topic which he has chosen because of its special interest to him . . . without interference from the demands and requirements of other courses." If a student didn't find any of the faculty proposals appealing he could suggest his own.

MOST projects were conducted on the University's campus at Hamilton, New York, but a few of them were designed to change the academic scene in a very literal sense. One group went to the island of Jamaica to study tropical biology at the Caribbean Biological Center. Another flew to Venezuela to make a study of that country's government and society.

The major January excursion into New



Photos by Dick Broussard.

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York's supercharged world of art and music was made by nine seniors, twelve juniors, and four sophomores, guided by two Colgate professors. Freshmen were excluded by the project's only prerequisite: a fine arts course which all students at Colgate must take in their sophomore year. From January 6 until January 28, the students (a few of whom had never visited New York before, and many of whom had never darkened the door of a concert hall) attended seven symphony concerts, a choral concert, four small ensemble concerts, two operas, a piano recital, and a ballet. The concert-going, which took place in eight different locations, represented about one-third of the total "work."

STUDENTS agreed that one of the benefits of their big-city cultural orientation was simply learning some of the logistical ropes: how and where to buy tickets; the location of concert halls, museums, and galleries; where the best moderately priced seats are located, and so on. As one boy put it, "I will [no longer] be reluctant to attend any concert in the city, now that I have an understanding of how to go about it—which may sound foolish, but I think it is a specialized type of knowledge." To anyone who has tried to worm some essential information about the location of seats from a New York box-office attendant, the sentiment is anything but foolish.

Two of the symphony concerts were enhanced by a chance to sit in on rehearsals. The students watched Leopold Stokowski rehearse the American Symphony Orchestra, and took in a rehearsal of the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Andre Kostalanetz. On the



"Most projects are conducted on the university's campus at Hamilton, New York."



Off-campus projects included archaeological excavation of a prehistoric Indian site with Florida Atlantic University. . . .



. . . a study of marine and tropical biology in Jamaica, and a study of the properties of snow and ice in cooperation with the Arctic Institute of North America.



subject of the American Symphony rehearsal, one student recorded, "Stokowski was old, gentle, and lovable. He gets results by urging rather than bullying . . . It is a very young orchestra and he is sort of a father figure to them."

All students were required to make notes of their impressions. If their comments are at times naïve, they are happily unburdened by critical jargon, and reflect a fresh approach, characterized by candor and notable lack of cynicism. When a "cultural event" displeased them, they said so, straight out. After one concert, a student wrote of the pianist-composer: "All the half-baked philosophy, man-to-man stuff about his trials as a rebellious artist really struck me as ridiculous and inappropriate. It was probably our most entertaining concert—if you like clowns."

Another student commenting on the same concert, described the artist's talk as "interesting and idealistic, although the concert was filled with strange music and stranger actions, and beyond me." (He was really more interested in the fact that he found himself sitting behind Leonard Bernstein, who, he noted, was quite enthusiastic.)

During the twenty-one days in New York, all the students visited the Museum of Modern Art, the Frick, the Metropolitan, the Guggenheim, and the Cloisters. In most cases they made several visits. Their professors also directed them to the Jewish Museum, the Primitive Museum, and the Brooklyn Museum. If the contents of the museums seemed somewhat overwhelming, the museums themselves seemed less formidable. One boy recorded his impressions of the Guggenheim thus: "I went through again, alone, for a longer and closer look. In the dark, the Museum is much nicer, the sunlight no longer makes the white hard and stark . . . but the soft lighting mutes and calms the whiteness and complements the structure of the building."

During the day, when not at a major museum, a concert rehearsal, an auction at Parke-Bernet, or a movie at the Museum of Modern Art, most of the Colgate men went on their own tours of private galleries. Here are a few notes on the paintings they saw:

On Leger's *Femme*: "Woman apparently only has one breast. Why? Maybe I will know after a month."

On paintings by Fredenthal: "Flowing forms in two colors . . . non-representational, hard-edge. They look like designs my roommate got "D" grades on when he was a frosh in design class."

Interestingly, while a lot of students saw motion pictures during the course of the January Program, few of them bothered to record the fact. One student mentioned, in passing, that he had seen five Billy Wilder movies at the Museum of Modern Art but this did not appear

very noteworthy to him. Movies are woven into the fabric of most college students' intellectual lives; they are the bread of his cultural meal.

In addition to all the concerts, operas, recitals, and gallery-going, there were visits to the studios of two professional New York artists, Franklin Drake and James Wines, a lecture describing Columbia University's Electronic Music Center, and seven morning seminars in the art museum of Finch College.

Seminar preparation included prescribed reading from the *New York Times* art and music reviews. During the course of the seminar I visited, there was a briefing for the visit to an artist's studio, a discussion of the Leger show at the Rosenberg Gallery, an enthusiastic reaction to the demonstration of electronic music which the group had heard the day before, much talk about "op" and "pop" art, an introduction to Picasso's painting, *Guernica*, brief student exchanges on the paintings of Beckmann, Diebenkorn, west coast artists, and the "Chads Ford Group," a long discussion of *The Marriage of Figaro* (which all had seen but few had enjoyed), and a description of the exhibition of drawings at the J. P. Morgan Library.

IN addition to living in the city, there was the cost of transportation as well as a \$50 "fee" for tickets which included a membership at the Museum of Modern Art. All extra expense for an already expensive education. But as one student observed, "Living in New York has made me realize the importance of my whole education and the opportunity that intellectual growth gives me. This may sound like a lot of bull, but it's the truth. I am broke for the next semester but I never spent money in a better way."

It's hard for college graduates of ten or more years ago to grasp the fact that the amount of learning required of undergraduates today has brought about an acceleration of the educational process unlike anything they experienced in college. Academic pressure is nothing new. But the sheer volume of learning expected of students in 1966 has enforced a pressure which is different in kind. Many youngsters, potentially high-achievers, academically, perform very poorly under such circumstances. Some are advised to leave college and forget about studying for a year. Last year, Dartmouth College recommended that over 100 of its students do just this, offering readmission on return. Though this is hard on the administrative machinery, those who take this leave of absence usually return refreshed, more mature, and finish with excellent records. By switching once a year to largely self-directed studies Colgate may find a way to build intellectual refreshment into its highly pressurized academic semesters.

the Editor's Bookshelf



In 1721, Harvard students formally debated the question, "Whether it be Fornication to lye with one's Sweetheart before Marriage." Though history does not record the outcome of this forensic encounter, it may well have been a draw, for after 245 years the topic still is debated, not only at Harvard, but on some 2,000 other college campuses.

Authors too, in growing number, are eager to explore the problem of sex on and off the campus. Richard Hettlinger, who formulated his views while a chaplain in a men's college, offers an unusually frank discussion in *Living with Sex: The Student's Dilemma*. (Seabury Press, 192 pp., \$4.50). The dilemma, which Hettlinger presents in broad perspective and with compassion, is by no means new: Boys reach their period of greatest sexual vigor and desire at a time prior to marriage when the doors to socially approved sexual activity are officially closed to them. But these doors, which have never been successfully locked and barred, now have been set ajar by a more permissive society. Moreover, the fears of pregnancy and disease—"the two chief weapons in the armory of those who would (surely quite immorally) frighten young men and women into chastity are almost entirely ineffective as deterrents."

Our double-faced society, says Hettlinger, encourages early dating and provides a maximum amount of sexual stimulation, and then expresses moral disapproval of activities that are the natural consequence of such stimulation. But Hettlinger refuses to view with alarm. "In the course of research and discussion," he says, "I became convinced that students are, contrary to popular opinion, at least as responsible in sexual matters as any group in our society. At the same time they are the inheritors of an extremely confused and irrational moral code."

Insofar as they draw their conclusions from the printed word, today's students are influenced by the books of Albert Ellis and the Kronhausens, the Kinsey Reports, and Hugh Hefner's "Playboy Philosophy" far more than by the now antiquated views of Havelock Ellis, Kraft-Ebbing, Sigmund Freud, and Bertrand Russell. Hettlinger is well aware of these new sources of enlightenment and does not discount their influence. He devotes an entire chapter to the "Playboy Philosophy" of recreational sex. While he applauds Hefner for his protest

against nonsensical hypocrisy he finds the philosophy incomplete and asks, "But what kind of sexual activity is appropriate without extensive involvement, commitments, and obligations? Do certain sexual intimacies establish some commitment to another human person? Does intercourse without obligation perhaps inevitably depersonalize the parties involved? Can one exclude from one's consideration the possible hurt to her parents, future husband, or society at large?"

Hettlinger discusses the various forms of premarital sex with a candor that will shock some readers, though probably not the college boys for whom the book is intended. He gives one chapter to problems of masturbation, another to homosexual activities, and still another to "heavy petting." He thinks, "It is the acceptance of heavy petting that most clearly distinguishes the mores of the present student generation from those of their parents and of other educational levels of society . . . indeed some of the practices utilized by young people today are still regarded by many of their parents as abnormal, even within marriage."

While this statement may accurately reflect a statistical trend, it suggests that the author may be too young to recall the flapper era or even the Thirties. Older readers will recall that the term "heavy petting" was used in the late Twenties when it meant just about what it means today: "everything but." The real difference is that students of the earlier day were more secretive. They rarely discussed their dating practices with college psychologists or chaplains, while today's students feel free, and often seem eager, to do so. Heavy petting was not invented by this generation but Hettlinger is probably correct in saying that the "acceptance" of the practice is new. Forty years ago, Bertrand Russell expressed strong disapproval of such practices though he encouraged extramarital intercourse.

Hettlinger discusses the implications of the sexual revolution and suggests that today's students, satisfied with neither the religious approach to sex nor with the libertarianism of those who have reacted most strongly against that approach, may be evolving a new code of their own. He is firmly convinced that a new code is needed because "the traditionally negative, repressive, and frequently hypocritical repudiation of sex as a second-best will never again carry weight

with informed and educated men . . ."

While it may well be that the younger generation is evolving a new code it could very well use some adult guidance, for as Hettlinger points out, "There is no field of human activity in which it is so easy to deceive oneself and to be convinced by arguments which are in fact nothing but rationalizations of claimant desires."

Lyndon Johnson, the first President of the United States to have graduated from a teachers college, will probably also be the last, since teachers colleges as separate institutions are fast disappearing from the American scene. As student editor of the campus paper, Johnson wrote a series of editorials which are both revealing and prophetic. In one, which reflects his teachers college experience and makes more understandable his concern for education as Congressman and President, he said, "Today, intellectually, America is fast asleep. With all our boasted wealth and material advance we are living educationally in a dark age. But there is a new day coming in America . . . when great monuments will be erected to teachers as creators of significant life, when our school and university buildings will be like cathedrals in their dignity and beauty, and wealth will deem itself honored to endow them. A day when, at last, America, with its mighty resources and dormant brain and soul power will actually be awake and up, done with intellectual sleepwalking, and a giant in spirit as well as body."

In another editorial written in 1929 he said, "Sectionalism is vanishing. Our nation is becoming more truly American. One great factor in the wiping out of sectional ties is the education of the masses. Our colleges and universities are accomplishing a great work in creating not Northerners, Southerners, Easterners, or Westerners, but Americans." And in still another, reflecting on the tragic aftermath of "the war to end wars" he said, "Let us promote the cause of peace—a peace so dearly bought, so bravely gained, so anxiously awaited. Let there be no more of contention, of combat, of foolish strife and warring words. Let us unite in the attempt to secure the best for our nation and our people, making high ideals, instead of selfish gain and prideful ambition, our goal."

These and other editorials by the youthful Johnson are quoted in a new book *Lyndon Baines Johnson, The Formative Years* (Southwest Texas State College Press, 185 pp., \$5.25), by three members of the present faculty of Johnson's alma mater, William Pool, Emmie Craddock, and David Conrad. The authors explore the geographical and social environment from which