

A Place Apart

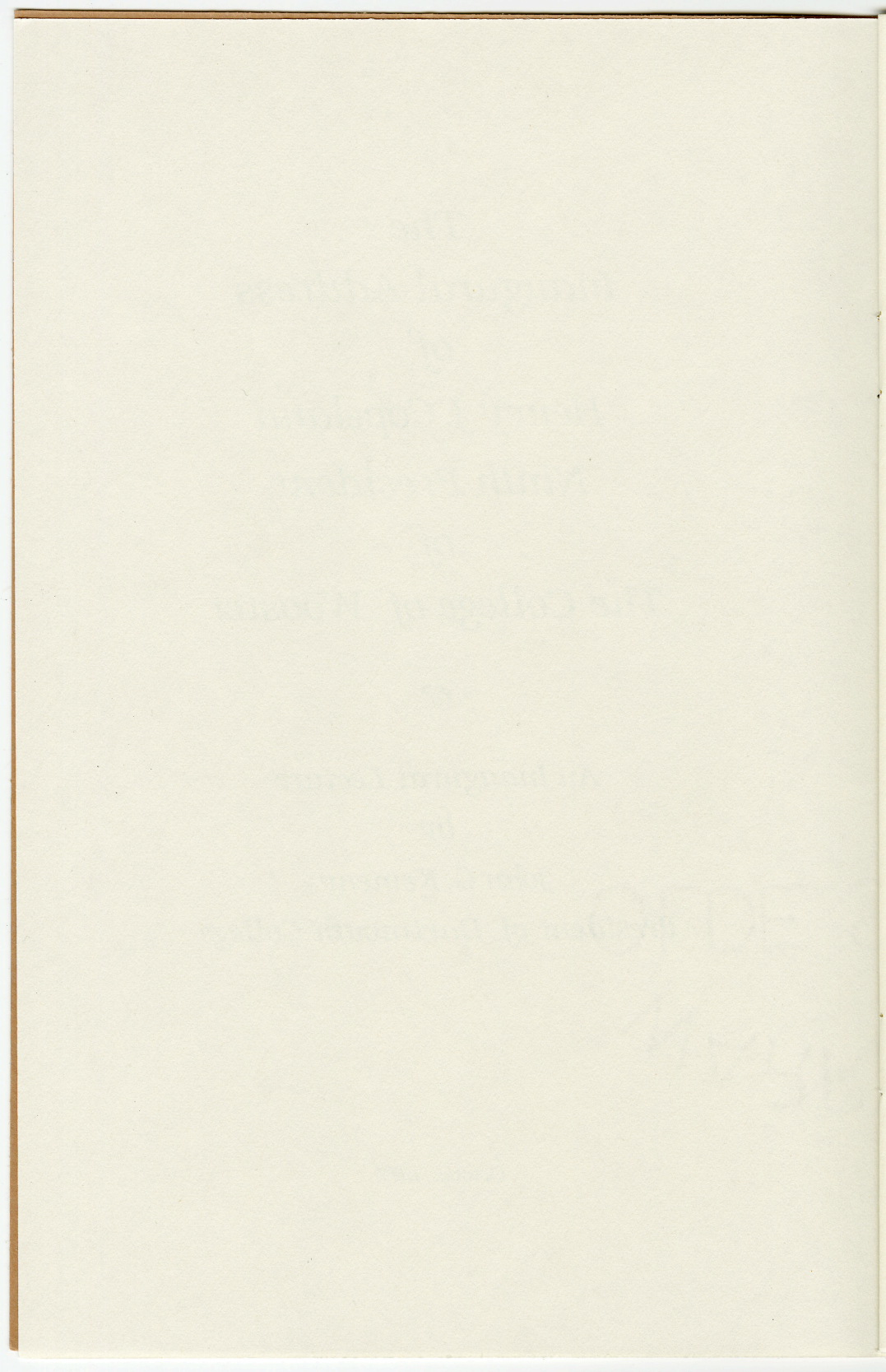


*The
Inaugural Address
of
Henry J. Copeland
Ninth President
of
The College of Wooster*

&

*An Inaugural Lecture
by
John G. Kemeny
President of Dartmouth College*

October 1977



An Inaugural Lecture

The College of Wooster is loved by many. This love comes from warm memories of time, place, and people for those of us who briefly flitted through the campus in our early years. It also comes, I believe, from a grateful appreciation of all the good things that the College has given and is giving to the world; but, above all, this love comes from a continuing presence of the College in our lives—a presence which reminds, chides, supports, encourages—encourages us to do the better things, to avoid the easy acceptances of life and always to seek the opportunity to use our talents in a beneficial manner. A college is really more than an educational machine. Facts can be injected into young minds, even though modest pain may result. Patterns of logic and reasoning can be developed, even though their eventual end use may yet remain obscure. A dawning appreciation of human works may be generated, though relevance to the present world is but vaguely glimpsed. But the sowing of seeds of wisdom, seeds for harvest in later years, is quite another thing. And it is given to colleges, and, indeed, it is a magic of this place that such seeds can and have been planted. For we, at Wooster, lay claim to many with names that are known across this land and around the world. And we do and should do them honor.

But an even richer gift of our College to the world, I believe, is that gift of those hundreds of men and women who have gone into the world guided by this Wooster presence, ever to give of themselves unknown to most, other than their families, their friends, and the community. And this is what Wooster is really all about.

From the words of induction by
John W. Pocock, Chairman, Board of Trustees

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An Inaugural Lecture

Crossroads for the American Liberal Arts College

JOHN G. KEMENY

Meeting the press is an occupational hazard for all college presidents. Although no one from the press has yet asked me when I stopped beating my wife, they do have a favorite current question that is very much in the same category. The question I am asked very often is, "Now that the liberal arts are no longer useful, how has your college changed its curriculum? Please answer in one minute or less." Having faced that challenge too many times, I thought that perhaps this might be the occasion when you would permit me more than one minute to answer that particular question. I would therefore like to consider four of the indictments that have been brought against liberal education in general, and private liberal education in particular.

The first is that we turn out too many liberal arts graduates. Second, that a liberal arts education is no longer a good investment. Third, that in a liberal arts education we do not prepare our students for today's world. And finally, even if there were some case for liberal arts education in general, how can one possibly justify private liberal arts institutions?

Let me take the question of turning out too many liberal arts graduates. A certain national news magazine, that never spends more than one page on any issue, once spent four or five pages making the case that there are far too many liberal arts

graduates. The indictment was indeed more convincing; I will quote just one sentence from it that was truly devastating. It said, "27% of the nation's workforce is overeducated today." That is certainly a terrible charge against all of us. It is very similar to charges being made against high schools that some percentage of all high school graduates today are functionally illiterate. The two charges seem very similar. They charge that for some significant fraction of their graduates, high schools and colleges have failed; high schools by not teaching them how to read, and colleges by doing this terrible thing to their graduates, namely "overeducating" them. You know, the article was so convincing that by the time I finished I really felt extremely sorry for these poor overeducated people.

And then it occurred to me that 27 per cent is really a very large fraction and that there must be some people amongst my own acquaintances who fall into this poor pitiable category. Just who are these overeducated people? And after considerable thought a light suddenly came on: I realized that I am one of these people!

After all, I have a Ph.D. in mathematics, and no one ever said that that is required for college presidents. I think back to the things I learned in graduate school and, really, very few of them are used frequently in a college presidency. I know a good deal of topology but I have never applied it to the college budget. I know quite a bit about modern algebra, but my vice-presidents and I very rarely discuss that subject. I was once recognized as an expert on a very important subject known as martingales, but to the best of my recollection I have not once discussed that with the Board of Trustees. Therefore, quite clearly I am overeducated. Because "overeducated" in the sense in which the news media use it means nothing more than the fact that you have learned more than the absolute minimum you need for your present job. If one looks at it that way, one can think of many examples from the history of mankind of individuals who suffered from the same malady.

I would think that by any measure Socrates was overeducated. For a simple manual laborer he knew much too much and indeed he paid the price for it. Probably, if he had been much less well educated he might have died happily in bed, as a prosperous artisan, instead of being executed by the state. And the entire history of western civilization would have been different!

If someone had been accused of being undereducated, I would certainly recognize that as a serious problem. If someone does

not know enough to carry out the job for which he or she has been chosen, that is clearly bad. But I am having increasing difficulty understanding why *overeducation* is something of which we should be ashamed, or something we should worry about. This attitude seems to me one of the clearest symptoms of a strongly anti-intellectual trend in the United States: articles in widely-read journals that seem to indicate that education has no value at all, except in so far as it helps you get a job and only in so far as it helps you to make money. That and that alone can be the only possible explanation of why we are being accused of doing this terrible thing, overeducating our students.

Closely tied to that first indictment is the second one, that what we are selling is not worth the price. I would like to read you a quote on that one, that appeared again in a national news medium: "In 1965 the lifetime income advantage that the recent college graduate could expect was 11%—by 1974 it had fallen to 7%." As a mathematician I have a certain game I play whenever I read numbers in a publication; the more distinguished the publication the better the game. The first question I ask is, are those numbers utter and complete nonsense? So with that particular sentence I couldn't resist asking if it made any sense at all. Think about it: In 1965 the lifetime income advantage that a recent college graduate could expect was 11 per cent. I was trying to figure out how the news medium that always knows the future so well knew how much money a 1965 graduate would make during his or her lifetime. Not to mention a 1974 graduate who has hardly begun to earn anything. How could they know even within a hundred thousand dollars how much that person would make during a lifetime? Let alone being able to distinguish an 11 per cent versus a 7 per cent difference. I put it to you that this is the kind of statement that is utter and complete nonsense. It is based on somebody's terribly crude estimates, given a starting salary that could be quite accidental and extrapolating on some very complicated theory as to what people are going to make, and then reading totally unjustified conclusions into facts that are insufficient for even a wild guess.

But there is a much more fundamental question. The question is: is a lifetime earning difference the justification of our colleges? Here I must confess that those of us who are responsible for our institutions must share the guilt. Because there was a period in the fifties and the sixties when college graduates found many, many jobs waiting for them, some of them extremely lucrative, and there were many college presidents and admissions directors who could not resist the

temptation of telling students: "Come! Rush to our colleges and look how rich you are going to be compared to those who did not go to college!" And that bragging of an earlier age has clearly backfired on us. It is therefore helpful to look more than twenty years into the past to get an historical perspective on the rationale for colleges.

The early colonial colleges were founded primarily for one reason—to provide a native source for the clergy of the American colonies. They soon acquired a second mission: to train teachers—native teachers—for our schools and our colleges. I do not claim to be an expert on the economics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but I would hazard a guess that even in those centuries the clergy and the teachers were not the highest paid professions within the colonies. There was no suggestion at all, in the early colleges, that the reason to go was to become rich. But slowly the scope of the colleges expanded; they were offering something that was sufficiently attractive, that the professional and managerial classes thought it worthwhile to attend college, not necessarily to learn those professions or management skills, but because they were interested in acquiring a certain kind of education. And it is true that as the clientele expanded it included many who did go on to highly lucrative careers. Whether it was because of their college education, in spite of it, or totally irrelevant to this, is an open question.

Perhaps the case that can be made is that over the centuries what our colleges have made possible is for their graduates to enter what each generation has looked at as the most desirable professions, but not necessarily those professions that have the greatest financial rewards. As a matter of fact I have sort of a nightmare at the way the public press attacks this problem; fairly soon I expect *The Wall Street Journal*, in addition to listing price/earnings ratios of stocks, will start listing colleges comparing their prices and the lifetime earnings of their students so a new kind of price/earnings ratio will be listed; you know, go to Dartmouth and earn back 122.3 times the tuition you paid, while if you go to Harvard it is only 115.8 times.

As long as I am talking about prices I would like to make a very brief remark about the field day the press seems to have with charges made by our colleges and universities. It is not a subject worth spending a great deal of time on, but I can't resist making a brief comment. I do know that since 1940 the tuition at Dartmouth College has increased seven-fold, and that sounds terrible. The year 1940 is a year that I remember very, very

clearly. It happened to be the year that I arrived in the United States and settled in New York City. I remember vividly that one of the great pleasures of New York City was that you could ride the subways all over the city for a nickel. Also you could stop at any hot dog stand at Times Square or elsewhere and you did not have to ask the price, because the price of a hot dog was always a nickel. Now those prices have increased not seven-fold, but ten-fold. And that is not the whole story, because since 1940 higher education has changed dramatically. There has been a knowledge explosion and as the result of that the variety and richness of the curriculum all of our colleges offer is much greater than it was in 1940. And therefore, of course, it is a more expensive program to support. So although we do admit to the seven-fold increase in price, we would argue that the product has become richer, more valuable and more meaningful. On the other hand, the last time I had a hot dog in New York City—at a ten-fold increase—it did not seem to taste any better than it did in 1940. And as far as riding the New York Subway is concerned — —

Let me turn to the third indictment, the one that is heard most frequently, that the liberal arts college does not prepare its students for today's world, therefore what we ought to be doing is change our liberal arts education into a program of vocational training. Since I am going to make some quite strong remarks on this subject, let me make clear that I am not speaking against vocational schools. I feel they serve a useful and important purpose in the overall educational structure, but I am going to argue as forcibly as I can that they are in no sense a replacement for liberal education and that traditional liberal education is more important today than it has ever been in the history of higher education.

Let me share an incident with you from my own undergraduate education that has to do with the question of whether courses should be tailored to the needs of the moment, or whether they should take a long-range point of view. I had a very fine undergraduate education at Princeton, with one notable exception. There was a course called Politics 101, an Introduction to Political Science, and I happened to take it during World War II. Whatever that course normally taught I never discovered because the professor decided that this was an age of war and the Political Science Department ought to be giving knowledge that was immediately useful for that moment, that terrible moment in the history of the world when millions were dying. Therefore, the subject of the course was Wartime

Governments. Almost the entire course was devoted to studying the wartime governments of four countries; two on our side and two axis countries. There were quite a number of us who were not very sure why we were studying this, but whatever reservations we had became more severe when about two-thirds of the way through the course one of those governments fell and we had to start all over again learning about that particular government. But as luck would have it, that was not the final incident in that ill-begotten course. The final examination was scheduled for a Monday—I will never forget it. On Saturday a second one of those governments fell and every student in the course had to rush out to buy the *Sunday New York Times* to find out what government was in power in that particular country. I would like to put it to you that a course in which, between the time the professor makes up the questions and the time you have to answer them, the answers have changed for one quarter of the questions, cannot be a course of lasting significance!

There was something ironic about that course, for somewhat apologetically we were told that although it was a superbly organized coherent course, there was another member of the department who had been promised that he could give a couple of guest lectures. Apparently they did not succeed in talking him out of it and therefore one totally irrelevant subject was introduced into this marvelous course on Wartime Governments. A distinguished demographer came and told us something quite outrageous: that the population of the world was increasing so fast that within our lifetime growth of the population would be one of the greatest problems threatening mankind. The department was quite apologetic about this man introducing such far-out ideas. It seemed a strange thing to do in the middle of World War II; when millions of people were dying all over the world, surely explosion of population seemed like a very remote idea. If one looks back, with all the horrors of World War II, the millions who died hardly made a dent in the curve of the explosion of population growth. And of course here, thirty years later, all the so-called knowledge about wartime governments is totally useless, but there were those two guest lectures in that course that had lasting significance, because one professor started me and others thinking about what would indeed be one of the greatest problems and challenges facing mankind.

I am saying something obvious when I say that we live in a world of very rapid change. Therefore, going back to the original indictment that we do not prepare our students for

today's world, I would argue that the worst possible thing we could do is to prepare you for today's world. If that is what we did, your knowledge would be useless twenty-five years from now. And twenty-five years from now is when today's students will be in mid-career. What we should be doing is devising an educational system that is preparing them for life in the year 2000 or even the year 2025. If someone would be kind enough to tell us what the world will be like in those years, we could tailor your vocational education to that era. But I am afraid I don't know what the world will be like. We all have our guesses, some of which would be right and most of which would be wrong. But the fact is we are preparing for an uncertain world that none of us can predict with any degree of conviction. And therefore what we really need to do is to devise an education that will be useful to you no matter what the world turns out to be. Clearly the most useful thing we can do is to give you breadth in your education. To give you an education that will allow you to adapt to whatever may face you in the next twenty-five or fifty years. And above all to give you the ability to learn and to develop throughout your lives.

I came across a particularly good quotation that describes succinctly and well my own feelings on this particular subject and I would like to read it to you. It says,

The College believes that all liberal education is a continuing education offering increase and renewal to the very end of life. It does not assume that everything can and must be taught. It seeks rather a liberal education that will truly free undergraduates for a lifetime of intellectual adventure; one that will help them meet new situations as they arise; one that will allow them to develop harmoniously and independently.

I hope you have all recognized the source of that particular quote. It is from the catalogue of The College of Wooster.

I have been fortunate in my life to make some fairly significant contributions to the development of computers. The question is, what in my educational background prepared me for this? I will tell you what did *not* prepare me for it—it was not courses in computer science, because I have never had a course in computer science. The reason is very simple: when I went to college and to graduate school, there weren't any computers. As a matter of fact, the key developments I am associated with were the work of two people, Professor Thomas Kurtz and myself; and Professor Kurtz also never had a course

in computer science because there were no computers when he went to college. We went to different schools but we both had the good fortune of having a very fine liberal arts education. Mine was at Princeton and his was at Knox College in Illinois. Both schools pride themselves on giving great breadth to their undergraduate students, and therefore when the challenge came along we were able to rise to the occasion. It is not that there was something in any one course that we could point to that said "Aha, this is what we need to do." There was something about the way we learned to think, something about the way we learned to attack new problems and the fact that we were able to come up with some completely original ideas that allowed us to make those breakthroughs. I would like to put it to you, as strongly as possible, that there is no amount of vocational training that will help you achieve this goal.

Furthermore, vocational training by its very definition is the training of specialists. Now we do need specialists in this world, but we have too many specialists who are specialists and nothing else. As a result there is not enough communication among specialists in different fields and there is a desperate need for a synthesis of knowledge that is getting increasingly fragmented. And there is enormous danger that we keep training our specialists in more and more narrowly specialized areas. We are living in an immensely complex society and the problems do not come nicely compartmentalized—we can't say that this is a problem in high energy physics and that is a problem in a small sub-branch of genetics and this is a problem in mathematical economics. Problems have an annoying habit of cutting across a spectrum of different disciplines, but no one expert can really speak to the entire problem. This complexity is increasing every year and the need of having individuals who can draw upon a great many specialists and make a synthesized judgment becomes more important.

Take a congressman trying to wrestle with the law on almost any major subject. He may hear expert testimony from ten different fields, and from several experts in each field, but then the experts leave and there is the poor congressman trying to put it all together into one bill that will help rather than hurt mankind. The same problem is applicable to businessmen or a college president or almost anyone who has to make decisions in this complex world. And you not only have to do all that synthesis, but in spite of knowing that you are quite shaky and you only half understand what the experts tell you, you have to make value judgments and figure out how to do the best given

the facts that you have half-understood. There is no magic solution to this problem, but I am convinced that a liberal education is the best possible training for decision makers. And since society is more complex, and since the need for pulling together knowledge from many different fields is a critical need of our society, I am convinced that liberal education today is more important than it has ever been.

One last word about preparing you for today's world. Today's world is a world in which public immorality is rampant. We become hardened to this, insensitive, for each month another public scandal breaks. Most of us have gotten to the point where we read a big banner headline and shrug our shoulders. And yet it is very sad and very dangerous that we take public immorality for granted. I don't have a magic cure for it, but it is clear that specialized vocational education is *not* the answer to returning to a more moral path. I hope that the liberal arts may be at least part of the answer. A liberal education that places stress on the historical values, on questioning of the present system, no matter what that system may be, and on examining our own values, still seems to me the best hope of returning our civilization to fundamental principles of morality.

Those are three of the main attacks that apply to all of liberal education and I have tried to respond to them, but my fourth one was the question that even if one succeeds in answering the case for liberal education in general, why private education? Why not leave it to the states? After all, state institutions do a fine job and they cost so much less than private colleges. Can we still afford the luxury of private colleges?

Just one small correction: although it is commonly said that state education costs vastly less than private education, of course that is not quite true. What is true is that in state institutions a large part of the cost is paid for by tax money, rather than by tuition money, and therefore the price is significantly lower. As a matter of fact the price is so much lower that it is not surprising that there are some private institutions that now have difficulty attracting students. What is amazing, is that most private institutions still attract all the students they want, and that millions of students are willing to pay the much higher price to attend private institutions of higher education.

What are the conceivable arguments for the continuation of private education? First, I am going to try to make a case for innovation. We, the private institutions, were here first. As a matter of fact we were here for some two hundred years before the first state institution came into existence. Perhaps because of

the fact that we had to invent American higher education from scratch, the private institutions have a long tradition of innovation. And we are helped in this by having a private board, usually of moderate size. If you persuade that one board of trustees that some great new idea is worth trying, it is done. You do not have to go through state boards and legislatures and possibly fight it through the political process.

I have seen examples of this at Dartmouth and I will be careful to pick ones that were achieved by my predecessor, before my administration. It was a campus where the fine arts were once at a very low level, and my predecessor had a dream that it would be a much better institution if the fine arts blossomed. He persuaded the board of trustees to build the largest and most expensive building as a building for the creative arts. And the Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth has changed that campus totally and has changed it for the better. I can imagine the same fight going through a state institution and heaven only knows how it would have come out!

I saw faculty leadership institute a Foreign Study Program unlike any that I know at any other institution. Over 60 per cent of our students sometime during their undergraduate careers study at a foreign site, and it has become almost an essential part of a Dartmouth education. It certainly must have sounded like a far-out experiment but a private board again was willing to take a chance, in this case on a group of faculty members.

The same thing happened at Dartmouth with computers. A small number of people had a dream that computers could become a regular part of liberal education very much like a library. And the fact that it had never been done anywhere else did not stop the board of trustees from taking a chance on an impossible dream. Luckily the dream came true.

The creative factor is the combination of the private college with an imaginative board that both protects the traditions of the institutions and yet will, from time to time, take a chance on the really radical idea. Remember, tomorrow's traditions are today's radical ideas. It is those boards that made a difference. I am not saying all boards of private institutions are like that, nor do I say that any one board, even the Dartmouth board, is right all of the time. I am sure every board makes mistakes. That is not the point. The point is that if we had only state higher education, we would have fifty chances to have a new idea succeed and in each case there would be a significant political process involved in getting it to pass. By having hundreds of private institutions, each with its own board, the chances of a

great new idea catching on are just that much greater because all it takes is one of those small boards willing to take a chance on it and proving that this is indeed a great educational innovation. And so I am convinced that we in private higher education will continue to come up with major new ideas that will later be copied nationally.

My second argument for the continuation of private higher education is an argument based on quality. The democratic spirit that led to the spreading of higher education in the United States is admirable and I strongly support it. State institutions are not only good, they are absolutely essential. But this very same democratic trend has a tendency in most cases to put more emphasis on quantity and less on quality. As you have to deal with tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of students in a given state system, it is less likely that specialized programs for the gifted student, or the student with special talents or special needs, will gain the attention of the mass educational system. And therefore I feel that we, the private institutions, have a special role as the guardians of the best intellects this nation can produce. It is up to us to give the personal attention that they need and the special stimulation that is so important to enable them to develop their full potential.

My next argument for private higher education is that we are the strongest force for upward mobility in American society. I know that is a very strange argument, because one would certainly think that if someone is going to move up in society, the tax-supported institutions are likely to be the means. Yet so far all of history points in the opposite direction. From the very earliest days, though it may have looked as if the private institutions were institutions for the privileged few, there were always private patrons who would look at the talented young man or woman from a poor family and sponsor them through educational institutions, and there are endless tales of success of such individuals going on to great careers. That private one-to-one patronage has been institutionalized now through our system of scholarships; donors have contributed to large funds so that we can continue to keep our doors open to those who could not pay full tuition at our institutions. In a strange way, with all the tax monies available to the states, it seems that very often it is the private colleges that have the most generous scholarship systems available. It is certainly not that our total assets are greater, but perhaps we have placed a higher priority on this particular need. For example, in the late sixties when it became clear that a major push to open the doors to minority students

was absolutely essential for the United States, it turned out that it was not the state institutions that had the greatest success, but it was some of the most prestigious and most expensive institutions in the country that attracted the largest number and had notable success with their equal opportunity programs. And before equal opportunity programs there were many generations who came from other shores and found the road of private higher education the means of upward mobility. I stand here in front of you as a living example of it, because how else could a first generation immigrant become president of the ninth oldest college in the country?

My final argument for private education is the argument for the preservation of freedom of thought. This is not Russia, this is not a South American Republic, I do not see any clear and present threat to freedom of thought in the United States, but it is one freedom that we must never take for granted. And systems of higher education can be our best bulwark against any attempt to reduce that freedom. It would be catastrophic for the United States ever to allow the Federal Government or all the states together to control the entire system of higher education because we would lose our best and safest outlet where criticism is possible and where freedom of thought is encouraged and not subject to political pressure.

And I would argue that even if my other three reasons for private higher education, which I feel are very strong today, would some day lose their force, the love of freedom would still dictate the necessity for a system of private higher education in the United States.

We have considered four of the most common criticisms of liberal education in general and private liberal education in particular. Perhaps now I am in a position to answer that original question and to answer it in less than one minute.

The answer is no, we have not made any changes in the curriculum at Dartmouth and I hope you have not done so at Wooster. Because we believe that what we do is exactly what our students need in this world. We believe that liberal education is the only education that has lasting value in a rapidly changing world. We believe that it is the best hope of returning to a higher standard of morality for our nation and for the world and we believe that the private sector in higher education will continue to spearhead the best of liberal education.

The Inaugural Addresses

A Place Apart

HENRY J. COPELAND

As an historian, I could not resist the temptation to read the inaugural addresses of my predecessors: Carter Druse's "Partners in Understanding," Howard Loomy's "Sketch for a Family Portrait," Charles Wickard's "The Search for the Golden Mean," and so on back to Willis Lord's.

Throughout, there is much to admire. One has to go no farther than President Lord's eloquent denunciation in 1878 of racial and sexual discrimination in education. As he summed up his argument, "The essential test of term of citizenship in the commonwealth of science and letters should be character, mental and moral quality and attainment, not condition, race, color or sex." President Lord also began the defense at Wooster of the scholar's right to seek truth wherever it may be found. As he put it, there should be at Wooster "no restriction upon free inquiry; no fetters upon liberal mind."

There are, of course, other strains in these addresses. President Taylor's appeal for financial support was repeated in nearly every address.

Oh! if God would but open the hearts and hands of his own people whom he hath blessed with liberal supplies of wealth, to a sense of the intrinsic value and lasting usefulness of institutions of Christian learning and to their intimate bearing upon the progress of the Kingdom of Grace, and the salvation of precious souls, they surely, with loving liberality, would crowd their gifts upon these affairs, and with their sons disburse also their incomes to God.

There are in these addresses echoes of paths not taken. Willis Lord's request that Wooster add graduate schools of law, theology, and philosophy to its flourishing medical school, or Howard Loomy's plan that Wooster maintain a college limited to a

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Throughout, there is much to admire. One has to go no further than President Lord's eloquent denunciation in 1870 of racial and sexual discrimination in education. As he summed up his argument, "The essential test or term of citizenship in the commonwealth of science and letters should be character, mental and moral quality and attainment, not condition, race, color or sex." President Lord also began the defense at Wooster of the scholar's right to seek truth wherever it may be found. As he put it, there should be at Wooster "no restriction upon true inquiry; no fetters upon [the] mind."

There are, of course, other refrains in these addresses. President Taylor's appeal for financial support was repeated in nearly every address.

Oh! If God would but open the hearts and hands of his own people whom he hath blessed with liberal supplies of wealth, to a sense of the intrinsic value and lasting usefulness of institutions of Christian learning and to their intimate bearing upon the progress of the Kingdom of Grace, and the salvation of precious souls, they surely, with loving liberality, would crowd their gifts upon these altars, and with their sons consecrate also their incomes to God.

There are in these addresses echoes of paths not taken: Willis Lord's request that Wooster add graduate schools of law, theology, and philosophy to its flourishing medical school; or Howard Lowry's plea that Wooster remain a college limited to a

thousand students. There are also declarations that bring a smile, such as the confident assertion that in appointing the faculty the president must be able to recognize "the real gentleman" at first sight.

But, as I read the eight addresses, what struck me most was the variety of images used to describe the College: a "strong bulwark against the winds and tides which are blowing and drifting men of this generation from truth and life to the shores of error and death"; a "temple of literature and science. . . ennobled. . . by the pervading presence and power of religion"; a "Divine-human partnership"; the "Holy Grail of our dreams"; a "corner of men's hearts where hope has not died"; a "partnership in understanding." What we imagine ourselves to be is significant, for we tend to become what we imagine, and in the images of these men one catches glimpses of aspirations judged important for the day.

Today we live in an age of discontinuity in the forms and values of our civilization. Quantitative change is becoming qualitative; and we are being required to rethink the dimensions of our existence. In such an age what we cling to and what we discard are inescapable questions.

Since World War II, higher education in the United States has been transformed. The number of students has increased sixfold, and we have gone from fewer than one fifth of young adults in colleges and universities to almost one half. The increase has been handled both by an expansion of existing institutions, an expansion which in many cases has been so drastic as to alter their nature, and by the development of new forms such as training institutes, cluster colleges, branch campuses, schools without walls, and the multiversities. The control of higher education, formerly predominantly private, is now predominantly public. The university has become an expression of mass culture and subject to the tides which have swept other parts of society: politicization, social activism, vocationalism, equalitarianism, consumerism, and a search for immediate relevance. New roles and tasks have been thrust upon colleges and universities. They have become instruments of national purpose and public policy, contractors for defense, space, health and welfare agencies, in a celebrated phrase, service stations for society. From all sides, there have been calls for them to enter the political and social arena as participants and to place themselves squarely in the middle of whatever controversy prevails. Some of these developments are good, and there is room in education for a wide spectrum of institutions. But as this

transformation takes place, what should Wooster's stance be? What image should we have of ourselves?

In my judgment, Wooster should strive to remain an autonomous center of ideas, values, and standards which, while rooted in the present, transcends in its concerns the here and now; which, rather than reflecting the world, challenges it; which, rather than assuming all of the tasks that require doing, assumes one and does that one superbly; which, rather than accepting the inevitable, creates a tension between what is and what could be; which, rather than being a mirror of society, remains a place apart with its own character and purpose.

In making such assertions, I am not suggesting that Wooster be isolated to an extent that would encourage a lack of concern or a sense of irresponsibility. On the contrary, the College exists to serve society. I am suggesting, however, that, in order to serve, its purposes may best be accomplished at a distance, with a certain detachment. There is a difference between being open to the world and being distracted by the here and now, between being aware of the prevailing patterns and becoming their prisoner, between establishing one's own ends and becoming the means to ends defined by others. Wooster must draw strength from society and be concerned with its affairs, but it can more surely serve if it stands apart.

What should be the attributes of this place apart? If you will permit, I will suggest five:

First, Wooster should remain a collegial community. The origins of such communities lie with the medieval universities of Europe, and these borrowed their corporate forms from the craft guilds. The guilds were legal corporations with defined privileges and responsibilities setting them apart. They were self-governing communities guided by a sense of professionalism, and yes, self-interest, with the power to devise statutes for their members and to enforce them. They had stages of membership from apprentices to masters, and there were ceremonies to celebrate the patterns of activity which bound the members to the purposes of the guild.

In many respects, the model of the guild still forms the basis for an academic community, and it is difficult to exaggerate the significance of this fact because today models drawn from the commercial and industrial spheres are being urged upon us. An academic community is a community of scholars, and students are members of the community and active participants in the learning process, not outcomes of a production line or passive recipients of a service. The guild provides an opportunity for

learning; the individual student is a participant in and contributor to the process; the result depends heavily on the student's potential, interest, and effort. Models based on mass production or a consumer approach, valid in their own spheres, have serious drawbacks when applied to academic programs, and Wooster should seek to remain a collegial community.

We are constituted as a community of scholars, and all who join should do so with the purpose of sharing in its life. Our organization ought to be based on professional standards with members of the profession having the authority to act autonomously in situations requiring their training or knowledge. Our physical arrangements should not be surrendered to expediency, and the campus ought to remain a magical place with boundaries and walls, towers and open vistas, its beauty and grace leading beyond the ordinary and the commonplace. In addition to its organizational and physical arrangements, however, the community ought to base itself on the power of the imagination to embrace diversity. To sustain our community, we must strive to identify the encompassing patterns which bind each of us to the purposes of the College and find ways to celebrate our common purposes in communal events, as we have done this inaugural week.

A second attribute of a place apart is its independence, and, in addition to remaining a collegial community, Wooster should strive to retain the ability to exist on its own terms. The medieval university came into being by a process of isolating itself, and an essential characteristic of a guild of scholars was its autonomy. In the thirteenth century, the universities struggled for an independent status in the face of ecclesiastical and royal authorities. The ideal of the community of scholars, never achieved, was to stand beside priestly and royal authority, poised between the temporal and spiritual domains, with a dignity of its own. As Hastings Rashdall concluded, *Sacerdotium*, *Imperium*, and *Studium* were the trinity through whose cooperation the life of Christendom was to be sustained.

The struggle to combat stifling external encroachments and to become an arbiter of ideas led to the formulation of the ideal of corporate academic freedom. Wooster should treasure the tradition of an autonomous body serving as a forum for the examination of ideas and as a center for the expansion of knowledge. Effective academic work calls for an environment which is secure and in which the work of scholars can be confidently pursued; the guild must be insulated to the extent necessary to encourage freedom of inquiry, and this requires a

certain isolation and safeguards that protect scholars in their pursuit of knowledge. The principle of autonomy cuts both ways, however, and, except in extreme cases in which the freedom of the forum itself is threatened, should not be violated for partisan purposes. We have been granted the leisure for study and the privileges of the lecture hall and mandated audience so that our findings will be available to all. Autonomy requires that the entire spectrum of views be examined so that apprentices are given the fullest knowledge on which to base their own work.

While dependent on the state for a definition of its privileges and responsibilities, Wooster should seek to remain a self-governing community with regard to those matters which are critical to its purposes. Yet, this ability to exist on its own terms is in danger today as higher education is increasingly subjected to new laws and regulations. Federal involvement now touches almost every aspect of college life, and there are some four hundred statutory authorities at the Federal level alone affecting higher education. We are extremely vulnerable to changes in public policy. If we wish to remain independent, we should do all that we can to provide the financial base to permit us to maintain the integrity and strength of the institution. Wooster is fortunate that others are willing to give tangible expression to their own commitment to the independence of the College. With the support Wooster has attracted in the past and will attract in the future, I am confident that it can retain the freedom to chart its own future.

A third attribute of a place apart is a concern for standards. Fundamental to the guild system was the belief that the craft of learning possessed standards of workmanship and that the masters were responsible for safeguarding these by supervising the course of training and examining the candidates who wished to obtain a license to practice the craft. For this purpose, there was an elaborate structure for the arts course with a preliminary examination for entry to the apprenticeship, an examination which led to the bachelorship, and, finally, an examination for the license to become a master. After the license, there was a special ceremony of inception to admit candidates to the society of masters. The scholastic guild was thus a corporate body with order and hierarchy, with stages of learning, and with standards for entrance and exit.

The guild provides us with several propositions which remain important today. If we are to be serious about craftsmanship, we must be selective in terms of those admitted to the course of

study. The skills at which a liberal education aims are difficult to acquire because they can rarely be transmitted directly or explicitly. Their acquisition depends upon a readiness that reflects both ability and experience. Prior achievement as well as potential must be present before an apprentice is ready to take up the task of becoming a master. In making such an assertion, I do not want to be misunderstood. Wooster is not preoccupied with the gifted alone. It must remain alert to ways to measure true potential, to discount the effects of early disadvantage, to broaden the talents measured by tests, and to take into account motivation as well as achievement. But, while reaching out to include rather than to exclude, we should not waiver from the final goal. We must, in the end, insist on performance and achievement. We must remain willing to distinguish between good and shoddy work and resist the kind of leveling influence which forbids discriminating judgments, the obsession with quantity rather than quality to which President Kemeny refers. We must reject a permissiveness that accepts any level of performance as worthy and challenge students, faculty, administrators, and trustees to reach and to achieve. We need foster no more pockets of mediocrity.

The insistence on standards also requires that we sustain the conditions in which the aims of education may be achieved for each student. To this end, members of the faculty should be masters of their crafts, capable of challenging students to develop their potential to the highest degree possible. Faculty members must continue to have the time to work with students as apprentices, individually and directly, at appropriate stages of their development. They must continue to have the opportunity to stay abreast of their fields so that students may have access to the most useful tools available for making existence intelligible. The institution must continue to be able to provide the resources so that learning may take place in the presence of primary sources such as those found in libraries, laboratories, and field experiences. Finally, the atmosphere in which students and faculty live and work on campus should encourage study and reflection, and it is the responsibility of the corporate body to foster such an environment. The collegial community has as one of its reasons for existence the maintenance of rigorous standards of craftsmanship.

To say that Wooster wishes to remain an autonomous collegial community committed to exacting standards leads to the question, what is the craft we practice? Wooster is a liberal arts college and, as its fourth attribute, I would suggest, intends

to remain a place of liberal learning.

The liberal arts are mental arts, and their purpose is the development and refinement of the mind's capacity for thought, imagination, and judgment. The ultimate goal is the cultivation of the mind's capacity for conscious and critical reflection on itself and on the world around it. In Cardinal Newman's phrase, it is "the cultivation of the intellect as such."

Jacob Bronowski in his essays on *The Identity of Man* pointed to consciousness as the distinguishing characteristic of human beings, and he saw consciousness as the result of the mind's ability to recall, to create and to use images of things, including itself, which are not present in the senses. In his terms, it was this imaginative process of recalling, reflecting upon, and creating images which permitted consciousness.

Therein lies the dignity of the race because it is consciousness which permits us to escape the domination of the here and now, of social egotism and cultural bias, of racial prejudice and sexual stereotypes, of religious bigotry and political dogmatism and to gain the freedom to transcend time and place, acquire a general view of ourselves and the world, and become shapers of life. We are different from the rest of creation precisely because of the possibility of achieving a deliberate, self-determined existence.

A liberal education is the work of a place apart. It requires a sheltered space, an enclave, within which education can be pursued as free from as much distraction as can be arranged. Such an education is not training or conditioning or filling heads with facts; it is more than the acquisition of skills and knowledge; it is the nurturing of minds which, in the words of T. S. Eliot, are "so fine that no idea can violate them." The capacity for imagination and reflection cannot be taught so much as nourished by the sustained relationship of one mind with another. If liberal education is essentially an activity of consciousness engendered by the communion of one mind with another, then the preference for a secure meeting place is clear. There should be, of course, an interplay between theory and practice, and the standards of the guild may lead the apprentice out into the byways of the world to test concepts with experience. But order, leisure, and security are desirable conditions for sustained intellectual activity, for the scribble, scribble of Mr. Gibbon, and Wooster ought to structure itself as such a place.

A place apart is desirable for liberal education for a second reason. The world is very much with us, and there are pressures for education to be immediately useful and relevant: to produce

good citizens, to solve social and environmental problems, and to train workers and managers for the economy. The question is how can a college be most useful and most relevant in the long run? Usefulness and relevance are not the primary aims of liberal learning. They are by-products. If we seek immediate usefulness and relevance, we risk becoming irrelevant in a rapidly changing world. You will recall President Kemeny's story of the Political Science class at Princeton held in the midst of World War II, a course on the introduction to politics in which the professor chose to focus on the "relevant" subject of wartime governments. I am happy to say that the "irrelevant" lecture on population expansion inserted into the course by the guest lecturer was given by a Wooster graduate of 1923, Frank W. Notestein. His lecture was the only one which President Kemeny said had proven for him to be of lasting usefulness and significance.

Wooster has an obligation which goes beyond the present moment and the roles which society and the state urge upon it. It should remain a place apart and focus on the individual to be educated as opposed to a slot to be filled in the economy, a political stand to be taken, or a social problem to be solved. If we nurture reflective minds, they will eventually be assets to the state, the church, the economy, and society. What could be more practical and relevant in the long run than minds capable of turning their powers in whatever direction they are needed? What could be more useful than minds capable of thinking, imagining, and expressing themselves under conditions which cannot now be possibly foreseen? Wooster should strive to remain a place of liberal learning.

Finally, and as the last attribute, Wooster is a place apart, not only in its concern with the mind, but in its concern with the spirit. It was founded by Presbyterians who had the conviction that the Prophets, the Evangelists, the Apostles, and the Incarnate Word had provided glimpses of the timeless and the infinite and that divine principles of truth and righteousness ought to be incorporated into human affairs. For over a hundred years, the College has produced servants of the Church who have sought to interpret the Word for their time and place. Wooster today is voluntarily associated with the Synod of the Covenant and should continue to strive to work out the implications of its religious heritage for this age.

Concerned with the spirit, we should insist on the richness and complexity of existence, on the reality of goodness as well as evil, and not permit life to be reduced to the lowest common

denominator. The belief that no evidence counts unless it can be empirically verified is circumscribed and cuts us off from meanings that are communicated through music, poetry, and art. We must be open to all of the possibilities of being human and be drawn beyond ourselves to visions which are not of our own making and to hopes which can transform. We must go beyond the unambiguous simplicity of mass and number and confront the paradoxes and subtleties which mark our condition. We are more than an assemblage of functions and drives to be taken apart and reassembled according to the dictates of fashion or the needs of the state. We must recognize each other as persons, whole persons, free of the stereotypes that keep us from realizing our full potential. We should be aware of the extraordinary range of human achievement and appreciate how a Homer or a Beethoven may make an extraordinary assertion and produce a work which dominates the imagination of succeeding generations.

Concerned with the spirit, we ought to recognize that in addition to facts there are values. One of the traits of intelligence is the ability to define its own limits. All views of the universe ultimately involve unverifiable assumptions. Articles of faith are necessary, and we must examine our assumptions and the ends to which our actions are to be directed. Kant's questions of "What can I know?"; "What ought I to do?"; and "What may I hope?" have not been finally answered. When we look backward and inward, we are aware of the possibility of morality. We see ourselves as responsible. As a place apart, the College should care in a central way about the question of ends and seek to nurture moral discrimination. It should insist that the purposes for which the intellect will use its powers be defined and on the primacy of our moral capacity to use skills and knowledge for worthwhile ends. Its responsibility is not to provide a prefabricated world view or a prepared set of values. Its duty is to see that each comes to grips with the question of ends, that the articles of faith adopted are not blind, that they are formed with an awareness of how men and women have grappled with moral issues in the past, and that they are open to the realm of transcendent meaning in the universe. Wooster intends to retain its concern for the life of the spirit.

We live in an age of transition; the forms and values of our civilization are being transformed; the questions of what we cling to and what we discard are on the agenda. As Wooster has responded creatively in the past, so it will do in the future and

in ways that will make many aspects of the institution unrecognizable to us today. And that is as it should be. I have suggested this afternoon, however, that, as we respond to a changing world, we strive to remain a collegial community, independent, devoted to rigorous standards of craftsmanship, a place of the mind and spirit.

The path ahead is uncertain. I believe that humanity's best hope lies in the intelligence of men and women informed by the values of the past and open to the full range of the potentialities of the human spirit. There is ample evidence that minds and spirits capable of reading the record of the past, responding consciously to the challenges of the present and acting courageously in the future may be nurtured in a collegial community, a place apart. If our concern extends beyond the here and now, beyond conditioning and training, to the liberation of the powers of the mind and spirit, then such a place apart is worthy of our devotion.



