

*Introduction to*  
**The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching**  
**And the Case of Middlebury College**  
*1915*

The document is a twelve-page typescript with a few edits in Royce's handwriting.<sup>1</sup> The typescript is the last of eight documents in Harvard Archives Royce Papers (HARP) Box 49 of published articles from 1913 to 1914. Originally, the typescript was an address read before a meeting of the American Association of University Professors in New York on 2 January 1915, which led to the formation of a committee on the limits of standardization. After the typescript was published as an article in *School and Society*, vol. 1, 1915: 145-150. The typescript is a part of a collection of writings concerning the case of Middlebury College. Royce had previously been to Middlebury College in Vermont to deliver two series of lectures, 'Illustrations of the Philosophy of Loyalty' and 'The Philosophy of Religion.'<sup>2</sup> During a visit to his son Ned, who agreed to join the music faculty in 1913, Royce met with John M. Thomas, the president of Middlebury College. At that meeting, Thomas sought the help of Royce to alleviate concerns about administrative issues attendant with the college's recent financial difficulties. Recently, the Carnegie Foundation was approved to investigate the financial difficulties of colleges in the state of Vermont by the State Educational Commission and to recommend a solution. The recommendation was that state colleges should depend on public philanthropy or the state ought to own and control whatever institution receives state funds. Royce, who probably saw such a recommendation not only as a potential violation of provincial autonomy but a political interference with academic freedom, agreed to help.

Royce's help came in October of 1914 when the *Middlebury College Bulletin* published 'A Plea for Provincial Independence in Education.'<sup>3</sup> Royce felt, on the basis of his undergraduate experience in the newly formed University of California and his association with that institution as an alumnus, that state control tends to endanger the integrity of a university's academic life. The threat is partisanship will thwart institutional development for the sake of political rivalry, which manifests as imprudent academic policy. Therefore, even if the state is the *de jure* owner of state colleges, the state ought to still grant state-funded colleges *de facto* control over their own affairs. Then each college can respond to particular problems according to their unique circumstances rather than rely on a uniform policy of state ownership and control that might be adversely affected by political partisanship or imprudent academic policy. A cooperation of public philanthropy and state funding, together with relative independence from state interference, and state colleges can devise academic policy suited to the particular needs specific to its own province. Given such relative independence, state colleges can become institutions that assist in the self-definition of the province

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<sup>1</sup> All information on the manuscript is found in Oppenheim's Comprehensive Index, entry 320 in Part II. An online version is available at <http://royce-edition.iupui.edu/docu/index.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the case of Middlebury College, see Clendenning, John. *The Life and Thought of Josiah Royce*. Nashville & London, Vanderbilt University Press 1999: 367-68.

<sup>3</sup> An online version of the article is available at <http://royce-edition.iupui.edu/online-royce-articles/>.

of which they are a part and serve: Free from the impositions of regional and national authority, state colleges can become vehicles for the expression of the mental life of their province. Despite Royce's efforts, the State Commission had already begun to implement the Carnegie Foundation's recommendation: Funds for academic programs were cut and state scholarships eliminated.

Rather than lose hope, Royce remained steadfast in his loyalty to the cause of education and the ideal of provincialism. After the State Commission had begun to implement the Carnegie Foundation's recommendation, Royce tried to enlist Dean Hurlbut and President Lowell of Harvard, as well as the philosopher A.O. Lovejoy, to the cause. Consequently, Lovejoy brought the case to the attention of the American Association of University Professors, the organization to whom Royce would read the present address in 1915. The address continues to develop a theme of Royce's earlier plea: Namely, the rejection of standardization in education. The problem with the Carnegie Foundation's recommendation is that the uniform policy of state ownership and control ignores local conditions and traditions. Since officials and bureaucrats are ignorant of such conditions and traditions, the result might be a defective academic policy; thus, the state ought to rely on provincial wisdom to devise academic policy. The foregoing is an instance of the limits of standardization, that is, the leveling of provincial particularities for the sake of administrative uniformity. Generally, the problem with standardization is the prescription is not to seek *higher* or *better* standards in our intellectual, moral, and practical life but to equalize our intellectual, moral, and practical life in accordance with one standard, irrespective of the circumstances or even the consequences. Certainly, we must share certain intellectual, moral, and practical standards, but do not need the same standards in every circumstance and must evaluate those standards in terms of their own consequences. Such uniformity would, therefore, diminish spontaneous creativity and individual initiative for the sake of administrative simplicity, which is definitely not the ideal of education. Rather than standardize education, we ought to let individuals freely and creatively choose their own standards and allow colleges to codify these standards in its policies. Such policies would then express the self-chosen aims and ideals of the province.

Written by Joseph Dillabough  
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