Kenyon College

Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange

Kenyon College Alumni Bulletin | College Archives

11-1972

# Kenyon College Bulletin - November 1972

Follow this and additional works at: https://digital.kenyon.edu/kcab

Recommended Citation
"Kenyon College Bulletin - November 1972" (1972). *Kenyon College Alumni Bulletin*. 115.
https://digital.kenyon.edu/kcab/115

This Alumni Bulletin is brought to you for free and open access by the College Archives at Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Kenyon College Alumni Bulletin by an authorized administrator of Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact noltj@kenyon.edu.

# KENYON
## COLLEGE BULLETIN

November, 1972

KENYON
COLLEGE BULLETIN
November, 1972
Volume I, number 4

William A. Long, Editor

Robert J. Zuer, Assistant Editor

Published in July, August, September, November, January, March and May by Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio 43022. Second Class Postage Paid at Gambier, Ohio.

© Kenyon College, 1972

## The Cover

Leaves are the pattern for November in Gambier. Middle Path carpeted in brown and gold. This year they briefly splashed the trees with color before being washed down by the almost daily rain to be pasted shining to path, street, and car. But still, they gave us the colors — nature's way of making bearable the prospect of winter.

## Contents

**The Once and Future College,** by Perry Lentz '64 ..... page 4
**Parting Time Had Come,** by James R. Dickenson ..... page 9
**Higher Education in the 1970's,** by Bruce Haywood ..... page 12
**Knowledge, Faith and Superstition,** by Shivesh C. Thakur..... page 20

## Features

Letters ..... page 2
Kenyon Bookshelf ..... page 3
Job Line ..... page 24
Deaths ..... page 24

# From the Editors

This *Bulletin* introduces a new format which will be used for some of the issues to be sent to all Alumni, Parents, and Friends each year. It is intended to compliment the other numbers, which are printed in newspaper style, by providing longer features and articles which can cover Kenyon—its program, its faculty, its alumni—in greater depth then is possible in the newspaper issues. We suffered the usual birth pains in bringing forth this new format, but, with some excellent materials to work with, we have finally gotten it through the presses and the mails.

To open the issue we have the address by Perry Lentz '64 at the Baccalaureate Service for the Class of 1972. Several of Perry's collegues on the faculty remarked that this was the best baccalaureate talk they had ever heard, and it has lost little in its transition to type. Written by one who is both a Kenyon graduate and faculty member, it says much about the way alumni see their college.

The article about bringing a daughter to college needs no introduction. It will be reminiscent to some, and for others of us who are still in anticipation of this experience, it is a must.

The assessment of "Higher Education in the 1970's" by Provost Bruce Haywood is important reading for all who are interested, not only in the future of Kenyon, but in higher education generally in the decade ahead. The opening portions of this paper were published by the Center for the Study of Higher Education of the University of Toledo, whose director, W. Frank Hull IV, commented that it represents "one position worthy of serious attention by anyone involved in a liberal arts college." It was written last year prior to the faculty's approval of the new curriculum plan, and it's assessment of the role of the liberal arts college will be considered many more times as Kenyon seeks to maintain its identity as a liberal arts college of quality in these changing times.

As is explained in the introduction to the paper by Shivesh Thakur, the *Bulletin* has agreed to publish the annual Harwill Lecture. We hope you agree we have made an excellent beginning for this series with this piece.

The other regular *Bulletin* features, such as Letters, The Kenyon Bookshelf, Along Middle Path, Job Line, and Deaths, will be included in each issue when appropriate. We are currently making plans for an "Alumni Profiles" section to recognize one or more Kenyon men or women who have met successfully the challenges of the outside world. We will welcome your ideas on suitable candidates for this feature, and of course, on any other aspect of the publication.

# Letters

Editor's note: *The following letter was written to J. Eric May '58 in response to his letter published in the July* Bulletin *commenting on the decision to drop the separate designation of the Coordinate College for Women. Mr. May suggested that the establishment of the Coordinate College was planned to be "merely a stepping stone towards eventual coeducation," and "was a deliberate ruse from the very beginning." The reply from William R. Chadeayne '50, secretary of the Board of Trustees, sets forth the College's position in this matter.*

Dear Mr. May:

As one intimately involved, first as an officer of the Alumni Association and later as an officer and Trustee of the College, in the decision making process which resulted in the establishment of the Coordinate College for Women and the subsequent decision taken by the Board last February to abandon the concept of coordinate education in favor of coeducation, I must take exception to the allegation in your letter to the *Kenyon College Bulletin,* July 1972, that the use of the term coordinate college was a deliberate "ruse from the very beginning."

You are certainly entitled to your opinion but in this instance it is not predicated on fact. In point of fact from the very outset both the Board and the administration were deeply and sincerely committed to the concept of coordinate education for a number of reasons, the foremost being the belief that in an institution with such a long and established male tradition as Kenyon, women would not achieve the desired sense of personal development and identity in a coeducational institution as readily as they would in one of their own where they would be free to establish their own traditions.

For both academic and budgetary reasons it was never contemplated that the women's college would have its own separate faculty and curriculum and President Caples is therefore correct in stating that the academic program has been coeducational from the start.

In many other areas, however, every effort was made to make coordinate education a reality. For example an entire women's housing complex, including a commons, was constructed at a cost of several million dollars and a dean of the women's college employed who was given the express assignment of creating a new college with an identity and tradition of its own.

While the advent of women would certainly have required additional housing and other facilities in any event, I can assure you that had complete coeducation been the objective at the time such facilities would have taken different form and configuration.

In reality, the shift of thinking resulted from experience, for even during the first year when women came to Gambier, it began to be apparent that the women themselves generally preferred coeducation to coordinate education or, in other words, that they preferred to participate in and share Kenyon traditions rather than create their own. This manifested itself in various ways as for example protests over being excluded from the matriculation oath and not sharing fully in student government. In short, it developed that the concept of coordinate education was becoming a divisive influence on campus rather than a unifying one with the result that an unhealthy polarization began to emerge.

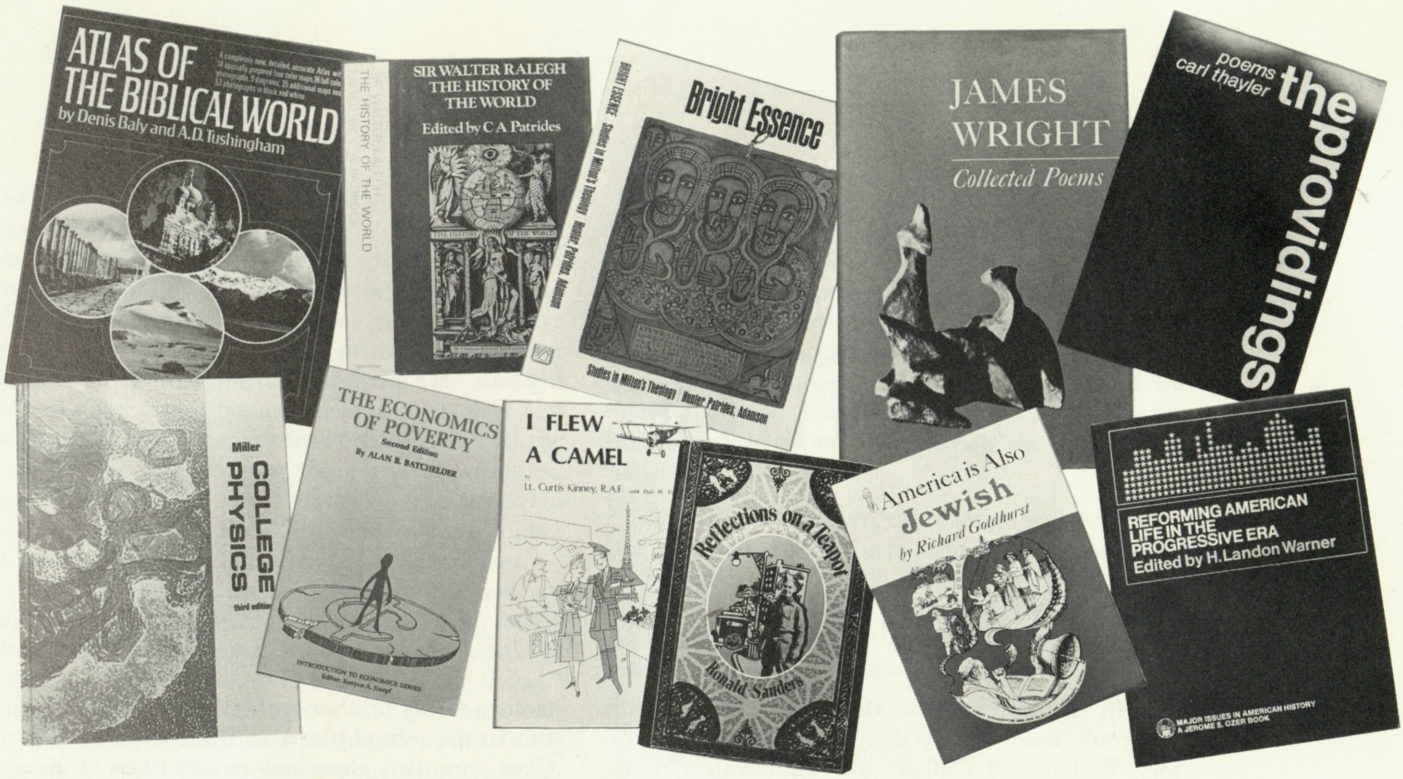
Faced with this reality the administration and the Board reexamined, and rightfully so I think, the original premises upon which the coordinate college had been established and concluded, in the light of experience, that they were not entirely valid and would become less so in the 1972-73 academic year and thereafter when there would no longer be any male students who had known Kenyon as an all male institution.

It can perhaps be argued that everyone involved should have been more prescient when the original planning took place. To that I can only say that hindsight is a wonderful thing. To charge, however, that these plans constituted a deliberate subterfuge or some elaborate hoax on the Kenyon constituency is at best naive and at worse irresponsible.

I for one hope the day will never come when those responsible for the welfare of the College cease to reexamine and reevaluate the programs and objectives of the College in light of experience and changing circumstances. Kenyon is assuredly a different institution today than it was prior to September, 1969, but it continues to provide a quality liberal education for its students who now include both men and women. In so doing I believe it is better serving society and the nation than it ever has in its distinguished past.

Yours very truly,

William R. Chadeayne




# The Kenyon Bookshelf

New books by Kenyon alumni and faculty:

*Collected Poems* by James Wright '52, which won the 1972 Pulitzer Prize for poetry, includes nearly all the poems published in Wright's previous four volumes, plus 33 new works and some 30 translations from modern Spanish and German poets. (Wesleyan University Press, $7.95).

*America Is Also Jewish* by Richard Goldhurst '50, is a history of Jewish immigration to America. (G. P. Putnam's Sons, $3.64).

*Reflections on a Teapot, The Personal History of a Time,* by Ronald Sanders '54, is a "touching, wry, and affectionate memoir" of the author on his growing up in New York City, his days at Kenyon, and later experiences. (Harper & Row, $8.95).

Sir Walter Ralegh's *The History of the World,* has been edited by C. A. Patrides '52 and was published jointly by Macmillan's of London and the Temple University Press. Professor Patrides is co-author, with William B. Hunter and Jack Hale Adamson, of *Bright Essences, Studies in Milton's Theology.* (University of Utah Press).

*I Flew A Camel,* by Curtis Kinney '10, with Dale M. Tiller, is the true account of the author's adventures as a World War I pilot with the R.A.F. Kinney's article "I Fought the Red Baron" in the July-September 1971 issue of the *Kenyon Alumni Bulletin* was just a preview of this work. (Dorrance and Co., $4.95).

*The Providings,* by Carl Thayler '68, is a collection of poems written between 1963 and 1971. (The Summac Press, $2.45).

*Reforming American Life in the Progressive Era,* edited by H. Landon Warner, Henry M. Weaver Memorial Professor of History, is a fresh appraisal of the nature and dimensions of the Progressive Movement in American history, paying particular attention to the problems of urban society and the economy. (Jerome S. Ozer Book, published by Pitman Publishing Corp., $2.95).

*Atlas of the Biblical World,* by Denis Baly, professor of religion, and A. D. Tushingham, chief archaeologist for the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada, is not "just another biblical atlas" but presents the information "most needed for understanding the biblical environment." 208 pages, 49 maps and 69 photographs. (Wall Publishing Co., $12.95).

The third edition of *College Physics* by Franklin Miller, Professor of Physics, has just been issued. It is a basic textbook in elementary physics. (Harcourt Brace Javanovich, Inc., $12.95).

The second edition of *The Economics of Poverty,* by Alan B. Batchelder, professor of Economics has been released. A part of the "Introduction to Economics Series" edited by Kenyon A. Knopf, it examines the traits, causes, and possible remedies of American poverty but leaves final judgements to the reader. (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., $3.00).

# "THE ONCE AND FUTURE COLLEGE"

by Perry Lentz '64

In talking over baccalaureate addresses with Kenyon's most recent deliverers thereof—Professors William McCulloh and Galbraith Crump, whose sermons I found quite worthy of emulation —I emerged with three guiding instructions: that the address should be brief, to the point, and learned. But, I have decided to break with this advice, never, to misquote Huck Finn, having had much talent along those lines. Thus I intend to be long-winded, murkily obscure, and sentimental.

Above all, sentimental, for this is a sentimental occasion, for public reasons obvious to you all. With the graduation of this class, I suppose that Kenyon's one hundred and forty-eight years of being a men's college comes to a final end. When you depart this afternoon or this evening or tomorrow morning, you take with you in substantial part the last of that masculine century and a half, immured in the memories of your freshman year, before the women came.

Now there are women in your midst, and pleasantly so. I have had the pleasure and honor of knowing almost all of them, and they have brought honor to the college both by choosing to attend, and by the quality of the work they have performed. But I hope they will forgive me for thus having submerged them in the masculine host of the Class of 1972, for the length of that last paragraph, and I ask their pardon if I touch with what seems undue emphasis upon Kenyon's "male" past.

Because I find this occasion especially sentimental myself—and not a little depressing, not a little melancholy, as well. In the first place, and most obviously, this is depressing for me because it marks the last time when I will ever be able to lecture to my brother without fear of interruption. But in the second place, with the departure of this Class, my own cherished recollections of Kenyon will bear less relationship to the physical, present realities of this College than ever before. The College that dwells in my memory will depart the world of living experience, finally, forever.

But you will notice a kind of depression yourselves, toward the early evening of this bright, sentimental day. After the festivities—the academic procession beneath the sugar maples, the crossing of the platform, the camera-laden parents in the pathways—after these things, you will notice a depressing uneventfulness, a depressing *un*-change. No cataclysmic laying on of hands, no bold sudden assumption of new power, no sudden bursting awareness of new-found self-knowledge, not even in fact any markedly new respect from men- or women-friends up for the day, or even little brothers. You will remain yourselves: $16,-000, and not even a thunder clap.

For you are not going to change, of course, with this single day. The "commencement of your lives" comes not upon you now suddenly prepared for it with some new-found, newly-acquired powers—it comes with a drive down Ohio 229 surrounded by the books, clothesbags, steamer trunks, coffee pots and potted plants of the last four years. When you leave this Hill this evening, you will carry away the same, unchanged person that awoke in the old dormitory room this morning.

What will change, during the course of this day, will be the College. For you will never wake again in that dormitory room, amid that scarred furniture, above those maple trees. What will change, for all time, will be Kenyon College. It

has been a vibrant, vital, multifaceted, rich, frustrating, complex physical *fact,* a living *thing* in your lives, for these last four years. But as the car drops down Ohio 229 this afternoon or this evening, be aware that with that last glimpse you have of Kenyon College—probably of the chapel tower rising in gold and purple amid the late sunlight and all the trees—be aware that with that last glimpse, Kenyon changes irrevocably. With it, the College will retreat from the world of complex, large, living facts, and will become enclosed in memory, in recollection, suspended in the amber of your minds, changeless now, and permanent.

W. H. Auden, in his elegy "In Memory of William Butler Yeats," wrote that at Yeats' death, "he became his admirers," because "the words of a dead man are modified in the guts of the living." That is, Yeats at death became one with his verse, as it is read, re-read, and re-shaped by his living audience. Well, I suppose that our situation is almost exactly the reverse: that with graduation, a College, especially a traditional liberal arts College like this one, passes as well from the world of living experience — *but,* rather than being re-shaped and changed by its "admirers," it becomes immortal, shaped once for all time, changeless in human memory. The College becomes its graduates, because it is preserved in the minds of its alumni.

Kenyon College will continue to live, of course, and to develop radically in the space of Gambier and in the time of all its future existence.

## About the Author

Perry C. Lentz was promoted to rank of associate professor of English this year after three years on the Kenyon faculty. He was graduated from Kenyon in 1964, *summa cum laude* and with highest honors in English. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Vanderbilt where he held a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, a teaching fellowship and a teaching assistantship. He is the author of a novel, *The Falling Hills,* published in 1967. In the audience for this Baccalaureate Address on May 28 was Perry's brother, Preston, a 1972 graduate of Kenyon.

But for you, the Dean's office will still be in the middle of Ascension Hall, the river road will always be quietly secretive and down at water level, the women's campus will never be complete. The change into changelessness I'm prophecying, of course, will be a change only in your minds. But after all, we've been offering you the life of the mind for these four years, and perhaps it is not merely academic to reflect upon this last, cumulative mental event.

For the most part, this change will take place for reasons too obvious to mention, even in a long and sentimental sermon. But one reason *is* worth mentioning, I think: In large measure, Kenyon College will become isolated and immured in memory, precisely because your experience within it has been so isolated—so irrelevant. Your collegiate years at this place, on this Hill, in this Republic of Ohio, will not form a continuum with the rest of your lives. No matter the nature of your future course, it will be radically different from these isolated years of academic study. You will have experiences—rich and satisfying ones we hope —which will shape, change, re-shape and finally constitute the very passage of your lives through time and space. But, so irrelevant have these years in this Park been, that those future experiences will never touch, or reform, or rearrange, your recollection of Kenyon College.

Now, when we think of "the irrelevance," or "the isolation" of this College, we think first of its political irrelevance, and it seems as though events conspire to remind us bi-annually of that irrelevance.

After all, we have proven almost laughably helpless in attempting to respond to the gravest of national issues and events. Our endowment is so limited that we lack sufficient scholarship funds to attract promising minority students, and so limited that our faculty is too small to offer a wide variety of potentially more "relevant" courses. At times of crisis, we jam into a Hall or a room, debate with politeness of demeanor, some self-conscious obscenity, and much relish for well turned rhetoric—and triumphantly fail to close even one Sohio gas station. We flood the wire and postal services with succinct and sublimely unread petitions, we try to mobilize slumbrous, recalcitrant, bemused Mt. Vernon.

To me, these are not bad things, or wasted things, but they are politically futile things.

During the troubles of the spring of 1970, we were forcibly reminded of the irrelevance of our normal activities, in any case. While the rest of us on the faculty were laboriously explaining—pontificating upon—the "relevance" of Kenyon's concluding examinations, their importance to you, our sincerity in administering them, one popular and dedicated young professor rose and announced that he had helped to write the Senior English Comprehensive Examination and that it wasn't very relevant, and there was a storm of applause like that first clarifying burst of thunder when rain has been threatening all afternoon.

Well of course the examination wasn't relevant: none of it was.

Very little that we do here is politically relevant, and I suppose that you all become understandably annoyed when we play word games, and try to prove that it is. Many of your contemporaries have been at different kinds of colleges, ones committed fundamentally to the world of political change and event. They have been able to take courses immediately relevant to the exciting, frustrating, violent world of social action and reaction and commitment: urban studies, minority studies, guerrilla theatre, ecology-with-righteousness. You have been isolated at a College which is notoriously conservative, one whose faculty decided only a year ago that Sociology was respectable as a discipline, one whose faculty will probably never decide that, say, Urban studies are a suitable part of our curriculum.

Indeed, at other universities located in the webs of cities, where their middle paths are public highways, political commitment and political activity often seem to have become virtually synonymous with their educational aims. Again, especially here, this is not so. The countryside remains sponge-like, the distances muffle, sunlight flakes in dogwood branches: and thus our remoteness breeds our sense of guilt. We are at a comfortable distance even from Mt. Vernon, and I suppose that in these times there is nothing quite so spiritually painful as to be "comfortable." Anyhow, in May of 1970, while many of your contemporaries were making public witness of their outrage, we still stubbornly insisted that you testify to the difference between the Spenserian and Shakespearean sonnet.

Thus political "irrelevance." But there is a second kind of irrelevance which I suspect touches most students more fundamentally than the distance between this Hill and the headlines, and yet which is less mentioned because less noble.

On a day such as this, it is hard to believe that the College does not serve the needs of the entire man. The old trees blossom so shelteringly and shadingly amid the sandstone walls and over the paths, the air beneath their shade is cool, and it would seem that nature never could love or cherish anything more than it does a college.

But all this is deceptive. We know, don't we, that February is our cruelest month — and that February shows us a far different world. Recall how the college dormitories looked from the old river road: they rose, rainslick, covered with dead ivy, stark and square and artificial above the winter woods. Then, no buildings ever seemed *less* likely to serve as shelter for the lonely, hungry individual. Jammed together, hard-edged as shoeboxes, the winter dormitories stand as cumbrous and uncomfortable symbols, not of our distance from the world of social and political events, but of the College's stark remoteness from natural human passions, the distance between this artificial, constraining, empty world, and all those rich things which the private man seeks to sustain and gratify himself.

Well, I put it badly. But very little that we do here is especially relevant to those agonies of the private spirit, of the personal being, of the natural man. You've all experienced, in some way, a gap between the stilted, icy "work" of the mind which we've made you pursue, and the heated, desperate, pulsating "life" of the body and soul, during these last four years. For example, I suppose that time rarely passes as slowly as it does for a college student. You are impaled upon doubts about the future, uncertainties of the soul, and all the burgeoning desires of the flesh. It has ever been thus, of course, probably even when Aristotle taught Alexander those years in Macedon. It has ever been thus, but we live in an age infatuated with youth—so infatuated that the word "youth" itself suggests some cosmic advertisement, an image of some glorious, eternal suspension between a late summer sunset and the plunging downfall of surf. Upon this generation, especially, has been perpetrated that great American hoax, that these should be the happiest days of your lives—rather than the longest and the secretest.

In other colleges, in larger, more varied communities, I suppose that these agonies may seem less severe. You can always window shop, you can

always go to the movies. And consider those of your contemporaries who did not go to college at all, the ones who underwent those more traditionally American *rites de passage*—war, or working for a living. They have been answering fundamental and personal questions about themselves that you have, perhaps, yet really to face, and they have been meeting challenges that seem far more "realistic" than the pale challenge of intellectual precision — military challenges, business challenges, challenges to muscle and gut and courage. And their rewards have been more tangible and more realistic as well: money particularly, money banked away, while we have rewarded you with the pale, transparent currency of grades, banked without hope of redemption in Stephens Hall these four years. And they have lived for four years without the constraints, the frustrations, the arcane rules of dormitory life: lived with friends, husbands or wives, in their own family units, with people anyhow far more fulfilling to their private needs than your own weary succession of roommates. They have not had to endure lectures about love lyrics and all the world's physical pleasures, while the radiators in Philo Hall thumped against February's bleak cold.

So we are neither relevant to the political actions of your times, nor relevant to the personal problems of your hourly lives. And these irrelevancies will continue to manifest themselves during the course of this graduation day, for as rich and pleasant and sentimental as it will be for all of us, you will surely emerge at its end no more powerful or skilled politically, no more certain of personal truths, that you are at this moment—indeed, perhaps no more skilled politically, no more certain personally, than you were four and a half years ago. Why, then, do we exist? Why have we invited ourselves into your lives?

Now, I've been using "political" in a variety of irresponsible ways, but chiefly in an effort to suggest a man's identity as a creature among his fellow creatures, and the complex web of problems and responsibilities which derives from that. And I've been using "personal" to suggest the desires, needs, problems, lusts—mental, physical, and economic—relevant to you within your individual identities. Well, I suppose that there is a dimension of human experience, a realm of human reality, which is neither political nor personal. Because I teach in the Humanities Division of this College, I would call that dimension the "cultural." And because I profess English literature, I would define it as Matthew Arnold did: culture, he said, is "the study of perfection," that human "instinct" to learn "the best that is known and thought in the world, irrespectively of practice, politics, and everything of the kind." (From *Culture and Anarchy,* and "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time.")

In many ways, I must grant that this cultural dimension is not as "realistic" as the personal or political realms. They are, after all, of the world's surface, where realism dwells. Man in those realms physically flourishes or starves, physically survives or dies. Further, it has always seemed to me that when the cultural world tries to manifest itself *directly* in the political arena, it is fatuous, helpless, and ineffectual at best, and blindly enthusiastic and dangerously committed to ideal solutions at worst. And when that cultural world tries to deal *directly* with the personal problems of young men and women, it is apt to be paternalistic, ridden with rules and mercilessly obtuse Deans of Students at worst, inane, distant, bell-bottomed and unsure of undergraduate slang at best.

When it stays off by itself, it is derided politically as "the ivory tower." When it does not show especial concern for the private lives of its partakers, it is cold, artificial, "computerized," distant. When this cultural dimension, this other world of experience, is seen, thus, with the vision of either of the other two realms of experience, it is unnatural, artificial, unnecessary, and irrelevant.

You'll recognize my prejudices in this matter, of course, prejudices which I reckon I share with most of my colleagues. But, despite the irrelevance of this cultural dimension to political or personal realms which may seem more natural and more fundamental, I find this world of culture to be that one realm which ultimately defines our humanity—our identity as human beings. It—and the nowadays perhaps less accessible realm of religion—these are the only realms, the only dimensions of experience, which can place life above the power-equations and class consciousness of the political man, which can enable the private man to escape egocentricity, self-deception, self-indulgence.

I won't try to defend this argument, because if you are not persuaded of it after four years, four more minutes will not suffice. But let me offer one more sentimental recollection which most of you share, and then you are free to go.

In the spring of your freshman year, the spring for most of you of 1969—that last spring when Kenyon was still a men's College—the substantial majority of you studied *King Lear,* probably in the rooms painted pink along the western side of Ascension Hall (and probably half asleep amid the bursting masses of the maple boughs outside the leaded windows). But you recall, surely, the plot of that play: how the old king, blind in his pride, divided his kingdom, suffered insanity upon the heath, came to self-discovery and then to death. Well, the moral landscape of that play is as stark and as memorable as the plot. Lear's faithless daughters Goneril and Regan, and Gloucester's bastard son Edmund, empowered by Lear's abdication, begin to seek political power and personal gratification at any price. Again and again, the "good" characters—Lear and Albany and Kent, all helpless themselves—call upon the gods to intervene on behalf of humanity and decency, but of course the gods do not. Left to their own devices, pursuing their own limited visions of political or personal gain, the faithless characters become more and more evil, more and more brutal, more and more bestial. Chaos invades the realm of Albion. Fools are sane while kings are mad, children repudiate their parents and then hunt them down, guests tear out the eyes of their host, servants slay their master, and all culminates in civil war and foreign invasion. The evil characters die at the end, Goneril, Cornwall, Regan and Edmund. But so do the good: loyal Gloucester, sane, cured Lear, innocent Cordelia. And the survivors, Kent and Albany and Edgar, having witnessed the precariousness of man's condition, his helplessness before his own prideful, blind nature, achieve no hopeful restoration of order, but can only announce their own despair and prophecy their own deaths.

Now, Lear doesn't abdicate out of evil motives, but out of sympathetically personal ones. All he wants to do, is retire. And the wicked characters begin their fatal careers not through arrantly evil motivation, but out of the human desire to "get ahead," to achieve political power, to gratify personal desires. And it seems to me that the play's warning is unmistakable. Man needs a wider consciousness than the consciousness of political identity, of the consciousness of private desires. Else men become monsters, and "humanity preys upon itself."

Clearly, this chapel stands for one very traditional way to achieve a wider vision, a larger consciousness. But liberal education is another. Consciousness, it seems to me, is the business of this College—and the business, at its best, of the whole world of culture. Not publishing articles or doing private research, but directly striving to enlarge the consciousness of its partakers, by exposing them to "the best that is known and thought in the world," by causing them to "study perfection." And only through an enlarged consciousness, an enlarged vision of ourselves, of other men, and of the world about us, are we typically capable of transcending the corruptions of political power, the sometimes inhuman absoluteness of political commitment: only through an enlarged consciousness are we capable of escaping the prison of our personalities, the jailyard of our individual desires.

Well, you are going to leave these artificial surroundings, this isolated Hill, this effete, unprotected, irrelevant world of the mind. And you will presumably assume more "relevant" identities than we've permitted you—identities as political men and women, and as private men and women. And these years you've spent here will sink into time, changeless, unchanging, imprisoned in memory and secure from rearrangement.

But I believe that many of you will be *better* for your years here than you might have been otherwise—and perhaps *better* than those of your contemporaries who underwent other kinds of experiences during these isolated years. You will not be more powerful, or more skilled, or more enabled politically than they. And perhaps, in fact, you may be less powerful politically, because of a wider consciousness, wherein the world will seem more complex to you than it does to them, wherein men will seem more uniquely individual, wherein morality will seem more convoluted and life itself more mysterious.

Nor will you be happier personally, more fulfilled privately, than they. And perhaps you will be less happy, because of a wider consciousness, wherein you cannot as readily secure your personal desires in easy ignorance of moral consequence, or human responsibility.

But, arrogant as it may be for me to say, I think you will be *better* people for having been here. And I believe that in the future course of your lives, you will be less fragmented men and women, more whole men and women, insofar as you are able to recall this Hill in all its isolation, and this world of culture in which you dwelt.

*Taking the Freshman to College*

# PARTING time had come;

## NOW SHE'LL BE A VISITOR

By James R. Dickenson
From Gambier, Ohio

Every species has its rituals, and my wife and I have just completed one that millions of members of the American branch of *homo sapiens parentis bankruptus* are undergoing right now. Peculiar to this time of year, it is known as Sending the Oldest Child off to College.

It is really not a difficult ritual. Countless millions of parents have performed it; countless others have it to look forward to. It requires few qualifications. One is the willingness to raise and expend an enormous sum of money that one really doesn't have. Another is the sheer peasant cunning and stoicism to survive 17 or 18 highly interesting years until the fledgling is ready to try its wings and leave the nest.

Actually, given the circumstances immediately leading up to the parting, the fledgling sometimes behaves more like a large, vigorous, hugely self-confident young eagle that is ready and eager to swoop down on an unsuspecting world. The truth, as always, lies somewhere in between. And the parting is a wrench of astonishing poignancy.

**As the Twig Is Bent . . .**

My wife and I delivered our 17-year-old daughter unto Kenyon College, a small, liberal-arts school of excellent reputation whose English Gothic buildings rise rather startlingly amid the cornbelts of central Ohio. The people who run Kenyon College, let it be known, took it all with remarkable equanimity.

They know from long experience that most of their new charges will adapt but that failure and disappointment await others. They seemed considerably concerned with getting across the message that the time for parting had come, that the mold (which is of the parents' making) has been set, and that parents should now keep hands off and let nature take its course.

The visages of the new freshman's parents, ours included, indicated that such advice was appropriate. Like the youngsters', our faces at various times revealed pride, anticipation, and apprehension. Among the parents there also was an obvious effort to recall the emotions of that day 20 or 30 years ago when they entered college.

**An Incredible Variety**

Enrolling a freshman re-emphasizes the incredible variety of the species, even in as narrow a range as the Kenyon community—which is to say overwhelmingly white, educated, affluent, and middle-to-upper-middle class. There were fashion plates and hippies, those who came with expensive new sets of matched luggage, and those who traveled with cardboard boxes. Presumably the range of intelligence and education is not all that wide, but the range in physical size, attractiveness, and self-assurance is.

But there was the bond of common experience. The fathers, middle-aged and unaccustomed to manual labor, puffed and toiled like porters. Suitcases, trunks, boxes, typewriters, bicycles, bedding, and record players had to be muscled into dormitories. (There was help from a couple of enterprising upper-class boys, armed with the freshman directory—known as the "baby book"—to help them spot the good-looking female incomers. Those boys will go far.)

**James R. Dickenson is on the staff of the National Observer which granted permission to reprint this feature from its issue of the week ending September 18, 1971.**

The fathers caught each others' eyes with rueful looks and made little jokes like, "Raising a teen-ager does prepare you well to be a bellhop." If the jokes were nervous, so were the laughs.

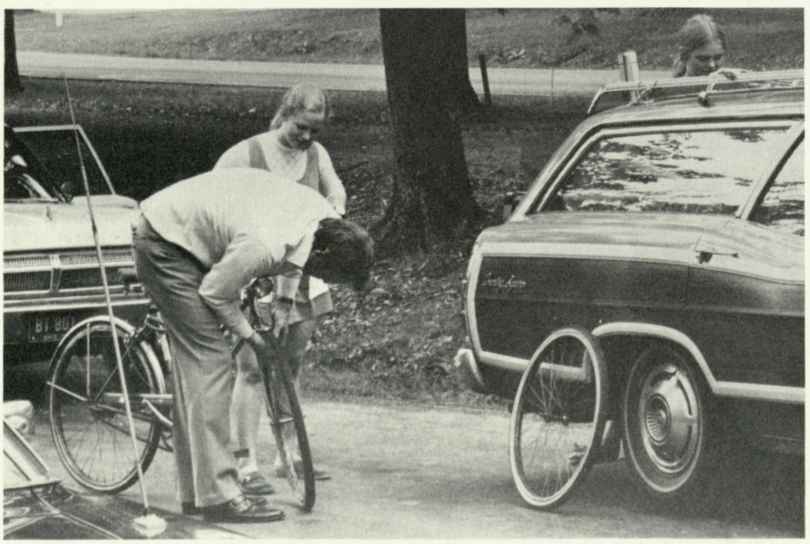
### 'Could You Sleep Last Week?'

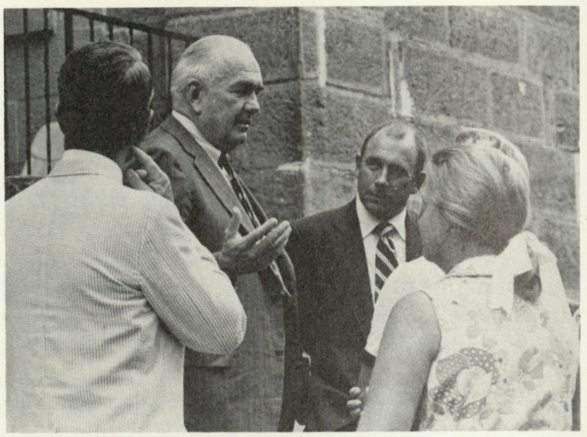
And so were the kids. Our daughter, an intelligent, extraordinarily strong-willed girl who to our memory had never revealed fear of anyone or anything, about a month ago first admitted her nervousness and apprehension. Entering the campus, she suddenly had a fit of nerves, albeit short-lived. At one point I overheard her ask her roommate: "Could you sleep last week?" "No," was the answer, and both admitted to sleeplessness the night before.

This moment, however, has been a long time abuilding. It dates back at least to those first stirrings of adolescence, when the trusting and uncritical child begins asserting itself as an individual and starts seeing its parents in progressively less exalted terms.

Western society, because of its long educational period, probably turns its young loose later than any other. It can be argued, of course, that we never really do. They return periodically, not always under ideal circumstances. I can recall, for example, my septuagenarian grandmother insisting that her 55-year-old oldest son, a widower who had suffered a heart attack, come home so he could be properly nursed and cared for; she thought little of hospitals.

**Dad puts the finishing touches on the bicycle.**





**President Caples chats with parents following the assembly.**

But graduation from high school and the departure for college, the first job, or military service is the cutting of the tie. After that the kids are visitors.

The anodyne for the pangs of parting, in nature, is simply that the fledgling outgrows the nest and has to leave for everyone's good. Something similar happens with humans. There is an increasing demand for adult status, and parental restrictions become seemingly unbearable. The clashes over money, hours, chores, clothing, boy friends, and countless other matters add up until everyone seems to have just enough endurance to last until the appointed day. "Everything is fine until you say 'no'," a neighbor with a similar situation remarked.

### The Match Back Home

This is softened in the last weeks, however, by mutual recognition that time is altering a bond that has existed from birth. This itself signals the change: It is an accommodation of adult to adult rather than parent to child.

Then comes the parting day. Leaving the house and saying good-by to the dog may bring tears. Parting from the boy friend can also be difficult. Our daughter's roommate received a box of University of Maryland book matches from her boy friend, who is enrolled there. The idea is that if she's on a date, she'll be asked about them and will confess that she has a boy friend at Maryland.

Parents, at least, find comfort in college officials' attitude that this, after all, isn't the first time a kid has gone off to college. Kenyon's provost, or academic dean, a man of wit and erudition, noted that the rainy, gloomy weather

probably matched our mood. "I'm terribly sorry about the weather," he said in cultured tones. "Generally it's sunny on registration day and on commencement and rainy every day in between. You were cheated."

He then defined a "liberal education," which Kenyon is set up to provide, using the "ancient" definition that goes back to the medieval university. "Liberal education is for the freeborn, not slaves, but men and women who expect to live their lives freely and responsibly with no one telling them what to think or what to do." Including, presumably, parents, whom he threw a sop by stressing that our children would be taught that "the ancient wisdom of 5,000 years ago can be as valid as contemporary experience."

The dean of men ("director of wildlife," he calls himself) acknowledged that difficulty of letting go, but observed that "real maturity does not develop under authoritarianism or excess but under freedom with responsibility and accountability." Freedom also, he noted, raises "for the first time the possibility of failure." The competition for grades will be tougher than ever before. He continued, "As one student once told me, 'I don't have those kids in high school around to make me look good any more.' "

This was a theme stressed by the dean of women. "When she calls, crying about her grades, your role is to encourage her and assure her that she can do it, that she has it in her. If she knows you love and understand her, she will do it."

### '. . . and Water the Fern'

Conservative fathers were warned not to get upset by the new student trying out radical political ideas or advocating new mores for living. "Remember, she's the same girl you brought here. This is the girl you raised," the dean of women concluded. "It may be difficult to remember this, but the idea is to let *her* go to college."

Nothing remained to be done. The final parting was reluctant and stalled. "Get up in time to eat your meals in the dining hall," Beth's mother counseled, not for the first time. "You need the nutrition, and don't waste your money on bad food." There were instructions on watering the potted fern, carried here on the front seat: "Three-fourths cup every other day," and my wife went to get a last cup of water. The first hint of tears came when she copied down Beth's address and telephone number in her address book. "This is the first time I've ever listed an address for you."

**Fathers (and mothers) as bellhops.**

Then came the final farewell. "I know I'm going to cry, I can't help it," Beth said, half crying, half laughing. My prepared speech came out, "Well, sock it to 'em, sis," or something equally inane. Out in the lobby I vacuously opened the umbrella and my wife unthinkingly moved under it. We laughingly agreed that we weren't nervous. Not us.

### After 17 Years, Quiet

On the way home there were long silences, memories of good times and regrets over past harshness and injustices. More motherly tears flowed when a school bus up ahead disgorged little girls in bright frocks, carrying their lunch boxes and taking home brightly colored art papers for inspection and admiration. There seemed to be a dog at each stop to greet them eagerly. In the back of the bus the Huck Finns showed off, hanging by their knees from seat backs and delivering elaborate, devastating, slow-motion rabbit punches to their neighbors for our benefit.

Seventeen years seemed to telescope. "Is this the little girl I carried, is this the little boy at play?" my wife quoted from *Fiddler on the Roof,* "I don't remember growing older. When did they? When did she get to be a beauty? When did she grow to be so tall?"

Back home. The house was emptier and quieter. Beth's room was cleaner than in recent memory, but it also had a deserted air. My wife wondered aloud whether it was too soon to call Beth to see how things were going.

# Higher Education in the 1970's

by Bruce Haywood

Kenyon stands before a time of severe testing. In what has already been labeled the "decade of crisis" for higher education, all private colleges face a struggle for survival against forces some observers think overpowering. The Carnegie Commission has forecast the death of several hundred colleges. Those which do survive the decade may be much changed. The problem is more than the recurrent difficulty of falling income and rising costs. It is whether, in the face of a burgeoning system of public universities and colleges, the private college has any role to play in higher education. There is no matter more urgent for the members of the College than to determine what shall be the form of higher education here.

Professor Fritz Machlup of Princeton has recently asked the University's alumni to consider that higher education will likely be destroyed altogether by efforts to provide universal higher education. Others, sharing this belief, have urged that the majority of the young be moved away from the colleges and universities into vocational schools and apprenticeship programs, the better to fit them to what society seems likely to need and to offer them. Meanwhile, the public universities go on enrolling ever larger numbers of students and, as they do so, they continue to broaden the nation's idea of what higher education is. Our society seems little disposed to accept any narrow definition, expecting by now that the university will be all things to all men. One need not be convinced by Professor Machlup's pessimistic view and still, one may wonder with him whether any form of higher education other than that championed by the state universities can endure, given their enormous weight as shapers of public opinion. Certainly it is impossible to discuss sensibly the forms of higher education appropriate to the small college without reference to the giant that threatens to crush it.

## I. THE UNIVERSITIES, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

While a variety of factors can be called on to account for the remarkable growth of the public universities, there is one that surely eclipses all others. What has brought hundreds of thousands to their lecture halls is the quest for upward mobility, for the education (or merely the degree), that will admit them to a higher stratum of society. From this nation's earliest days, education has been perceived as the key to larger opportunity for the individual as well as to a greater society. Successive generations have pressed for more years of formal education, so that going to college has replaced the high school diploma as the prerequisite to a social and economic breakthrough. The barometers of social change forecast no drastic shifts of attitude in this regard. Indeed, the spread of open admissions policies suggests a stronger national commitment than ever to the dream of having everybody go on to college. For all that they are urged to abandon the colleges and universities, whether by a Secretary of Labor who would rather see them learning skills in union-supported apprenticeships or by extremists who seek to shut the universities down, young people are not likely to do so.

## About the Author

Bruce Haywood, who came to Kenyon in 1954 as assistant professor of German, was appointed Dean in 1963 and Provost in 1967. Born in England, he attended Leeds University, then went to Canada to earn B.A. and M.A. degrees at McGill University. He holds the Ph.D. from Harvard. He has been a strong force in shaping the college's curriculum and in giving imaginative leadership to the development of Kenyon's academic program. This paper was written last year to focus the attention of the faculty on the changing patterns in higher education and the implications of these for Kenyon as consideration was being given to a new curriculum plan. That plan was approved by the faculty last spring, but Provost Haywood's assessment of Higher Education will be a valid guide to Kenyon's planning throughout the decade.

Their goals are hardly to be approached on other paths. Some will find higher education wanting, of course, in whatever form it is presented to them, and some will reject the goals to which higher education seems to point. Yet, all available evidence indicates, the vast majority of young people will look to higher education as the bridge to a society and a private life better than they now know. Crucial, then, to our understanding of what students will seek in higher education is our understanding of what they look to as the better.

**Two Student Revolutions**

Kenneth Keniston, the Yale psychologist who is among the more perceptive observers of college students, has warned us not to confuse the two distinct forms of protest against the universities in the 'sixties. He has discerned two student revolutions where most have seen but one. He sees one in the demand of the "have-nots" (Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, and increasingly Poor Whites), that the university help them become "haves." He sees a second revolution in the rejection of the "haves" of what they have: the products of the technological society. That has brought their questioning of a system of higher education seemingly devoted to values they do not cherish.

Though many have claimed to see in the student protests of the last decade something running counter to the main flow of American history, these seem in Keniston's analysis the predictable consequences of our commitment to providing larger educational opportunity. The poor and disadvantaged follow now the example of yesterday's immigrants in looking to the universities to provide their children with the skills and knowledge that will bring them to affluence. Meanwhile the children of affluence have learned to scorn materialism and to look critically upon institutions which seem to want to prepare them only for middle-class professions. It is largely our system of education which has called into life student hostility to it, even while it has developed in young people an allegiance to certain ideals and values: internationalism, the cultivation of the arts, fondness for the individual and eccentric, tolerance of other life styles. These are as surely the fruits of larger educational opportunity as they are the goals least likely to be sought by those who see education only as the road to their economic and social betterment.

No universal notion of higher education can satisfy the expectations of groups so different as those Keniston has identified. We cannot exclude from the colleges and universities, without betraying them, those who would use them in their move to middle-class state on the grounds that higher education must now serve loftier ends. But neither can we sacrifice the moral and esthetic sensibilities of those whom the university, out of a zeal to serve society's immediate goals, seeks to force into the mold of the useful professional man. Higher education can surely serve both, provided that we are willing to acknowledge that different needs dictate different forms.

**Task Force Report**

A report recently prepared by a task force of the University of Massachusetts, Boston sets the priorities of that institution according to the needs of a middle-class society and those who would join it. Far from assigning to vocational schools training in useful skills, the University sees that as its prime activity, dignifying it by the awarding of the degree. Implicit in all the report's findings is the conviction that the university exists, not as society's critic or its best expression, but as its multi-talented servant. That view, if one can judge from recent actions and announcements elsewhere, may well govern all definitions of higher education shaping the public universities in the decade before us. This should hardly surprise us. The state-supported institutions have moved steadily away from the European idea of a university which once served them as model. They have insisted increasingly on their right to their own definition of higher education and they have persuaded a growing part of the public to their view. They have moved at the same time in response to society's will, piping their tune to the taxpayer's call. They have come to see themselves, and society has come to see them, as the prime vehicle by which society will accomplish its ends. Nothing seems likely to rule them in the years ahead more than that vision of their role.

We may reasonably expect the public universities of the seventies, then, to have these characteristics: programs to meet the needs of a society increasingly defined by its technology, particularly the need for a large variety of technicians; concern for the current, for problem solving, and oriented therefore to the applied rather than the theoretical; responsiveness to political pressures, whether these take the form of alumni wishes for winning teams or of demands by special interest groups for particular degree programs; great accessibility in terms of open admission, extension services, informal enrollment, and irregular patterns of attendance; an expanding notion of higher education wedded to the idea of social and economic betterment.

With all of this we must expect the state universities to move farther and farther away from traditional notions of the academic. Equally we can expect to see them drastically altering ideas of what may be counted as credit earned towards the degree. The assumptions which will rule the state-supported institutions will as easily admit credit for guided travel in Europe as for study there, for working with retarded children as for studying the causes of retardation, for evidence of possessing a skill as for the course of study by which it was obtained. We shall thus see the end of a tendency long apparent, with the degree being seen, not as a state-

ment about a level of education attained to, but as a diploma certifying the mastery of certain readily measurable skills.

### A Narrowing of Vision

Ironically, this very process of broadening the scope of the university's work to barely conceivable dimensions will inevitably be accompanied by a narrowing of its vision. In the end, the state university will likely be most notable for its provincialism, the very enemy that higher education seeks to attack. There is immediate danger of this in the spreading efforts to exclude the out-of-state student and in the giving of preference to local concerns when the university's priorities are set. In a period of most severe competition for resources, the one axis of the university will be favored only at cost to the other. Concern for the local will reduce interest in the national and international; emphasis on the now will diminish attention to the past and the future. Even if we assume reasonably strong support for most of the university's endeavors, the evidence of the relatively affluent years suggests which part of the university is most likely to suffer benign neglect. The emphasis on professionalism, the preference for the departmental, the preeminence of centers for research, these will persist in a time of efforts to cut the costs of the university's operation. It will be undergraduate academic education, most neglected now of the university's responsibilities, which will suffer most in the lean years. Few will care. Sadly it must be said that most of the current enthusiasm for the three-year A.B. springs less from the conviction that today's students are intellectually superior than from a sense that undergraduate education is mainly a waste of time, the component most readily dispensed with when ways are sought to reduce the time from first grade to the practice of law, medicine, or whatever.

It seems reasonable to assume that the shape of the public university in the future will be controlled by a dividing of its resources between graduate centers for research and undergraduate departments akin to those we know now in conservatories, engineering schools, and colleges of education. From present evidence there is little reason to believe that the shape of the private universities will be very different. Tempting as it is to believe that they might now try to define their role in terms of what the public institutions cannot or will not do—Harvard recasting itself to fit the ideas of William Arrowsmith, say—there is little likelihood of its happening. Indeed, the private universities seem lately to have taken the state universities as their model, reversing the old pattern. Some have seemed suicidally bent on trying to match the public institution's diversity of programs and professional schools. Some have described their goals and responsibilities in language which makes them indistinguishable from those of community colleges. Virtually all of them, in easier days, have been as guilty as any state university of neglecting their academic center, the college of arts and sciences, in favor of other commitments. The reason is not difficult to determine. In the private universities as in the public, the decisions which control the kind and quality of undergraduate education are made by men whose first commitment is to the graduate and professional schools, who thus define the undergraduate component in terms of the graduate and professional components. For them the undergraduate program has no objectives of its own, no purposes except in terms of what comes next on the university's ladder. No private university has yet indicated that it will seek to change that order of things. Announcements of cuts in the number of those being admitted to the graduate schools of the Ivy League are no sign of a shift in priorities.

The public and private universities, once thought to differ in important regard, seem now like two ships sailing the same ocean, blown by the same winds, running against the same currents. They seek the same port, sailing on the same schedule, carrying similar passengers and crews. It is harder than it once was to see why passengers on the one are willing to pay the extra fare.

## II. THE SMALL COLLEGES

For those who have believed that the essential element in higher education is an academic form of undergraduate education, defined in its own terms, the small college has seemed the best vehicle for its accomplishment. Perhaps the most compelling support for that belief is to be found, ironically enough, in the efforts of large universities, when told that they must "do something" about undergraduate education, to create small residential colleges at their center. It is not surprising that these sometimes noble efforts seem always to fail, for the college-within-the-university is ruled by forces which are finally hostile to its success. Many a man by now has dreamed that a college of liberal studies could be the yeast that would eventually work all the university's dough. It has not happened, and the disinterested observer might conclude that responsible liberal education, as distinct from training or instruction in subjects merely juxtaposed, is no longer possible in the large university.

Alas, that same detached observer might come to the same unhappy conclusion about many a small college, for the forces which have shattered the traditional center of the university have heavily damaged the small colleges. Today a college is likely to build its appeal to potential students on the secondary advantages to its size, rather than to find special academic virtues in smallness. Thus its catalogue will probably claim that "at X you get to know your fellow students . . . you are more than just a number . . . teachers know you as a person." Small colleges do well to

emphasize these advantages, especially in face of the naive brutality which so often characterizes the university's dealings with its members. They do well, at a time when 27% of all the students in the country are enrolled in sixty-five universities with student bodies of twenty thousand or over, to stress the personal nature of their programs. Yet it must be granted that these claims cannot be uniquely made by liberal arts colleges; they could as well be made by any small seminary, school of engineering, or business college. By now, though, claims for a special sort of social intimacy seem to have become the sole justification for the existence of many colleges. The academic fare they offer has been taken from the university's menu. They make no claim to offer an alternative mode of education. They seem to have lost sight of their real identity. It was an ideal of an academic community, founded on the intellectual intimacy that grows between teachers and students devoted to the same ends, that was once the pride of the small college. How sad it is to find that ideal so corrupted that an eastern women's college can find the best exemplification of its character in the fact that "most students call their teachers by their first names."

### A Frame For Living

An academic education seeks to engage students so powerfully with the world of ideas and the triumphs of the human spirit that these will provide the frame for all their living. Such engagement does not come out of dabbling with the trivial and peripheral, but out of earnest attention to the great and vital. It does not come out of training in useful skills or from preprofessional curricula. It happens only when an institution commits itself to developing thoughtful men and women, not merely experts in this or that. The small college has seemed uniquely suited to these ends and it is still suited to them today. It can give itself altogether to the goals of academic education, uncompromised by commitments to graduate departments or to faculties of professional schools. It can propose a form of education that is something other than an articulated unit in the train that runs from kindergarten to Ph.D. The very name college goes back to a root which speaks to the interdependency of ideas and the interdisciplinary nature of liberal education. Even today the small college can still propose, in contrast to the chaos of the university's departmentalized world, a coherent view of man's inquiries into his world and his own being.

How many colleges can today legitimately claim the name?

In our century the colleges have retreated from their true character, often yielding to the forces that eventually controlled the universities. As the university's graduate and research programs became increasingly prestigious, particularly after World War II, the faculties of small colleges took their university colleagues as models. The centrifugal forces which made university professors members only of departments, brought to the colleges pressures to fit the study of a subject, not to the work of the college, but to the national concept of the discipline. By the late 1950s college faculty members were often so committed to a disciplinary identity that it was commonly argued that no college could hold on to a faculty unless it added graduate programs. Liberal education came to be thought of as being merely preparatory to the "higher" education of the graduate schools, not as higher education in itself. For the past twenty years at least a college which has laid claim to academic excellence has usually been suggesting that is a better track to the university's upper levels than its neighbors can claim to be.

Today, as the colleges see their enrollments shrink while the universities' rise, they ask themselves what their role shall be, what they can do to survive. In the sometimes feverish quest for an identity, many have apparently decided to imitate the private universities—and thus imitate the public universities. One of Ohio's colleges proposes to provide three distinct curricula for its two thousand students, only one of them with an academic character. The president of another has urged abandonment of academic criteria for the admission or retention of students. A third seems determined to outdo the public institutions in crediting substitutes for academic work. These colleges and others seem ready to grant that no definition of higher education can endure except that which the university has established. They seem already to be admitting that the small college has nothing to offer except the opportunity to call a faculty member by his first name.

### An Alternative

If the small college is to survive, it must argue boldly and cogently an alternative to the university's shrunken vision of undergraduate education. It can have no other claim on society's attention. Given the university's inability to avoid giving to every subject a technical character and preprofessional definition, the opportunity for the small college to provide an alternative seems obvious. We have already referred to those students who have come to look critically upon higher education because it seems to engage them only with the technical and narrowly specialized. Their number is by now legion, in institutions large and small across the country. They are united by their sense of their colleges and universities having failed to afford them what they really seek: a moral and esthetic education. Very few colleges, we should admit, have sought to provide that rich alternative. Arguments in favor of such a form of education have usually been waved away as "impractical" or "unprofessional." We have set our priorities to serve the body of society rather than its soul.

Even more important than the existence of the small college for those

who seek truly liberal education is its survival as the vessel of the humane tradition, the spirit that gave it birth. Without reference to that tradition, our society will find no solution to the problem that faces every technologically advanced society. Without allegiance to that tradition we may eradicate hunger, poverty, disease and still fail. Our technology permits us now to endow hundreds of thousands of young people with skills that would have seemed fantastic in a previous age. We can fit them to ease pain, save lives, cure illness. And we can equip them at the same time to torture, to kill, to destroy. How shall we bring them to choose the one use of their skills over the other?

Our century provides monstrous examples of the evil that men trained, but not humanely educated, will perform. Let one illustration suffice. Nazi doctors during World War II carried out bizarre experiments on Polish women, impregnating them artificially and then causing them to miscarry by such techniques as setting them in ice water. When charged with crimes against humanity, the doctors argued that they had been simply carring on their work as scientists. They had done those things, not in the name of the Führer, not on behalf of Nazi ideology, not for a German victory, but in the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.

There is something utterly offensive, in the end, to a notion of education that celebrates knowledge for its own sake. It is a justification frequently offered, nevertheless, for much that has gone on in our colleges and universities, the explanation most often given by those who have shut themselves off in a little corner of the academic world. Ironically, its dangers are matched only by that other view which influences so much of the university's activity today: the naive belief that higher education serves proper goals by developing skills and capacities in students, without concern for their uses. Again the poles of our present system emerge: at the one the commitment to undergraduate programs which do no more than equip young people to carry out certain functions; at the other, graduate research given to developing knowledge for its own sake. The lack of a moral middle is by now painfully obvious.

An academic education for undergraduates is no guarantee that we shall cross that bridge to a better life. We may say soberly that it is our only hope of having any vision of a better life. If we lose sight of the difference between educating doctors and training them, we shall have a world as lacking in moral principles as that created by Hitler.

## III. THE HUMANE COLLEGE

It is easier to define the aims of higher education than to describe confidently how those goals shall be reached. It is easier to find agreement on what shall go into the training of accountants, architects, or lawyers than on what is essential in their education. Societies have never been quick to see the values in liberal education and these will be least obvious to a society which has been told to measure the value of a college degree in terms of so many dollars of additional income over a lifetime. To make a case for an academic mode of education today may be harder than it has ever been, when direct experience is so highly prized and when the academic is loudly denounced as trivial, foolish, and irrelevant. The charge, we should admit, has some foundation. We all know of too many examples of comma counting, self-indulgent research, and the mere assembling of data. Some members of colleges, no less than their university colleagues, have preached liberal education only to practice something else.

There is surely no more relevant a form of education than liberal education, no activity less foolish or trivial. It is certainly true that the great social problems of our time—urban blight, poverty, crime, disease, racial discrimination—lend themselves to analysis and treatment by methods which have little to do with liberal education. Yet, if these problems are to be understood—the prerequisite to their being solved—we must come to them on the traditional academic paths of detachment, objective evaluation, and comprehensive study. They are, in the end, the contemporary expression of the questions the humane studies have always dealt with when they have attempted to treat the human condition. (The moral issues attendant upon the splitting of the atom are not essentially different from those which go with possessing an axe.) Whatever capacity higher education has to deal with large moral issues will be lost, if we force our institutions to seek local solutions to immediate problems. A university should not be asked to share its endowment among the poor in its community in an effort to deal with the problem of poverty.

We must be careful in setting out our expectations of our institutions of higher education. Colleges and universities do not exist to provide pat answers, but to engage students with vital questions. A college does not indoctrinate its students or ask their allegiance to a certain notion of beauty, a particular ethic or religion, a partisan point of view. The responsible college will seek to bring every student to formulate independently his answers to the first question in all humane investigation, a question never better framed than in the King James Bible's, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" The college has only one way of doing this. It sets its student to the answers that other men, in different times and places, have given to that question; it proposes what men have from time to time thought lovely and of good report; it examines man's efforts to deal with the problem of his humanity through his arts and sciences. But, importantly, the college does not think of its student passive before these questions and answers. It seeks his daily, continuing engagement with them, re-

lying on its teachers to be the chief instrument of its purpose. Giving equal voice to the truths that metaphor suggests as to those proposed through scientific inquiry, the college can only urge the student to give them equal ear. It cannot require any man to construct his own world view, but it remains dedicated to providing every student that opportunity and to guarding his freedom to perform that act of synthesis independently.

**The Universally Human**

Yet, even while the college is wedded to a view of education in these private and personal terms, it is equally pledged to the conviction that education leads us to the universally human. The college's way of knowing is synonymous with viewing from many points. It gives equal weight to different and conflicting views, granting no pride of place to one mode of inquiry, one system of thought, one representation of man. The knowing that is being and the knowing that is understanding are not the same. (We may need to remind ourselves from time to time that they are not.) To know poverty or suffering in human terms, rather than as personal problems, we must go beyond the reflex action, the intuitive, the experiential. We cannot properly understand poverty unless we scrutinize it under the spotlights that are focused by the sociologist, the economist, the historian, the philosopher, the psychologist, the poet. The "white light of truth" in the college is that which we compose out of the red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet of separate beams; it is never the college's purpose to have its members see a world only in a yellow or violet hue. The college's first characteristic is that it is a bringing together; its essential mode is interdisciplinary; it achieves its goals only insofar as its members and its graduates exemplify its complex character in their thinking. In its daily functioning the college demonstrates the paradox of the human condition: that we are individual and yet of the species; that to be free of the limits of our own knowing we must depend on the knowings of others. When we forget that and withdraw to a single narrow perspective, we are set groping before our problems like blind men of the fable before their elephant.

It is difficult to think of a freer state than that of being student. More than the child, who is the captive of the processes of growing up, the undergraduate is free to change and develop, unfettered by a particular commitment to think as politician, mother, historian, banker. That freedom, too, liberal colleges have sought to guard for their students, putting off the day of defining through commitment until the student has had every reasonable opportunity to come to understand himself and his culture. In the name we have given to the day of graduation, Commencement, we have chosen to emphasize the beginning of commitment, the student's full participation henceforth in his society, his being no longer detached from it. It is also, obviously, an ending, the close of a brief period when he has had opportunity, out of his study of what man has been and now is, to glimpse the better being that man might become. But, we must never forget, it is also the opportunity to equip himself to help his society realize that vision.

It is perhaps only now, as we begin to perceive the failure of the universities, that we can fully appreciate the vital need for colleges committed to a humane view of higher education. The growing barbarism in our huge institutions, we are coming to see, has directly to do with their great size, for with bigness has come a loss of integrity. (Presidents of universities have been able, for example, to hide from faculties the kinds of research activity to which their institution was committed.) Until now we have usually valued the smallness and the residential character of the colleges because these have permitted a deliberate limitation and concentration vital to their activities. We have treasured the sense of being committed to but one purpose, the right to exclude what did not seem essential. But more and more it is apparent that the chief virtue to smallness is the opportunity for dialogue between teachers and students, the chief failing of the university that this dialogue has broken down. The professor in the university has become a disembodied voice over a PA system, an image on a TV screen, the author of the class textbook. He cannot be questioned or drawn into discussion. His students see him before them for the few weeks of the quarter —and never again, very likely. He will hardly be better known to his faculty colleagues.

**Interaction**

The prime academic virtue to smallness, then, is that it provides for interaction between teacher and teacher, teacher and student, student and student. To be a member of the college is to be committed to such exchanges. It is not enough for the college professor to be tolerant of his colleague's discipline; he must be responsibly engaged with it. It is not enough for a student member to be politely acquainted with the subjects that lie outside his major interest; he must have some knowledge of them. But more than that. It is vital that members of the college have opportunity to see whether education touches the living of their colleagues. Thus students must have continuing access to their teachers, beyond the course and beyond the year, so that they may know what carries over from a man's classroom pronouncements on one matter to his judgment on other things. A faculty must have members enough for the college to deal responsibly with subject matter, but it must be kept small enough to provide frequent exchanges between teachers of different disciplines and between teachers and students. The quality of the college's life, in short, will depend altogether on the

extent to which it exists as an academic *community*. Without the intellectual intimacy of a community thus understood students will have little opportunity to discern whether the truths a man exalts in his professional statements are the truths of his life. Without the opportunity for dialogue they will receive their teachers as only propagandists. We have long claimed that the role of teaching in undergraduate education is a critical one. Just how crucial is the role of the teacher may not be wholly apparent until it is too late.

We must return undergraduate education to a first concern for the humane, if we are to have a society composed of other than soulless functionaries. We must have some independent colleges devoted to a celebration of human capabilities, if we are to remind the universities of a nobler definition than they seem now to seek for themselves. In the best of all possible worlds students would not have to choose between humane education and training in useful skills, any more than parents would have to choose between their children learning to read or having enough to eat. For the foreseeable future our society seems likely to force the choice or, worse, to neglect the very possibility of choice. We in the colleges must seek to preserve a rich alternative.

## IV. KENYON COLLEGE

Much of the foregoing speaks to an ideal, to the notion of a college perhaps more often celebrated in the pages of catalogues than known in our experience. Yet it is not too much to suggest that the distance between a college today and the chances of its survival is roughly the same as its distance from that ideal. It seems rather obvious that the colleges most likely to be swallowed up by the public universities are those which think of their role as being no different from that of the university. Kenyon is a good college. We must ask ourselves carefully now whether it is good enough: good enough to warrant foundations giving us their support, good enough to have students select us from the many choices open to them, good enough to bring those to us who are willing to pay the extra cost. Indeed, before we measure ourselves against any ideal or imagine the Kenyon we want for the future, we must look at ourselves frankly as we are. We need first to consider what the actuality of the College is as compared to our statements about ourselves. Do our students perceive the College as we perceive it? Do we have, as the Faculty, a common perception of Kenyon? What have we said is the reason for Kenyon's being?

Kenyon has always been, we say, a liberal arts college and is that today. We can point to a distinguished history and to something like a faith that has ruled us. Yet, like most colleges, we have moved away from the humane tradition and have increasingly accepted a definition of the College implicitly understood, though rarely acknowledged in public: departments preparatory to the graduate schools. We have made our pride the number of our graduates who have gone on in our subject, thinking less of those who have taken other roads. The best evidence of our success, we have thought, has come with our honors candidates being judged the equal of MAs in their subject (thus judged not coincidentally, by members of university faculties). We have checked on the College's health by taking its temperature in the number of Wilson Fellows we have graduated. These are good things in their way for any faculty to cherish, providing that they do not become the goals of the college in themselves. We seem increasingly to have seen in them our prime justification. The consequence for the College has been a shifting of weight to the departments. The decisions we make about ourselves, from what shall go into Freshman Orientation to what shall appear in the Commencement Program, seem to grow out of the general assumption that the departmental counts for more, in the end, than the collegiate.

### Are We A College?

Are we, then, a college or merely a congeries of departments? Have we thought as much as we should about the difference between being, say, a biologist at Kenyon and at Kansas State? Is Economics as a college discipline defined differently than it is by the university's undergraduate courses? De we expect the Kenyon student majoring in English to differ in important respects from Berkeley's English majors? In one way or another we have both assumed and claimed that there *are* differences between the Kenyon way and the ways of others, differences which justify our continuing claim on society's attention. Perhaps what we have really been assuming is a distinctive quality to the work of our department because of its being carried on within the collegiate structure here. But what, then, do we take that structure to be? Is it any more than the mere coexisting of separate departments? If we are to claim for Kenyon that its distinction lies in being a college, an academic community, we shall do well to look at every aspect of our activity — in collegiate, departmental, and private terms.

We can begin with our curriculum, for it is through our arrangement of studies in the College that we express most directly our convictions about what is essential in liberal education. The dimensions of Kenyon's curriculum, if we take curriculum here to mean the course of study leading to the degree, suggests the splitting of the student between work in one department and limited work in others. "Splitting" seems the appropriate word, better than "dividing" or "sharing," for we have not integrated these two elements in our curriculum. They seem set off one against the other. Neither in the design of our curriculum nor usually in our practice do we set

the student's major work in a context of other studies; these are seen instead as no more than backdrop to the action in the major department. We have not succeeded in translating into the curriculum any sense that the interdisciplinary is the essential mode, any more than we have suggested that independent study and synthesis should be the capstones of undergraduate education. We do not demand of our students that they demonstrate their understanding in terms of relating their major subject to others. Indeed, we seem little by little to have lost the sense of the word "major," making it a synonym for "exclusive" or "only." Hasn't our curriculum become the program of one *department* anticipated by a set of general education courses? We seem to have forgotten that the "major" was to be the *student's* chief, but not sole, study, the appropriate center for all his undergraduate work and the major structuring element in the inquiries that would lead him to understanding. We have corrupted the notion in making the major synonymous with the subject that the student will do in graduate school or with his eventual profession. It is our practice, more than student naiveté, which has brought the question, "What can you do with a German major except teach German?"

We need a curriculum which exemplifies the ideals of liberal study. We, even more than our students, must know what are the principles which lead us to set the requirements for the degree as we do. We shall need to acknowledge that a thoughtful student may wish to make his major study something which does not fit our present notions of the department's major program. The idea is not so astonishing. We shall need also to ensure that our students see their other work as something more than courses simply juxtaposed to the courses of their prime interest. Thus they must be able to make telling choices from among thoughtfully proposed alternatives. Every department, then, must look to its responsibilities to those students who do not make their major study in that department. What shall guide us as we decide what will be the content of our department's elementary courses?

It is on these large questions that we need some agreement before we speak to the particular requirements for the degree. We shall not keep the confidence of our students, if we seem interested only in rearranging units of credit or in buttressing such artificial structures as the division. What has brought student attacks on degree requirements all across the land is, not that faculties have demanded that every student take a foreign language or that they have paired Psychology with Biology rather than with Sociology, but that they have failed to offer argument persuasively in justification of them. (The battle for foreign languages in the undergraduate curriculum may well have been lost the day there was offered the bankrupt argument that they were useful for people going on to graduate schools.) It is surely improper for a college to set requirements without providing justification for them, surely immoral to state them merely as a "thou shalt."

### Most Difficult Questions

The most difficult questions are those we must put to ourselves, privately. We cannot claim membership in the Kenyon Faculty and yet reserve the right to teach our subject as though it were hermetically sealed from all the rest. We cannot think it our responsibility to profess only X and somebody else's to take care of the liberal education here. Should not each of us expect to serve as a model of the liberally educated man, suggesting in all our teaching linkings and dependencies? It is easier to be authority on our specialty than to be seen as student among students, easier to refer a question about the implications of our subject to the historian, the philosopher, the sociologist, than to deal with those implications ourselves. How shall we expect our students to attempt the difficult task of synthesis if we shrink from it ourselves?

These considerations must be only a beginning, if we are to secure Kenyon's future. We shall have much to do in many month's ahead, considering how we can exploit our smallness and residential character to the advantage of our academic life. We should not scorn any opportunity which promises to enrich our students' experience—off-campus study, experiential learning, special programs abroad—but neither should we suggest that these are identical with the academic work of the College. We must yield to nobody in insisting on thoroughness and responsibility, in demanding intellectual rigor. Our aim must be to see the College as a living body which changes and adapts, but which retains its essential character.

Some fifteen years ago a prominent economist saw some hope for the survival of the private colleges in the economies they could realize through growing larger. The argument, valid in its time, seems strangely dated now. Indeed, in a year when the private colleges of New York State alone could happily accommodate fifteen thousand more students, it is hard to think of a time when colleges could provide solutions to their problems as easily as they could build dormitories. Mr. Tickton was right in impressing on us the need for planning and fiscal responsibility, right in believing that most of the problems of the 'fifties could be solved by aggressive presidents and bold trustees. Yet the questions which seemed paramount then, though they remain to haunt us, are pushed into second place by what is plainly the overriding question of the 'seventies: Can the small college justify its continued existence? It is a question to be answered only by its faculty. There is no endowment large enough to sustain a college which has lost its reason for being.

## *the larwill lecture, 1972*

*As an introduction to this feature and to its author, we quote Prof. Richard F. Hettlinger who introduced the speaker at lecture on April 3, 1972.*

"The Larwill Lectures were established originally in 1908 by the generosity of Mr. Joseph H. Larwill, and his son Paul H. Larwill more than doubled the endowment in a bequest to Kenyon College in 1957. Mr. Paul Larwill's gift was in memory of his wife Daphne Paz Larwill and her brother, Frederick Dolores de Wymetal de Wylsdorff.

"The intention of the donors was that the lectures should be primarily concerned with philosophical or religious subjects. They were to be delivered by 'persons of distinction and wide learning' and were to be published from time to time. For some years the income from this endowment has been utilized for the general program of the Lectureships Committee. This is the first year in which the Larwill Lectureship has been revived according to the intentions of its founders, and Dr. Shivesh Thakur happily embodies both disciplines mentioned in original endowment.

"Dr. Thakur is a graduate in philosophy of Patna University in his native India, wrote his doctoral Dissertation for the University of Durham on Christian and Hindu Ethics, received the Diploma in the History and Philosophy of Science from the University of Oxford, has published a book and numerous articles on philosophy and religion, President of the New Zealand Philosophy Conference last year, and is on leave of absence from his post in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Auckland."

# Knowledge Faith and Superstition

**by Shivesh C. Thakur**

These three terms have one element in common: they all refer to forms of belief. Saying much beyond that seems to me to involve problems. However, judging from the ease and frequency with which these are dropped into our ordinary discourse, it might appear that they are some of the least problematic concepts we employ in our daily thinking and speech.

Popular usage certainly leaves us in no doubt about when and how to use these words: when a belief or notion is dear to me and I share it with other people, especially those I like or admire, then, 'naturally,' I know it. Just think of the number of things Mr. Agnew 'knows' about the 'silent majority.' When I am deeply committed to a belief that I cannot fully comprehend or explain, it readily becomes my 'faith,' e.g., the optimist's conviction that the world cannot be just an accident 'full of sound and fury' but 'signifying nothing.' Superstition is easier still—it is always what the other 'guy' (irrationally, of course) believes, but that I cannot or will not! I hope you agree that there is room for greater precision in our use of these terms.

What particularly concerns me here is the question of boundaries between these concepts, and the criteria of demarcation of these boundaries. I am assuming that the question is important and so deserves some investigation. It may well be that after due consideration we feel more convinced than ever that popular opinion has always been right. In that case this essay would have at least achieved a vindication of popular usage, and we would then, with greater ease of conscience, be able to call other people superstitious!

I shall talk about knowledge and superstition first, if only because in some sense these concepts are easier to handle. This should not be surprising, for 'knowledge' is one of the most central concepts in philosophy, and one would expect philosophers to have been able to define it precisely. As far as I can tell, the nearest to a universally agreed definition of the term that philosophers have come, is that knowledge is 'justified true belief.' I cannot be said to *know* that 'Chou En Lai eats a ton of Chow Mein every day,' unless he does actually do so, and, besides, I have good reasons for believing that he does. Even if the Prime Minister of the People's Republic does actually accomplish this incredible feat, but my reason for believing it is that 'All Chinese are monsters, and so Chou, as a Chinese, must need at least a ton of Chou Mein a day,' then I cannot be said to know this proposition. So without getting into further complexities

for the time being, we shall accept that to know is to have a belief which is true and which one is justified in believing. To be more precise, I can be said to know a proposition if and only if: (i) it is true; (ii) I believe it; and (iii) I have good grounds for believing it.

It should now be easy to understand what superstition is, for I take it to be absolutely safe to argue that one cannot know *and* be superstitious about the same proposition. To the extent that a belief satisfies the conditions of knowledge, just to that extent it fails to satisfy the conditions of being a superstition, and vice versa. Consequently, for a belief to be a superstition it must be either: (i) unjustified and false, or (ii) unjustified but true, or (iii) unjustified but neither true nor false. In relation to our earlier example it can be said that if a person insists on believing it then his belief will have all the hallmarks of a gross superstition. For no human being, least of all Chou, with his rather lean physical frame, can eat a ton of Chow Mein a day. So the proposition is false. Moreover, since it is believed on the assumption that all Chinese are monsters etc. it becomes a falsity supported by a mammoth fiction. The belief is false *and* unjustified.

However, not every belief that we might wish to characterize as superstition meets these maximal conditions. I may believe that 'Angela Davis is a communist,' which happens to be true; but if my belief is based on some such argument as 'She is a woman, a black, and a philosophy professor at that, a combination which is bound to produce either a witch or a communist; and thank God, she is not a witch!', then, in spite of the truth of the proposition in question, my belief could be said to be a piece of superstition. This would be an instance of superstition where the proposition believed is true but unjustified. Superstition in its most general sense, it seems to me, connotes simply 'irrational or unfounded belief.' Being irrational or unfounded, it is very likely that the belief will involve falsity, but I cannot see why that must be the case. There is another reason why falsity need not be a necessary condition for belief to be superstitious. A person may well be considered superstitious for believing a proposition which is logically neither true nor false. Consider the case of the *man* who holds: 'On the night of the full moon in the month of March, 1975, I will become the second wife of Tiny Tim.' The truth as well as the falsity of this proposition presupposes that the believer be a woman, a condition not satisfied by this case; so the proposition does not have a truth value. And yet we should have little hesitation in saying that the belief is superstitious.

It is possible that part of the irrationality that makes a belief seem superstitious might consist in the fact that it is usually accompanied by an element of persistence on the part of the believer. I have not dwelt on this and other similar features for the reason that they refer to the psychology of the believer, whereas I am primarily concerned with the nature or logical status of the belief itself.

Again, I might be told that superstition is a term applied primarily to practices: it is what a person does and how he does it that invites the opprobrium, e.g., idolatry or the use of lucky charms. While I am aware of this usage, it is my view that these practices presuppose beliefs which must have a certain character if the practices themselves are to be called superstitious. At any rate, I am here speaking mainly of superstition in its most general sense rather than in one of its many particularized senses. So I shall suggest that knowledge and superstition are contraries, in so far as the latter indicates irrationality.

Moving to the somewhat more difficult, even 'elusive,' concept of faith, I would like to say first of all that I shall take 'faith' to be synonymous with 'religious belief.' By the latter I mean 'giving assent to a metaphysical proposition which is seen by the believer to involve a deep personal commitment to an ontology as well as to a way of life.' How, then, is faith related to knowledge and superstition?

It is not too difficult to recall that in the history of every culture there have been men, many of impeccable integrity, who have declared that religious belief of any sort is inherently superstitious. The grounds suggested for this judgment have been various, but at least some of these have included the consideration that there could never be good enough reasons for accepting the claims made by religious systems. Some recent philosophers have gone further and declared that religious assertions (e.g. God loves men) either fail to make sense or are plainly false. For, when tested in the way scientific propositions are, they turn out in the long run to be either incoherent or false. It should be clear that if this view were correct, then religious statements could never constitute knowledge, for they will fail to satisfy one of its necessary conditions, namely truth.

It is possible to argue, however, that those who claim that religious statements are false have misunderstood the nature of such statements. To start with, there is no reason why they should be taken literally. If, while visiting an art gallery, my guide says "That's a Rembrandt masterpiece," I do not normally respond by asking: "But which is the slavepiece?" The word 'masterpiece' has a specific context and tradition of use, and my acquaintance with it precludes my taking 'master' literally. Similarly, if we understood religious utterances in their proper context and tradition, we might not be so easily tempted to regard them as either incoherent or false.

This sort of argument could be quite plausibly reinforced by pointing out that religious utterances are about 'transcendent' entities, states and processes, and not about 'sensible reality.'

That being so, to put them to rigid scientific or experimental tests is somehow improper. Religious discourse is quite distinct from scientific discourse. In general, to evaluate the claims of one by criteria borrowed from the other is like trying to play chess according to the rules of bridge. Wittgenstein, among recent philosophers, has in his later works lent weight to this sort of reasoning.

I should like to add that we do need to put religious belief, talk and practice in their proper perspective by emphasizing that they spring from and encapsulate our *personal* experiences, and our responses to a world that we never fully understand. And where vital experiences and deep feelings are concerned, language can at best struggle to express them. Describing his response to the mystery behind the world an Indian poet says that he feels as though he were a mute little boy who, having eaten a delicious sweet, wants desperately to, but cannot, convey his delight to people. Unfortunately, religious people in general have not behaved as though they were mutes. The volumes on religious experience and doctrines tell a different story.

Anyway, all these considerations suggest that religious discourse may be different from, say, scientific discourse. But I do not think the facts allow us to argue for the complete autonomy of religious discourse. For one thing, the doctrine of autonomy would seem to imply that neither scientific nor philosophical criteria, indeed nothing outside religious, could ever have any bearing on one's religious beliefs. But this does not seem to me to be true: religion is not cut off from the rest of our life, nor are religious beliefs altogether immune from examination, even rejection, by the believer. If genetic engineering succeeded in creating a human baby answering prior specifications, say, with the ability to 'walk' rapidly on its head without using its legs or arms, then it would take a naive believer to remain quite undisturbed and to keep repeating: "God created man in his own image."

To return to our main issue, it seems that there are good reasons why religious beliefs and utterances need to be understood in a way different from the skeptic's. This will save them from the charge of outright falsity. But this move will not have shown them to be true. In fact, for the very reasons that they cannot be considered false, they cannot be regarded as true either. As I see them, religious theories—of which particular religious assertions are parts —are metaphysical; and they are not true or false in any straight-forward sense of the terms; only more or less intelligible, more or less plausible, more or less rational. And to the extent that religious beliefs cannot be true or false in a straightforward sense, they cannot constitute knowledge in any straightforward sense.

However, in derivative or special sense of 'true' and of 'knowledge' there is nothing in what I have said which could stop them from being considered true or from constituting knowledge. This indeed may be the reason why many metaphysicians and religious thinkers have spoken of 'levels' of truth and knowledge, and have regarded religious truth and religious knowledge as belonging to another 'higher' level. As to the intelligibility of this notion or the possibility of this higher knowledge, I have nothing to say. I am still struggling on the 'lower' level! The last thing I would wish to do would be to say that it is impossible. If, without having once gone into a physics laboratory, I can simply take the word of the physicist to the effect that nutrinos 'exist,' then without having practiced the discipline of a religious life, I cannot deny the religious person's claim that there are immortal souls. After all, if there are immortal souls, it is entirely possible that I might have one too, and that is not an altogether unpleasant thought!

Now, what can we say about the relation between faith and superstition? It is clear that faith cannot be knowledge (in the ordinary sense of knowledge). But that does not entail that it must be superstition. For we have only established that knowledge and superstition are contraries. That simply means that no belief can be both, but it is possible for a belief to be neither. On what independent criteria, then, can we distinguish between faith and superstition? The question needs careful reflection, particularly by believers. For it is mainly religious cultures, some more than others, which have often in the past taken upon themselves the burden (or 'duty' as they have called it) of eradicating so-called superstition from the face of the earth. Some cultures have sounded more 'self-righteous' than others; and one would expect the former to know and to be able to show that their beliefs had qualities or features which "superstition' lacked. Besides many (or most) of the kinds of beliefs that are commonly regarded as superstition look suspiciously like religious beliefs and are held on the grounds sounding not too unlike religious ones. So how do we tell the difference?

Let us briefly look at some of the criteria that might be employed. It seems clear to me that in the task of telling religion from superstition, at least scientific criteria of truth and validity cannot be of much help. For in the light of these, religion is just as irrational, unfounded, and based on ignorance as any so-called superstition. The man of faith cannot 'eat his cake and have it' as well. He cannot plead that religion is outside or beyond the scope of scientific investigation, and yet employ scientific criteria to tell the difference between religion and superstition. In the 'eyes' of science worshipping an image of God is neither more nor less superstitious than praying to God himself; imploring the rain-god to send a good shower is no more superstitious than asking the 'Heavenly Father' to forgive our sins. Scientifically speaking, faith and superstition

sink or sail together.

Can it be then that there are 'moral reasons' which justify faith but do not support so-called superstition? Speaking generally, the answer would seem to be no. There may be an 'objective' morality, but the man of faith would accept it primarily because he sees it as entailed by his faith. And this reasoning, namely its being entailed by one's faith, is open to so-called superstitious people as well. We cannot without prejudice accept the morality implicit in a given religious system and then argue that the beliefs or practices of another religious system or community are immoral or amoral and hence superstitious. Speaking 'objectively,' circumcision has neither better nor worse moral grounds than the wearing of sacred threads by 'high' caste Hindus; on moral grounds the Cross is no more sacred than the Cow!

Perhaps we have been considering these beliefs and practices piecemeal; and it may be argued—rightly it seems to me—that particular beliefs could only be said to be justified (or otherwise) in so far as they did or did not happen to be parts of a larger theory. If the theory is acceptable, then all the beliefs that are integral parts of it, can be said to have 'theoretical' support. Now, since one theory can never be evaluated on the basis of criteria borrowed from another, the status of a belief can only be determined within the framework of the theory which incorporates the belief. Consequently, one religious system can be no more rational or better grounded than another, provided both are internally consistent, and do their respective jobs. But then, even the most flagrantly superstitious belief is always part of an overall system of beliefs which might be said to serve a useful purpose to people who accept it. The primitive who sees spirits lurking behind every leaf need not ncessarily have any less theoretical support than his 'civilized' counterpart who posits an immortal soul behind every mortal frame.

Nor can we always make a distinction in terms of intensity of belief. A 'superstition' need not be—seldom is—held with any less intensity than a religious belief; 'superstitions' often colour and control the entire lifestyles of people, just as faith does. Authority or 'revelation' cannot be much help, for each system of beliefs—whether Christian, 'pagan,' 'heathen' or otherwise—has its own. And there seems to be no reason why one ought, in general, to be regarded as any more 'respectable' than any other.

I imagine that by now some of you might have started wondering about my motives. Why have I first taken the pains to defend religious utterances against the charge of falsity, and then been suggesting that no line can be drawn between faith and superstition—at least not a clear one? What is the point of this exercise?

In my opinion to have a faith—any faith—is in an important sense, to harbour superstition; and the believer who sees this and so understands the logical status of religious belief, will have very little use for the word superstition. As we have seen, superstition is irrational belief, but so in a sense, is faith, even though we might euphemistically call it 'non-rational' or 'supra-rational.' Sophistry cannot hide the fact that neither of them is fully 'rational.' Does this make faith less respectable? Not necessarily; for I do not believe that reason does or should control all aspects of our judgment or behaviour. I am merely suggesting that 'men of faith' reconsider their assumed superiority over the 'superstitious,' and desist from 'swearing' at other peoples' faiths. But if complete abstinence from this favorite pastime is going to give them 'indigestion' or 'cramps,' then I ask them to do me at least this favour: never to call anyone superstitious, except on Sundays and 'holy' days!

It may be interesting to note at this point that one of the suggested interpretations of the Latin 'superstitio' is 'excess in devotion.' If we were to revive this meaning, perhaps we might after all be able to satisfy those who wish to insist that some distinction be made between faith and superstition. For we might then take the view that while a certain amount of devotion is faith, too much of it is superstition. If this suggestion had any merit, I might even recommend an extension of the scope in the term to include 'excess of conviction,' as well. A person who tends to regard his own religious beliefs as the only 'correct' ones, or for that matter, one who, instead of seeing religious statements as an individual's feeble and vain attempts to capture the mystery of the universe, sees them as the embodiment of final truth, may on this view be regarded as superstitious.

But then if we are prepared to move in this direction, it seems to me that we simply cannot stop here. So let me now withdraw some of the things I said earlier about knowledge and its relation to superstition. I said that a person cannot know *and* be superstitious about the same proposition. But now that seems distinctly possible. We have so far assumed that the definition of knowledge as 'justified true belief' is free from faults. But those who have followed recent philosophical literature on the subject will be aware of what has come to be called 'Gettier's Problem.' Gettier has, it seems to me, shown that on purely formal grounds this definition is inadequate. And until someone has solved Gettier's problem, we cannot be sure what we know, since we cannot be certain what knowledge is. Given this situation, it does not necessarily follow that we cannot be said to know anything at all, for in a 'rough and ready' way we can. But it does follow, it seems to me, that an excess of conviction that we do know a given proposition would be uncalled for. Now, why not call this kind of excess superstition too? And once we have done that, which one of us would be left to 'cast the first stone,' and call someone else superstitious?

# DEATHS

**Charles H. Weatherhead** '15, retired production manager of the Weatherhead company, Cleveland. He had lived in Florida since his retirement in 1957.

**Edgar B. Read** '19, of N. Andover, Mass., on October 11, 1971. A noted research chemist he had been associated with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and later with Nuclear Metals, Inc., a firm specializing in research in metallurgy. He had also served as a supervisor of a zirconium analytical chemistry project for the Atomic Energy Commission. He wrote frequently on scientific subjects and is credited with the invention of a "speedy vat" watch glass which enables chemists to use covered beakers in evaporation processes.

**Louis Melyne Latta, Jr.,** '23 in the summer of 1972. He had been a stage director with the Jerome H. Cayill Co. of New York, specializing in directing entertainments for charitable groups.

**William C. Hine** '28 of Bexley, Ohio, August 15, 1972. He was a manufacturers representative. He is survived by his wife, Cynthia; a stepbrother, William Reed; a stepdaughter, Mrs. Cynthia Stech of Kalamazoo, Mich; and several nieces and nephews.

**Robert B. Janes** '28, of Williamsburg, Va., on August 3, 1972. Retired research director for the Radio Corp. of America, he had recently moved to Williamsburg from Princeton, N.J. He was the son of the late George Milton Janes, professor of economics at Kenyon during the late 1920's, and the brother of Milton Janes '31. He is also survived by his wife, Louise, and children Nancy and Robert.

**Charles Barnard Cunningham** '29, a Virginia, Minn., surgeon, in St. Petersburg, Fla.

**Virgil L. Walling** '29, a Detroit, Mich., attorney.

**Henry Hunter McFadden** '30, a Steubenville, Ohio, accountant.

**William Vandivert Bernard** '37, a Seattle, Wash. high school teacher and administrator, found slain in his apartment on August 7, 1972. Survivors include a sister, Ruth of Seattle, and a brother, Robert, of Boise.

**Scott H. Turner,** Hon. '40, noted mining engineer, in August 1972 at the age of 92. His career in mining included heading the U.S. Bureau of Mines in the Administration of President Herbert Hoover, and the discovery and development of imported mineral deposits in many parts of the world. He has headed the American Institute of Consulting Engineers, and for nine years was national president of the Psi Upsilon fraternity. He has received numerous awards for his work in engineering, and in 1967 won the Gold Medal of the National Interfraternity Conference.

**John Friis-Mikkelsen** '70, in a sailing accident in the Atlantic on July 1, 1972. He was one of eleven young people on a voyage from England to Spain when their sailing vessel was rammed by a large French ship and sank within seconds. John's brother, Paul '68, was one of four survivors of the tragedy. John is also survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. Friis-Mikkelsen of Cresskill, N.J.

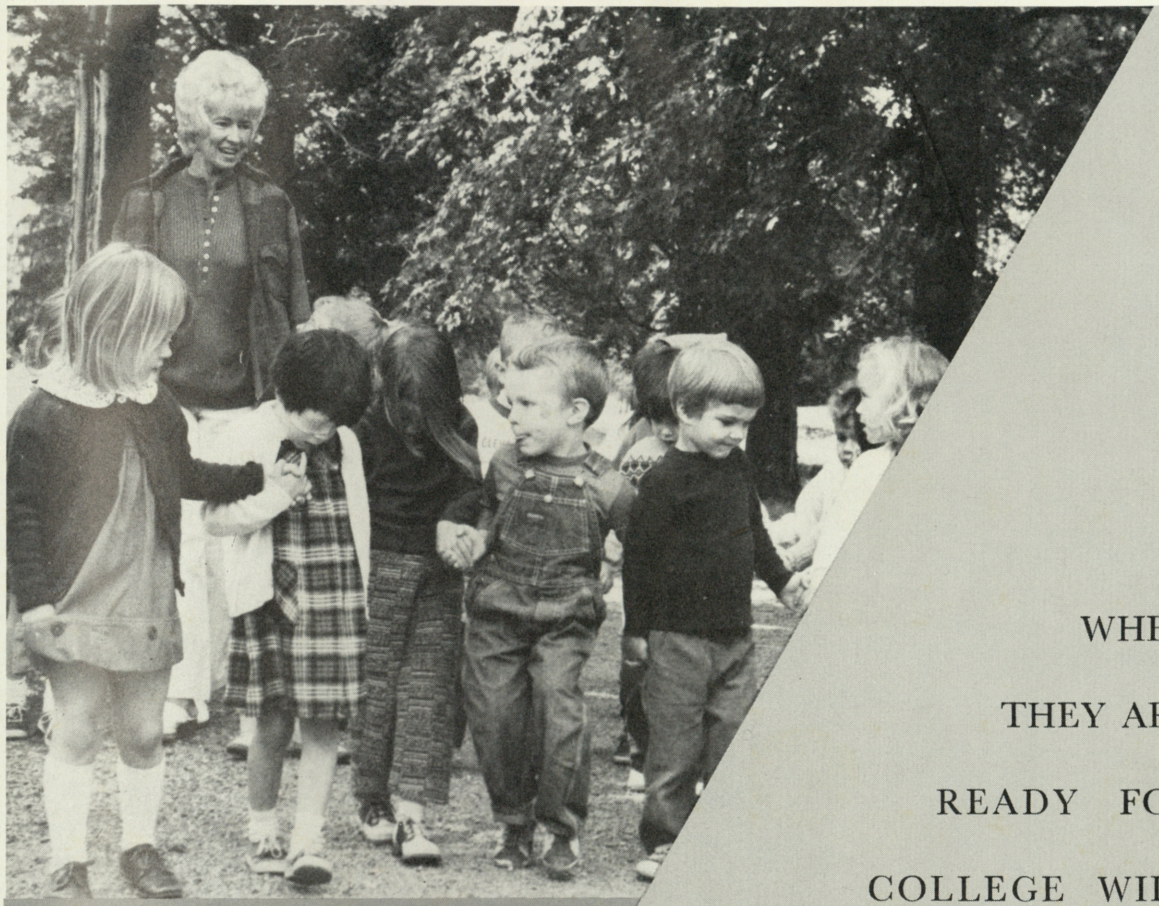
# JOB LINE

**Positions Available**

IBM is looking for qualified college graduates in the marketing area of their Office Products Division. Anyone interested should contact Dean Miller '69 at the Dayton, Ohio, office. Phone 513/461-5000, Ext. 333.

**Summer Job Line**

Last year the Alumni organized an effort through this Job Line column to offer Kenyon students summer employment. We hope to continue and expand this program. If any alumni, parents, or others will have openings for college students this summer, please contact:
Mr. Don Omahan
Office of the Dean of Students
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022



WHEN
THEY ARE
READY FOR
COLLEGE WILL
KENYON BE READY
FOR THEM? PLANNED
GIVING BY BEQUESTS,
TRUSTS, ANNUITIES, LIFE
INCOME CONTRACTS WILL HELP
INSURE KENYON'S PLACE IN THEIR

# F U T U R E

for information write:

PLANNED GIVING

Office of Development
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio
43022

KENYON
COLLEGE BULLETIN
Gambier, Ohio 43022

Mr. Charles McKinley '40-13
2880 Woodbridge Road
Hudson
Ohio 44236