



# BOSTON COLLEGE

BOISI CENTER  
FOR RELIGION AND AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE

## Symposium on Religion and the Liberal Aims of Higher Education

### Transcription of Panel III: “Dynamic Tensions”

Friday, November 9, 2012, 3:00pm  
The Heights Room of Corcoran Commons, Boston College

featuring:

**Susan Jacoby**  
Author and Independent Scholar

**Eboo Patel**  
Founder and President, Interfaith Youth Core

**Nicholas Wolterstorff**  
Noah Porter Professor Emeritus of  
Philosophical Theology, Yale University

Moderated by **Mark Oppenheimer**  
*New York Times* columnist and Lecturer in  
English at Yale University

Introduced by **Erik Owens**  
Associate Director, Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life, Boston College



OWENS: Thank you all. We are moving apace through the day, coming now to our final panel discussion of the afternoon. Directly after this panel, without break, will be the brief closing remarks by our president, Father Leahy. After that, more food and drink to celebrate and continue the conversations we have started here. So I invite you to take your seats now and join me for what promises to be a terrific conversation that we’re describing—perhaps euphemistically—as “dynamic tensions.” We’re delighted to have as our moderator Mark Oppenheimer, columnist from the *New York Times* as well as a lecturer in English at Yale University, and he’ll take over from here. Thank you, Mark.

OPPENHEIMER: Okay, thank you. Welcome. It so happens, Erik, that I lost all the notes you gave me on the phone about what I’m supposed to do, which is great, because then I get to do what I want to do. Let me just say, first of all, that as ever you have these panelist biographies in your brochure. And if we get tiresome just, you know, flip through your brochure and you can read them. But I’ll say briefly that Eboo Patel to my right, whom I hadn’t met before yesterday, is not only an activist, founder of the Interfaith Youth Core, IFYC, but is also a writer of some renown, and his first book won the—I don’t know, does Louisville say the “Growlmeyer” or the “Grawemeyer?”

PATEL: Louisville says “*Louisville* Grawemeyer.” Everybody else says “Grawemeyer.”

OPPENHEIMER: The Grawemeyer Prize for work in religion, which is important to know because it’s a lot of money. I mean, it’s extraordinary. He could’ve bought a really nice car with that money. Every year I get the press release from the Grawemeyer people saying “It’s embargoed, don’t tell anyone for the next three weeks, but here’s the next winner of the Grawemeyer Prize in religion.” I actually already know who this year’s winner is, and I always think, “That’s a lot of money that I didn’t win this year.” So congratulations. But his books are worth reading on their own merits.

Susan Jacoby may or may not remember that she once sent me one of the most bilious, cruel e-mails ever.

JACOBY: I do.

OPPENHEIMER: I mean, it was just nasty. She read something I’d written in the *New York Times*, totally misunderstood it and then wrote me this very mean e-mail. And I thought, that’s awful because I admire Susan Jacoby’s work so, so much, along with people like Wendy Kaminer and Jennifer Hecht, and of course others like Hitchens and Dawkins.

She’s one of the people who’s been writing very serious stuff on skepticism and new religion for a very, very long time and her book *Freethinkers* is one that you all should have. But I wrote back to her and I said, well, I don’t think that was very kind or thoughtful at all. And she wrote me the loveliest *mea culpa* and said, “You’re absolutely right, I was shooting my mouth off and I didn’t read your piece carefully enough.” So my warm feelings then redoubled.

JACOBY: That’s not how I remember it. [Laughter]

OPPENHEIMER: Oh you’re taking it back? You’re doing backsies? Oh, OK.

JACOBY: No, no. Because I can’t—I remember the e-mail but I don’t remember what it was about.

OPPENHEIMER: And then Nicholas Wolterstorff, who’s the Porter Professor Emeritus of Philosophical Theology at Yale and is now affiliated with the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia. Also has the distinction of having been one of the teachers who, in my junior year of college, convinced me through his lecture class that religion was something maybe I ought to take seriously. I certainly wouldn’t be here today but for that philosophy of religion undergraduate lecture. So it’s an honor to be here with all three of these thinkers and writers.

This panel was titled, very unhelpfully, “Dynamic Tensions.” So I thought that in order to put some meat on those bones—says the vegetarian here—I would tell you about a column I wrote a few weeks ago. When I wrote it, I thought—and I knew this conference was coming up—I thought, I want to know what those three people think of this column. So this will be a starting point, but then you, of course, may

all have thoughts about tensions between Christianity and higher education that you want to share, and you should feel free to ignore my prompt.

I was writing a column about Mark Regnerus, who was the sociologist at the University of Texas who wrote a study last June, one of whose conclusions was that the children of parents who have had gay relationships do not fare as well on some indicators as children of parents who did not have gay relationships at some point in the children's upbringing. And there was a huge hue and cry about this study. And among other things, Dr. Regnerus was accused of being a tool for the Christian right. He was accused of putting his scholarship in the service of his Christianity.

And some of his partisans said, that's ridiculous. He has a job at the University of Texas, a tenured job. He's a well-respected scholar at a secular institution. But then they said, well, but of course some of his funding came from the Bradley and Witherspoon Foundations and we know that they have an agenda that is unfriendly to the gay rights agenda.

And then, of course, if you looked a little bit further, as I did, you discovered that at his last teaching post, and I forget what evangelical college that had been, but he actually had a Web site, which has now been disappeared by him, although it's maintained in some archival form, in which he had talked on the Web site about the proud place of a Christian in the classroom in addressing Christian issues and doing Christian scholarship.

So I went around calling people and saying, is there such thing as Christian scholarship? What exactly could this mean to infuse your scholarship with Christianity? And I'll wrap up and throw this to you by saying I felt the answers were exceedingly incoherent. So almost nobody wanted to say, well—

WOLTERSTORFF: You felt his answers were incoherent?

OPPENHEIMER: No, he wouldn't talk to me.

WOLTERSTORFF: Oh.

OPPENHEIMER: But the answers when I called other sociologists —

WOLTERSTORFF: I see.

OPPENHEIMER: ...Christian and non-, were very incoherent. So one or two of them said to me, well, it just means that by being a Christian presence at a university you are modeling for your students that a Christian can do this. That it's a form of witness just to be outspokenly Christian, but it doesn't affect your scholarly program. And then some people said, well, it will affect the kind of questions you're interested in, but of course it won't affect the scholarship. There's no Christian way to crunch numbers as a sociologist.

And then one or two people off the record said, well, in fact Christianity infuses everything you do, even the way you crunch the numbers, and they were saying this was to the good in some cases. And of course, his study is deeply suffused with

his desired result, which was to cast some doubt on the gay parenting or gay marriage program.

So it really just reminded me of all the things that my teachers talked about when I had Christian teachers in college, which was, can there be a meaningful, and reputable, and rigorous Christian scholarship by secular lights? Or is the whole concept useless?

JACOBY: Boy, do I want to answer this. I want to answer this.

OPPENHEIMER: So do you want to take that first?

JACOBY: Yes. First of all, if there is such a thing as Christian scholarship or secular scholarship, the whole thing is a wrong idea to begin with. There are Christians who can do scholarship, and by the way, I also even hate the way the word Christian is used, because there are all kinds of Christians. So to talk about a Christian only in terms of this word that the right-wing Christians have stolen is ridiculous.

So there are Christians who can do scholarship. And to say that these values—if you're a Catholic scholar, or a secular scholar, or a woman who is a scholar, or a journalist who is a scholar—to say that your core beliefs don't affect your scholarship, whether consciously or unconsciously, is nonsense. That is not necessarily the same thing as you have a desired result and you look for it, which as we all know from some of the scandals in the hard sciences, is something that other people do as well.

So I think this whole question of whether there can be a Christian scholarship or an atheist scholarship, I think that these are non-sensible questions. Are you an atheist doing your best to do honest scholarship, and also being aware of what your own biases are? Are you a Roman Catholic being aware of your own biases and doing your best to do good scholarship?

We're all something. We all have some beliefs, so I just object to calling it Christian scholarship. And I think that there is a role for religious colleges and religious liberal arts colleges. Not because they're religious, but because—and I think the best historically religious based colleges are full of faculty members of that faith, and other faculty members of other faiths, who do their best to take account of their own biases in whatever scholarly project they're doing.

And just one more thing, I do think that having this kind of a discussion about social science—I object to that term too. It's just as subject as the humanities and as people who do bad science—hard science—to get into their conclusions, just remember what Clemenceau said and apply it to social science and some other kinds of science—military justice is to justice as military music is to music. That's it.

OPPENHEIMER: Nick.

WOLTERSTORFF: We'd have to talk more. I'm not sure whether I agree or disagree with Susan or partly agree, whatever.

JACOBY: Well, that covers it all.

WOLTERSTORFF: On this we agree, she and I. We all have a certain formation. We all interpret the world in certain ways. We all valorize certain things, that is regard some things as of value and other things as of less value and so forth. One of you put it like this. We're born into the world, but from there on we acquire a sort of formation, which I think is—I've sometimes compared it to a musical formation. You get formed musically. And that's not just having ideas in your head, but it's learning to emphasize things, to note things, give things significance, and so forth.

OK, so we all have that. And that just seems to me, if one is a scholar—at least in a field like philosophy. It's maybe not in computers, I don't know about that. But my field of philosophy, it shapes how you go about things. Let me give an example. Fifteen years ago, I was teaching a course in the history of modern philosophy at Yale. When I teach courses in the history of philosophy, I despise secondary textbooks. I've never used one. I want the primary texts. And I like a big chunk of the primary text instead of just golden nuggets.

So I found a text that had big chunks—I mean a big, fat text from Descartes through Kant I guess, big fat chunks. We're teaching John Locke. I think the culmination of Locke's essay is book four, and lo and behold, when I was standing in the bookstore selecting this text, a big—book four. So I thought, aha, this is it. So we're going through it and I assign the students Locke's arguments for the existence of God. Book four, chapter 10. So we're talking about him, I'm talking about him, and they are whispering to each other, and wiggling, and so forth.

So what's the problem? Locke doesn't give any arguments for the existence of God, they say. Well, of course he does, and I assigned them for today's discussion. But he doesn't give any arguments for the existence of God. So I look at the text. Everything in book four has been reproduced except chapter 10, Locke's arguments for the existence of God. Now it seems to me, look I want to be candid about this, this strikes me as the bowdlerizing—you know what bowdlerizing is—the bowdlerizing of modern philosophy, the removal of traces of religion.

So some of us have gotten together and published an anthology from Notre Dame Press on the survival of the sacred in the modern philosophers. Descartes, and Reid, and Kant, and Locke, and so forth. So I want to tell the story of modern philosophy correctly, and it's my Christianity, my religion, which leads me to be annoyed by this deletion. Is that Christian scholarship?

JACOBY: No, that's just good scholarship. And anybody who's not a Christian –

WOLTERSTORFF: Right.

JACOBY: I would want to have that if I were teaching this course. It was part of his argument.

WOLTERSTORFF: Right. So whatever it was, given my religious impulses, I'm annoyed and not satisfied by this bowdlerizing. That, it seems to me, is very often, at least in my experience, how it goes.

JACOBY: But I'm just as annoyed by it, and I don't have any religious impulses. [laughter]

WOLTERSTORFF: What's that?

JACOBY: I'm just as annoyed by it as you are and I'm not a Christian.

WOLTERSTORFF: Terrific. But Susan, the problem is some people were perfectly happy with it, obviously.

JACOBY: Yeah, of course.

WOLTERSTORFF: I mean, the makers of the anthology.

PATEL: And so let me tell a story, which I think illustrates this as well. So at the College of Worcester, there's a philosopher there who tells a story of an exercise he does with his philosophy class. There are 20 of you on a life raft, and there are hundreds around you who are drowning, and you can only save five. How would you choose the five to save? And he says that 80% of my classes will say we would try to save more than five.

Right, so you have all these idealistic 18, 19, 20-year-old young people saying we'll find a way to save more than five. And then Professor Cannon will go through what are philosophical reasons you would do that. And he says that almost to a person, you know, as he's writing this on the board, will give a utilitarian reason. Because if we don't do this, then those hundreds will capsize the raft. In other words, they're trying to justify this in that utilitarian type way.

He'll put the chalk down, or put the marker down, and he'll say, would you really do that? And a good number will nod their heads yes, we would really try to save the other people. And he'd say, tell me, really, why? And they'll say, because I'm Christian. And that's part of what we do as Christians is—and he'll say why didn't you say that when I had the marker in my hand? And they're thinking—and they will literally explicitly say, that's not the kind of thing you say in class.

Now here's what I find fascinating about this, right? Clearly Boston College, Wheaton College, many of the professors here at secular universities, would not fall into this. Clearly that way of thinking, that lens, that philosophical paradigm is invited into those classes. It is not invited in huge parts of the academy. That is a major problem, especially because huge parts of the academy take standpoint epistemology—it goes by a hundred different names—very seriously. So black readings of Huck Finn, female readings of Moby Dick. Well, why not Christian readings, then? Why not Muslim readings?

In other words, if race, class, gender, sexuality are important identities, as they are, and if they are lenses through which you can view things such as philosophy and literature, can you not also view things through lenses of religion? I don't mean for this to move towards a hyper-fragmented postmodernism. I mean for this to suggest that I think at the center of the standpoint epistemology movement is that we have a number of different formations which are based in very deep identities, and we ought to bring those to the table because, first of all, they're real.

Secondly, in a diverse democracy, if we're not bringing them to the table, we're hiding things. I think the larger question for me is what do we do with particular identities in a world of diversity? That, for me, is the central question of this conference. What does a Boston College do in the most religiously diverse country, some say, in human history?

WOLTERSTORFF: And I'm sure what you would add, as well as I, we bring them to the table and allow them to be corrected. Don't just stand on a Hyde Park podium. If I misinterpreted the history of modern philosophy in some way, you know, I've given it more religious import than it actually does have—I think it has got a lot more than is traditionally acknowledged—then I should stand corrected on that score.

JACOBY: Yes, and there's another question that might be asked which is I already said, you can only save five. You can't save more than five. What makes you think that the raft won't be capsized if you manage to save seven? Of course, nobody goes through these thought processes in a situation like that really, but it would be interesting to know whether the Christian answer they gave the second time was—maybe the reason they would try to save more than five and capsize the raft is that they don't think logically, which I think is the real problem.

Nobody trains people in critical thinking, and there's no Christian critical thinking or Muslim critical thinking, although there are different approaches to attitudes. There is logic, and you add to that and underpin it with whatever your religious or non-religious beliefs are.

OPPENHEIMER: So I mean one of the ways of looking at this is to ask the question, well what's pedagogically useful to talk about? So we all acknowledge that there are going to be Christians in our classrooms, Jews in our classrooms, a lot of secularists in our classrooms. A lot of people who say they're Christian, but actually can't, if you ask them to name several figures—

JACOBY: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

OPPENHEIMER: Right. The authors of the gospels, it's hopeless, right?

WOLTERSTORFF: Hopefully in that order.

OPPENHEIMER: Now, when you were my teacher I don't recall that you ever said you were a Christian.

WOLTERSTORFF: Probably not.

OPPENHEIMER: Probably not. I could imagine you saying, actually everyone if they have these ludicrous biases, they should put them out on the table. What's pedagogically useful, given that we all have these biases that we may be striving to eradicate, or have corrected?

JACOBY: I should say also one reason I was happy to be invited to this panel is that since I wrote my first book that even touched on atheism, which it had very little to do with, *Freethinkers*, I've been invited to speak at loads of colleges. 75% of those

invitations come from historically religious colleges, whether Catholic or Lutheran, the few Episcopal ones that are left, or Baptist—which is to say American Baptist, formerly Northern Baptist Convention. And one of the—

OPPENHEIMER: The Southern Baptists never invite you?

JACOBY: Never. I've never been invited to speak at a Southern Baptist school.

PATEL: That's because they actually read the books.

JACOBY: Right. No, I do hear from Southern Baptist history teachers who say they wish they could invite me. But anyway, one of the things I've found out about the students is that students at these lectures know much more about my subject than the students at secular colleges where I speak do. Because they do mention this—for example at some religious schools, they will mention that the Constitution doesn't mention God. Which, when I go to a secular university and I tell an audience this, they are absolutely stunned by that.

First of all, I think that when the subject bears on—such as the John Locke thing—when it bears on religion I think that you should be explicit—if your students know anything, but you can't assume that, I think if you're an atheist, or a devout Lutheran, or a devout Catholic, or a devout Jew of whatever Jewish persuasion. A Hassid you would know was a Hassid from the way he was dressed, but most Jews you wouldn't know that. I think that it's perfectly appropriate, at the college level certainly—and not only appropriate, but necessary—to acknowledge your own biases and ideas. I think that adds to the discussion and I would say since students are still—it's funny. They don't respect education that much, but they're afraid of teachers because teachers can grade them.

And I think that students should be assured by their teachers, when they come clean about what their biases are, that they're not going to be downgraded for disagreeing with them about religion or politics. That is, teachers should assure them this if it's true, because it's not always true in this case.

WOLTERSTORFF: Yeah, yeah. So Mark, in the philosophy of religion course at Yale that I had you as a student, there were 80, 90 students, whatever.

OPPENHEIMER: About that.

WOLTERSTORFF: I didn't see any point in sort of announcing that I'm a Christian. What I did is just went ahead and taught what I thought was significant and important in the history and philosophy of religion. And the outcome of that was very different from how a lot of other philosophers would've taught the subject, philosophy of religion. I took you people through the medievals, and tried not to make it seem antiquarian, but why would a medieval kid want to prove God's existence? What's going on here?

And then Schleiermacher, the Romantics, and I remember vividly finally we get to experience, and Schleiermacher and your whole class is sort of sitting there, their eyes are getting round and, oh, this is finally about me, this is not about belief, this about experience and so forth. (laughter) So it was –



OPPENHEIMER: Schleiermacher is better on drugs than (inaudible). Is that what you're saying?

WOLTERSTORFF: So I just went ahead and highlighted what I, given my Christian formation, thought was important in the history of the philosophy of religion, and tried to show why it was it was important, and invited objections and so forth.

OPPENHEIMER: I mean, that goes to the idea that being a Christian scholar may be interesting only so far as it has connotations for what you're interested in.

WOLTERSTORFF: Yeah.

OPPENHEIMER: For the kinds of things you'd be willing—that you think are the important questions. I'm curious, Eboo, those students at the College of Worcester who you said told their professor well we're not, you know, permitted to have a Christian point to stand on. Where did they get that idea, do you think? I feel fairly certain the professor hadn't told them that to preference utilitarianism permissible, deontology permissible, Christianity impermissible. So where did they get it?

PATEL: So from the time I set foot on my campus in 1993 at the University of Illinois, which is a wonderful school—it's not on the vanguard of any social movement, right? So the fact that I was deeply steeped in multiculturalism from day one of freshman orientation through commencement just shows how central that was. What I mean by that is you couldn't walk into a leadership program, or a humanities program, or a social sciences class without being asked to speak from your race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality.

It was hugely invited, and there were impulses all the time, and some of them were explicit about how cretin and Neanderthal religious ways of knowing and believing are. I'll tell a very quick story on this. I'll tell you the first time it kind of occurred to me the huge parts of the world that I was missing.

So, you know, like any good 18- or 19-year-old student, I would drive home about a weekend every month or so, and I would bring my dirty clothes, and I would hope for the Tupperware containers I brought back to be returned with hot food, and I would give my dad big lectures about multiculturalism and racial consciousness. And he would probably be thinking to himself, I'm paying for this. You do understand that, right?

OPPENHEIMER: He thought, please go back to school.

PATEL: That's exactly right, that's exactly right. I'm like, "Have you ever read bell hooks?" My dad is mostly good-natured about this, but at one point he says to me, you know Eboo, for all your Audre Lorde and Gloria Anzaldua you're missing the form of identity that's driving the world. So the next time you want to show up and call me bourgeois and have us clean your clothes, will you please tell me how you're going to solve religious conflict?

And I'm like, "You know, my dad is clearly stuck back centuries ago." I get back in my car and I drive back south to the University of Illinois. A week later I get a phone call from a close Jewish friend and I can hear the tightness in her throat. She's about to cry, and she says Yitzhak Rabin has just been assassinated. And

that's the first opening of my eyes, honestly, to the evening news and to the role that religious diversity issues are playing in the evening news, which is mostly murder to the soundtrack of prayer.

JACOBY: Yeah.

PATEL: 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, '95 assassination of Rabin, '98 election of the BJP in India. The 1990s is the story of growing religious violence and the diversity movement, which had taken over academia –

OPPENHEIMER: 2001, 9/11, Second Intifada, priest scandals, I mean, yeah.

PATEL: All of this, right. But even in the 1990s, which we don't think about. Now, of course, Sam Huntington sees this and, in my view, gets the conclusion wrong, but gets the beginning right, which is religion is a primordial identity and people convene around religion. And I think back to my college years and I think, I am really glad for the robust race, gender, class, sexual orientation conversations. How is it that I went through three years at the University of Illinois and heard religion mentioned five times?

I say that in the context here because one of the things that has been prominent in our discussions over the last 24 hours is the importance of religious literacy issues. What you know about Islam should not come from the evening news or your Facebook news feed. That you ought to have an appreciative understanding of a fifth of humankind, and frankly, an appreciative understanding of the traditions that play an animating role in the majority of peoples' lives around the world, and the evening news is not going to give you that appreciative understanding.

So one of the roles that college campuses play is a counternarrative. Not just because it's a nice thing to do, but because it's part of the definition of being an educated person—the ability to have an understanding of a 1,400-year-old tradition with a billion and a half people.

Now, to go back to the title, “Dynamic Tensions”—which I actually quite liked. What does it mean for me searching for a latte on this campus at 8:30 this morning to run into a hijabi girl at Boston College, a college started in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to educate Irish Catholic boys, who were poor kids who would never have had a chance for education unless a group of Irish Catholic priests took the time to start a college. That, for me, is the most fascinating and dynamic tension.

I want to say one more thing here, which is that I think in a room full of eminent scholars, I'm going to say something dramatic, which means you all are going to correct me. One of the great geniuses of American society is not just that it welcomes the expression of particularity, it doesn't see it as threatening. Your Catholicism, your African-American heritage, your Muslimness—the expression of that identity is not only not seen as threatening, somehow America welcomes you to plant your seeds in this soil and to build institutions that serve the broader community. I find that stunningly inspiring.

What would America do without its 600 Catholic hospitals, not a one of which turns non-Catholics away? 85 million people are treated every year in those 600

Catholic hospitals. 250-some Catholic colleges and universities. 7,000 Catholic elementary and high schools, one of which a young Zayd Patel, my son, wreaked havoc in for his preschool years on the north side of Chicago. So these are expressions of Catholic religiosity that in American soil served the broader society, and I think that's a huge part of America's genius. And I think that dynamic tension between particularity and pluralism is something that we have to address as coherently as possible.

JACOBY: I agree with everything you said, but I'd like to tell you a story. Everyone has been talking about—and this may be true—that people feel that they can't say they're religious, let's say, on the college campuses of the northeast. But I can assure you, and I only know this because I lecture at a lot of colleges in the South and the border states, that atheists—or even people who are religious but don't agree with the kind of religion they were raised in—feel extremely constrained, just as constrained as some Catholics at a highly secular university might feel about talking about their religion in terms of their scholarship, their values, even themselves as a person.

Once, I was lecturing at what was not a religious college, but all of the students were the children of fundamentalists in Conway, Arkansas. And the kids would come up—the fact that they came to my lecture shows that they were all practicing in their faith, but they were interested in other things. And they would say, I can remember, I can hear their voices, they were so sweet.

They would say, I'm a Christian, but. I'm a Christian, but I believe in a woman's right to choice. Or I'm a Christian—using it the way—I'm a Christian, but I certainly believe that gay people should have equal civil rights with me, and how do I reconcile those things?

Here I am, an atheist. I'm trying to advise Christian students how to continue to practice their Christianity. And I said, the main thing you have to realize, and you're young, you're going to be going other places, is you have to find a place where if you believe both of those things, you can say I am a—they were all Christians, there were no Jews or Muslims, this is the Bible Belt—I said, there are lots of places, and lots of environments, where you can say I am a Christian and.

WOLTERSTORFF: Yeah.

JACOBY: And you have to find those places, and that's certainly what I would say to somebody who felt that they couldn't say they were a Catholic or a Jew. But all I'm saying is that atheists, freethinkers, whatever you want to call them, feel just as constrained about expressing their beliefs in a huge part of this country as I am told that various Christians do.

OPPENHEIMER: Well, it seems to me that there are two reasons—we're talking about two different philosophies of what education is for. I mean, some of us think, among other things, when you send your child off to college, that the college will reinforce and help fortify the—let's say, the faith tradition in which they've been raised. And the faith tradition, or the tradition, shall I say, may be one of skepticism. It may be atheism, it may be socialism, or maybe it's Seventh-day Adventism, whatever.

And then there's a whole school of thought about higher education which is to say it should challenge you in ways that may actually crumble all that. That may, not necessarily, but it should present the kinds of challenges that may be very, very bad for those sorts of faiths in which you were raised. And I'm not sure that the two are—it seems to me when I hear the scholars from Christian colleges talk, they want to finesse that somewhat. And I'd actually like to—can those meet? I mean, are those commensurable?

WOLTERSTORFF: So Mark, I'm going to hijack your question a little bit.

OPPENHEIMER: Please.

WOLTERSTORFF: And say a few words about liberal education as I understand it, and then you can drop it as a lead balloon if you want, and so forth. Back in my youth when I was teaching at Calvin College, head of a curriculum committee, I tried to figure out what constitutes liberal education. And I defined it negatively the way some of us have. I never felt happy with that. But it frees us, it's –

OPPENHEIMER: What do you mean you defined it negatively?

WOLTERSTORFF: It frees us from parochialisms. It is not aimed at a profession, so forth. Then one day, I shall never forget it, I was reading a passage in the sociologist Talcott Parsons. A little book by Parsons, I forget what the book was. And it was not about liberal education. It was about culture and society, and he happened to make this remark. He said that a striking feature of Western society, for a good many centuries now, is the immensity of the cultural heritage that we have that did not originate within our present-day society and has no obvious utility within present-day society.

That struck me as a bombshell. This was fascinating. We have this enormous cultural heritage coming from all over the place, and the liberal arts education seems to me to be, in essence, inducting the students into some part of that heritage. We can't induct them into all of it, of course, but into some part. So it's more than just not something, it's that.

And it seems to me, I've come to think that the worth of that—that does all kinds of good things to us. It improves critical thinking and creative thinking. I don't dispute any of that. But it seems to me—well, I've come to think that we've got to say something more about it. We are put in touch with something of great worth. I found myself, I think sometimes I expressed it in the philosophy class, this is fascinating. Isn't this interesting? A creative question and a truly creative answer. Whether you can do something with it, I don't know about that. But it presents to us these enormous achievements. In the case of the natural sciences, puts us in touch with a world of astounding intricacy and vastness.

And I've come to think that liberal arts education, when it goes well, should then have an emotional basis to it. Students should find themselves awed. They should find themselves saying awestruck with Dante, with Shakespeare, with Plato emerging out of nowhere almost. Aristotle emerging out of nowhere. Be awestruck.

And yes, given what historians tell us, they should also be sometimes be horrified at what human beings have done to each other. Yes, it's got all kinds of uses, but it's something that should awe us and horrify us. And if my students emerge never being awed—isn't this wonderful, isn't this fascinating—I haven't been successful. That's how I've come to think of a liberal arts education.

JACOBY: Right and I think one of the worst things I've heard today, and I can't remember who said it, but it was at the edge of the last panel, about finding ways of measuring the effectiveness of liberal arts education. Something like a scale of, yes we can see that this person has better critical thinking on a scale of one to five.

WOLTERSTORFF: This is what Dante does to you, you know.

JACOBY: Right, right. This is what Dante does to you. This is how it changed this person's thinking, or—

OPPENHEIMER: I give your warmth and integrity a B+.

JACOBY: Exactly. I just think this shows how much that anybody who is a liberal arts educator can say that and believe that this is going to help—by the way, it's not going to help any more than it helps when social science conflicts with people's preconceived ideas, and we absolutely know that it doesn't. That facts don't conflict. Look at the proportion of this country that still believes that Barack Obama was born in Kenya, you know, all things to the contrary.

And this is true of measurements. I said this before in a question, but the value of a liberal arts education, whether it's provided within the context of a religiously based institution like this one, or in the religious history departments of secular universities, it has to stand on its own. I hate to say this, I know somebody's going to laugh at me. You, probably.

But it is a matter of faith, and you cannot prove it to people, and you actually denigrate the value of liberal arts education by trying to grade the change in peoples' views on one to five. How much has this person, because we are teaching some of the classics in Arabic—how much have they improved in their understanding in the rest of the world? One to five.

No. These things have value because you believe they have value, because of what you said. And if, as a teacher, you don't feel confident that you've reached somebody—you never reach all people, especially in this society—it is valuable because we have to believe in it, and it is valuable whether you reach 10% of your students or 90%.

WOLTERSTORFF: Right. And I suppose I should add, to be clear, there is something unspeakably corrupt about running a concentration camp in the day and listening to Beethoven at night. There's something unspeakably corrupt about that.

JACOBY: Who said otherwise?

WOLTERSTORFF: But I don't want to say that we should think of Beethoven purely in terms of utility.

OPPENHEIMER: So going back to the title of this panel—acceding to the fact that you liked it very much—what are the big dynamic tensions? I'll suggest one. When the president of Wheaton College was sitting where you are, for example, and was talking about the education there—is he still here? Where did Philip go? There he goes. I may be wrong in this anecdote. I seem to remember reading in the *Times* five or six years ago that my old college acquaintance—we weren't friends, but he was all right—my old college acquaintance Joshua Hochschild was fired for becoming a Roman Catholic. Is that right?

RYKEN: He actually resigned, but sure.

OPPENHEIMER: He resigned. He's still a very committed Christian. He'd become a Christian in college, I remember when that happened, and let's assume the best about him. I assume that through this arduous process of self-searching, and critical thinking, and doing all the things that a liberal arts education at Wheaton, or at Amherst, or at Williams wants us to do, arrived at the conclusion that the fullest or the truest expression of the Christian faith was Roman Catholicism. And for that, more or less, was forced out—lost a job.

That strikes me as a problem, like there's a place a where the rubber hits the road, if you're trying to create a certain kind of community that describes itself as Christian a certain way. And by the way, there are examples like that at other schools also. That's the one I remember. That at a certain point, I mean, that's a tension that I don't think—it seems odd to me that you can say to someone, we really, really want you to think freely and critically, but if you reach a certain kind of conclusion, you're no longer fit for our community. That's the one I think of. What are the dynamic tensions you thought about when you saw that this was the topic?

PATEL: So my guess is that knowing President Ryken a little bit, that he's probably given that an awful lot of thought.

OPPENHEIMER: He probably wasn't president when it happened.

PATEL: Right, but still it's a fascinating and important case, and the question is, back to the language you used Phil, is good sectarianism, bad sectarianism. I actually prefer the term particularity, because I think sectarianism has a negative connotation. To tell a quick story and then to analyze from there—so I went to Berea College a couple years ago. It's this really special Christian institution in the American South, in Kentucky, that was started as an integrated black/white institution college in pre-Civil War Kentucky.

I'm speaking in the chapel and there's a big cross right behind me, and one of the sweet staff members of Berea College comes up to me and says, hey, I hear you're a Muslim, are you uncomfortable with the cross behind you? Should I cover it? And I thought to myself, God, this is the danger of particularity meeting diversity and thinking to itself, for you to be safe, I have to be less who I am. Right?

And I thought about this. John Fee, in the 1850s, built this college, risked his life to have black students and white students studying together, because he believed in a particular vision of that cross. And my sense is the reason that the college, under

Larry Shinn's presidency at that time, had brought a Muslim to speak about religious diversity and social justice was because of their vision of that cross. I didn't want them to cover the cross, I wanted them to have a robust articulation of that vision of it.

So I think that, actually, the intersection of particularity and diversity is this—the ability to articulate, from your tradition, your relationship with other traditions and ways of being. It's not to say that for the Muslims and secularists, etc. to be safer at Boston College, we have to be less Catholic. It's to say that we have to have a full and robust articulation of a Catholic theology of relationship with other people, or interfaith cooperation, whatever you want to call it, so that we actually highlight different dimensions of our Catholicism coming to light in a 21<sup>st</sup> century America that's more diverse than ever before.

One of the things that strikes me is that in the past generation or two, the ability of people to articulate theologies of poverty, of racial reconciliation, of environmentalism, has become part of what it means to be educated in that tradition. In a time of religious diversity, and interaction, and intensity, it feels to me like part of the challenge and opportunity of Catholic colleges, and all religiously affiliated colleges, is to be able to articulate how its tradition is in relationship with other traditions.

That way, you have people who say I'm proud to be a Catholic, or an evangelical, or a Presbyterian, and I don't feel like I'm bad sectarianism. I don't feel like I'm hiding away from the world. It's not faith as bubble, it's not faith as barrier. It's faith as bridge. But that takes an articulation, and who else is going to do that except for institutions like Catholic colleges that have a foot in the world of that diversity and a foot in the historic nature of their tradition?

JACOBY:

I completely agree with what you said, but here is another tension, and it comes particularly for people who have been educated only in one tradition, learn about others. And it was brought home to me most forcefully—it's why I'm so grateful I lecture, because I've learned so much.

A few years ago I gave a lecture at Augustana College, a historically Lutheran college in the Quad Cities area, and it was to their college freshmen—it was a freshman college history teacher who invited me, who was a Lutheran. Not all of the faculty there is Lutheran by any means, but he was. And after, this student came up to me, a freshman, 18, raised in a very different kind of Lutheran home, a very literal biblical interpretation, of a kind that a lot of Lutherans, probably the majority, are not today.

He came up to me afterwards, and he said to me, I understand everything you say about the reasons for not imposing your religious values in a society of diversity, in which people have to get along and be governed by the same government who believe very different things about this. But how do I reconcile that with the fact the fact that I know—and he used the word know deliberately, he didn't say I believe—that I know I'm in possession of the absolute truth? How can I not want other people to have that, too? And how can I not do my utmost—there's where you get into it—to see that they have it? Well, there's that word, to see.

And I thought to myself—and this, by the way, was somebody who six months before had arrived at Augustana wanting to be a minister, and now he wanted to be a high school teacher. Why? He'd already been exposed to a different idea of Lutheranism with his professors there. And I said to him, that is a question that everybody who believes they're in possession of the absolute truth has asked themselves throughout history, as I'm sure you'll find out even more than you already have in terms of your education.

But I said, that's not a question I can answer for you. That reconciliation—which will include a question of whether there is an absolute truth—an absolute truth, meaning that everybody else has to agree with it—I said, you're going to have to answer that question for yourself.

Then along came the teacher and said, why don't you come to the faculty lunch we've arranged? And he did and what he heard at that lunch—but I think that this was a great example of the tensions that exist even within these institutions. He was learning, and what he'll decide eventually, I don't know. But certainly he was getting, as you said, something that a historically religious college—but providing a good secular education as well, is uniquely equipped to do precisely because they are concerned about religious belief.

WOLTERSTORFF: Mark, can I tie my answer to your question into what Nathan Hatch said, one of the points Nathan made last night? I think an absolutely remarkable, and I think wonderful feature of American higher education, is its radical decentralization, and the fact that we don't have a federal minister of education. In fact, most of the states don't have a minister of education. I taught for five years, half of each year for five years, at the Vrije University of Amsterdam, and there you see, in a European system like that, the radical contrast. There's a central ministry of education, all the universities are under that and so forth.

So a remarkable feature of American education is that a bunch of people can get together and for really good reasons, or for really goofy reasons, decide to start a college and they have to be licensed a little bit and so forth, but they decide, why don't we just have our students confine themselves to reading Great Books. We won't teach them any physics, we won't teach them any chemistry. Now I think that's a kind of goofy idea, but it goes. That's one of the great benefits of American education. But of course –

JACOBY: Sounds great to me. A school where they're not going to teach any physics. I should've gone to one of those. It's also a great weakness though.

WOLTERSTORFF: But of course it's got the rub. And the rub comes, then, when—well, it especially comes when they are not clear to their prospective faculty, especially, and to prospective students and donors—but especially to prospective faculty—when they're not clear as to what the contours are, what tradition they want to carry on, what particular vision of education they want to carry on and so forth.

So the first thing I want to say about all such colleges is that you have to be absolutely clear as to what it is. There will still be painful things. People will change their mind and so forth. One of the things that's going on in the Wheaton case is that the old sorts of divides between Catholics and Protestants are breaking



down in all kinds of ways and old rules begin to look pointless. I do want to say that what you point to as the dark side is something that's really to be celebrated in American higher education. You can get together and start a college for goodness knows what reason. People show up, you find some donors.

JACOBY: There is a compromise, though, between some of the things about the European and American system, and I think we see this because of the lack of preparedness, because we don't have any national standards for elementary or secondary education, either.

WOLTERSTORFF: [inaudible]... it's true.

OPPENHEIMER: We're getting some in two years with the national core.

JACOBY: But that's not going to be enforceable. I don't think it's a great thing, and certainly I would object to any public money ever being spent—and all colleges get some public money indirectly—for a college which decides that a person can be an educated person, that they can issue a degree, and teach nobody any science. I think that that's ridiculous, and I think in that respect, the European system is better. And I think that there is a compromise to be made between that and the idea that, say, Patrick Henry University can decide to set itself up to teach homeschooled children to become right wing lobbyists in Washington. It's ridiculous to even call it a university.

WOLTERSTORFF: There's another downside to, with respect to our topic of liberal arts education, to the European system. In the European system, since it's run by bureaucrats, in recent years—England, Holland I know best—is becoming run by—I was going to say efficiency experts—purported efficiency experts, and so even more relentlessly than in the States, they're asking what is the economic payoff for? The Dutch universities are close to eliminating all teaching of languages.

JACOBY: Oh, God.

WOLTERSTORFF: I find this just excruciatingly painful. The Dutch were, in the Renaissance, the early Renaissance, the great linguists of the world. And now they're saying it makes no money in the modern world. We'll teach economics and sociology—why exactly sociology, I don't know, but economics—so yes, our liberal arts in the states are endangered by that mentality. But thank God there's no minister of education and there's no parliament saying, you've got to all be efficient. The Yales and the Wheatons and the Calvin Colleges can thumb their nose at it.

JACOBY: For everybody who can pay their tuition.

WOLTERSTORFF: Yeah, that's right.

OPPENHEIMER: That's a great place to maybe start taking questions from you. Does anyone have any questions for any of our panelists? I'm going to make you wait for the microphone. Don't even think about talking until the microphone—it's coming. There you go.

Q: A quick question. Do you see a dynamic tension between diversity and freedom of association?

OPPENHEIMER: What do you mean by that?

Q: What I mean by, like, for example, if a bunch of people decided to have a Bible study and say, you know, we only want men who are Christians, do you want to force them to be diverse or things like that? Or some men want to play golf and they don't want their wives to come? That's another example.

WOLTERSTORFF: Imagine that.

OPPENHEIMER: Hypothetically speaking.

PATEL: I think that this is a terrific question, and it's long been one of the great challenges, and it's going to be one of the great challenges. The specific case in which this is going to hit the fan is around universities' all-comers policies and particular religious groups' ideas of who ought to belong or who ought to run for leadership. And the stuff has hit the fan at Vanderbilt around this, where the intervarsity group has been decommissioned or whatever it is because –

OPPENHEIMER: Sounds like an awful euphemism.

PATEL: —they've said that gays and lesbians can't run for leadership positions in our organization, which directly contravenes the university's all-comers policy. I actually think—was it Isaiah Berlin who said that, look, the deal in a democracy is you have competing values, you have competing goods. And you can say both of these things are good in this case.

I think that a community being able to articulate its identity—I'm not making a judgment about what I think about that particular expression—but a community saying, we're a community, we have an identity, and we're going to articulate it. Here's what it looks like. And a larger body saying, actually, we are going to proactively redress what we think are unjust inequalities, in this case around identity issues.

In my view, both of those are good. The question is, which side wins and who has the power? This is only to say that the point that you bring up is a hugely important point. I just think it's endemic to a diverse democracy, and I think that universities are probably the best place to have thoughtful conversation and some—I don't want to use the word resolution, but some sense of the next step forward, because every one of those clashes plays out in the broader society.

Wouldn't you rather have a place where people can sit together that has an ethos of civil discourse, and free speech, and respect for identity, and student leadership, and building bridges, all of those things, and say, when you put all those things together, there are cases in which some things are going to conflict. So how do we resolve those cases?

OPPENHEIMER: Who was right in the Vanderbilt case?

PATEL: Honestly, I actually was at Vanderbilt two weeks later and you know what I said? Try not to pick this fight.

JACOBY: Yes.

PATEL: Hold on, let me finish this.

OPPENHEIMER: Who'd you say that to, the Christians or the administration?

PATEL: I said that to everybody. And I will give you the best example of where that wisdom came from for me. Martin Marty is a friend and mentor of mine and ours at Interfaith Youth Core, and I go see him a couple times a year. He says during the time of the Obama administration-Catholic institution fire around insurance plans and contraception, he looked at me and said, the last conversation Catholic college presidents want to have right now is what is in my insurance plan.

Honestly, most of them don't want to know, and they don't want to be told, they don't want to have this fight. Here's what I'm saying—that it is simply the case that the expressions of some identities are insulting to others. So if evangelicals were to say, which they do, we don't believe in gay marriage, that is insulting to gay people who want to marry. There are times when we have to choose to have different conversations. But we don't have to have the fight all the time.

OPPENHEIMER: But I'm unclear what you're—I mean, are you telling the Christian group to let the gay —[multiple conversations; inaudible]—

PATEL: No. You know what I told?

OPPENHEIMER: —or are you telling the administration not to enforce their policy?

PATEL: I'm telling the administration not to enforce their policy.

OPPENHEIMER: Even though the gay students have come to them and said –

PATEL: No, actually what happened in this case is, from my understanding of the case, is that somebody—and I could be getting this wrong—but that somebody when through the charters of all the student organizations, found a charter that didn't match the all-comers policy, and proactively went and said, we're going to enforce this. Now, look, you might say that this is a ducking your head in the sand approach.

All I would say is my, having thought about this for a year and having a lot of conversations about this, I don't know what the better solution is. Do you tell the Christian group, actually, we in the Vanderbilt administration are going to tell you that your understanding of Christianity is wrong? In other words, we're going to mess with your religious interpretation, or we're going to say that there are certain forms of identity, mainly yours, that cannot flourish here in the form of your student groups.

Or are you going to say to gay students who want to be a part of that group and run for leadership, actually when it comes to you, we're not enforcing our policy.

What's interesting is that that policy was not enforced explicitly when it came to fraternities, which of course creates its own brouhaha. This is only to say, which I think is, and I'm happy for a better solution to this, because I recognize that my articulation leaves everybody half-full—in a diverse democracy, the expressions of some peoples' identities are hurtful, marginalizing, insulting, etc. to other people. The question is how can those communities still live together? I think sometimes the response to that is you have to not pick the fight.

OPPENHEIMER: Either of you want to address that?

JACOBY: Yes. There's another word for that which I meant to say about the Wheaton situation. There's common sense. If you are a Roman Catholic, and it's not a matter that Roman Catholic identity is hurtful to Wheaton College, it is that Wheaton College is an evangelical college. It does not believe the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. If you are a Roman Catholic professor, there are lots of colleges who will welcome you as a professor and a Roman Catholic.

Why should you think that a college which is explicitly evangelical—it is exactly as if someone decides—and this would be hurtful—but a woman decides she should bring a lawsuit against a Hasidic Yeshiva where everyone wears modest clothing because that's part of what a Hasidic Yeshiva does.

A woman who wants to wear shorts with her belly uncovered to a Hasidic Yeshiva and because this Yeshiva is accredited by the state of New York, she decides to bring a lawsuit. There is a certain common sense, which is almost the same thing as do I want to pick this fight? What is this fight about? Why do you want to go to a Hasidic Yeshiva if you want to walk around with your belly button showing?

PATEL: Susan, I think, for me, the center of the tension is that Wheaton College is very proudly an extremely particular type of institution. So is a Yeshiva. The question is for a Vanderbilt, or a Boston College, which seeks to be an institution which welcomes diversity, whose definition is there are going to be people here whose expression of their identity is hurtful and insulting to us and whose full expression of our identity is hurtful and insulting to them.

So the question then becomes, does Boston College become the equivalent of a Yeshiva and say, actually, we're not going to have those people because we want to be entirely consistent and pure in our articulation, or does it say, we have to figure out which dimensions of our tradition we are going to robustly articulate and which we are going to hold for other conversations?

JACOBY: Well, but Vanderbilt also wasn't saying to gays, we don't want you here. The question was about gays obviously wanting to run for positions in an organization which is antithetical to their own values. It's stupid.

OPPENHEIMER: Next question. In the green scarf. Yes, wait for the microphone. Thank you.

OHANESON: My name is Heather Ohaneson, I'm a Ph.D student in religion at Columbia, and I was wondering if any of you would respond to an argument like you find in Matthew Crawford's book *Shop Class as Soulcraft* that defends the value of

manual labor for the expression of our humanity, especially in light of a New Testament teaching to lead simple lives, quiet lives, and to work with our hands.

WOLTERSTORFF: I didn't quite get that question.

OPPENHEIMER: The question was with regards to *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, Matthew Crawford's book about working with motorcycles, wasn't it? And the virtue-building effects of that. Your question was would anyone defend that as a necessary, important part of education?

JACOBY: It's great if you have the ability and the desire to do manual labor. There are lots of forms of labor and giving away to your community that weren't possible in the times of the Bible. I don't know why anybody has to go to shop class to express their religious values, especially if they're bad at it.

WOLTERSTORFF: And Matt Crawford got a degree in classics at the University of Chicago, so—

OPPENHEIMER: Before going into motorcycle [inaudible].

WOLTERSTORFF: Yes, well, the motorcycling is on the side.

OPPENHEIMER: On the side, I see.

WOLTERSTORFF: But I think it's a really interesting book.

JACOBY: I read it.

WOLTERSTORFF: And there's a true value in that. I guess I wouldn't want to—well, here we go. Suppose a group of people gets together and they say, we'd like to start a shop class as soulcraft college. I think a wonderful asset of American education is the chance to go do it.

OPPENHEIMER: Deep Springs makes you do all sorts of farming. There's also —

WOLTERSTORFF: Yeah. Berea College used to do it. Let there be a Matt Crawford college. Why not?

OPPENHEIMER: Yes, right there.

ALAN WOLFE: It's Alan Wolfe. So we had an election on Tuesday.

OPPENHEIMER: What?

WOLFE: We had an election, we really did, for president. And everyone's now talking about the changing demographics of the country, and that there's just going to be whole new demographic mixture, and that's obviously true, but when I think about this whole conference last night and today, and about our religious colleges, it strikes me that with the exception of Yeshiva and Brandeis, two Jewish ones, almost all of them are Christian.

Outside of Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish universities in America, what's left? So my question is do you expect that any other religions in the United States outside

those, the Judeo-Christian traditions, will create universities in the next 20 or 30 years? What role would they play as neither Christian nor Jewish? In other words, when are our universities and colleges going to catch up to the demographic reality of the country, which they haven't done yet?

OPPENHEIMER: Well, there is this attempt to start a Muslim four-year college in the Bay Area, right?

PATEL: I actually just reviewed the manuscript for that—kind of an ethnography on the process of that. It's called Zaytuna College. It's led by some of the preeminent Muslim intellectuals in America.

WOLTERSTORFF: And where would it be?

PATEL: It's in California.

OPPENHEIMER: In the Bay Area.

PATEL: It's going to be part of the broader GTU, that's the idea. And there's actually a Buddhist college called University of the West.

JACOBY: Yes.

PATEL: I think actually Kerouac and Ginsburg tried to set up a college in Boulder, Colorado. Professor Wolfe, I'm fully with you. This is kind of my very positive, optimistic view of American civil society, that it is a place where identity-based communities can express their identities in ways that serve the broader society. And I think colleges are one excellent example of that.

Right now, Zaytuna is not dramatically different from my reading of what Boston College was in the 1850s and 1860s. It's very small and it focuses largely on Islamic studies type things, but one day I hope that it's a Brandeis, or a Boston College, or a Notre Dame. That, in other words, it is the expression of Muslim identity in America that lifts up the dimensions of the heritage of Islam that are teaching and learning and intellectual, but that's for the broader society.

There's something called Claremont Lincoln Seminary, which is part of the Claremont complex, which is going to be granting degrees in religious areas and partnership with religious communities. So in that way, it's kind of a traditional seminary, but that's using some of the intellectual and other resources of religious communities in order to grant degrees.

I think these are all experiments at this time, but you know, who knew 150 years ago that there would be a robust system of 250 Catholic colleges? So I'm hoping that the experiments that we're seeing right now flower into robust civic institutions in a couple of generations.

JACOBY: You know, I think he's right, which is unusual for me. I basically believe in broader groups. I probably would not send my own child to a—I'm not sure though. But think about this. It's not only looking back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Joe Kennedy sent his boys to Harvard because the status of Catholic colleges then was

such that he could not see them having the future if they went to a Catholic college. He sent his girls to Catholic colleges, which doesn't tell you anything about Catholic colleges, but tells you what Joe Kennedy felt about girls versus boys.

But there has been such a huge change just in my lifetime in Catholic universities and what they do. I mean, I've just been amazed by what I've seen because my head was back in the stereotype—my parents would never have sent my brother or me to a Catholic college because they basically had Joe Kennedy's view of it. There is a lot of evolution, which I know is a word I can use here, that can take place, as he says, in what starts out as a parochial, in the literal sense of a word, institution.

Would I want to send my own kids, if I were a Muslim, to such an institution? No, because like Joe Kennedy, I would want them to have a certain quality of education—but it would be both boys and girls. But the way that things start out in America isn't the way they have to finish up.

OPPENHEIMER: Very back row there. Yes.

SUSAN HENKING: My name is Susan Henking. I'm the president of Shimer College in Chicago, and I'm going to make a comment, then I have a question. I wish to speak in defense of the Great Books colleges, at least the one that I teach at, because one of our proudest graduates left a Great Books college to go to Harvard to do a dual Ph.D in physics and the history of science. We teach the science through historical text, but we teach science.

Having said that, my question really has to do with another kind of dynamic tension, and that's the dynamic tension between the fiscal realities and education mission—that's one—and then there's another one, that's between segregation and separation. Because one of the things we're not talking about here is the long-term consequence, for example, of anti-Catholicism, and why there's therefore a strong Catholic tradition in higher education here. It was because, in some parts of the country and for some periods of time, Catholics could not go other places. Same thing for Jews, right? And same things for women.

I'm coming back around to the finances in a minute. You could argue that today out of the 4,000 higher education institutions, 1,000 of us are financially precarious. But of the ones that have closed, a disproportionate number of them are institutions where their populations that they marketed to can now go elsewhere.

For example many more women's Catholic colleges have closed and men's have become much more co-educational. We all know Notre Dame. How many of us know St. Mary's? There's a number of things that we could say about this, and I'm raising it in part because underneath some of this, also we're debating what's the public good of higher education, and how do we sustain a diversity of kinds of educational systems when the vast majority of institutions are poor?

The institutions are poor, whether they're religious or—Shimer is a secular institution, and quite self-consciously a secular institution, so I'm making comments and trying to also say there's some other dynamic tensions evident in the relationship of fiscal realities to educational mission, segregation to separation.

We're not talking about the role of historically black colleges and universities, or Hispanic-serving institutions. Some Catholic institutions are very powerful at doing that.

And so I think as we expand this out to interreligious dialogue, including the nones in the dialogue, we also have to think about what the institutions we're not including in a dialogue about the place of religion or the place of non-religion.

HENKING: OK, it was a comment not a question.

OPPENHEIMER: Prompt any thoughts from anybody?

JACOBY: One thing, and this, in a way, relates to what Dr. Hatch said last night, which I agreed with partially, but not always. What we're not talking about here is public education, public higher education, which is not religious, and in a way, because they don't offer something special, something like Boston College offers, is in a much worse situation. And this relates to what you said, too. One reason I don't think we have any reason just to crow about the diversity of the higher education system is, first of all, it isn't true that the first colleges here were not dominated by the church. They were.

Harvard was every bit as dominated by Puritanism as any religious college was, as any Anglican college was in England. And it took a long time for that to change. The origins of higher education as church education had great impact on America because—I don't know how many of you know this, but George Washington in his will left a considerably sum of money to Congress to found a national university. He thought there should be a national university for everybody, preferably one that was free or that cost very little.

Congress refused to do it because Harvard and Yale, then headed by Timothy Dwight, who certainly dominated his institution in a religious way, felt that to have a secular national university, one that wasn't controlled by the church, then the Puritan church, would undermine church education. We didn't get a real commitment to public education until the land grant colleges. And I would say that we shouldn't get too—I think these are wonderful schools. I love them. I wouldn't have any money from lecturing were it not for them.

But I think the formation of land grant colleges was the biggest, most important step in American education, whereas the colleges which originally started out—and this has nothing to do with the greatness of historically religious colleges today—but the colleges that originally started out being dominated by the church, they were not initially—I think the glory of American education is that it was eventually expanded beyond the church control.

OPPENHEIMER: I want to take one more question. Yes, Ben.

BEN BIRNBAUM: As probably the only person in this room that graduated from an ultra-orthodox Yeshiva I want to tell Susan Jacoby that my life would've been much improved by the presence of a woman with a bare midriff in my class. It never happened. It was a fond dream, I believe.



JACOBY: [Laughter]

BIRNBAUM: I think there's a major tension. You know, there's no way to number. I've been at Boston College for 34 years. There's no way to number the tensions. Too many tensions exist within an institution like this, which has a religious commitment, as well as a scholarly commitment, as well as professional commitments. One that we've missed that I think is very important is the conversation with culture.

I will say that students at Boston College have an opportunity to meet culture, public culture, in a way that students at other colleges don't. I attended secular colleges as well as my Yeshiva, but for example the hookup culture which is prevalent—I don't imagine it's at Wheaton, but I'd imagine it's at a lot of places outside of those evangelical schools that have very tight control over student life. But it is prevalent at all Catholic colleges and prevalent at—I believe, I shouldn't characterize it—well, this is an interesting tension. It's a fascinating tension.

Here you are in an institution which you have freely chosen, unless your parents dragooned you into showing up here. 70% of our undergraduate students are Catholic. They know what Catholicism means, they've been catechized. And here they are and there's this tension between what popular culture says—I should say what culture says—and what they're told here, and I think that's just a small example, but I think this conversation is extremely useful. It provides the tension that keeps Boston College, frankly, on its toes. And even I, clearly not Catholic, who have a sort of sideline seat but in the front row, find it enormously interesting—more than interesting—to watch and to participate in.

OPPENHEIMER: One more question? Is there a question? OK, yes. Let's get in one final question and then we will wrap up.

PATRICK MANNING: Thank you very much. I'm a Ph.D student in theology and education here at BC. Initially I wanted to touch on something that Dr. Patel brought up, but this is for anyone in the panel. But Dr. Patel, at one point you mentioned that you did not personally object to lecturing in front of a crucifix. However, some years ago there were a number of professors here at Boston College who objected strongly when crucifixes were placed around classrooms at the university. And I imagine that your view was not the only view.

PATEL: Yeah.

MANNING: Many would take a different position. I think it raises an interesting point that in this panel today, and I'd say in the wider intellectual climate today, there's a growing sense that it is a good thing to have this plurality out of which a number of groups can speak from their particularity, share what is good within those varying traditions in a way that will benefit the wider culture, the wider society.

However, to put it this way, proselytizing is something of a dirty word. And I think this creates an interesting tension for Christians, certainly for a place like Boston College, when a key tenet of the faith is go forth and make disciples of all nations. So my question for the panel is how do we judge the difference or draw a line between sharing what is best in our traditions, offering what we have to share to the

wider culture, and simply forcing our religious views on others? How do we helpfully set the terms of that discourse and for people's conduct in society.?

OPPENHEIMER: We have two minutes total, do you want to go?

PATEL: I mean, super, super interesting. I'm going to do 15 seconds on each. Your comment about the hookup culture on Catholic college campuses I think is fascinating. My sense is there's been four categories of discourse at this conference—the importance of continuing particular religious identities, the importance of embracing religious diversity, the importance of finding meaning through looking through religion, and then morality. The only thing that's been said about morality is that it's important.

Any reasonable religious view of morality would take a dim-eyed view of the hookup culture, which exists prevalently just about everywhere. So once you make that decision, the question is whose morality and who is going to enforce it? I don't think we can just get away with saying it's important, we ought to do moral formation. It's a very challenging thing to do.

Very quickly to your question. I think there are, obviously, different dimensions to religious traditions. The Great Commission is clearly a huge part of the Christian tradition. So is the Great Cooperation. I think individuals and colleges make decisions about which one they're going to emphasize. My sense is that Boston College places more emphasis on what I'm calling the Great Cooperation, the dimensions of the Catholic tradition which would seek cooperation. Doesn't mean they don't believe in the Great Commission. It just means that it's not the first thing out of their mouths.

My conversation with Phil Ryken, which has been going on for two years, is where does the Great Cooperation play in the ecology of Wheaton College? Could it have a role, even though your most important focus is on the Great Commission? I think it's which dimension of the tradition your campus chooses to emphasize.

JACOBY: Ten seconds. I don't know how you solve that problem of proselytizing. Essentially it's the same question the student asked me. I don't know how you solve it personally, but don't solve it by spending any of my tax money to finance it.

OPPENHEIMER: All right, thank you so much. We appreciate it greatly.

OWENS: Nick, you were cut out there. Would you like to send us home, Nick Wolterstorff?

WOLTERSTORFF: I don't have any thoughts beyond the good ones that were said.

OWENS: OK, good. Well, thank you to our panelists. This has been a terrific conclusion to the conversations today.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]