Brooklyn College

Inauguration

of

HARRY D. GIDEONSE

as

Second President

Addresses by

The Hon. T. V. Smith

and

Pres. Harry D. Gideonse

The Quadrangle

Brooklyn College

Thursday, October 19, 1939

2 p.m.
EDUCATION FOR "THE SAME" AND FOR "THE DIFFERENT"

BY T. V. SMITH

There is going on in American education, as there is going on throughout the world of power, a struggle between those who want to glorify what is common to men and those who seek to celebrate what is different. One group is for solidarity and order, the other for freedom and variety. Were it not for the struggle between the two, with the shifts in academic population which it sometimes entails, you of Brooklyn would today be inaugurating a different president, I fancy, and we at the University of Chicago would still be enjoying the lively company of this beloved colleague, Harry D. Gideonse. These competing attitudes toward life we need to characterize as clearly as possible for education, not in order to make an "either . . . or" but a "both . . . and" accommodation. For of course both the Same and the Different are essential parts of life, and so both are proper aims of education. But which comes first and why—and with what strategy shall we treat what comes second?

I. On Education for the Same

If we place exclusive emphasis, as do folk-worshippers, upon the Sameness of human nature, then woe to the Jews, for they are different; woe to the Capitalists, for they are different; woe to the Catholics, for they are different; then woe at last to the Protestants and even to the Democrats, for
they too are different. When indeed we view the Different with suspicion, there is nothing that is not different enough to become suspect. This is the psychological meaning of Marxism: since the “class war” requires a class to war against, any group may get marked for liquidation as “a class” in the curious relativity of misplaced malevolence. I say “misplaced”, for what men who professionalize envy hate really is themselves, though at one time they see themselves projected as kulaks, another time as fascists, and another time as capitalists. Now the Same is a hardy plant in the garden of humanism, and needs little cultivation: whereas the Different is more delicate and must be nurtured to come to its best. The Same seems indeed to grow wild in the by-paths of life, flourishing without attention, until we begin to take our aggressions out on the Different. Then it is the Same which disappears rather more than the Different, as all men drift apart in a social distance of mutual distrust and suspicion. The Same grows larger when men are allowed to think differently and we are encouraged to individualize their talents.

The moral of this paradox is neatly put in a legend that clusters around a meteor which fell long ago in the Sahara Desert, a small fragment of which is now on display at the Field Museum in Chicago. The story has it that the massive hulk was pure gold when it landed at the meeting place of three tribal lands. When the neighboring tribes fell to quarrelling over it, the gold turned to silver; and later when they fought over it, it turned to iron. Now the base material appears robbed of all its magic.

Nature has indeed laid in us the pure gold of common sympathy and glad understanding. She has made us much alike, and has placed us in a common environment which itself remains largely constant. Whether she has given men an equal measure of political virtue to enable us, as in Plato’s beautiful myth, to stand together in strength against the craft of the stronger brutes, she certainly has endowed us with the

potency of sympathy and has equipped us with organs and aptitudes that are very much the Same. Have we not all eyes? Have we not hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Are we not fed with the same food, hurt with the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer? If you prick us, do we not all bleed? If you tickle us, do we not all laugh? If you poison us, do we not all die?

Yet in spite of all that nature has done to prosper our similarity, some men make it their business to monopolize this emphasis as though it were wholly neglected by both nature and custom. The Cult of the Folk is such a carrying of coals to Newcastle. The Cult of the Comrade is another such carrying of the coals to Newcastle. What is a virtue in the mean can become by over-emphasis a vice and even a crime in the extreme. When sociality turns to pure gregariousness, the social Same becomes the curse of civilization. For civilization connotes a reverent regard for variation as well as appreciation of similarity. Particularly is this true in the free field of fancy. In nothing are there such easy and such innocent differences as in the proliferations of ideology, political, religious, cultural.

Yet orthodoxy has invaded even that fine, free field to censor the Different and to enforce the Same. And this has been as true of secular orthodoxy as of the sacred. No inquisition has ever been more ruthless against ideological deviation than the blatantly secular sacredotalism known as dialectical materialism and its present bloody brother in arms called Nazism. Yet I would not willingly withdraw any of the historic dishonor acquired by zealots in behalf of sacred orthodoxy. Both are bad enough. Institutions are not made less inquisitive, nor less odious to civilized men, by changing their complexion from sacred to secular or from secular to sacred again. Even as generous a mind as that of Plato at his
best, uniting the sacred and the secular, perpetrates in a frenzy
of friendliness this joint infamy. Not only was he willing
to prescribe a "little gentle violence" for the dissenters' own
good, but he was also willing to liquidate those who dared
to differ from him on sacred matters of secular metaphysics.

Indeed, we may borrow from Plato the rule-stick of over-
devotion to the Same. It was his conviction that proper
objects of thought validate methods of inquiry rather than
the methods validating objects of belief. In that antithesis
we have made conspicuous the logical watershed as between
the ancient and the modern civilized world. I say "civilized"
world advisedly; for those among us who give way to the
undertow toward the Same are the barbarians of our time.
They have the outlook which Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes
once described as perfectly natural, which of course it is.
Natural also is sadism; so too is murder and rape. Natural
they all are, but not civilized. Said the great Justice: "Perse-
cution for the expression of opinion seems perfectly logical.
If you have no doubt of your premises or of your power and
want a certain result with all your heart you . . . naturally
sweep away all opposition." This same civilized man, though
professing full devotion to truth, admitted that he was not
God and indeed that he did not know "the truth of truth."
Nor do those know more who do not admit it. Affirma-
tion cannot conjure Sameness where it does not exist, though
it summon it ever so loudly through the metaphysics of
power or even through the power of metaphysics.

Unity, however, which cannot be coerced or even meta-
physically cajoled may yet be permitted through forbearance
or nurtured in strategy. Indeed without any attention what-
soever the Same, we may now guess, grows more prolific than
is requisite for the best balanced social life. As a mere matter
of strategy, then, the first emphasis of educational statesmen
should be elsewhere, should in fact be upon preserving and
cultivating the Different.

II. On Educating for the Different

It is precisely because being alike is both so natural and so
easy to us gregarious animals that it becomes imperative for us
to prize more the equally precious, that wherein we are
different. Otherwise, returning too ardently to the folds of
each other's warmth, we will stagnate in a veritable cesspool
of similarity. Art, stifling spontaneity, will be degraded into
more and more of the same. Science, inattentive to negative
instances, will lose itself in dogma ever repeated so. Religion,
ceasing to affirm divine creativeness through human hands,
will become sordid superstition exploited in the name of
bogus control. All in all, men can easily nuzzle themselves
back to savagery in luscious enjoyment all the while of
human Sameness. That indeed is the direction toward which
education as indoctrination points, as of course it is the
illusive road being blazed for their peoples by all totalitarian
tyants. Beware, too, the scholarly forerunners of fascism
who tell you that Gemeinschaft is to be preferred to Gesell-
schaft, that is, that societies that rest upon unconscious social-
ity are better than those that raise civic relations to a conscious
art and celebrate similarity by that legal meeting of minds
called contract.

The nurture of the Different goes on at two levels. There
is the level of tolerance tinged as it is with negativity, and
then there is the summit of growth marked by positive
embracement of variety as the greatest good. Now it is
enough for ordinary social purposes that we maintain the
level of tolerance, though individual fulfilment requires more.
Tolerance means a hands-off policy with reference to those
who disagree with us, giving the young thereby a chance to
breathe the air of ideological choice. That much assured,
society can grow in the interstices of many a no-man's land.
Even this negative virtue is so hard to achieve, however, that
it is perhaps all we politicians have a right to ask of educators,
or they to demand of us, especially during these days hazardous to any form of sociality save antipathy. The danger is indeed that we politicians at least shall be driven to limit even tolerance to those who are themselves tolerant.

This much, however, is absolutely indispensable to the maintenance of moderate civilization. Think concretely what sustained intolerance would mean to that civilized form of demeanor known as religion. Suppose there was only Judaism in the world, or but Roman Catholicism, or even united Protestantism alone? If you can entertain with pleasure the thought of any such monopoly, then you love provincialism rather than life and light; for life has given birth to all religious isms and each of them has shed and does shed some light upon our common path. Civilization could more easily do without all of them than it could do with one of them alone. With one alone piety would sink to superstition, whereas divested of them all, our fucnd Mother Nature would again produce their counterparts in forms gallantly pluralistic as before.

What I say of religion, you will say with equal truth of politics. You know what braying ass the Democratic Party would become, prizing only its provender and kicking at all comers, were it not for the Republican Party to keep alive another order of civic pulchritudes, elephantine in proportions. And I know equally well how poor a thing the Republican Party would become, did become, without a strong Democratic Party to keep it circumspect. It is a linguistic token of the pluralistic nature of political virtue that from the beginning in America we have on Monday, Wednesday and Friday called our country a republic and on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday called it a democracy. (Sunday we have long reserved for moral relaxation in the hinterland of Teocracy.)

When Communists learn the ABC’s of American manners, they too may join us Democrats and Republicans at the table of power without grabbing all the food above and kicking all the shins below the linen of civic decency. Surely if Communists can sleep with Fascists, they ought to be able to eat civilly with capitalists. Indeed, having stomached the very dregs of tolerance, Communists as Stalinists might now, it would seem, meet Communists as Trotskyites without spitting at each other in streets as clean as Brooklyn’s under LaGuardia. It is but infantile obstreperousness to live on dung and to spit poison when the pantry of power is groaning with viands. With Comrades and Kamerads now walking together, let every “Tommy Gallagher’s Crusade” relax a little toward tolerance and later widen into generosity. For “... the world is wondrous large,—seven seas from marge to marge,—

And it holds a vast of various kinds of man:
And the wildest dreams of Kew are the facts of Khatmandhu,
And the crimes of Clapham chaste in Martaban.

"Here's my wisdom for your use, as I learned it when the moose
And the reindeer soared where Paris roars to-night:—
'There are nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays,
And—every—single—one—of—them—is—right!' "

(Rudyard Kipling, In the Neolithic Age.)

III. On Educational Statesmanship for both the Same and the Different

If educational statesmanship could present to America a generation nerved to see how much of the Different can be allowed rather than how much of the Same must be exacted, we should at last have entered culturally upon our long heritage of political freedom. The common bond between freemen is surely not to be assumed more tenuous or less precious than the social bond between the unfree. There is
a law of compensation which holds that those who lose their unity through freedom shall find it, and those who find their sociality through coercion shall lose it. The message of the college to its students, then, should be to repeat in terms curricular the moral of the poet's age-old wisdom:

"Only this gift I beg of you...

Let me be
Swift wings to bear you on your skyward journey—
A sword to cleave your bonds and set you free!
Then, though you drop both out-worn sword and pinions,
I shall not care,
Knowing I gave you wider skies to wander,
And of my love made freedom—not to snare!"

(Jamie Sexton Holme, Star Gatherer.)

Or in language less lofty, educational statesmanship will conspire to further what Science and Democracy unite to illustrate. That is a method the same for all scrupulous minds. Science does not start with objects or beliefs given as sacred, but it starts with a method which, when honestly applied, yields sameness of belief as the reward of effort.

"This that I ask you," said the great Pasteur to his admirers, "is what you again in your turn demand of the disciples who gather round you; and for the investigator it is the hardest ordeal he can be asked to face—to believe that he has discovered a great scientific truth, to be possessed with a feverish desire to make it known, and yet to impose silence on himself for days, for weeks, sometimes for years, whilst striving to destroy those very conclusions, and only permitting himself to proclaim his discovery when all the adverse hypotheses have been exhausted. Yes, that is a difficult task. But when, after many trials, you have at length succeeded in dissipating every doubt, the human soul experiences one of the greatest joys of which it is capable."

Such is the method of science which constitutes all the Sameness that honest and bold minds require until through it they can create more in the name of truth. Such is the virtuosity of science which renders it one of the humanities of our age. One but only one prerequisite for the humane life. Truth indeed is not the only value which our culture enshrines and which educational statesmanship seeks to perpetuate. The other humanities remain, too, of indispensable importance for the life of mind which colleges serve. Beyond truth lie both goodness and beauty. What of Sameness survives in these fields to save their freedom from the bedlam of cultivated differences? In these vaster regions the spirit of Democracy must obtain, as the spirit of science prevails in the realm of stricter logic. The social technique of forebearance saves beauty from bedlam, and the political method of compromise, as practiced by us politicians, prevents good men from destroying good men in the name of goodness itself. Democracy is not a dogma any more than science is prescribed canon. Democracy is whatever can be arrived at democratically, and not another thing. Like science, then, it is a method of getting ahead without leaving any of us behind. I commend to the "Essentialists" in education these two essentials—Science and Democracy—for conserving the Same and for enlarging the Different.

In this gallant enterprise of weaving Democracy and Science into a way of life, you have now a leader, today officially inaugurated, who I think will not fail you in exploiting to the full the cultural potencies of Brooklyn. Indeed, I count on his building many a Brooklyn bridge from here to connect with every section of our great county. His prospects I envy from an experience of my own.

When I stood for the Illinois Senate some years ago from the Hyde Park District in Chicago, I did so in part because of the extraordinary complexity of the population. Differences
that were the raw stuff of community richness were being wasted through suspicion and conflict. My constituency was, speaking generally, half white and half Negro; one-third Jewish, one-third Catholic, one-third Protestant; it was one-half rich, one-half poor; it was half sophisticated, with the proud University of Chicago at its center, and half under privileged, educationally speaking. What a chance to begin with the negative virtue of tolerance and to drive toward the positive goal of appreciation of variety as chief ingredient of the best life of man!

The Borough of Brooklyn offers something like the same challenge educationally, I fancy, which Hyde Park offered politically. You have just the man to do this job. You might have searched the world over, as perhaps you did, and not found a person better equipped, temperamentally and philosophically, to shame provincialism into tolerance and to educate tolerance into magnanimity. If I know Gideonse—and we have been together through personal thick and ideological thin—this challenge is probably the chief reason he was willing to leave the rich life of scholarship to undertake this fuller life of educational administration.

Gideonse comes to Brooklyn under hardships that favor preeminent success. The conflict abroad sharpens this problem of the Same and the Different at home. He brings to the task a free hand. Nobody told me so; but I know Gideonse. There has been no politics in his appointment, and there will be no favoritism in his administration. Nobody told me so; but I know Gideonse—and incidentally I know the educational record of LaGuardia, your Mayor, and less incidentally I know the capacity and sagacity of Orway Tead, the chairman of your progressive board. Gideonse is not here because he shares the politics now prevailing in either New York City or in Washington. I remark it sadly. I have certainly done my own best, privately and publicly, to set him right: and he and I will shortly be debating publicly again. But he remains independent, treating politics as he treats education, a nonpartisan opportunity to make social life more fruitful and personal life more happy and wholesome.

President Gideonse approaches his task here not only independently but confidently. The world has given him a problem, which he prizes; your Board has given him a commission, which he respects; and experience has provided him already with wise cues for fruitfully beginning his task, the task of creating finer human hungers at a time when elemental fear and suspicion threaten to return us all to the level of the pack. As much as any man I know, President Gideonse has the proper slant upon this supreme task of educational statesmanship. I say so because he has right convictions upon the sacredness of the Same, sound appreciations of the significance of the Different, and the strategy of courage required to inter-thread the two like the warp and the woof, which they are, of social life.

All of this is but to say that Gideonse has a scientific mind yoked to a very democratic heart. The democratic heart insures against the intellectual conceit which in others ripens into cynicism. It promises that at Brooklyn College students will be junior partners, faculty members colleagues in leadership, and citizens the custodians of this community enterprise which he heads. The scientific mind is insurance against every type of provincialism and against one peculiar form of self-deceit. Such a mind does not submit to the impulse to believe merely because others must dogmatize. Its holder it so sensitizes to the Different that he knows that all ideas as ideas are equally good. Only those that can be proved true are any better. Since appreciation of ideas does not depend upon their being true—for there remain goodness and beauty as independent bases of appreciation—proof of truth becomes
but the burden of science, as tolerance of variety remains the
geurdon of the democratic spirit. What cannot be proved to
the satisfaction of all trained minds is no matter of truth to
be urged by any, but a matter of free appreciation to be
tolerated by all and to be enjoyed by such as may enjoy it.

Such a mind, I repeat, we induct today into the presidency
of this magnificent municipal institution of learning. He will
carry forward with considerate courage the honest work of
others which he inherits. In doing so, he must be bold for
without it the past will peter out in the present. He must
be reverent, for without it he will undo all the past and have
nothing left on which to build for the future. In this spirit
of reverent boldness may Gideonse for many a year become
and be the master builder for the Borough of Brooklyn.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS
BY PRESIDENT HARRY D. GIDEONSE

Education has been supported with unparalleled public
sacrifice because equality of opportunity is a basic and tradi-
tional value of American life. Since our activities are for
obvious reasons not exposed to the continuous challenge of
competitive economic enterprise, we have sometimes been
tempted to regard "security" and "tenure" as ends in them-
selves rather than as essential means to professional effective-
ess. Professional effectiveness obviously depends upon the
things we as a profession are asked to effect. It requires,
therefore, continuous self-criticism, particularly in a time in
which the functions of education are shifting very rapidly.

It is a commonplace that our high schools and colleges are
ill-suited to a large percentage of the youth in attendance.
Within a single generation the composition of the student
body has undergone almost revolutionary change. Through-
out the country an academic curriculum, designed for a
relatively small group with well-understood social and intel-
lectual "backgrounds," has been put through a shift in
personnel that threatens to make it a complete misfit for the
great majority of students now in the colleges. We have
more of our people in secondary schools and colleges than all
the rest of the world put together. Can we honestly say that
we have responded to the public challenge with the profes-
sional resilience which such a shift in responsibility implies?
Can we earn anything but ultimate contempt with the plea
that our present drift is really design, or with the pathetic proposal to return to an educational pattern that was designed for the social and economic conditions of an earlier age and for a radically different selection of the human material then available.

I have discussed these problems in a number of recent papers and, since I have had no recent occasion to revise my judgment, I shall inevitably cover some of the same ground.* We have thought of the school as concerned with the training of the mind. In a sense the depth of this tradition is perhaps illustrated by our complete inability to understand (note, that I do not say: accept) the famous dictum of the German Nazis when they propose “to think with their blood.” We usually dispose of this strange utterance with the categorical statement that we know of other parts of our anatomy more efficiently designed for the purpose. If we should search our minds sympathetically for the kernel of truth in the characteristic exaggeration of Sport-Palast oratory, we might find ourselves on the track of a crucial weakness of Western culture.

Western civilization has for more than two thousand years sought to establish a rigid separation between reason and emotion, between “objectivity” and “values.” The material fruitfulness of the separation in the past is the chief reason for its uncritical acceptance in the present. The intellect, however, is not simply an aspect of human life—and a superior aspect in typical Aristotelian tradition—but it arises out of the emotional and ethical life, is deeply rooted in it, and draws its strength and stamina from it. The moral and emotional bleakness of typical intellectual communities, and many of the characteristic problems of the American college and university, can only be understood in the light of the persistence of this tradition. When we discuss our “problems of teaching” and set large staffs at work on the problems of “youth” and “teacher training,” we are simply tracing some of the symptoms of a malady that is rooted in this distinction of reason and emotion that underlies most of our thought about the entire educational process.

The usual discussion of the problem of teaching is a good example. It is typically a survey of methods of improving the quality of teaching, the selection and training of teachers, and so on. Solemnly the customary banalities about “the teacher vs. the research man” are repronounced and reevaluated, and equally solemnly the conventional conclusions are rediscovered about the inevitable togetherness of good teaching and good research.

I am not inclined to deny that different methods of motivating, selecting, or training the teaching personnel have promise if we are interested in improvement of the job that is at present done. To me, however, all these questions are like an argument about the cabin decorations, while the steamer has a hole in her bottom. The entire discussion tends to be concerned with methods of teaching, methods of teachers, yes, even methods of improving the methods. The end that is to be sought by these means is taken for granted or is discussed in only an incidental fashion.

Obviously mathematics, French, or economics can be taught with more or less competence, and, all other things being equal, we all share the preference for the greater competence. The point about the modern problem of teaching is, however, precisely that even with a very high level of competence in the teaching of the various “subjects,” the gnawing doubt about the “purpose” of it all remains, as certainly in the sensitive teacher as it does in the minds of a growing number of his students.

The entire tradition is analytical. All the professional motivation and the conventional premiums are on the side

---

of division of labor, specialization and dissection. From the
beginning of the freshman year we proceed to analyze, to
dissect and to take the bones apart until we have so many
bones piled so high, that no one can put them together again
—and then we hastily graduate the class, and start all over
again with a new group of freshmen. These things are true of
Teaching—the transmission of learning—and they are equally
ture of creative scholarship. Any one familiar with our great
centers of creative scholarship knows the peculiar atmosphere
enerated by the mechanization of the process of thought
itself. Men and women with great human potentialities have
apsed into that state of resentful coma known as research,
while a battle-front bleakness hangs over the intellectual
landscape.

Occasionally, a teacher in the humanities or the social
sciences will venture the statement that the “relations” of
subjects or the “meaning” of the learning is the heart of good
teaching, but beyond that point few will risk themselves lest
they be accused of “preaching.” So—in the language of the
Sermon on the Mount—while the young clamor for bread,
we continue to offer them stones, and if the discontent of the
young provokes critical discussion, it is limited to the quality
of the stones and to methods of improving methods of manu-
factoring more excellent stones.

The reason for our studied avoidance of “ends” is histori-
ously obvious. With the emergence of a secular education,
“values” were jealously reserved as the prerogatives of the
church, the family, and other intermediate social groups.
Historically, secular education could not have touched this
side of education if it had desired to do so. And—for a
variety of reasons—it did not desire to do so. It made a
virtue of “objectivity”—meaning detachment from value
judgments. It built up a professional taboo against consid-
eration of values, even if it is, of course, sheer objectivity to
observe that all learning and all activity derive their meaning
from human values. Education, i.e., the limited formal pro-
cedures that are usually described by this broad term—could
do this with impunity, even if social cohesion without values
is inconceivable, because the church, the family, and other
social institutions maintained a sufficiently close grip upon
the young to give meaning to the instruments and facts that the
school had chosen as its limited field of interest and activity.

With the progressive development of our industrial civil-
ization, the role of the family and the church declined, while
social mobility and impersonal exchange relations continued
to play an ever-increasing role. Educators, however, discussed
the sphere of formal education as if nothing had changed in
the social setting in which the school operated, although a
good deal of rather opportunistic experimentation developed
in a more or less bootleg fashion via the academically less
respectable channels of electives and extra-curricular activities.

Perhaps the deep-seated character of the cultural lag in our
ideas about the content of education is best illustrated by the
fact that in a decade in which totalitarian philosophies are
spreading like a prairie fire, prominent discussion should be
devoted to a proposal to discard all the “fads and frills,” and
to return to a strictly intellectualist program for the schools
—justified with the explicit statement that the other-than-
intellectual matters are a concern of the family and the church.
While such a program might have a certain validity for a
limited upper fringe of the educational structure, it obviously
advocates a remedy that overlooks the chief cause of contem-
porary difficulties in general education. It assumes that the
position of the school with respect to the whole of society is
still identical with that same position in an earlier period.
We are, however, concerned with the fruits of our modern
teaching, precisely because that assumption is no longer valid.

Other contemporary proposals advocate the deliberate
indoctrination of some ism of either a conventional character
such as “the American way” or of a more venturesome nature
such as one of the fifty-seven varieties of collectivism. Here again the basic cause of contemporary difficulty is overlooked. Merely baking ourselves back into some new cake of custom will not remove the distress caused by the cracks in the comfortable crust of convention that covered our routine in the past. For the new cake of custom will give way before the same forces that subverted the old—and neither the intellectualists nor the social indoctrinators propose to do anything about these forces that are inevitably interwoven with the drift of social policy throughout the world today.

What are these forces? Essentially they all spring from our predominant modern preoccupation with increased material standards of living, with our constant drive toward increased productivity. All our twentieth-century political faiths agree upon this objective and it is frequently envisaged as an end in itself. In the United States, New Deal Democrats as well as their more conservative brethren in and out of their own party agree upon this objective. Disagreements are a matter of means to achieve this end. Similarly Fascists and Communists are lyrical in their description of the "waste" of laissez faire democracy, and here, too, basic agreement upon ends exists, although it comes in sidewise in fascism because of the emphasis on a war-economy. Now increasing productivity—generally accepted as an end—precludes the choice of certain means and inevitably leads to the selection of others. The social by-products of these means constitute our problem.

Productivity as a social end means specialization and division of labor as means. It means heavy stress upon the rational and impersonal and it means continuous undermining of the traditional, the social, and the other-than-intellectual. In a sense, specialization has eaten the heart out of our social cohesion. To be sure, the more specialization, the greater the need for careful coordination of the specialists. The specializing—i.e., the differentiating—aspects of our activity are however, constantly stressed in our day-by-day effort of earning a living, while the coordinating—the fitting into a common framework—is impersonal and takes place through abstract devices like a price-system or the technique of an administrative bureaucracy.

In recreation—the very recognition of "recreation" as a separate activity is characteristic of the system—we tend to passivity. We listen, look, and thrill at the activities of specialists, and a general "spectatoritis" develops in these fields. The sense and value of participation have disappeared, and more and more people use only one small part of their potential human equipment. Abstract and impersonal relations predominate, and the general decline of intermediate social groups, of the family, and church is obvious to any observer. The community youth surveys of the American Youth Commission tell a tragic tale in this respect.

In such a community, "specialists" will arise to cater to new "wants" of a psychological and emotional sort. Commercialized recreation like the movies and dance halls and pathetic politics of the totalitarian type illustrate the thesis. Life has to increasing multitudes a quality that might be called absence of wholeness, or perhaps emotional starvation. Segmental thought and organization become characteristic in economic and political life as another typical expression of specialized endeavor.

If the real achievements of specialization are not to be more than offset by these costs of the impersonal and abstract—desocializing aspects of the process, a social program will have to be devised to make specialization safe for society—meaning safe for that which makes for social cohesion.

Education in the broadest possible sense of the term—from the nursery through the adult stages—will be a significant part of such a program, and this will be true under any form of social organization. Industrial development in the U.S.S.R. produces exactly the same social consequences in
this respect as the so-called "capitalist" system. Part of the explanation for the lack of understanding among radical critics of capitalism, of the emotional and psychological factors that help to explain their own radicalism, probably lies in the aesthetic and spiritual poverty of Marxism, which professes to see all these factors as dependent upon the mode of production in its *ownership* aspect.

The legal technicalities of ownership, however, have little to do with the psychological impact of a given technique of production. Ownership by a cooperative, a capitalist corporation, or the federal government is likely to make little difference in the psychological impact of a conveyor-belt factory upon the workers involved in such production, unless suitable supplementary organization is provided, and the latter is as likely to occur under one form of ownership as under another. Clearly, if we are to avoid an obvious threat to most of the values of Western civilization, we must once again ask basic questions about the *content* of education as a whole. In other words, what should be the shift in direction and in content of curriculum, in view of the change in the social setting of which formal education is merely a part?

It is suggestive to examine briefly two examples of education in a pattern that avoided some of these modern tendencies. The first is historical, the second contemporary.

Medieval education could with impunity stress the purely intellectual or strictly vocational—often, again, the same thing. It operated in a society of which every member belonged to a single, strongly entrenched church and in which that church maintained a strong family system that was sacred in every sense of the term. Art in general, group expression in religious ritual and procession, production and consumption, and government itself, all derived their meaning from the same religion. In such a society, unified by a common faith, the problem of other-than-formal education could not even arise. All specialized activity derived its meaning from the common religious core of civilized life.

The Scandinavian countries supply us with a good contemporary example. Too frequently the relatively stable conditions in these countries are discussed in terms of social and economic policy and accompanying organization. The factor of cultural homogeneity is frequently overlooked and the deliberately created—as contrasted with historically grown—aspects of this homogeneity are seldom observed. The striking results of the movement for supplementary adult education in Denmark and Sweden are first of all attached to an other-than-intellectual emphasis in our program. In its origin, the movement might even be described as anti-intellectualist in the strict sense of the term. Heavy stress was placed by Grundtvig as early as 1844 on the social and cooperative aspects of education, on folk song and folk dance, on the role of tradition, myth, and religious observance, and on the peculiar educational fruits of working and living together.

To stress the significance of the contribution this movement has made is not necessarily to demand exact duplication of its program or procedures. Obviously in a different social and historical setting another adjustment of content and techniques would be demanded, and this would be in strict accordance with the essential ideas involved in the movement.

The lessons of the historical and the contemporary example are therefore identical. To maintain social cohesion something beyond the usual academic—intellectual—program is required. In the normal course of events this will be supplied by institutions like the family and the church. With rapid social change involving the position of these fundamental educational influences, the content of formal education must be reexamined and evaluated in terms of the social setting in which the institutions that supply formal education operate. When the institutions that are supposed to cater to other-than-intellectual needs of the human personality are rapidly
shifting in their range of influence, basic questions are in order as to a corresponding shift in the direction and content of formal education. These questions should be asked with an eye to make up the deficiencies now revealed in the activity of the other institutions that play so important a part in the social—i.e., total—education of the young. The deepest challenge to formal education in a democratic society is to find emotional equivalents in their program for the type of thing that is likely to make the totalitarian appeal irresistible if it is not recognized at a sufficiently early date in the process.

At bottom, this is the meaning of the appeal for integration or meaningfulness that is so common in American education today. The solution, however, does not primarily lie in improved methods of organizing the subject matter or in better teaching, but in a radical reorientation in our thought about the content of formal education that will once again restore values to a central place in our program.

Frequently a plea to restore values in our formal education is met with the query: Which values? The question is itself a measure of the acuteness of the malady. We live in a free and democratic society. Are the values of freedom and the democratic way of life explicitly taught or even examined? We live in a culture which even in its most secular activities, bears the marks of Christian and Jewish religion. To how many of our young people do these terms have a meaning? Nothing is more characteristic of our culture and our education than the emphasis upon science. How frequently do we spend any time at all on the basic values of truth and free inquiry that motivated the scientific movement? Are esthetic values to be left entirely to the appeal of tabloids, the movies, and competitive advertising? If it is replied that these things should take care of themselves, the obvious answer is that the facts indicate that they do no such thing.

In a sentence, this means that formal education should begin to think of other-than-intellectual aspects as a major part of its responsibility.

To be sure, much is now done along these lines. Throughout society, spontaneous effort has arisen in a wide variety of movements in response to these needs. It is the essence of a free society’s method to encourage such diverse self-generated responses rather than to let matters drift until a regimented public program centered on the totalitarian state seems the only alternative to dissolution. Thus we find the arts—and particularly music and song—creeping into curricula all over the land. Physical education is already well established and although it often degenerates into team-worship and non-participation of the mass of students, it certainly offers great and immediate opportunities for coordination with a general program.

Extra-curricular activities with their almost unlimited opportunities for social education have notoriously flourished in spite of constant denunciation by academic pundits unable to cross the boundaries set for education in a different historical period. While this is a garden that calls for careful weeding, the multiplicity of its offerings is precisely its most encouraging feature. The progress of a sprawling movement for personal and vocational guidance is evidence of a similar trend. And, in a broader social field, the enormous development of such activities as the scout movement, the boys’ clubs, the Summer camps, the remarkable initiatives of a man like Bishop Sheil in the Catholic community throughout the Chicago industrial district, and the C.C.C. camps, all point to deep-seated needs in diverse fields.

Leisure time agencies are still too much concerned with the spectator rather than with the participant. They are cast as entertainment rather than as creative self-expression and self-discovery. Such activities should channel a flow of energy and they should integrate a personality towards an aim.
Here are wide areas of education which have remained without trained and professional cultivation because of a narrow "intellectualist" tradition that is now breeding forces that are inimical to the core of the doctrine itself.

The first need is therefore a complete shift of focus. What has partly developed as an unplanned by-product must now be seen as clearly within the general responsibility of the educator. Talent and funds formerly restricted to academic purposes in the narrow sense of the term must now be shifted from sheer cultivation of intellectual virtues to education for the whole man, for men "as knowers and doers and appreciators." Thus far such statements describe significant objectives rather than actual achievement. Out of such a reorientation new insights, new techniques, and new personnel will develop, and a significant repercussion upon the established program can confidently be expected to follow.

Wherever in our contemporary educational world really significant teaching is being done by individuals or by institutions, it will be revealed that concessions to the whole-man theory have been made in fact, if perhaps not in explicit formulation. At the very minimum, this will result from the imponderable factor of a well-integrated teaching personality that has an impact that quite escapes the careful analysis of the actual text of materials or of the spoken word—and frequently, of course, the successful teacher goes beyond the limits of the academic mores and does not hesitate to relate his subject matter to significant value judgments.

It is my thesis that we should make the really valuable parts of our current achievement explicit in terms both of ends and of means. It is time to consider the full and systematic development of the so-called "fads and frills" as an essential part of an educational program for the preservation of a free and democratic society.

No amount of discussion or even of achievement in the direction of improved methods of teaching will correct the errors made in the definition of the content of education. If we do not reorient ourselves in this direction—if we reach out for some collectivist philosophy or some road back to a pattern not designed to meet the needs of our generation—we may have to resign ourselves to a satisfaction of the esthetic, emotional, and physical needs of the young by the man on horseback. If it is not the man on horseback, it will be the irresponsible demagogue who will in some way manage to give expression to the emotionally starved, even if in a fashion that makes for certain destruction of all the values of a free society.

If we in the schools do not live up to our other-than-intellectual responsibility, if we do not reach into moral and emotional fields in a manner that is justifiable from the standpoint of the values of a free society, someone else will. For the need exists, and the trend is toward intensification of the pressures that have brought it about. Thus, in a real sense, the survival of a free society may be determined by the flexibility with which we think of the limits of formal education in a changing world.*

All these considerations are peculiarly relevant in the city colleges. If ours were the campus of a typical "football" college with the rah-rah spirit that goes with such country club education, mine would have been a different theme. Our emphasis has, however, been more exclusively intellectual than most American college education.

---

*Cf. Harry D. Gideonse, The Higher Learning in a Democracy (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1937), pp. 31-32. The program outlined in this paper is, of course, in line with the best classical tradition. Those who have been confused by the modern heresy which would make classical education synonymous with exclusive cultivation of intellectual virtues may ponder the choice and order of nouns in Plato's statements about education in which the "body" almost always precedes the "soul," and in which the heaviest possible emphasis is placed on rhythm, the "harmonies," and especially musical training which is seen "as a more potent instrument than any other because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul." (Cf. The Republic, [Hutter Edition, New York: Dial Press, 1936] p. 108).
Academically our entrance requirements are so high that we can match those of the best colleges in the country. The quality of the intellectual work done after admission to the college can stand comparison with any other institution of college level in the city. But if man cannot live by bread alone, neither can a college live by training mind alone. The community holds us responsible—and rightly so—for the preparation of the best of its youth for significant and challenging citizenship. We are not just interested in training minds, but in the development of effective men and women. The responsibility for that part of the college program has not yet been adequately faced. It means a grave responsibility for the students and for the administrative officials in the college.

I might properly conclude with a remark which I also addressed to the student body of this college at our first meeting this fall: Brooklyn College has some 13,000 students working for the regular bachelor's degree. Some other institutions in the city have a larger total enrollment—none of them has a larger arts and sciences enrollment. It is difficult to visualize 13,000 students. If we could add up the total student body of Barnard College, Columbia College, Williams College, Amherst College, Colgate University, Smith College, Vassar College, Mount Holyoke College, and all of Princeton University, we would still be several hundred short of Brooklyn College's thirteen thousand. The administrative officials of these other nine institutions would number nine college presidents and some thirty deans. We have one president and the equivalent of four deans to match that army of administrative talent, and I think almost anyone would agree that the students in a big city college are far more urgently in need of administrative guidance than the students in most of the colleges enumerated. My final plea: If we go slow—and if we seem somewhat impersonal—keep the arithmetic in mind.