

HISTORY DEPARTMENT

Western Connecticut State College

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NOTE: The COVER for this issue of CLIO was designed by:

KATHY HANLON

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Editor's Note

A publication is only as good as the people who write for it. And thus, I am especially proud to have been associated with Mr. Bannister, Dr. Warner, Blaise Bisaillon, Debbie Russo and Rich Gallagher in the editing of this Clio issue. My job was made very easy and most pleasant indeed due to their enthusiastic and professional co-operation. Also, I would like to thank Dr. Leopold and Dr. Janick for their supportive as well as constructive encouragement. In addition, I would like to express my graticule to Sharon Noel who spent many a grueling hour typing the stencils for this publication. And lastly, I would especially like to thank Alison Roth in her capacity as President of Phi Alpha Theta for helping me to make this issue a good one.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

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KATHY HANLON

Kahlil Gibran once wrote:

Life takes us up and bears us from one place to another; Fate moves us from one point to another. And we, caught up between these twain, hear dreadful voices and see only that which stands as a hindrance and obstacle in our path.

And so things are especially for those graduating from college in these economically troubling times. The "dreadful voices" can be heard everywhere — in newspapers, on radio and television, by word-of-mouth. Those holding long-standing positions as well as those just hired are losing their jobs due to severe cutbacks. Universities and colleges in attempting to "renovate" their credos of eduaction are cutting back drastically on liberal arts pursuits in order to make room for more "practical" programs of study. The result: liberal arts majors feel anxiety over their degree choice; liberal arts graduates feel frustration and regret over their degree when unable to find work — work suited to their particular educational background. They apologize and/or become speechless when asked by employer and general public alike: "But what can you do with a liberal arts degree? What kind of job are you qualified for?"

People are discouraged — they are perplexed. They no longer know who or what to believe. Just as page 13 of the 1972 Wesconn Yearbook portrayed a young college graduate in black academic robe and motar board standing arms-stretched in cruxifix-fashion before the local office of the Unemployment Compensation Department, many liberal arts graduates since have succuried to the same conclusion:

If I am going to be drowned If I am going to be drowned Why, in the name of seven mad gods who made the sea, Was I allowed to come this far and contemplate sand and trees...

The tragedy of this situation, I feel, lies not in the loss of job -- but in the loss of faith and perspective. It lies not in the inability to become employed -- but in the inability to see the talents one has acquired as a liberal arts major and thereby fervently fight for their utilization in to-day's society as well as marketplace. Many graduates in giving up, in appologizing for pursuing a liberal arts course of study in college fail to take heed from Emerson when he writes:

Man is not a farmer, or a professor, or an engineer, but he is all. Man is priest, and scholar, and states—man, and producer, and soldier. In the "divided" or social state these functions are parcelled out to individuals, each of whom aims to do his stint of the joint work, whilst each other performs his...

Man is thus metamorphosed into a thing, into many things. The planter, who is Man sent out into the field to gather food, is seldom cheered by any sense of the true dignity of his ministry. He sees his bushel and his cart, and nothing beyond, and sinks into the farmer, instead of Man on the farm. The tradesman scarcely ever gives an ideal worth to his work, but is ridden by the routine of his craft and his soul is subject to dollars. The priest becomes a form; the attorney a statute-book; the mechanic a machine; the sailor a rope of the ship.

In this distribution of functions the scholar is the delegated intellect. In the right state, he is "Man Thinking". In the degenerate state, when the victim of society, he tends to become a mere thinker...

- "The American Scholar", 1837

As Philip H. Rhinelander points out in an address entitled "Education and Society" given at Stanford University in June, 1968:

Our colleges and universities have been content to develop mere thinkers; what has been lost (in Emerson's terminology) is the ideal of "Man Thinking", i.e., the conception of the scholar as first of all a concrete individual engaged by his education to bring to bear the resources of rational thinking upon the solution of the major and pressing problems of human existence and of social justice. And thus, perhaps these trying times are but a blessing in disguise. Perhaps they will lead us to "what has been lost" — the ideal of "Man Thinking" — thereby confirming these words of Gibran: "Perplexity is the beginning of knowledge." And in so doing, perhaps these times will force all of us to make wiser, more honest decisions concerning our life plans. Perhaps they will, upon such decision making, bring out the better and eventually the best in all of us; and in so doing, every discipline of study, every aspect of living will be the better for it. No longer will man turn to those fields that society dictates but to those for which he is best suited.

Perhaps the study of history in this time of severe testing and change will attain an emen greater, more respected place in the life of man for as Gibran once noted:

(In) examining ... yesterday's ledger... you will find that you are still indebted to people and to life ... (for) the many books and strange figures and the lovely thoughts around you are the ghosts of the spirits that have been before you. The words your lips utter are the links in the chain that binds you and your fellow man. The sorrowful and joyful conclusions are the seeds sown by the past in the field of your soul to be reaped by the future.

How ironic, Gibran continues, that "Man struggles to find life outside himself, unaware that the life he is seeking is within him."

This is not to say that the challenge to students of history (as well as those of the other liberal arts) will not be great. In fact, it will be most demanding. For instance, those of us blessed with the knowledge of newer more interdisciplinary approaches of history -- yet cursed with insight as to how such approaches could be effectively utilized in today's society -- will still be forced to "prove our worth" according to criteria set by an intellectually staid business world. Those undergraduate students of history will still have to face much criticism over not switching over to a more "practical" program of study in light of today's tight economy. Many, if not all, will fall to discouragement, to questioning, to change.

However, have patience. Have faith. Perservere. Emerson once warned:
"Beware of an idea whose time has come!" That time is here — if only we accept the challenge.

And thus spoke Wisdom ...

"March on. Do not tarry. To go forward is to move toward perfection. March on, and fear not the thorns or the sharp stone on Life's path." --- Gibran