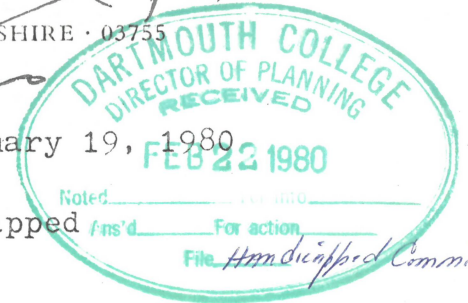




Dartmouth College HANOVER · NEW HAMPSHIRE · 03755

Comparative Literature



February 19, 1980

To: Members of the Committee on the Handicapped

From: Richard Luplow

Subject: Who Are Those Handicapped People and What Does It Matter?

As people dealing occasionally with matters relating to the handicapped, you might be interested in the following:

Speaking of the "normal" person in relation to the handicapped, Randolph Bourne, a man with a hunched back and a twisted face, once said his disability left him

filled with a profound sympathy for all who are despised and ignored in the world. When he has been through the neglect and struggles of a handicapped and ill-favored man himself, he will begin to understand the feelings of all the horde of the unrepresentable and the unemployable, the incompetent and the ugly, the queer and crotchety people who make up so large a proportion of human folk. We are perhaps too prone to get our ideas and standards of worth from the successful without reflecting that . . . the sayings of the wealthy . . . are pitifully inadequate for those of us who fall behind in the race. Surely there are enough people to whom the task of making a decent living and maintaining themselves . . . is a hard and bitter task, to make a philosophy gained through personal disability and failure as just and true a method of appraising . . . life . . . as the cheap optimism of the ordinary professional man.

And Joseph Featherstone, a professor in the Harvard Graduate School of Education, recently stated:

Something to remember is that we all have a self-interested stake in [improving attitudes toward the handicapped]. Only one handicapped person out of six is born with a disability. This is a minority we can join if we miss our step or brake too slowly or suffer a heart attack or maybe even just grow old, as most of us surely will. The text for our time may be King Lear, for at any moment any of us might discover how society treats that poor naked thing, unaccommodated, disabled man.

*Richard Luplow*