

Kolenda Defines Persons, Agents

By CLAIRES PLUNGUAN

Dr. Konstantin Kolenda's talk on "What is a Person" Tuesday night at Hanzsen College proved a fairly provocative one (at least insofar as most of the audience seemed to be quite unconvinced of the truth of his remarks), due, as discussion later proved, to some misunderstanding of his basic terms.

Persons vs. Agents

Beginning with a grave concession that probably most of his audience considered itself "per-

sons," he proceeded to define that essential quality which distinguishes "persons" from "agents."

An agent is a mere executor of concrete causes; that is to say, it acts as a direct result of an existing fact. Examples of existing facts acted upon directly by some sort of human agent might be the urge to smoke a cigarette, or a feeling of hunger.

Person Omitted

But this cause-and-effect re-

lationship entirely omits the notion of persons, which we all think we are. The answer to this is that a person is not entirely a mere representative of the causal forces that happen to collide with him.

Kolenda stated that a person is a human being who acts upon principles he holds to be universally valid. This means he must view action in the light of how it would apply to anyone in the same circumstances. Consideration of an ideal not actually existing or present must come into the picture.

Bound And Free Ideas

Or, the difference between an agent and a person may be seen as the difference between having "bound ideas," articulations of factual motives, and "free ideas," articulations of factual motives, and "free ideas," those principles that are universally valid.

Various instances of mixing both types of ideas were discussed afterward, as well as the possibility that some people are always agents (which Kolenda firmly denied, finding universal justification for all the examples of particular, causal ideas which were brought up). Rational thinking proceeding from causes, rather than valid reasons, was described as "rationalization," and reflexes of habit or instinct were also admitted as part of motivations.

The conclusion seemed to be that we are all, like it or not, persons.