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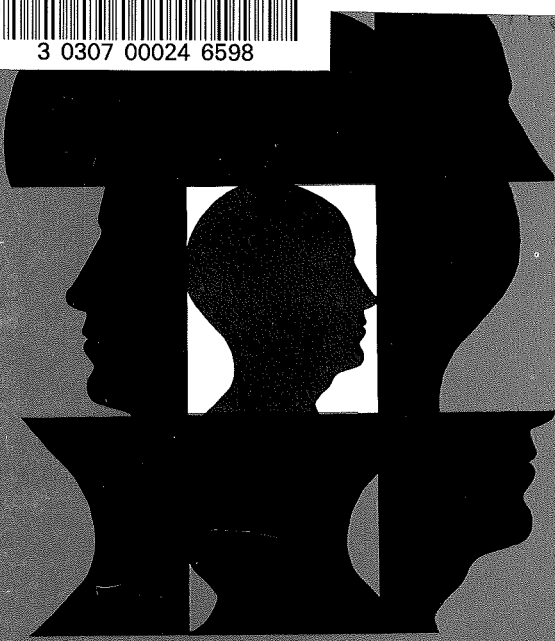
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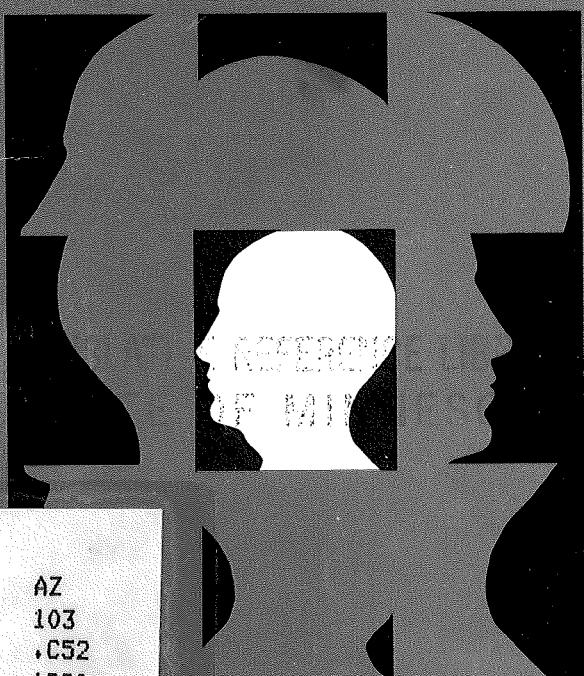


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THE HUMANITIES
AS GROUP MEMORY
BY ALSTON CHASE



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THE HUMANITIES AS GROUP MEMORY

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BY ALSTON CHASE

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PREFACE

Alston Chase, writer, philosopher and Montana rancher, made this provocative presentation at the first annual meeting of Minnesota humanists at Macalester College on April 12, 1979. Chase was asked to challenge the Minnesota humanists and judging from the response by the 225 humanities faculty members in the audience, he was successful. The Minnesota Humanities Commission was pleased to support the Macalester conference and hopes that Chase's thoughtful remarks continue to provoke heated discussion as they did last April.

Portions of the presentation are taken from Dr. Chase's forthcoming book, *Group Memory: A Guide to College and Student Survival in the 1980s*, to be published in the fall of 1980 by Atlantic Monthly Press.

Because the Northwest Area Foundation shares Chase's concern for the humanities and higher education, the Foundation has underwritten the costs of this publication. Dr. Chase has served as a consultant to the Northwest Area Foundation's Higher Education Program.

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THE HUMANITIES AS GROUP MEMORY

The novel *1984*, by George Orwell, was written about a country where love was forbidden, history rewritten and thought suppressed. It was, in short, about a society without the humanities and a time without hope. Next year, the college class of 1984 will matriculate. This class will not face easy times ahead. It is emerging into a society still struggling to accept the idea of limit, where individuals will be absorbed with questions of personal survival. When it graduates, will it have found the humanities a source of strength and hope?

I believe so. The need for the humanities in the 1980s will be greater than ever, and the opportunities will exist, not only for them to serve society, but for them to do so with a renewed sense of mission.

There is today much concern about what the *Chronicle of Higher Education* calls, "the plight of the humanities." During the last year several conferences, commissions and associations have been created to focus national attention on this concern. During a recent trip I took to over twenty colleges, universities, foundations and government agencies, I found a widespread feeling of crisis among academic humanists. There

was, however, little agreement on the nature of the crisis.

Some suggested it is a problem of *money*. The humanities, I was told, are not getting their fair share for teaching and research. They noted that the budget of the National Science Foundation is over six times that of the National Endowment for the Humanities and that professors of the humanistic disciplines are paid less, on the average, than their colleagues in the sciences.

Others told me it is a problem of *students*. They pointed out that undergraduates, now increasingly preoccupied with their economic future, are forsaking the liberal arts for vocational and preprofessional studies; that undergraduate enrollment in the humanities has dropped from nine percent of total enrollment in 1969-70 to five percent in 1975-6, and that graduate enrollment is dropping even more precipitously.

To others, it is a problem of *jobs*. They noted that as enrollment drops the demand for teachers declines, and that according to some accounts, by 1985 four of every five new Ph.D.s in the humanities will be unable to find work in their field.

To others it is a problem of *literacy*. They called my attention to a host of new studies which suggest a decline in reading and writing skills at all levels from fifth grade to graduate school, and to the fact that functional illiteracy now afflicts over twenty percent of the adult population.

And finally, still others suggested it is a crisis of *confidence*. Humanists, they said, no

longer believe in themselves or have confidence in their mission.

These problems of money, students, jobs, literacy and confidence are very real and very serious. Yet they are also paradoxical. For on one hand they suggest that the humanities are suffering from a shortage of money and students, and they suggest that the humanities are not very popular; not even, as the last problem suggests, with humanists themselves. Yet on the other hand these problems are emerging during a time of unprecedented growth of the humanities and after fifteen years of persistent efforts to make them popular. College and university enrollment, after all, grew seventy percent between 1966 and 1976; the number of courses offered in the humanities at private colleges and universities increased substantially during the seventies and the budget of the National Endowment for the Humanities is over thirty-five times what it was in 1966! Likewise, the student demands of the late sixties and early seventies for more relevant studies led to the creation of many innovative courses and programs.

Why then should the humanities be facing a crisis which appears to be at least partially caused by a lack of money, when there is more money, in absolute terms, available for the humanities than ever before? And why should there be a decline in popularity and enrollment after ten years of efforts, by academic humanists, to be more sensitive to student needs and demands?

The answer is, as I shall show, that not despite, but *because* of this money and these efforts there is now a crisis. There are

legitimate needs of our society which it is the humanities' responsibility to satisfy; yet the problems of students, money, jobs, literacy and confidence are all signs that they have failed to do so.

The concerns of our society have become more basic. The preoccupations of the sixties and early seventies with the moral issues of war, civil rights and Watergate have been replaced by worries about energy, inflation, balance of payments, defense and taxes. Ten years ago national attention was focused on questions of justice. Today it is focused on questions of survival.

Yet survival is, in a sense, particularly relevant to the activities of higher education. For colleges and universities teach skills that help people to survive economically and help, through research, the economy, defense and the formation of national priorities. They encourage the growth of character and the development of values which individuals need to make personal decisions and which the country needs to identify and solve questions of national importance. They store, in their libraries and in the combined training of their faculty, the knowledge which has been of help to earlier generations, and pass it on to the next. And, like Socrates, they midwife the birth of new ideas which provide for society a constant source of renewal. Survival of the coming generations, of the culture, of the country, and indirectly, of the *species*, is then the business of higher education.

The humanistic disciplines, moreover, play a vital role in this business. They are, or should be, what I shall call the keepers of the

group memory.

Consider, for a moment, mountain sheep. They are social animals, living in herds. They live by grazing. An established population knows where to go to get grass and to avoid hard weather. They know, in winter, to leave the valleys for the high ridges, where the wind blows the grass clear of snow; and they know, in summer, where the good grass and water is. This knowledge is passed on from one generation to the next. If, however, a population is destroyed through disease, hunting or predation, it is difficult and sometimes impossible to reintroduce a new population which will sustain itself. The new sheep simply do not know the territory. The original sheep had a group memory of what they needed to know to survive. The new population does not possess this group memory and without it, cannot survive.

There is, I suggest, something akin to group memory for mankind. It is the body of stored knowledge which is passed from one generation to the next and, although transformed in the process, manages to retain its original message and usefulness. It is, in short, the disposition for putting old ideas to new use.

The humanities are, as a body, this group memory and, as a collection of activities, are the business of applying it. Specifically, this group memory can be divided into three very simple ideas. These are unity, continuity and value. The role of the humanities is then the articulation and preservation of these three ideas. Let us consider them in detail:

First, unity. This is one of the oldest and

most universal of ideas. It is nothing more than the supposition that while the universe appears to be composed of many, apparently unconnected objects behaving in a haphazard way, these objects are actually related to each other systematically, or are appearances only—misleading manifestations of an undivided universe. This idea is the centerpiece of most major philosophies from Parmenides' poem, *The Way of Truth*, to Rudolf Carnap and the Unity of Science Movement, and it is a persistent theme in eastern thought. It is a presupposition in the aesthetic theories of Plato, Kant and Schopenhauer, the histories of Burkhardt, Gibbon and Tolstoy, and the works of Chaucer, Milton, Dante, Cervantes and Melville. It is also the foundation of all modern science. It lies behind all these because it is, at bottom, nothing more than the belief, articulated so well by Einstein, that truth is simple.

This idea also has a corollary which applies to man. It is that underlying the diversity of human beings is a unity. Aristotle called this an essence, Christians call it soul and Freud called it ego; but whatever the name, the use implied that human needs do not differ greatly and that the similarities between people are more fundamental than the differences. Higher education has been built upon this idea of unity. The word, "university" expresses it, for it means both "universe or totality" and "community or individual corporation." For centuries academe perceived itself as a community of scholars, united by their common attempt to make the universe intelligible and to teach what they learned. Classical and liberal education were derived from this idea, for

they were designed to encourage the student to integrate widely disparate areas of knowledge by the study of a central residue of inherited insight to which everything else could be related.

So this idea of unity, although not unique to the humanities, is an integral part of them, being an interest which the various humanistic disciplines share and which provides them with a direction of inquiry. Thus it is this idea which, for instance, lies behind the philosopher's pursuit of truth, not opinions, the historian's study of history, not events, the writer's portrayal of the human condition, not private foibles, and the painter's or sculptor's attempts to create art, not decoration.

Second, continuity. Immanuel Kant observed that to be aware of change required persisting through time—indeed, having a memory. For to be aware of change is to be aware that the present is not in all respects like the past. If I have no memory, I would have no way of knowing anything had changed. In short, if I, including my memory, changed every instant, I could not be aware of change. If change becomes too rapid, then awareness of it is impossible.

This is also true of societies. If change becomes too rapid, the society loses the ability to make rational judgments about the desirability of the changes taking place. For judgments through time require comparing the past with the present and thus require memory. This role, of preserving perspective, has always belonged to academe. To perform it, the universities had to persist—last through time—and had to change

more slowly than the society itself. Thus Oxford University began before the signing of the Magna Charta and has persisted through the reign of forty monarchs. Harvard University has endured four forms of government on this continent. At Oxford, the Laudian Code, written in 1636 and covering every detail of University life, was not superseded until 1864, and Greats—the study of classics and the oldest course of study—is still the most prestigious. In this country, 12th century caps and gowns are still worn to commencement exercises, and the liberal arts, whose roots go back to the 13th century curriculum divided into the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music) and the *trivium* (logic, grammar and rhetoric) are themselves a commitment of continuity, for they are based on the supposition that knowledge from and of the past is useful to the present.

Moreover, within the academic community, the keeper of continuity has been the humanities, not the sciences. For although all scientific activity to some extent depends on the accumulated insight of previous theorizing and experiment, it is not, as the humanities are, necessarily concerned with the past, and in fact may find the past burdensome, as did Galileo and Darwin, among others. For science, which often rejects the past, the most popular word is “revolution,” as in “Copernican Revolution,” “Newtonian Revolution,” “Darwinian Revolution,” “Keynesian Revolution,” and, most recently from geology, “Plate Tectonic Revolution.”

Third, values. Every act, whether by an individual or society, is directed to some end.

The rules which prescribe these acts, or are presupposed by them, express the values by which we live. A role of the academy is to encourage both individuals and society to reflect critically on their values, and if necessary to reject or revise them. For a healthy society, unlike Oceania in Orwell's *1984*, requires an agency which encourages constructive criticism of the conventional wisdom of the day, and thus serves as a kind of social gyroscope, keeping it on course. The performance of this function, moreover, is a humanistic activity, for science is concerned with means, not ends, and attempts to remain value free.

The humanities, then, are value laden. Specifically, they perform two roles; first, they encourage the critical examination of accepted beliefs, and second, they seek to discover, through rational enquiry, moral and aesthetic truth.

These enquiries, moreover, have a specific direction. This direction is determined by the preceding ideas of unity and continuity. For as the idea of unity suggests that the similarities between people are greater than the differences and the idea of continuity suggests that the similarities between generations are greater than the differences, then the search for moral and aesthetic truth must be a search for *universal* truth. If we are all essentially the same, then we must all be subject to essentially the same rules. The humanities will, therefore, eschew relativism, for relativism is nothing more than the supposition that, as people are different, the same rules do not apply to everyone. Thus although at any particular period of history it may be impossible to achieve a

consensus on values, this should not deflect humanistic activity from pursuing the goal of universality. Such a goal, in fact, may never be achieved; but it is, like the goal of unity in science, always, as Kant would say, "set us as a task."

These three ideas, then, lie, and have always lain, at the heart of humanistic activity. They also comprise what I call our group memory, not only because they are essentially connected with the past, but also because they contain the wisdom necessary for our survival.

Man is a social animal. He cannot survive alone, but, like the mountain sheep, only as a member of a community. As any student of expedition literature knows, the cases of annihilation, such as the fate of the Donner Party during the winter of 1846-47, or failure, such as the 1975 American K-2 Expedition, began with a social breakdown. Yet it is the three ideas discussed above which constitute the glue which holds a community together: unity, in the recognition of common needs; continuity, as awareness of sharing a common past and future; and value, as commitment to a common set of goals. Together, these conspire to produce the sense of mutual trust and acceptance of personal sacrifice to a common good, without which no community can last over time.

It is in this way that the humanities have a special role to play in our society. They are, or should be, a unifying force. For the three ideas to which the humanities are uniquely committed are also the ideas which can preserve a sense of community.

All one needs do, however, is visit almost any campus in America to see that the humanities are no longer a unifying force. For the three ideas we have discussed, so pervasive throughout history and so necessary for the activity of scholarship and the socialization of the individual, are being subverted by current academic policies. In these policies centrifugal forces have replaced centripetal ones as the cohesion of the community has been eroded.

For on campus today, in place of unity there is disunity. Here the destructive force is the policy of options. Never before have so many been offered, both within the curriculum and for student living. The prevailing paucity of general education and distribution requirements increases the range of choice, while simultaneously the cafeteria line of offerings grows, as courses are added, more often at the periphery of the liberal arts than at the core, and often stressing the differences between people rather than their affinities. Thus for instance, Smith College, with 2800 undergraduates and no graduation requirements other than ensuring students complete thirty-two courses and a major, has over one hundred courses in English literature from which to choose, the Harvard History Department has nearly two hundred offerings; Yale has recently added a major in film studies and the Connecticut Wesleyan Classics Department now offers a course in American culture.

Finally, compounding the confusion created by these haphazardly constructed or overgrown curricula, students are permitted or encouraged to make frequent decisions regarding grading options, dropping or ad-

ding courses, special programs and getting extensions or incompletes. At Yale where there are fifty-nine major programs and 5200 undergraduates, there were, last year, according to the Registrar, over 50,000 course changes!

Within the area of student life, decisions must be made to live on campus or off, whether to opt for the ten meal a week plan, the twenty meal a week plan or to eat off a hot plate and, if the options are available (as they are at some universities), whether to live in a coed or single sex dorm, drinking or non-drinking dorm, noisy or loud dorm or one with liberal or strict visiting privileges. If the dorms are self governing, decisions must be made for the legislation of rules about quiet, smoking, drinking, visitors and sex.

Second, rapid change has disrupted the continuity of academe. It is not an accident that the name of the major professional journal of higher education is entitled, "Change Magazine," for change, not continuity, is the name of the game today. Within the last ten years, for instance, the typical liberal arts college made many, if not all, of the following changes: It abolished liberal arts distribution requirements and more recently reinstated some of them. It experimented with special programs such as African studies, business and social welfare internships, urban studies, physical therapy, business administration, courses on television and radio, continuing education and women's studies; then it phased some of them out. It dropped its church affiliation. It introduced pre-professional programs such as nursing and law. It abolished parietal rules and it changed its method of governance.

Change is, in fact, becoming so rapid that many institutions are losing their sense of continuity. The average tenure of a college president is not much longer than the average tenure of a college student and the annual rate of turnover among Deans of Faculty and Deans of Students at liberal arts colleges is nearly twenty percent. In this state of rootlessness there are few in power who can say what the institution was like six years ago. There is no institutional group memory and few in the administration who will have to live with the consequences of the latest innovation. It is ironic, too, that universities, whose libraries store knowledge, typically cannot tell you, for instance, what curriculum they employed in, say, 1965. The President may just happen to have an old college announcement around, but he may not. The students themselves do not know what the college was like before they came and thus have no basis of comparison with which to judge their present circumstances. Faculty, too, until recently, was highly mobile, so only a few older faculty may know the way things used to be. In these circumstances one might think that the group most likely to have knowledge of the school's history would be the custodians. And this would be true if it were not for the fact that most custodians have been replaced by students on work study.

Third, values. Rules which prescribe actions, as I have suggested, express values. Yet the increase of options has meant the decrease of such rules. There are fewer rules governing the curriculum and student life, and in many cases, distribution requirements and parietal rules have been abolished altogether. Yet these rules performed an important

function. *They defined the community.* Distribution requirements not only ensured that students would at least attempt to integrate disparate areas of knowledge, they were also the institution's way of saying, "This is what we think is important to know. Studying this is what is distinctive about our community and its pursuit is the interest which we share." Likewise, parietal rules defined the community good. They said, in effect, "This is the kind of behavior which we value and which is consistent with the general good." Both kinds of rules reinforced the view of the universality of human needs and served to protect the individual. Distribution requirements and the absence of options protected people from wasting their time at college by taking unnecessary or unhelpful courses, and parietal rules protected students who were uncomfortable with the prevailing norms of their peer group by limiting those activities, such as cohabitation between sexes, visiting, noise and smoking, where one person's actions might impinge on another's well being.

The absence of rules has atomized the community because there is no longer any common knowledge or sense of common good. The emphasis has shifted to the differences, rather than the similarities, between people and to individual preference rather than universal values. Students, whose studies have often narrowed in the pursuit of special projects, find they have nothing to talk with each other about. "The difficulty in teaching today," says one member of the Smith College faculty with whom I spoke recently, "is that we can no longer presume all students are familiar with the *Bible* and know who

was swallowed by a whale. It makes it difficult to get a point across. Communication breaks down."

The great sociologist Emile Durkheim called the absence of rules the state of *anomie*, meaning literally, "without law." In his classic study of suicide he said this state led to loneliness, a growing sense of anonymity and a loss of a sense of identity. In extreme cases it led to suicide. *Anomie* characterizes student life today and it is therefore unsurprising that, among the campuses I visited recently, the increasing isolation of the undergraduate was a principal concern. The suicide rate for the college age group is at an all time high and recent studies have suggested that anxiety and depression are reaching alarming proportions among the undergraduate population.

What these trends show is that fission has replaced fusion as a source of energy on campus. The academic community, no longer a centralizing force for society at large, has itself become atomized, and has found itself an atmosphere hostile to learning and living. It is diffusing, like a spiral nebula in an expanding universe, carrying to its perimeter many humanists, while others, remaining in the vortex, are left increasingly alone. For apparently the humanities, which should serve as a gravitational force holding things together, have lost their magnetism.

Why has this happened?

There are two answers which are commonly given to this question.

The first could be called the pendulum

thesis. It holds that the liberal arts were emasculated by the cataclysmic effects, on campus, of the civil rights movement and the war in Vietnam. But, according to this view, these events are past and academe, now licking its wounds, will soon heal. The pendulum is reversing itself, as can be seen by the beginnings of reform at Harvard, Yale, Amherst, the University of California/Berkeley, Syracuse and many other places.

The second interpretation of these events is the determinist thesis. According to this view, the fragmentation of campus is the result of irreversible historical trends and thus is merely an inevitable reflection of what is happening in the surrounding society. Our country is becoming increasingly split into warring special interest groups as the growth of emphasis in ethnicity and cultural pluralism, and the shrinking of the globe, destroy agreement on values. The explosion of knowledge in science which has occurred in the past twenty years has made decisions about what students should learn more difficult, if not impossible, to make; and the emergence of the new, post pill morality and lowered age of majority have effectively removed academe from responsibility for students' living environment.

To paraphrase Dr. Johnson, these two theses are both apposite and true. Unfortunately, the parts which are apposite are not true, and the parts which are true are not apposite.

The pendulum thesis is, in fact, based on a misinterpretation of recent developments. Although it is true that a few colleges and

universities are revising their curricula, in most cases these revisions are not substantial improvements over the old, because there simply is not, at this point, sufficient agreement on what these revisions should contain. The much publicized Harvard Core Curriculum requirements, for instance, are a clear case where, through compromise, the baby has been thrown out with the bathwater. As Adele Simmons, President of Hampshire College, notes in a recent issue of *Harper's*, the term "core" is misleading for a proposal which asks students to choose eight from approximately one hundred courses and which does not reduce the number of electives. The returns are not in on many of the other curricular reviews, but at the campuses I visited, there was still substantial disagreement over their merits. Moreover, one should think that if the pendulum were indeed shifting, the trend to proliferation of courses would reverse itself. Yet as we have seen, it has not. Finally, the pendulum is certainly not reversing itself with respect to institutions' perceptions of their responsibilities for student life. Most are still unwilling to recognize that living and learning cannot be separated and that therefore the quality of student life should be as much their concern as the curriculum.

Next, the determinist thesis. This is inapposite because it is not an explanation at all, but a factual claim. For stating that our country is in the thrall of divisive pluralism does not explain why the scholarly community should also be divided, nor why the community should not work to heal its divisions. Why, for instance, should cultural pluralism in the *country* entail that the *academy* should adopt cultural relativism? The former may

be a fact, but it does not entail the latter, which is a theory. There have been many other periods of history—at Oxford, for example, during the counter-Reformation under the reign of Queen Mary, during the English Civil War and during the Oxford Movement of John Henry Newman—when consensus could not be reached on fundamental issues, either by the academic community or the nation at large, but during these times scholars never forgot that the solution to the issues was to find one truth, not many.

The recent explosion of scientific knowledge, moreover—really an explosion of information—neither explains why *humanists* should be divided nor why *scientists* themselves, who are, after all, dedicated to the construction of unifying theories, should find agreement on a core curriculum unattainable.

Likewise, the emergence of a new morality, if indeed it exists, does not explain why there should be now a lack of effort to introduce rules which define the community good and protect individual well-being. For an introduction of such rules need not imply a return to paternalism nor to arbitrary enforcement of a narrow moral code.

Finally, the determinist thesis is wrong, I believe, in overemphasizing the influence of the new morality and underestimating the growing need for structure by people today. In a society without rules, Gresham's Law holds, and bad drives out good. On campus especially, those students who are uncomfortable with a permissive moral code feel peer pressure and tend to hide their displea-

sure. Writers such as Richard Sennett, in *The Fall of Public Man*, published in 1977, and Christopher Lasch, in *The Culture of Narcissism*, published last year, have noted the need for a social framework which protects the privacy of the individual and allows for a greater sense of public good and private identity. The phenomena of the cults and communes, of EST and the many faddist programs of self help, also suggest that more people today miss a sense of community and intellectual discipline. The popularity of *Roots* and its imitators shows that people feel needlessly cut off from their past. During my visits to campuses, numerous students have told me that the university could reintroduce almost any new rules now without facing serious protest.

There appears, in short, to be a growing demand for structure among many sectors of the academy. Yet this demand goes unheeded because few can agree what the structure should be. Why should such disagreement persist, even today, when campuses are otherwise so pacific?

One answer lies, surprisingly, in the phenomenon of growth. The 18th century Scottish philosopher, David Hume, noted that laws are necessary only for the regulation of scarce goods. Until recently, for instance, we have had few laws affecting the atmosphere. But as fresh air becomes more rare, we are enacting an increasing number of anti-pollution laws. Likewise, where water is plentiful, as in Minnesota, there are relatively few laws regarding its use; but where, as in Montana, it is scarce, it becomes subject to a vast network of laws.

The 1960s were a period of plenty, and a period of plenty on campus. So it is natural that college "laws"—distribution requirements and parietal rules—were considered unnecessary. There was enough money for everyone to have everything. If, during that period, the educational world had been poorer, there might have been more incentive to preserve rules. For rules governing the curriculum and student life are like any other laws governing the distribution of goods. They limit choice and thus consumption. When a college cannot afford to teach everything or let students live any way they want, they must have rules which in a sensible way close off options.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the decline of the humanities, and a sense of community on campus, should occur at a time when colleges were flush with new money and baby boom enrollment. For wealth made the rules, which defined the community and embodied the wisdom of the humanities, seem unnecessary. This, too, would explain why this decline has continued throughout the seventies, long after the disturbances on campus have disappeared. For although inflation has put a crimp in educational budgets, the seventies have still been, on the whole, a period of plenty. Nationally enrollments have shown a net growth during this period and, thanks to a 500 percent increase in federal aid to higher education, revenues have more than kept up with inflation.

Now we can understand the crisis in the humanities. It is, in a sense, like the energy crisis. The energy crisis is not caused by a shortage of energy, but by excessive con-

sumption. Consumption has simply grown faster than have energy supplies. Thus the solution to the energy crisis is not more oil, but more efficient use of it. Our nation, for the first time, is required to accept the idea of limits to growth. This will force us, as a people, to agree to a division of energy and a scale of national priorities. Likewise, the crisis in the humanities is the result, not of shortage, but of plenty. Too much money has caused proliferation of options, radical change and abrogation of those rules which defined the community, and has discouraged the pursuit of unity, continuity and shared values which comprise the essence of humanist activity. The solution, therefore, is not more money or more students, but a willingness, on the part of humanists and others in academe, to accept the idea of limit, to work to achieve a new consensus of academic priorities and to express these priorities in rules governing the curriculum and student life.

This is why I believe that the 1980s will represent, for humanists, a time of opportunity and not eclipse. For enrollments, and possibly revenues, are going to be less than in the past. And while no one can enjoy the prospect of some colleges facing deficit budgets and declining living standards, consolidation could have a salutary effect. It could prevent further haphazard multiplication of programs which lie at the periphery and not at the center of the liberal arts, and it could provide added incentive for the academy to work for the consensus it failed to find in the seventies.

Sometimes less, not more, is better. The current crisis in the humanities is that our coun-

try needs, for its survival, a renewed sense of unity, continuity and value; and the humanities, whose role it is to provide this, are not doing so. To do so, they must embrace the idea of limit, and direct their energies, not to adding courses which promote our differences, but to the design of curricula which further a sense of sharing; not to an increase of options, but to building an environment more conducive to learning and living; not to projects which emphasize the uniqueness of the present, but to ones which instruct us in the uses of the past, and finally not by eschewing value judgments, but by making them with conviction. This is the way they will keep the group memory alive.

