

The Linacre Quarterly

Volume 7 | Number 1

Article 5

January 1939

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Recommended Citation

Bull, George D. (1939) "The Catholic College and a Premedical Education," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 7 : No. 1 , Article 5.
Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol7/iss1/5>

THE CATHOLIC COLLEGE AND A PREMEDICAL EDUCATION

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Father Bull began by saying that there are two views of education which are radically different; that according to which of these fundamental points of view one held, would be the training and the curriculum of a college. The two views might be roughly described as "job-ism" and "personism." The first is the theory that education should be directed predominantly toward fitting a student for a job, i. e., to direct the whole educational process immediately toward giving the student that knowledge and those techniques which would advance him in any chosen vocation.

It was under the influence of this point of view that American colleges had, in increasing numbers, introduced all kinds of courses, regardless of any permanent human value, they might have, if only they got a student ready for earning a living. "Pre-courses" in medicine, law, engineering, business, education, etc., had been introduced in such numbers, that the college was no longer a place of education but a place of pre-training in vocations.

The spirit of this kind of college work is at odds with the traditional spirit of the Catholic education. It is part of the Catholic tradition to be interested primarily not in the job, but in the per-

son of the student. It has conceived education to be the development of intellect, imagination and noble emotion. The mental life has its own proper or befitting good, independently of any use of these powers that may be made for earning a living. Just as health is desired by men not primarily or exclusively because it is a useful thing to be healthy, but rather because health is the befitting condition of the human body, because it is proper that a body be healthy, so the powers of man's soul have conditions which are their normal and perfecting attributes. We cannot suppose that God gave us intellect, imagination and aesthetic emotions and is indifferent as to whether we give them their co-natural perfections, even in this life, as far as this lies within our power. There is an objective moral obligation that man should enrich with truth, beauty and balance his intellect, his imagination and emotions, just as there is an obligation that he shall enrich his will with moral virtues. Catholic education, therefore, must take cognizance of this and be drawn accordingly. Furthermore, it is a fact of history that the movement in the 19th century (of which we are the heirs today), which destroyed the idea of personism in education and substituted job-ism, is identified with the movement which cast out of

* Notes on an address delivered before the Brooklyn Guild, November 30, 1938.

education all idea of the supernatural. Spencer in his educational writing, and the brilliant and caustic Huxley are cases in point. And they derive from the fantastic naturalism of Rousseau. Nor is this an accident. It is inevitable that men who are hazy or disdainful of a spiritual element in life, should emphasize bread and butter levels, rather than intangible things like beauty and truth. Scientism is the philosophical atmosphere of job-ism. And scientism is merely that habit of mind which attempts to apply to *all* knowledge, to literature, to philosophy, and to religion, the techniques and methods proper to the natural sciences alone.

That is why science cannot, in a Catholic college, be the main instrument of education. Science has as its object nature. Genuine education should have man as its object, and nature only in so far as it is the instrument of man. Literature, therefore, which is primarily man's vision of man, at the moment of highest creative inspiration, and scholastic philosophy, which is the highest achievement of man speculating about man in relation to God, to other men and to nature — these must be the dominant though not the exclusive instruments of education.

Father Bull concluded by saying that in spite of what appears at a superficial glance, this is eminently a *practical* education. To point his remark, the lecturer asked his audience to glance at the fundamental deficiencies of the

modern world. There is chaos, not only in institutions, but in individual lives. Men no longer have a center—a point of referability for their actions and aspirations. Modern intellect is shallow, its speculation is timid. This is clear, if for no other reason, from the fact that men today are so easily the victims of propaganda. "Democracy," for instance, and "Dictatorship" are shibboleths and there is no habit of delicate discrimination among the people which would rob these terms of their power to stampede a whole people into courses of action which will not stand intellectual analysis. That modern emotion is unbalanced, that it oscillates between sentimentality on the one hand and hysteria on the other, the lecturer said, would appear to anyone who reflected on our movies (the ancient Greeks would have laughed these into oblivion!); or who would recall such incidents as the panic caused thousands by a purported attack from Mars a few weeks ago. In a word, if education for generations in this country had been pre-eminently "personistic" and not "job-istic" we should have today as a population, men and women possessing within themselves the capacity to be above things and not at their mercy. They would be self-possessed, and not immersed in jobs, capable of leading the life of a human being as such, and not merely the life of a doctor, an engineer, a lawyer, or a business

man, and the *practical* result of having such an element in considerable numbers in our midst, cannot be denied. Many problems of our social order are due to gullibility, sentimentality, hysteria, and above all the lack of power to discriminate delicately between

ideas. If democracy be the will of the people, let us remember that will supposes intellect. For will is blind. And if democracy be a moral union of human beings and not of technicians as such, let us remember to educate the human being first.

Mercy Killing De Luxe

Advocates of Euthanasia have formed an American group with a membership impressive for its respectability and eminence. It calls itself the National Society for the Legalization of Euthanasia. On its advisory board are such prominent Englishmen as Havelock Ellis, Julian Huxley, the Earl of Listowel, and H. G. Wells.

The founder of this outfit says that the group expects bitter opposition from medical men, who "may bring up their Hippocratic oath (dated 400 B. C.)." He also says: "But common men and women, faced with the practical problems of whether or not they will let their loved ones suffer torment for months before death, will cut through all this ancient red tape and somehow make it possible to do the decent and right thing."

"Most of the arguments against euthanasia are founded on emotion rather than reason." We suppose, remarks the *Medical*

World, that no emotion will enter into the contemplation of wealthy aunts and dependent mothers-in-law, nor into any machinations to bump them off. We suppose, indeed, that no emotion enters into the ideas and efforts and utterances of this much irked group.

As to the mere age of our Hippocratic oath serving to discredit and nullify it, isn't this dangerous boomerang logic? The Sermon on the Mount itself is practically as old, with all its "ancient red tape," to wit: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment." By the same token, one could sever oneself from all sorts of religious obligations, faiths, and creeds. Should we do this? If we are really sincere and prepared to take such steps, why not be honest and call our group the National Society for Cultural Murder?—*New York State Journal of Medicine*, June 1, 1938.