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HUMANITIES AT THE CORE:  
CURRICULAR ISSUES IN THE 1980S

Remarks by:  
Ernest L. Boyer, President  
The Carnegie Foundation for  
the Advancement of Teaching

Delivered at:  
Northeastern University  
Boston, Massachusetts  
October 27, 1981

Thirty-five years ago, the German philosopher, Karl Jaspers, identified the goal of education as culture.

- <sup>according to</sup> culture, Jaspers ~~said~~ <sup>is</sup> "a given historical ideal (and) . . . a coherent system of associations, gestures, values, ways of putting things. . ."
- The educated person, Jaspers concluded, was one to whom culture--so defined--had become second nature.

Today, a generation after Jaspers wrote, we find ourselves, as a nation, deeply hesitant about the aims of education.

- ~~In Jaspers' terms, what are this society's agreed-upon values and "ways of putting things"?~~
- What, precisely, would characterize a person of "culture" in our fragmented post-modern society?
- The absence of answers is haunting.

There was a time when colleges and universities

<sup>absolutely</sup>  
~~were confident~~

~~about the~~ goals of education

- The task ~~was~~ was to transmit--to the next generation--moral, cultural, and political values and traditions. -with no question asked.
- This mission was once so vital that in most 19th Century colleges the presidents taught a "moral philosophy" course as the ~~academic capstone~~. jewel in the academic crown

Even after the direct power of the church <sup>society</sup> ~~declined~~, schools and colleges continued as a bastion of the moral order.

It was a sterile time  
- morality was ignored

~~While the transmitting of civic obligations become a central obligation still~~

~~the afterglow of religious loyalty lingered on.~~

Today all this has changed.

~~But~~ Early in this century, confidence in the unity of the established order began to fade. ~~Historian Henry May demonstrates persuasively in The End of American Innocence,~~

- ~~that the evaporation of Wilsonian idealism~~
- ~~and the cultural upheavals of the 1920s hastened social fragmentation.~~ *Uniqueness was ~~not~~ AFFIRMED*
- past certainties were shaken by scientific inquiry and higher education's confidence in its own moral mission ~~was~~ *dramatically declined*
- Commenting on this loss of coherence and conviction, Robert Hutchins, on one occasion, described the modern university as a series of separate departments held together by a central heating system;
- and Clark Kerr characterized the multi-university as an assemblage of faculty entrepreneurs held together by a common grievance over parking.

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~~Still, deep down inside, the belief persists that education at its best can hold the intellectual center of society together.~~

- ~~We still expect the university to bring together the views and experiences of all its parts, and create something greater than the sum~~

*we are still <sup>absolutely</sup> confident of the length of education*  
*But we are uncertain as to ends.*

as to substance  
This confusion was driven home when

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in 1972 that

In 1972, a Stanford University faculty committee proposed a western civilization ~~course~~ <sup>course he required of all students</sup> ~~having dropped such a requirement a few years before.~~ The student newspaper, in a biting attack on the faculty proposal, said in a front-page editorial that the new requirement would:

remove from students the right to choose for themselves } . . . This is not to deny that courses in western culture are valuable and ~~that most students could benefit from them.~~ To require such a course, however, carries a strong, illiberal connotation. . . . It imposes a uniform standard on nonuniform people.

10 years ago  
when I first read that statement in my office in N.Y. I was startled and distressed.  
I find this a startling statement. ~~It is~~ <sup>It was</sup> startling that the

student editor failed to understand that while we are indeed "nonuniform," we are at the same time interdependent. <sup>He had failed to learn that</sup> We have <sup>with all of our differences</sup> a shared cultural heritage, a shared agenda of urgent contemporary problems, and a shared future that cannot be ignored. <sup>It seemed remarkable that one of our most gifted students had failed to learn</sup> Uniformity and interrelatedness are not synonymous.

<sup>I am suggesting - quite simply -</sup>  
~~It is a pity that~~  
A college curriculum cannot ignore or diminish this aspect of our experience. To deny our relationship with one another and with our common home, Earth, is to deny the realities of existence. <sup>as it is our common home</sup>  
<sup>god!</sup> It is as irresponsible to imply to students that they have nothing in common <sup>was - in an early day -</sup> as it would be to suggest that they are alike.

And to deny our relationship with one another  
and with our common home Earth is to deny  
the realities of existence.

ALL ALONE - ALL TOGETHER

(4)

And this--it seems to me--is precisely the point where "the Humanities" move center stage.

- There is, I believe, more than an "accidental" connection between such words as human, humane and humanities.
- They identify an area of inquiry with "people at the center."
- The humanities focus on the consequential common experiences of the human race
- and in so doing they seek to integrate and give meaning to all the disciplines--including science.

*The are concerned with significant connections* R BASSERVING

Norman Foerster, writing in The Humanities and the Common Man, argues that

- "an education permeated by the humanistic spirit has always included science."
- There is no science, he notes, other than that which human beings produce, and they produce it because they value the passion to know.
- When American scientists were revolted by the Nazi's perversion of science, Foerster points out, they were reacting as humanists--who brought values to their work.

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Nearly forty years ago in Liberal Education, Mark Van Doren  
Wrote:

The "connectedness of things" is what the educator  
contemplates to the limit of his capacity. No human  
capacity is great enough to permit a vision of the  
world as "simple", but if the educator does not aim at  
the vision no one else will, and the consequences are  
~~dire when no one does.~~ . . . The student who can begin  
early in life to think of things as connected, even if  
he revises his view with every succeeding year, has  
begun the life of learning.

*Began the life of "more learning"*

Seeing "the connectedness of things," is, it seems to me, the  
essence of humanistic studies.

*But what are the ~~unconnected~~?*

Let me describe still more specifically just what it is I have in  
mind.

*Unreal that  
represent the world  
of every?*

*Charles*

*shouted down  
hacked out  
no my personal*

*Essence of  
Humanistic  
Study*

II.

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QUEST FOR COMMON LEARNING

① CENTRALITY OF LANGUAGE

Uniquely Human  
Separates us from other forms

MIRACLE OF LANGUAGE  
USE OF SYMBOLS

~~ARE~~ NOT JUST WRITTEN SYMBOLS

DANCE VISUAL ARTS  
MUSIC

← TEST OF THE CIVILIZATION →

LINGUA BOVE → ROBT FROST  
TWO PATHS

WE MUST SUPPORT THE ARTS - SUPPORT CIVILIZATION

SECOND

ALL STUDENTS SHOULD LEARN ABOUT  
OUR <sup>shared</sup> ~~common~~ <sup>status</sup> IN INSTITUTIONS  
Groups

Ralph Waldo Emerson said

We do not make a world of our own  
But (we) fall into institutions already made  
and have to accommodate ourselves to them.

Institutions touch almost every aspect  
of our being

economic educational

family, political and religious

We are born into institutions

We pass much of our life in institutions

And we are buried by institutions.

Whether institutions smother or enhance the individual  
is an issue of great consequence

~~master or slave~~

MASTER OR SLAVE



THRO. ~~SOME~~ WE ARE ALL BUSY PRODUCING & CONSUMING

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AND STUDENTS SHOULD EXAMINE  
HOW WORK REFLECTS THE VALUES  
AND SHAPES THE SOCIAL CLIMATE OF A CULTURE.

THE URGE TO BE ACTIVE AND USEFUL  
IS FOUND IN EVERY AGE & ~~CULTURE~~ EVERY SOCIAL UNIT

~~THROUGHOUT THE - ALMOST EVERYONE IS KEPT BUSY  
PRODUCING & CONSUMING~~

WE NEED THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR FELLOW  
HUMAN BEINGS -

AND THEY NEED FROM US -  
SOME THING IN RETURN

GEORGE BENNARD LARW CAUGHT THE POINT  
WHEN HE SAID -

"WE HAVE NO MORE RIGHT TO CONSUME HAPPINESS  
WITHOUT PRODUCING IT  
THAN TO CONSUME WEALTH  
WITHOUT PRODUCING IT."

VALUES - WHO WORK

WHY DO THEY WORK

1000 0000 0000

WE ARE DEPENDENT ON EACH OTHER

9

THE WHOLE IS OR CAN BE GREATER THAN  
THE SUM.

SINGLE TERMINUS

RANDOM MINDLESS MOVEMENT

3 or 4

begin of an idea

Therapy

A BARRIN

Terminologia

Exquisite Archs

Food

Cooly System.

Not just an economic question  
social  
humane question

There is a 4<sup>th</sup> Theme that <sup>1000 0000 0894</sup> ~~includes~~ the HUMANITIES

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(10)

~~On the Core of Ed-Lite~~

~~Fourth~~, all life forms on the planet earth are inextricably interlocked, and no education is complete without an understanding of the ordered, interdependent nature of the universe.

o Lewis Thomas, in his Phi Beta Kappa Oration at Harvard University, said that:

There are no solitary, free-living creatures:

Every form of life is dependent on other forms.

The great successes in evolution, the mutants who have, so to speak, made it, have done so by fitting in with, and sustaining, the rest of life.

Up to now we might be counted among the brilliant successes, but flashy and perhaps unstable. We should go warily into the future, looking for ways to be more useful, listening more carefully for the signals, watching our step, and having an eye out for partners.

The Study of Humanities

General education means learning about the elegant, underlying patterns of the natural world and discovering that all elements of nature, in some manner, are related to each other.

This is an essential part of humanistic learning.

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Fifth, all students should understand that our common heritage is a bridge that holds us all together in ways we hardly understand.

- It is more than this.
- It is what Edmund Burke termed "a pact between the dead, the living, and the yet unborn."
- It is essential that the human race remember where it has been and how, for better or worse, it got where it is.
- An understanding of our heritage should be expected of all students.

THE FUTURE HAS BEEN  
PREDETERMINED

TS ELIOT - FUTURE -

Finally, all students should explore values and beliefs.

- Education, by its very nature, is value-laden. Any institution committed to inquiry into the human experience must inevitably confront questions of purpose and meaning.
- The refusal to face those issues openly and directly is, itself, a moral decision with far-reaching implications.

These

LANGUAGE  
SOCIAL SCIENCE  
SCIENCE  
ECONOMIC

VALUES

(12)

The late Jacob Bronowski, in a vivid description of his 1945 visit to Nagasaki harbor, raised deeply unsettling questions about education's response to humanity's most profound concerns.

~~What I had thought to be broken rocks was a concrete power house with its roof punched in. I could make out the outline of two crumpled gasometers; there was a coal furnace festooned with service poles; otherwise nothing but creaked telephone poles and loops of wire in a bare waste of ashes.~~ I had blundered into this desolate landscape as instantly as one might walk among the craters of the moon. The moment of recognition when I realized I was already in Nagasaki is present to me as I write as vividly as when I lived it. I see the warm night and the meaningless shapes; I can even remember the tune which had been popular in 1945, and it was called "Is You Is Or Is You Ain't Ma Baby?"

For Bronowski, the lyrics of the dance tune took on macabre overtones.

o It was, he felt, a "universal moment," one in which modern man's knowledge was transformed into horror.

o ~~At that instant of confrontation, he later wrote, "each of us in his own way learned that his imagination had been dwarfed."~~

Hiroshima and Nagasaki--not to mention Buchenwald and Auschwitz--may, from one perspective, be irrelevant to the educational issues we confront today.

Still, they have the odd effect of forcing us to inquire once again into deeply troubling, and perhaps unanswerable, questions about knowledge and its uses, about the relationship between education and human conduct.

The destruction Bronowski witnessed was a technological achievement built on trained intelligence, and we cannot help wondering what discipline of mind, what knowledge more adequately comprehended, what values more effectively conveyed could have an equally powerful impact for human betterment?

Howard Munford Jones wrote in 1958 that

"perhaps nobody knows how to make any human being better, happier or more capable, but at the very least, the humanities . . . help to sustain a course of thought in which these questions have meaning. . ."

Howard  
Jones

*In the end  
of it*

The aim is not only to prepare the young for ~~productive~~ careers, but to enable them to live lives of dignity and purpose, not only to generate new knowledge, but to channel that knowledge to humane ends; ~~not merely to increase participation at the polls,~~ but to <sup>promote</sup> ~~help shape~~ a citizenry that can weigh decisions wisely and more effectively ~~promote~~ the public good.

John Gardner said on one occasion that "The deepest threat to the integrity of any community is an incapacity on the part of the citizens to lend themselves to any worthy common purposes."

- o Gardner goes on to reflect on "the barrenness of a life that encompasses nothing beyond the self."

~~In response to such barrenness,~~ America's colleges and universities need an inner compass of their own.

- o They must perform for society <sup>- through humanity -</sup> an integrative function, seeking appropriate responses to life's most enduring questions, concerning themselves not just with information and knowledge, but with wisdom.

- o This, it seems to me, is education's most essential mission and such a mission vigorously pursued places humanities at the core.

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*I quote from Len Thom*

At a recent meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, ~~Dr. Lewis Thomas~~, acknowledging that these are not the best of times for the human mind, went on to observe:

I cannot begin to guess at all the causes of our cultural sadness, not even the most important ones, but I can think of one thing that is wrong with us and eats away at us: we do not know enough about ourselves. We are ignorant about how we work, about where we fit in, and most of all about the enormous, imponderable system of life in which we are embedded as working parts.

*This it seems to me is ~~the~~ education  
most essential mission*

*And this means we must  
place Humility at the Core*