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## General and Liberal Studies for the Career-Oriented Student

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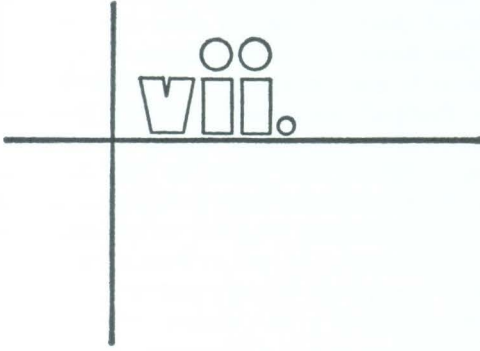
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## General and Liberal Studies for the Career-Oriented Student

By ERNEST H. BLAUSTEIN  
Boston University

This afternoon's session is entitled, "General and Liberal Studies for the Career-Oriented Student," and will consist of three papers. My co-discussant will be Dr. Clyde J. Lewis, Dean of Central University College, Eastern Kentucky University. We will not only serve as the discussants, but will attempt to act as catalysts for the discussion that will follow.

Papers are being presented by Dr. Myrtle Beinhauer, Director of the Center for Economic Education at Olivet College, Olivet, Michigan. She will be followed by Dr. K. D. Briner, Associate Professor of English and Director of the Chrysalis Program at Wartburg College. The third paper will be given by Dr. Wilton Eckley who is Chairman of the Department of English at Drake University.

In an earlier panel, "career-orientation" may have been used in a rather restrictive although not necessarily in an incorrect sense. Many of us who find ourselves attempting to bridge the gap between traditional liberal arts programs and the more flexible general education curricula, note that in dealing with the highly-motivated vocationally-concerned student population in the University these days, career-orientation has become a euphemism for what really is in the very best sense, professionalism. While I am not critical of student aspirations I am of the opinion that our penchant for attaching labels,

if not a form of misrepresentation, at least obscures certain underlying concerns. For example, I think that it is fair to state that the preponderance of Biology majors found in many universities today is simply a reflection of the desire to enter medicine as a career. I think that the growing numbers of Political Science and History majors may perceive these areas of concentration as the most appropriate vehicles for gaining admission into law school. I have no doubt that the growing number of liberal arts programs associated with professional schools of business represent one kind of curricular pathway to graduate programs leading to the increasingly popular Master in Business Administration degree. I am sure that we are all familiar with the programs and professional commitments required in the various Allied Health Professions, Nursing, and the diverse Public Communications degree opportunities. Thus, career-orientation in our student population is a fact of academic life. The problem, as I see it, lies in determining the appropriate balance between the liberal arts component and the undergraduate professional degree requirements.

One way of reassuring ourselves regarding the inclusion of general/liberal studies in any degree program, I suppose, is to refresh our memories regarding the functions of the (any) University. Of course, there are probably as many identifiable responsibilities of an institution of higher learning as there are people sitting in this room. I think that we might all agree, however, that under this rubric of responsibilities of the University is that it should serve as a storehouse of man's knowledge, a function that is fulfilled in its libraries. We all will surely agree that a University should devote a substantial portion of its resources to the advancement of the frontiers of knowledge by means of research and by encouraging the scholarly activities of its faculty. Finally, and for some the most obvious function, is the transmission of knowledge (i.e. teaching) to generations of students.

Now, the vehicle for accomplishing this latter function of teaching is the curricular structure or collection of courses that represents our immediate concern in this session. However, the development of a curriculum is no simple enterprise. In fact, there are complicated problems that all of us encounter in developing programs in general studies. I do hope that some of these will be addressed by our panel today.

One of the most readily visible problems in the area of curriculum development is the rather obvious conflict that exists between perceived career technologies and existing societal values. This may sometimes be translated into the apparent (real ?) conflict between liberal arts education and career or professional education. In fact, the perception is frequently accurate that the basic conflict coming into sharp focus lies between the liberal arts program and the requirements of the vocational or professional school.

It seems to me that the root of the problem is to be found in the gradual erosion of the general education or liberal arts portion of curricula that has been taking place over the past decade or two. Consequently, we see that general education today is no longer the core curriculum of the forties, but is the two-year program we now see contracting into a one-year collection of the unrelated so-called "inter-disciplinary" courses. Furthermore, what has now seemed to become quite fashionable is the so-called "buckshot approach" of scattering courses throughout the four years of undergraduate study. Thus, the generalist may be found guilty of that very same charge leveled at liberal arts colleagues; i.e. of providing a cafeteria-style education with its "smidgeon of this, a little bit of that, and not-too-much of the other things." Some institutions are simply replicating the very same introductory-level courses, only under slightly different and more acceptable "general studies" titles. Thus, instead of Biology or Physics, we sometimes observe the use of the term "Life Sciences" or the "Natural Sciences." Instead of an integrated program in Aesthetics, Art, or Music, the designation Humanities is used. Finally, the label of the general education Social Science course is the alias for the same highly discipline-oriented courses such as Sociology, Psychology, or Anthropology, etc.

There is little doubt in the minds of some that the resolution of this adversary role between general/liberal studies and career goals will be found in the reemphasis of the faculty commitment to the liberal arts tradition as a goal in and of itself and not simply in terms of "distribution" or "residency requirements." The question is then frequently raised, "Well, what is to be the student's contribution to his own education?" Some members of the Academy have become extraordinarily courageous in recent times and have said that the faculty member may indeed exercise a more expert judgment in the selection of courses on behalf of and without the need for student consultation. In fact, some have even suggested that the result of dialogue between the student and faculty member in this "arena of relevance" is about as useful as a course of treatment arrived at by mutual agreement between patient and physician, independent of the realities of the disease. In any case, we confront this issue of the career-oriented student and the liberal arts educational commitment of the faculty.



# General and Liberal Education and Career Education: Partners

By DR. MYRTLE BEINHAEUER  
Olivet College

The general theme of this particular session is "General and Liberal Education for the Career-Oriented Student." This title raises the question of relationship between General Education and Career Education. As one reflects on this subject it seems the two are inseparable and that General Education must be an important part of the education of career-oriented students. But in order to see this relationship one must first look at the philosophy and goals of each.

The end product of education is the individual, so we must ask ourselves what kind of individuals with what values and training is expected. First let us look at the goals and philosophy of Career Education. Dr. Keith Goldhammer, Dean of the College of Education of Michigan State University, and a well-known proponent of Career Education, makes the following statement: "Career education is an educational program designed to assist every individual to become a fully capacitated, participating, contributing, and fulfilled citizen. The goal of Career Education is to achieve a healthy state of society in which all individuals have found a place for themselves, can cope with the problems which confront them, and can become effective in the performance of their roles."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Goldhammer believes that to achieve this goal individuals must have:

1. Acquired knowledge and skills necessary to establish a place for themselves.
2. Found themselves a place in society where their capabilities can be developed and used and have planned their life style to coincide with their aspirations and capabilities. (This is saying an individual must know his limitations as well as his potential.)
3. Recognize their own worth. They develop satisfaction from developing their capabilities to the fullest extent possible.
4. Acquired the skills necessary to perform ALL their life roles with a large degree of effectiveness. Career Education emphasizes not only the skills essential for becoming a competent worker but also the development of knowledge, understanding, attitudes, and skills required for the performance of roles as a member of a family group, as a citizen of a community, as a participant in the avocational, aesthetic, religious, and moral life of the community.

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1. Goldhammer, Keith. "Career Education." Michigan School Board Journal. (October 1973).

Kenneth Hoyt, another advocate of Career Education, says: "Career education should neither deny intellectual achievement nor denigrate manual skills. It is neither academic education nor vocational education, yet it involves both. Early childhood and college education are as much a part of the concept as elementary and secondary schools—wherever youth and adults can find learning relevant to the world of work. It must encompass all these prerequisites: attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to choose, prepare for, and pursue a successful career.

"Central to the career education concept is recognition that success in working life involves good mental and physical health, human relations skills, a commitment to honest work as the source of income, and a willingness to accept the discipline of the work place and to be motivated toward achievement in the work setting. It also requires all of the basic skills of communication and computation and a basic familiarity with the concepts of science and technology as well as a saleable skill in demand in the job market.

"Career education is not something which precedes participating in society, but it is an integration of learning and doing that merges the worlds of the home, the community, the school, and the workplace into a challenging and productive whole . . .

"Career education is a total concept which should permeate all education, giving a new centrality to the objective of successful preparation for, and development of, a lifelong, productive career. Yet it must in no way conflict with other important education objectives. Its beneficiaries can still become good citizens, parents, and cultivated and self-aware human beings because career success can augment *all other sound educational objectives*.

"Career education should become part of the student's curriculum from the moment he enters school. It relates reading, writing, and arithmetic to the varied ways in which adults live and earn a living. As the student progresses through school, the skills, knowledge and, above all, the attitudes necessary for work success are stressed. This stress is phased into every subject for every student, not just in separate classes designed for those who are going to work."<sup>2</sup>

As many of you may know, the Michigan Legislature passed a bill requiring Career Education in all schools. This law, House Bill 4422, states "Career education means programs for K-12 students designed to create career awareness, orientation, exploration, planning, preparation, and placement, to maximize career options available, and to provide comprehensive career development. In addition, career education shall provide for the full development of students to gain maximum self-development and fulfillment from career preparation

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2. Hoyt, Kenneth. *Career Education: What It Is And How To Do It*. p. 3.

and choice, and to maximize the capabilities of students to explore, analyze, prepare for, gain entry to, and succeed in career choices.”

Quite logically, then, the questions arise: How is this to be done? What program or programs should be developed and implemented to help individuals acquire the essential information and characteristics to achieve the goal of Career Education as described? Presumably, there are a number of routes such educational programs may take.

Hoyt says that it is the goal of Career Education “to make work possible, meaningful, and satisfying to each individual”<sup>3</sup> which in his opinion can be done within the present educational system with some modification of values and relationships.

Another widely known program articulated by the Center of Vocational and Technical Education at Ohio State University and quoted by Earl Nelson identifies eight areas which it deems necessary for an understanding of the Career Education process and which outline the characteristics embodying the whole of Career Education:

1. Self-Awareness—It is essential that each person know himself, and develop a personal value system.
2. Educational Awareness—It is essential that each person perceive the relationship between education and life roles.
3. Career Awareness—It is essential that each person acquire knowledge of a wide range of careers.
4. Economic Awareness—It is essential that each person be able to perceive processes on production, distribution, and consumption relative to his economic environment.
5. Decision Making—It is essential that each person be able to use information in determining alternatives and reaching decisions.
6. Beginning Competency—It is essential that each person acquire and develop skills which are viewed as ways in which man extends his behavior.
7. Employability Skills—It is essential that each person develop social and communication skills appropriate to career placement and adjustment.
8. Attitudes and Appreciations—It is essential that each person develop appropriate feelings toward self and others.

Although there are doubtless innumerable proposed programs for Career Education, we need not delve into them. These suffice to give us a basis for determining the components of what a successful product is to be.

To ascertain if General Education may be of service to the career-oriented student, we must now look at the goals and philosophy of

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3. Hoyt, page 4.



General Education. In leafing through various materials we find descriptive statements such as: "General Education . . . that part of a student's whole education which looks first of all to his life as a responsible human being and citizen." Another, "In order to discharge his duties as a citizen adequately, a person must be able to grasp the complexities of life as a whole." A third, "What characteristics are necessary for anything like a full and responsible life in our society . . ." Again, "General education . . . must constantly aim at these abilities: at effective thinking, communication, the making of relevant judgments and the discrimination of values."<sup>4</sup>

More recently, Dr. Dressel says "General Education . . . as applied to higher education has a wide range of meanings . . . Its major interest seemed to be that of defining liberal education . . . in terms of aims and content suitable to conditions existing in the Twentieth Century American Society . . . The argument that General Education must be related to individual needs introduced the possibility that these experiences might contribute to vocational competency as well as family life and citizenship. This made it possible to argue that the qualities and abilities associated with general education could be developed equally well by vocational, professional, physical education, traditional liberal arts or even shop courses . . ."<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Mayhew defines: "General Education (as) that portion of formal collegiate education specifically designed to affect non-vocational life style of the undergraduate."<sup>6</sup>

Quoting T. R. McConnell, he continues "The purpose of General Education is to enable men and women to live rich, satisfying lives and to undertake the responsibilities of citizenship in a free society. Although General Education seeks to discover and nurture individual talent, it emphasizes preparation for activities in which men engage in common as citizens, workers and members of family and community groups."<sup>7</sup>

In another paragraph he has the statement: "The goal of general education programs must be realistic. They must focus on . . . attitudes, capabilities, abilities, and values . . ."

A comparison of goals and philosophy indicate that the end product of Career and General Education is virtually the same, namely, a well-rounded, broadly educated individual who will fulfill all his roles in

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4. General Education in a Free Society. Pp. 52-73.

5. *The Undergraduate Curriculum in Higher Education*. Paul L. Dressel. New York. The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc. 1967. Pp. 13-14.

6. Lewis B. Mayhew, *College Today and Tomorrow*. (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, Inc. 1969), p. 199.

7. Mayhew, p. 206.



society with maximum efficiency and satisfaction to himself and others. The components which make up this end product and the emphasis on the various components differ somewhat.

Emphasis on General Education came as a result of what some felt was on over-stress on specialization in education. It was argued that there are certain skills and bodies of knowledge that ALL citizens should have to function with maximum group and personal satisfaction. Career Education agrees, for the most part, that there is need for the same type of skills. Recall an earlier quotation which says "It (Career Education) requires all of the basic skills of communication and computation and a basic familiarity with the concepts of science and technology . . ." But Career Education places more emphasis on work orientation. Career Education has grown from a society which finds that many of its job opportunities do not require a formal college education and which predicts that with present trends proportionally fewer will require a formal college education. According to statistics quoted by the Michigan State Chamber of Commerce, 25 percent of jobs at the present time require no more than a high school education. By 1980, that number will reach 30 percent. Quite naturally, then, Career Education stresses the development of values in a work-oriented society.

In the past years there has been a tendency to think of work in the manual sense as degrading. One "gets ahead" if he has a sedentary job or position which does not require physical exertion.

The traditional work ethic has apparently been eroded in American society to a considerable extent. The extent of this erosion is easily seen when we speak of such principles as: "All honest work possesses innate dignity and worth," "One should strive to do his best in whatever he does," "A task well done is its own reward," and "The contributions one can make to society stem . . . from the work one does." These statements sound Victorian and strange, don't they? I am not advocating a return to the original Puritan ethic concept. Social change has made this undesirable, but we do need to recognize that manual labor is not a four-letter word and we *do* need less intellectual snobbery in our attitude toward one's earning a living by manual labor. We do need an attitudinal change on the part of the individual and society so that work has an innate dignity and worth and so that the person who is performing honest labor—no matter how menial the task—and who is contributing to society is respected.

Perhaps society needs to revamp its values in the pattern of the economic world which has long since placed higher value on manual work than on much of the sedentary, white collar work. A bricklayer is paid more than many college professors. As Hoyt says "What needs to be done is to help individuals (1) to develop and/or become familiar with the values of a work-oriented society; (2) to integrate these

values into their personal life values; and (3) to implement them in their lives in such a way that work becomes possible, meaningful, and satisfying to each individual.”<sup>8</sup>

General Education can and, in my opinion, should help to bring about this attitudinal change realizing that Career Education is something more than the Vocational Education programs of years ago which had as their basic concept the training of an individual in a skill with which he would earn his livelihood through all his working years. Many individuals can no longer expect to remain in one job all their working life. Social and technological change is occurring so rapidly, we are told that individuals must be prepared to train and retrain three times during their working years. A major function of General Education is to help individuals recognize the need for change and adapt to it. General Education, then, can and should place more emphasis on preparing individuals to recognize the need for change in their “work life.”

This will necessitate a greater emphasis on economic education for the individual. If a student is to understand the wide range of careers with their rewards and responsibilities, if he is to be able to judge his potential and limitations in careers, if he is to recognize the need for retraining, and if he is to be able to determine the direction of that retraining, he must understand the whole economic system within which he must perform. He must know how his chosen career “fits” into the whole. He must know how the system functions, what the system expects, and what its values are and he must understand the interaction with other forces of society.

An individual’s vocation or career is only a part of the entire economic system and only a part of his economic activity. Both General Education and Career Education can well look at this part of a student’s needs and build economics into their programs. This means that both proponents should take a look at what they are doing to meet this need.

Though Career Education places an emphasis upon values in a work-oriented society, it parallels General Education in pointing to the need for ALL the basic skills, communication, computation, etc. and to the desirability of retaining them. Thus, it appears that Career Education is really asking for General Education but with a greater emphasis on the world of work and assurance of a close relationship to the real world. This is not to say that all that is not related to the world of work should be deleted for there is recognition that there are many roles for which man must be prepared. It seems to me that General Education is well prepared and has a responsibility to provide

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8. Hoyt, p. 66.

programs to aid individuals to fulfill life roles other than those in the world of work.

I expect we all agree that to be significant education must be related to the world in which we live. Thus, it seems necessary for General Education to re-examine its offerings to ascertain if they serve the individual realistically. Frequently, education has been accused of teaching in a vacuum, or of being too theoretical and of not being practical. For example, in January 1972, an article appeared in the *Saturday Review of Literature* entitled "Is Economics Relevant?" The gist of this article is that classroom economics is too theoretical and that it is not related to the real world; that a student may take several economics courses but not know how the real economic system functions. I fear there is more truth to this charge than most economists care to admit. I'm sure other disciplines will find that they, too, are often unrealistic and theoretical.

So we conclude where we started, but with a more positive note. Instead of saying "it *seems* that General Education must be an important part of education for the career-oriented student," we now say "General Education *must* be a major portion of the educational program of the career-oriented student." If the end product of education is the fully capacitated individual, then the two groups should cooperate in developing programs, for they are complementary.

## Iron Lids and Morning Stars: A Challenge for Liberal Arts

By WILTON ECKLEY

Recalling that Ezra Pound once said that professors are not paid for how much they know but for how long they can string it out, I was tempted to begin my remarks today with Puritan New England—a good starting place for almost any topic. Sparing you that, however, I shall go back merely to two earlier years, years marked by significant statements about American culture.

In 1837 Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered the Phi Beta Kappa address at Harvard University—in which he stated that perhaps the time is already come "when the sluggard intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids and fill the postponed expectation of the world with something better than the exertions of mechanical skill."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," in *The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York, 1940), p. 45.



It is in one sense ironic that Emerson should have made such a statement at the end of Andrew Jackson's administration, an administration that itself did much to increase the pragmatic aspects of American culture—indeed that did much to make fertile the soil for future seeds of anti-intellectualism in America. Emerson saw that, as he put it, "The state of society is one in which the members have suffered amputation from the trunk, and strut about so many walking monsters—a good finger, a neck, a stomach, an elbow, but never a man."<sup>2</sup>

The second year, 1907, marks the private publication of one of the most important works in American intellectual history—*The Education of Henry Adams*. Early in this book Adams asks, "What could become of such a child of the 17th and 18th centuries, when he should wake up to find himself required to play the game of the 20th?"<sup>3</sup> The child referred to, of course, was Adams himself. But in a larger sense the child was more than just Adams. For if Benjamin Franklin was a symbol of an age, or Andrew Jackson, so too was Henry Adams. Put simply, Adams symbolized that split in America between Past and Present—and when we read *The Education*, we get some idea of what it was like to enter the 20th century and, more important, what it is like to live in it. Adams saw the 18th-century world of order having given way during the 19th century to one of apparent disorder—one in which the material Dynamo was to ultimately overtake the spiritual Virgin as a creative force.

Moral values and rational action were being replaced by money values and expedient action; and we could get a fictional character like Christopher Newman in Henry James' *The American*—a man dedicated to the making of money but with no idea of what to do with it. Or Carrie Meeber in Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, who somehow feels better off just for having two ten-dollar bills in her pocket.

Both of these statements underline the dichotomous nature of the American Dream—the material, or power, aspect on the one hand and the ideal, or spiritual, aspect on the other. Never in our history have these two conflicting aspects been reconciled on any other than a superficial level—and usually not even there. The result is that we are constantly forced to defend or justify—or perhaps I should say rationalize—philosophic or economic positions with a rhetoric that attempts to disguise this basic dichotomy.

The conflict between the spiritual and the material or between freedom and condition was not something new with the coming of the 20th century. The task of achieving some kind of synthesis, however, has become much more difficult and much more crucial because time

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2. Ibid., p. 46.

3. Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (New York, 1961), p. 4.

—in the past a stabilizing factor in historical change—is no longer our ally. The world has become geometrically smaller in terms of transportation and communication and geometrically larger in terms of population. America, once insulated by two oceans, now suffers from a sense of insecurity comparable to that which has plagued Russia for a number of centuries. Possessor of seemingly unlimited frontiers in the 18th and 19th centuries, we now have trouble finding space for our trash and are in some danger of being strangled by our own affluence. Perhaps James Fenimore Cooper's Natty Bumppo in *The Prairie* could peacefully die facing the freedom of the West, but Sal Paradise in Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* can only say, "Here I was at the end of America—no more land—and now there was nowhere to go but back."<sup>4</sup>

Condition impinges upon our society not only in the physical sense, but also in the creative sense. When we need innovators and thinking men, we get manipulators and Organization Men. Conditioned by society, they accept the status quo, content merely to improve their lot in conventional ways. Innovation has always come from people who have been imperfectly conditioned into an acceptance of the status quo, but it is difficult now to escape such conditioning. Moreover, as the Organization Man syndrome is replaced by the Computer syndrome, it will be even more difficult. Indeed, there are those who see the computer itself as an agent for cultural change. Computers, the argument goes, will be essential in changing society because the organization of the modern world has become so complex as to render it clumsy for comprehensive observation and management by individuals alone, and necessitates the recollection, project and planning resources of the computer to bring the diverse elements of society into new equilibria as demanded by changing circumstances.

But there is another side to the coin. If the Organization Man and the computer combine to condemn us to a world of condition—a world in which it is difficult, if not impossible, to realize a coherent freedom, to what does an over-reaction to such a situation lead us? Many young people of this generation have been pulled in the direction of extreme freedom. Daniel Yankelovich, writing a couple of years ago in *The Saturday Review*, discusses the get-back-to-nature aspect of that nebulous phenomenon called the Student Movement. He itemizes what it means to be natural in the student lexicon:

1. To push the Darwinian version of nature as "survival of the fittest" into the background, and to emphasize instead the interdependence of all things and species in nature.
2. To place sensory experience ahead of conceptual knowledge.

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4. Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York, 1955), p. 77.

3. To live physically close to nature, in the open, off the land.
4. To live in groups (tribes, communes) rather than in such "artificial" social units as the nuclear family.
5. To reject hypocrisy, "white lies," and other social artifices.
6. To de-emphasize aspects of nature illuminated by science; instead, to celebrate all the unknown, the mystical, and the mysterious elements of nature.
7. To stress cooperation rather than competition.
8. To embrace the existentialist emphasis on being rather than doing or planning.
9. To devalue detachment, objectivity, and noninvolvement as methods for finding truth; to arrive at truth, instead, by direct experience, participation, and involvement.
10. To look and feel natural, hence rejecting makeup, bras, suits, ties, and other artificialities.
11. To express oneself nonverbally; to avoid literary and stylized forms of expression as artificial and unnatural; to rely on exclamations as well as silences; vibrations and other nonverbal modes of communication.
12. To reject "official" and hence artificial forms of authority; authority is to be won, it is not a matter of automatic entitlement by virtue of position or official standing.
13. To reject mastery over nature.
14. To dispense with organization, rationalization, and cost-effectiveness.
15. To embrace self-knowledge, introspection, discovery of one's natural self.
16. To emphasize the community rather than the individual.
17. To reject mores and rules that interfere with natural expression and function (e.g., conventional sexual morality).
18. To preserve the environmental at the expense of economic growth and technology.<sup>5</sup>

There is no doubt that we are living in a kind of rear-guard romantic period, at least as far as the younger generation is concerned. And how odd, remarks Henry Steele Commager, "that this revival of romanticism should coincide with the triumph of the cosmic—and

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5. Daniel Yankelovich, "The New Naturalism," *Saturday Review*, LV (April 1, 1972), p. 32.



therefore the impersonal—in science. Perhaps it is astronomy's vast and incomprehensible extension of the universe, which threatens to dwarf man, and the triumphs of scientific technology, which threaten to dwarf the fruits of art and music and literature, that have led to the cultivation of what is private, emotional, and irrational"<sup>6</sup>

In *Points of Rebellion* Justice William O. Douglas argues convincingly that the goal of America's young people "is not to destroy the regime of technology," but "to make the existing system more human, to make the machine subservient to man, to allow for the flowering of a society where all the idiosyncracies of man can be honored and respected."<sup>7</sup>

But it is little wonder that many young people have moved in the direction of extreme freedom from the total rejection of, the conditions of society. They grew up with the spectre of the H-bomb and the visible horror and apparent meaninglessness of the Viet Nam war, only to find themselves on the threshold of another terrifying situation—a world threatened by ecological destruction and starvation. Young people have always rebelled in some way against the authority of the adult world, but in the end they have usually been assimilated into and become part of, that world. For every outcast Huck Finn, there have been a hundred conventional Tom Sawyers. In the end perhaps this generation will follow the same pattern. Even if such is the case, the very fact that so many recent American writers have turned to the adolescent as a metaphor indicates a belief that youth, if not in a practical, at least in an abstract, sense can provide a dream for a society desperately in need of one.

Dreams, however, do not become realities merely by wishful thinking or by shouting Shazam! or like Wow! They become realities only when enough people are willing to commit themselves emotionally and intellectually to gaining the knowledge necessary to provide substance to vision. And there, precisely, is the challenge for education in general and liberal arts in particular.

No field has been called upon to address itself to the problem of reconciling the dichotomies of the American Dream more than that of education, from kindergarten to the university, from Puritan times to the present. The American educational system, unlike the European, is a product of a frontier society, and as such it has always had a basically pragmatic motive—from past eras when our economic system emphasized the exploitation of natural resources to the current era when it emphasizes mechanical, managerial, professional, and service functions. Faith in education has always been strong in America, not

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6. Henry Steele Commager, "America in the Age of No Confidence," *Saturday Review World*, August 10, 1974, p. 21.

7. William O. Douglas, *Points of Rebellion* (New York, 1969), p. 9.

in any intellectual sense, but simply in the sense that education brings economic gains. A liberal education, for example, has seemed a mark of culture to an economically secure elite; but to farmers, self-made men, and workers, it has seemed impractical. Moreover, to some in America it has seemed not merely impractical, but a very real danger—a threat, as it were, to the established order. Indeed, were not the leaders of student riots in the late 60's and early 70's more often than otherwise enrolled in liberal studies?

I need not lay out here the general external problems that face American higher education today. They are well known. Liberal arts, as a part of higher education, faces these same problems only more so, the most pressing of which is declining enrollments. In his book *The Organization Man*, published back in 1956, William H. Whyte presents statistics which reflect the dramatic shift in collegiate education from the liberal to the technical. He quotes an article from *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, the newspaper at the University of Pennsylvania. I should like to read part of that article here:

The first and most important destructive influence at Pennsylvania of the atmosphere important for the nourishment of humane arts is the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce. Justly famed for the excellent business training which it offers, and for which it grants an academic degree, the Wharton School by the sheer force of its reputation and undergraduate appeal has given to undergraduate social and extracurricular life an atmosphere which, while it is seldom anti-intellectual, is usually nonintellectual, and which tends to discourage the popularity of those interests which ordinarily occupy the time of the students of other universities where the school of liberal arts is the main impetus for student activity.

An undergraduate body where half the members have definite educational interests of a material, non-academic nature is bound to create an atmosphere that reflects something less than enthusiasm for the theoretical sciences and the liberal arts. This is especially so when those members are frequently people of particular intelligence who are adept at pointing out to their fellow students the apparent flaws of an education seemingly for "nothing at all," and whose idea (of what they are in the philistine habit of calling "culture") is an elementary course in the fine arts or history, judiciously chosen for

its adaptability to the most inconsiderable demands of a thorough business school.<sup>8</sup>

The obvious point that Whyte underlines here is that the conflict is not between the sciences and the liberal arts, as some humanists might believe, but between the fundamental and the applied—or, put another way, between the liberal and the vocational. The outcomes of such a conflict, according to Burton Clark in his book *Educating the Expert Society* “mean much for students’ experiences in college and for the nature and functions of higher education. In practice, we undoubtedly will see the conflict result in various combinations of academic and the vocational. The difference will lie in whether they are combined in generous proportions or blended by adding a drop of the one to a heavy dose of the other.”<sup>9</sup> The prevalent fear among those identified with the academic side of this conflict, of course, is that the vocational will be the heavy dose and the academic, the drop. It would be little wonder, then, if those of us in the liberal arts would not be sympathetic with the very old and very wise black slave preacher who led his congregation in prayer with, “An’ deliver us, O Lord, from de status quo—meanin’ de mess we is in.”

The “mess” that liberal arts finds itself in is not one that leans toward easy solutions—though I hope that we are not yet reduced to prayer. At the moment, liberal arts, and liberal arts colleges, must be concerned with short-range tactics of survival—and there is nothing wrong with this, so long as the legitimate *raison d’être* of liberal studies is not permanently distorted by the “come groove in our grove” syndrome or over reliance on such illusory panaceas as life-experience credit or inter- and multi-disciplinary programs. Like inflated grades and CLEP tests, the above approaches encourage the impression that there are short cuts to a liberal education—almost as if one can read books about books and never have to read the books themselves.

Over the long range, however, there must be a reconciliation between liberal and career education on more than just a superficial level. This reconciliation must come from both directions—and it must come in a spirit of cooperation and mutual benefit rather than in a spirit of self-righteousness and conflict. To say that our survival depends upon this reconciliation, or synthesis if you wish, may sound a trifle over-dramatic, but I believe that C. Wright Mills is correct when he postulates that we must face “the possibility that the human mind as a social fact might be deteriorating in quality and cultural level, and yet not many would notice it because of the overwhelming

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8. William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organization Man* (Garden City, New York, 1957), pp. 93-94.

9. Burton R. Clark, *Educating the Expert Society* (San Francisco, 1962), p. 243.



accumulation of technological gadgets.”<sup>10</sup> Mills sees increased human alienation resulting from this accumulation of gadgets. “Those who use these devices,” he says, “do not understand them; those who invent them do not understand much else. That is why we may *not*, without great ambiguity, use technological abundance as the index of human quality and cultural progress.”<sup>11</sup>

Some years ago a friend of mine related his experience of going into a bank that had recently computerized its accounts. He asked the young lady in the teller’s cage how the new process was working out. She looked up at him with resignation, saying “The computer makes about as many mistakes as a person does—only the computer doesn’t care.”

Obviously we cannot expect the computer to care. But more importantly we should not expect man to carry out a series of actions without an idea as to the result or significance of those actions. Because it is highly unlikely that the current state of civilization, which sees people in terms of their role or job in society rather than in terms of self, will change radically, it becomes even more important that the *individual* see himself not simply as a functioning automaton, but as a living human being. Man is like a work of art. He cannot be poured into a mold of specialization and be expected to come out totally integrated and totally alive. Certainly we need better carpenters, mechanics, engineers, physicians, lawyers, or what have you. But more importantly, we need better human beings. Education should be more than a path to social privilege and economic power; it should also be a path to human decency and human fulfillment—to something more than e. e. cummings describes in his poem on mankind, or manunkind, as cummings calls him:

pity this busy monster, manunkind,  
not. Progress is a comfortable disease:  
your victim (death and life safely beyond)  
plays with the bigness of his littleness  
—electrons deify one razorblade  
into a mountainrange; lenses extend  
unwish through curving wherewhen till unwish  
returns on its unself.

A world of made  
is not a world of born—pity poor flesh  
and trees, poor stars and stones, but never this  
fine specimen of hypermagical  
ultraomnipotence. We doctors know

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10. C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (New York, 1959), p. 174.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

a hopeless case if—listen; there's a hell  
of a good universe next door; let's go

Unfortunately, we have no better universe next door to go to. The one we live in now is the one that we must put our imagination to work on and create a reality that is not merely a pragmatic expediency to be measured only quantitatively, nor a flippant rejection of discipline based on a rationale of eccentricity, but a reality that is worthy of the infinite capacity of both the intellect and spirit with which man is blessed.

Arriving at this goal of the whole man does not require any single strategy or pattern of education. It is not, for example, necessary that a period of liberal studies precede professional or vocational studies. The two could be blended, or the sequence could be reversed, with liberal studies following the latter. After all, a liberal education is a life-time endeavor. Moreover, we must not hesitate to break traditional organizational patterns and concepts, even to the extent of blurring or erasing the lines of demarcation between the liberal and the vocational or professional segments of the educational enterprise. There is nothing inherently sacred in colleges or schools of business administration, journalism, engineering, or liberal arts. What is *indispensable* is a commitment from both sides based not on selfish biases or vested interests, but on the belief that, in Henry Thoreau's words, "Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to come. The sun is but a morning star."<sup>12</sup>

## Between Scylla and Charbydis the Perils of False Dichotomy

By K. D. BRINER

I cannot address this gathering without first voicing my gratitude to the Association. In 1967, fresh out of graduate school and with my head full of structural linguistics and British fiction, I was selected to participate in the Intern Seminar at your annual meeting. During four days of lectures and discussions, I was introduced to the work and ideas of Joseph Royce, Stanley Idzerda, and Harold Taylor. In the seven years since, my thinking, my sense of vocation, and my behavior as teacher and learner have been profoundly altered by those four days and their consequences. Because you have been important to me, it

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12. Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (New York, 1966), p. 278.

is my pleasure to be among you again. Some of what this Association has tried to teach, I have learned, and I am grateful.

It pleases me, in particular, that this meeting addresses itself to the relationship between liberal studies and vocation. I do not regard concern for liberal learning and concern for vocation as dipolar and contradictory qualities. Rather, I believe that they might better be viewed as complementary parts of that wholeness which is the aspiration to full humanity.

Often, it seems to me, we confuse ourselves by assuming that we must choose between possibilities that we take to be mutually exclusive. Something in us loves a duality, and loves it as blindly, as stubbornly, and as irrationally as Paris loved Helen. (And, one can hardly resist adding, with about equally satisfactory results.) Do we want freedom or security? What in us is mind and what body? Is man *animal rationis* or *animal sentiens*? Is a given phenomenon a manifestation of matter or of energy? Should we have free enterprise or planned economies? Are we humanists or behaviorists? Liberals or conservatives? Little wonder that to Robert Frost man seemed

like the poor bear in a cage,  
That all day fights a nervous inward rage,  
His mood rejecting all his mind suggests.

At the moment, much of our "nervous, inward rage" is generated by another of those dipolar questions: should the efforts of our schools be directed toward "Career Education" or toward "Liberal Learning"? The question is seductive, partly because it invites passionate answers ringing with righteous clarity.

For example, two years ago the Iowa House of Representatives debated a measure which would have required elementary schools to present to every pupil a program called "Career Education." The purpose, the bill stated, was not to enable students to explore particular kinds of work, but rather to inculcate in them "acceptance of the dignity and value of work itself." Here is a proposition most generalists can attack with relish. Clearly, the bill was misnamed; it was a proposal to require, not "Career Education," but "Work Indoctrination."

Last year my oldest daughter was in fourth grade. Her experience of "Career Education" seemed to confirm my worst suspicions. One day, for instance, she was required to watch a movie called "Who Puts the Blue in the Jeans?" The movie pointed out that we all require the products of labor. Subsequently, the following theme assignment was made: "Describe the job you want to do when you grow up." Boys, it was suggested, might want to write about being doctors, lawyers, or engineers; girls about being nurses, secretaries, or teachers. I am not aware that my daughter has ever been given a comparable assignment asking what kind of person she is trying to become.



Most of us do not teach in elementary schools, but this example has point for us nonetheless. Nearly all colleges and universities may be described as marriages, either of passion or of convenience, between liberal arts programs and programs of job preparation and certification. Clearly enough, not all such marriages will withstand critical scrutiny. I have difficulty imagining, for example, the precise nature of a Bachelor of Arts program in "Chamber of Commerce Management," yet at least one American college does offer such a program. But what of the more typical cases? Most of us work in institutions which offer undergraduate courses (and often majors) in journalism, social work, business administration, accounting, medical technology, physical therapy, counseling psychology, and, of course, teaching. Thus, we can hardly dismiss "Career Education" as unworthy of our concern. If I dismiss from consideration all the students in the programs I have just listed I have excluded the majority of students at Wartburg College. Most of you, I am certain, could say the same of your institutions. Such an outcome is self-evidently unacceptable.

Let us, then, come at the question from a different perspective. If "Career Education" and "Liberal Studies" are not to be mutually exclusive, how might they be related? This question raises several corollaries to which we might profitably address ourselves:

First, what are we to make of the work ethic? For all the denunciations we have heard or uttered, the centrality of work as one of the focal points of our identity seems undiminished. Who we are and what we do are not, for most of us, separable questions. Nor is this phenomenon either new or peculiarly American. One of the characteristics shared in common by Whitman and Rimbaud, William Carlos Williams and Shelley, T. S. Eliot and Coleridge, is that each, besides writing poetry, wrote searching commentaries on the uses of poetry and the responsibilities of the poet. For each of them, writing poetry was a vocation to be worked at. Our own experience should verify such a claim. College teachers, while questioning the work ethic, typically work hard and long. Ironists among us should be able to make something of that. If we want to find an attitude which is relatively recent, peculiarly American, and socially counter-productive, we might look, not at the work ethic, but at its true contradiction, the attitude that "living in the moment" and "doing one's thing" is an adequate program for life. Work, I am saying, is here to stay, and we deny its importance at our peril.

If we ask why work is so important, several answers suggest themselves. The most obvious, that our economy rewards work with the means to acquire goods and services, is an explanation of limited usefulness. Since I am addressing an audience of teachers, I trust that the inadequacy of economic interpretation of work values is clear.

Why, then, do we work? When we call teaching our "life's work,"

we clearly mean that it is something more than our "job," our "position," or even our "profession." I believe we mean that teaching offers us a significant arena for constant growth, change, learning, adaptation, reflection, conversation, and action—in short, for the cultivation of our own best possibilities. We mean, further, that teaching lets us pursue those possibilities in ways which are, at best, both personally satisfying and socially productive. We mean, moreover, that the "work" we do as teachers makes us better at our other tasks—as moral agents, as citizens, as parents, and as lovers of other human beings. In such a view, teaching becomes for us a manifestation of what Luther called *Berufung*—the calling to use ourselves fully and express fully the human spirit in all the arenas of our action.

If we hold such a vision of the possibilities for human life, then "Career Education" ought to afford occasions for sharing that vision with our students. To the student whose intentions are narrowly vocational, we should be able to show visions of aesthetic sensitivity and ethical responsibility, and to do so for two reasons: first, because that student's human possibilities are not confined just to working, and secondly, because the student who becomes a better, more realized person will be better at work. And to the student whose interests are in self-cultivation and service to others, we should be able to introduce the possibility that creative, productive work can be a locus for the realization of such aspirations. We ought to affirm with Swift that it is useless to love mankind in the abstract and with Carlyle that only in the Actual can the Ideal be grounded. To both kinds of students, we ought to exemplify, and thus not need constantly to talk about, our conviction that everyone is entitled to and needs instruction in the arts, politics, history, language, psychology, philosophy, and science for the simple reason that the road to full humanity proceeds through competence, not away from it.

Our need for fully human practitioners of many kinds of work could hardly be more desperate. We have not discovered how to deliver adequate health care to a clear majority of our people, though our health-care personnel are the best trained and best paid in the world. Our system of laws and law enforcement seems frequently to perpetuate the privileges of the fortunate and the exploitation of the oppressed. Our industrial plant seems typically to make money by raping the environment and subjecting workers to a regimen of soul-grinding monotony the costs of which are becoming clear in studies of absenteeism, on-the-job drug use, and industrial sabotage. Our economic planners define "full employment" as a condition in which four to six per cent of those who could work and want to are excluded from the experience of work. Many of our best scientific and technological minds are occupied with the invention of new and better agents of destruction. Meanwhile, the dearth of skilled craftsmen and



conscientious workers has filled our lives with shoddy goods and utterly unnecessary gadgets that don't work. We lack, it seems to me, not so much particular skills as disposing wisdom, a sense of human purpose which would direct our application of skills to worthy ends.

If "education," then, is to mean the articulation of human purpose and the exploitation of human possibility, it follows that education is not the exclusive province of the schools. Neither does education terminate with the attainment of any academic degree, even one so potentially terminal as the Ph.D. But it also follows that schools have educational responsibilities, and it is with a brief consideration of those responsibilities that I wish to conclude.

Now and again I reread Cardinal Newman's treatise on "The Education of a Gentleman." It reminds me that the traditional liberal arts curriculum had, in Newman's day, readily identifiable cultural utility. But those of us who profess the value of a liberal education for apprentice citizens of the United States in 1974 are frequently regarded as the village idiots of American academe. I think that is an honorable role, perhaps a vital one. Thus far, I have been trying not to speak like the village idiot. What I have said seems to me to be true, which probably means that most of it has been safe and conventional. If we are to survive the immediate future, we must be able to see, affirm, and, alas, sell the possibility that the marriage of liberal arts and education for careers can be passionate and fruitful. Our managers can use our help if we will give it. But if we believe our professions about the liberal arts, we might be of further use by spinning, out of what we know and believe, visions of a viable future. Here, in brief compass, is one such vision. Think of it, if you will, as a "Village Idiot's Manifesto."

1. Whatever may have been the motives that brought our colleges into being, they now exist. There are a lot of us. If we could define some purposes that we share, we should be able to work at those purposes with wit, energy, and impact.

2. It is consistent with the premises of the liberal arts for us to profess (and confess) the following proposition: Persons coming to adulthood in this society could do four kinds of tasks as expressions of their humanity. In order of diminishing importance, these tasks are:

- a. To be a responsible participant in the environment.
- b. To become a fully realized, imaginatively free, spiritually awakened, and aesthetically alive human being, and a good lover of other humans.
- c. To be a good citizen.
- d. To hold and perform well a "job" of the traditional kind.

3. At the moment, the means of sustaining life, dignity, and com-



fort are offered as reward for performing only the last (and perhaps least) of these tasks. Performance of any of the others is usually praised, seldom rewarded in other ways, and often punished.

Therefore, the task of the liberal arts professors—all of them, not just the Professors—might be to help people prepare to do their jobs, to follow their vocations, in ways which will bring into being a cultural structure which rewards those who perform the critical tasks of human life according to their merits.

Can we create such a culture? I doubt it. Should we try? I think so. This decade will not see the creation, nor in all likelihood will this century. But we are, right now, teaching those who will teach our children—in the classroom and elsewhere. We ought to be offering them such visions of future possibility. If we do, our grandchildren might find such a culture thinkable, and their children find its creation possible.

If this be a pipedream, our ignominy will not long outlive our funeral flowers. But if it be a vision, our grandchildren's children might remember us, not as village idiots, but as God's holy fools who fed on honey-dew and drank the milk of Paradise.

