

Opening Presentations

András Szántó: Good morning, everyone. Please take your seats. I'm András Szántó, I'm the director of the National Arts Journalism Program. I'm delighted to welcome all of you early risers to the conference today. This is the thing about conferences, you know, they take two years to prepare, then boom, there's this explosive moment the day of, and you never quite know who's going to come. But I'm delighted that we are getting off to a good start.

Well, it's going to be quite a day. I'm the only guy here today who's not going to be speaking about Randolph Bourne, because there's pretty much—pretty much everything that can be said about Randolph Bourne will be said in the course of the day. So my role here is mainly ceremonial, to acknowledge all the people that have been so wonderful in preparing this conference, and also just to say a few words about the National Arts Journalism Program.

I do think, however, unfortunately I have to begin the day on a somewhat somber note. I know that there are a lot of people here today from the disability community and I was just online this morning and saw the news that Christopher Reeve died yesterday, at age 52. It was of a heart failure, yesterday. It was just announced this morning. So unfortunately that makes for two very timely reasons for this conference. Arguably the most important, living embodiment of some of the struggles surrounding disability passed away, and of course here we are again this morning with more news of casualties in Iraq.

The National Arts Journalism Program has been in existence for ten years. We are here to improve the quality and quantity of writing and journalism about the arts in the news media, the general interest news media. We have hosted more than 120 professional journalists here at Columbia, and in an earlier part of our existence at other universities for academic residencies. And the idea is that if you help arts journalists do a better job covering the arts, you'll also help all the arts themselves.

A sampling of our publications and research is in the back. I just want to point out that last week we released a very important study called "Reporting the Arts II"

which you can purchase in the intermission, which called attention to a very unfortunate fact, which is that over the last five years even while the arts have been growing, arts coverage has been flat or falling in most American newspapers.

Now today's conference is slightly offbeat and unusual for us, but there are a host of reasons why we're doing it. Foremost among them is that one of our former fellows, Allan Jalon, whom many of you have gotten to know in the course of the last few months as he was preparing this conference, hit upon the theme of doing a conference about Randolph Bourne, and ever since his fellowship—our fellows usually work on projects while they're here—he's been working tirelessly on getting this day prepared and getting people lassoed in. As many as you have discovered, Allan is a pretty relentless guy. So first of all I'd like to thank Allan for all of his efforts leading up to this day.

There are a couple of other people that I have to acknowledge. Alan Brinkley, the provost of Columbia University, unfortunately couldn't be here today. He was planning to introduce the conference this morning, and the provost's office did support the conference today. Alan is traveling today I believe in Italy, so he sends his regards. However with us of course is Casey Blake of the history department, who has been the other key player organizing this conference, and we will be hearing from him very soon.

A couple of other people I need to acknowledge. Larry Siems at PEN's Freedom to Write Committee, also an organization that supported this conference; Simi Linton of the University Seminar on Disability Studies—I'm delighted to see that many people have joined us through that group. Jean Ashton at the Columbia Libraries has been wonderfully supportive. You will be seeing some documents related to Randolph Bourne up on the screen today, and a lot of their help has gone into [these]. Jenny Lee also, at the Special Collections Department in Butler Library, for all of their help and encouragement, and allowing us access to the Bourne papers. This has been a Kafkaesque process, by the way. I remember sitting with Allan one day trying to find some pictures of Bourne, and box number seven couldn't be found and the entire Columbia Library system went into a tizzy trying to find this long-lost box. In any event, here we are, we found the pictures.

Of course thank you for all the panel participants for giving so generously of your time and for being here today. And thanks also to Vivian Ducat, who has through her work at Columbia Digital Knowledge Ventures compiled an extraordinary Web site that is already up and contains some information about Bourne, including some of his essays and biographical information. But more importantly, they are taping today's proceedings so we'll be able to capture and make available everything that happens here today. And it's an absolutely beautiful site.

Thank you also to the playwright John Belluso, and Clark Middleton, and the others who have made dramatic readings possible. Thank you to David Coffin for his technical support today. And above all, for their work today and every day at the National Arts Journalism Program, the two people who really do all the work at NAJP, Abigail Cameron and Eileen Torres.

Just a couple of quick logistics. We're going to be going straight into talks and sessions this morning. You're welcome to take your own break and go outside; there's a bathroom down the hall, there's coffee at the end of the hall. For the conference speakers we have some lunch reserved, for others in your packet there's some information about where you can have lunch. And at the very end of the day we'll have a glass of wine.

So with all that, I'm going to hand it over now to Allan Jalon. Once again Allan is a journalist who came to Columbia as an NAJP fellow. He writes on a whole variety of subjects, including mostly literary subjects, and one day he walked into my office and started talking about this great Columbia figure, Randolph Bourne, who I must admit I hadn't heard a whole lot about, and he talked some more, and he talked some more, and he talked some more, and soon enough we were on our way towards this conference, and here we are today. So thank you Allan for all your work, and take it away.

Allan M. Jalon: Thank you very much, Andrés. Just as he saw me that day when I came to talk to him about Bourne and remarked upon a kind of instant offering of something that I found vitally important, I had a kind of immediate reaction from Andrés that characterizes him so often, which is immediate openness to what is new

and what interests him, and a devil may care—somewhat dangerous sometimes—approach to just doing it. And the other person who constantly was eager to hear about a better way or a new way to approach this, and surprised me with his interest in trying things, was Casey Blake. So to the two of them I owe a lot. And it was an interesting combination, an administrator, a scholar, and a journalist, and in the end it was durable and it worked.

So I'll repeat that my name is Allan Jalon and I'm a former fellow with the National Arts Journalism Program, and I'm the fellow who took the fellowship a little too seriously, at least in part. One idea of the fellowship is that after years of writing hundreds and thousands of pieces of journalism, much as we loved writing those hundreds and thousands of articles and reviews, one might actually want a break, not to quit but to rediscover a passion or expand horizons. That's the rhetoric, and I took it seriously.

Part of the program was to do something completely unjournalistic, to cross the line from the one who writes about what happens to become part of a story. A theater critic will help to direct a play, a visual arts writer will help hang an exhibit. To make a long story short, I did this with the help of András and Casey. It wouldn't have happened without them. And there are others I'll thank more specifically later.

When asked why I am so intent on giving a fuller statement of Bourne's importance, I try to unravel my fascination and am still working at that. I mostly write about books. I'm a person forever walking the stacks of libraries. And the writers who tend to move me have a lyrical yet realistic gift. They're usually outsiders of some kind. It could be a poet or philosopher. It's a loneliness for the relationship of such writers that I persist, half asleep from boredom sometimes, half ill from the airless mustiness that clings to the metal shelves. The book's exact title I have forgotten. I believe it was *Five Who Fought For Peace*. It wasn't thick, had a dark blue cover, was one of those blandly desperate books about pacifists put out in the thirties. I flipped through the brief chapters, each with a drawing of a semi-obscure figure. Who here remembers Bertha von Suttner, the authoress of *Never Again War*? Then came the chapter about a writer I'd never heard of, and the peculiar profile that drew me. I began to read and felt a sense of almost physical transformation. The

experience was extreme, I admit, and had an element of purity. It reflected what I understood as true and rejected as false. The words on those pages and I were bound.

If we're honest most of us, it is his story, the novelistic life, that first takes us in: the disfiguring illnesses, the horrifying idea of an ineptly handled birth, being physically apart in a suburban surrounding, the single-parent family, then the powers to overcome the limits, the glowing mind, the great literary talent, the journey to New York that stands as a kind of noirish version of a Bernstein musical about the young hopeful. He plays piano well enough to support himself as an accompanist and piano-roll factory slave. At 23 he wins a scholarship to Columbia. On a campus roiling with boyish pranks and tribal games, he becomes his own sort of big man, the star debater, literary society arbiter, journalist, editor of the literary magazine. He writes for the *Atlantic* as a 24-year-old sophomore, a fully mature writer. He writes for the *New Republic*. I'm not sure if all this was in *Five Who Fought For Peace*, not all these details. The book focused on the opposition he forged to America's entry into World War I, how he stuck to it, intensified it despite rejection, "the violent death," as he called them, of the publications he worked for, and the ouster, for that's what it amounted to, from the *New Republic*. Then his early death in 1918 at 32 from the flu.

"The kind of war we're conducting is an enterprise which the American government does not have to carry on with the hearty cooperation of the American people, but only with their acquiescence. And that acquiescence seems sufficient to float an indefinitely protracted war for vague or even largely uncomprehended and unaccepted purposes." I discovered a much larger fascination than the life, the writing itself. Surely the political environment these past 18 months has pushed me towards an increasingly strong feeling for Randolph Bourne. Yet even in the nineties I was enthralled. Those paying close attention to Bourne and the overwhelming reality since 9/11 will have found it to be like standing between two pictures covered with highly reflective glass, each growing sharp in clarity as they reflect each other's view. Passing one's days reading daily headlines and reading Bourne shaped this conference. Digging through original papers, looking for scholars and journalists who might share my growing interest was like walking past one of those old family por-

traits in the corridor of a haunted house with pictures with the eyes that follow you, and in the comic horror movies of course there's usually someone hiding behind the painting.

Then the Bush administration prepared for Iraq and conducted the invasion. And gradually all the stories came, the high degree of manipulation—political and deeply psychological—which raised questions about how it all happened at all, and how, this was the sense, it had happened to us, each of us. "Our resources in men and materials are vast enough to organize the war technique without enlisting more than a fraction of the people's conscious energy," he wrote. Still I'm not sure that I've explained very well the sense of that bond with him, for I did actually see a sort of white light when I first read Bourne. And I still do have that extraordinary sense of connection.

An early memory of mine is of my grandfather's kneecap, along its side a slightly buried yet visible and wide green line. Here an enemy's bullet had passed, shattering his knee in 1915 and leaving a scar. It is important probably that he made the wound into a badge of masculine heroism and showed it to his grandsons. My maternal grandmother was herded into a gas chamber in a concentration camp in Poland. I grew up terrified of the atom bomb. Listening to the indifferent voices of the announcer on WINS as my mother drove me to swimming in the summers of 1967 and '68, I listened to the mounting numbers of the dead, the body counts. I dreamt in vengeance of destroying the whole German people and raking their ashes smooth, a hard flatness of black cinders as far as the eye could see. I dreamt of dropping into the bright, dark jungle of Vietnam, where I really had no chance of being sent, yet I was never really close to World War I or a concentration camp, the atom bomb or Vietnam; these were stories or images. And this is the particularly poisonous American form of tentative detached horror which begins, and has begun, in childhood for many of us, and follows us through our lives.

I would have gone crazy I think these past 18 months without this conference to work on. I hope that's not a self-dramatizing exaggeration. I wouldn't say it if it were. If it had not been for Bourne I would not have had any ability to grasp my own sense of implication for what has happened in Iraq. And that is the diabolical

combination, isn't it—the sense of responsibility for what is utterly beyond one's control? Writing was Bourne's way, I believe, of wrestling with this sense of implication and he did it more effectively than any of us could, I believe. Expression was his instrument and it was powerful and its memory is still alive.

What has this got to do with arts journalism, which is what I practice and is the mission of the National Arts Journalism Program, one of the event's core sponsors? Bourne was a universalist and he stands as a model for writers about the arts, for those engaged in all specialties. And the example is important as he is no one kind of writer; Bourne was many writers in one. He understood the most important word in writing and in a person's life—*and*. To be the connector, the activist at connecting, politics and cultures, perspectives of social science and literary art, a style both realistic and lyrical, subjective yet objective, to write in a short form, yet to grasp what is vitally important.

Anyone who's worked in newsrooms now or over recent years knows the terrible feeling of the missing *and*. Memos get written, new policies declared, editors hired, sections started, but the old wall between hard news and soft news, between politics and culture, front of the book and back, remains fast. Reading Bourne is deep therapy for the divisions of the journalistic mind. There is a much deeper reason that Bourne is important to culture writers, because he understood culture as the antidote to moral violence.

When I was 8 years old somebody hit me. It doesn't matter for my purposes here to say who it was. It was someone I still try to forgive, and sometimes with apparent success. It was an adult, a fully grown person who pulled his hand back as far as he could and swung at a vicious angle, catching me full force between my eye and my ear on my left side. Normal time stopped. The possibility of normal thought absolutely stopped. Society as I knew it, which meant the family, stopped. One benefit of observing yourself in a crisis is how you learn. The knowledge I gained was twofold. The world as I knew it was shattered. That was one side of the lesson. The other was that everything can be rebuilt.

I have come to see this process of trauma, being thrown into an enveloping vio-

lence, and detachment, the ability to rescue oneself, as the very definition of knowledge. It is the point at which each of us becomes a witness to our own experience. It is a private process for most of us, sustaining a quiet, silent record in most cases of the right and wrong in our lives and in our sense of public life. It is individual. But for Randolph Bourne it wasn't just that. He immediately combined the realm of private witness with that of public, shared, social, political experience. And this steady duality of insight about the interaction of private and public exclusion, rejection and violence in all kinds of experiences, shaped his reaction. And that is the gift he gives us as we face the manipulative, corruptive forces that work on us every day through images and ideas that reverberate in the collective psyche as deeply as the blows of a physical attack.

It is the detachment that does not deny, but embraces that which rejects us and that which we most fear. Those are the two approaches: to deny the feeling of association, or to embrace it.

Bourne wrote work that shifted in subject from piece to piece, but to me the brilliant light of it is that embrace of what is difficult and painful. He worked in the chaos of broken things and formed a many-sided whole. He cast fragments of lights around the walls of a dark room, in which I often feel I sit contemplating personal matters and public ones. I'm taken by the sensation I can follow these beams of the light his work casts and find the shape of the dark room that I am in, that I can follow the light beams from the middle of another writer's moral imagination, along with the confused, jumbling, jagged shape of the walls as they lead us seemingly nowhere. But one follows the writer with this sense of purpose, with the faith that he will lead us to feel instead of leaving us numb, that he will lead us to think instead of sleeping in thought, that he believes that there is more we can be and do (disbelieving the acquiescence, he described so strongly the implication that obstructs the door to enterprise.) That somewhere he will lead if we keep following the brilliant traces until we may finally find the way out.

I would like to at this point introduce . . . first, I'd like to just also thank Dave Coffin and several others who I won't give with title, I'll just call them by the name, Bournian of course, *friend*: Larry Siems and Jerome Davis, Peter Pazzaglini, who I

hope is here; Vivian Ducat, Nathaniel Herz at DKV; Andy Brown at the Gotham Book Mart; Kevin Baker, and Bret Israel and Donna Frazier, two editors of the *Los Angeles Times*, who published a quite long piece on Randolph Bourne, who they'd really never heard of before then; and Olaf Hansen, who couldn't be here today and wrote the anthology responsible for the really broader sense we have of Bourne, but who sent his very good wishes and remembered very fondly his days of coming up to Columbia from the Village and searching through the special collections here. And I'd also like to thank Michael Rosenthal, who at the very last minute and with very short time to prepare, dove into the assignment to talk to us about Nicholas Murray Butler, drawing on his upcoming book, *Nicholas Miraculous*, which he has just completed and submitted to his publisher. He's a long-time professor of English and was associate dean at Columbia College actually when I was here, but also for 17 years in all. And he's always stood as an example of an elegant and intelligent professor, deeply interested in his students, and I welcome him to come and talk to us about Nicholas Murray Butler.

Michael Rosenthal: I am the other guy not talking about Randolph Bourne. In the interest of full disclosure I want to say that I feel in the presence of you a Bourne imposter, as I am really going to talk about Butler and Butler's Columbia where Bourne was a student from 1909 to 1913. But I just want to make clear that I do not consider myself a genuine Bournian.

On October 9, 1917, in a famous incident in Columbia's history, the distinguished American historian Charles Beard resigned from the University, appalled by what he considered the administration and trustee intrusion into faculty affairs. The incident that led to his resignation was the firing of James Cattell and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana, two professors at Columbia, who had violated Nicholas Murray Butler's orders that anyone who would in any way oppose the American participation in World War I would be found guilty of treason and immediately dismissed from the university. And in various ways Cattell and Dana both continued to talk about American participation in the war and therefore were promptly dismissed.

Writing several weeks later to Senator Albert Beveridge, Beard declared, "It is certainly a relief to be out of Mr. Butler's asylum." For better or for worse, Columbia

was absolutely Nicholas Murray Butler's asylum from 1902, when the trustees unanimously named him president to succeed Seth Low, to 1945, when a different generation of trustees forced Butler, now totally blind and practically deaf, to resign. During his 44-year reign Butler presided over this country's intellectual, political, and cultural life that few other Americans of his time—president of Columbia, president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, president of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, chairman of the board of the Carnegie Corporation, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1931 along with Jane Addams, collector of 38 honorary degrees, profiled in two issues of the *New Yorker*, displayed on one *Time* magazine cover—Butler achieved more or less every distinction imaginable, except the one he most wanted: the presidency of the United States, and even here as a candidate for the Republican nomination in 1920 he managed the modest triumph of getting more votes on the first ballot than the eventual winner, the lamentable Warren Harding. Encrusted with honors he was, for British novelist H. G. Wells, the “pearly king of academics.”

Butler came to power at the same time America was coming to power, reflecting the energy and optimism of a young country about to take on a position of world leadership, supremely confident in the rightness of its political and economic system. His values were unapologetically elitist, as was the university he was creating in his own image. “Great personalities make great universities,” Butler announced at the very start of his presidential tenure. And he implacably sought out the faculty talent necessary to make Columbia not just the leading university in the country, but of the entire world. While Bourne delighted in the intellectual energy pervading the Columbia campus, he found Butler's arrogance and vanity to be insufferable. Bourne's radical egalitarian instincts clashed with Butler's autocratic principles and hatred of dissent. The contrast made Bourne's presence at Butler's university into a kind of sustained, stimulating, oxymoronic moment, of which the rapidly accomplished social critic took full advantage. For Bourne to be at a school whose president viewed the limited-liability corporation as one of the modern world's great inventions, who condemned all labor strikes as acts of warfare against the democratic system, the experience had to be exhilarating.

Had Bourne fully understood while he was at Columbia the battle that Butler was

leading to keep Columbia from being inundated with the high-achieving but socially undesirable sons of eastern European Jews, he would no doubt have been distressed, but presumably he knew little about the administration's suggestions being entertained concerning the imposition of a residential requirement, required physical examination, and other such measures. As a journalist he would've been fascinated with the discussion surrounding how best to use a scholarship fund provided to the college in Joseph Pulitzer's will. Dean Frederick Keppel, college dean at the time, thought that not only might the Pulitzer family be pleased if the fund were used to support boys thinking about going on to the journalism school, but that also, in Keppel's words, "It might give us a larger proportion of gentiles among the scholars, for journalism is not sufficiently lucrative a profession to be particularly attractive to the Jew."

Pillaring Butler as Dr. Alexander Mackintosh Butcher in a 1915 *New Republic* article entitled "One of our Conquerors," Bourne noted the care Butcher took every commencement day to warn "the 5,000 graduates before him against everything new, everything untried, everything untested." Bourne's Dr. Butcher was convinced, as was Butler himself, of the complete perfection of our Anglo-Saxon political institutions, and he never wearied, in Bourne's words, "of expressing his robust contempt for the unfit who encumber the Earth." As America's outstanding philosopher-politician, Butcher was able to inject "into the petty issues of the political arena the immutable principles of truth."

Nicholas Miraculous, as his good friend Teddy Roosevelt among others called him—the students occasionally called him Ridiculous Hurry Nutler, but students will do things like that—was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey in 1862, moving to Paterson before he was 2. Although writer Upton Sinclair charged him, not implausibly, with being the intellectual leader of the American plutocracy, his origins were decidedly unplutocratic. His father was a modestly successful manufacturer of floor carpet. In the 1890s he required several loans from his son to keep the business going. Butler graduated from Columbia with a B.A. in 1882, receiving his Ph.D. in philosophy also from Columbia in 1884. His hiring as a tutor in philosophy in 1885 launched him on sixty years of consecutive employment at Columbia.

"The American century," which Henry R. Luce proclaimed in 1941, was very much Butler's century, and he succeeded in imposing himself on it in a dizzying variety of ways. Butler's ambitions were never parochially limited to Columbia, nor were they national or even international in scope. They were finally nothing less than intergalactic. The choice of *Cosmos* as the pen name under which he wrote a series of articles for the *New York Times* on his program to end World War I tells us more about Butler than he understood, as does the quip that amused British statesman Lord Halifax to the effect that it had been said that Butler had no intention of dying until a vacancy occurred in the Holy Trinity.

Revered icon and reviled caricature, Butler was large enough to embrace both easily. Whatever else could be said about him, he was always noticed, a quality which contributed to Columbia's own visibility. Butler was a brilliant promoter of self as well as institution, and understood from the start the need to keep the two products he was marketing—Dr. Butler and Columbia—constantly before the public. Before the age of television, that meant using the press, and from the beginning of his career Butler exploited the resources of the press with a virtuoso skill. Although he employed two press agents—James T. Grady on the Columbia payroll, and newspaperman Edward R. Marshall for more personal issues—Butler functioned effectively as his own public-relations firm, committed to the notion that no day was entirely satisfactory without his name appearing in the newspaper, even if only to announce the guest list at one of his presidential parties at 60 Morningside Drive.

In pursuit of this goal he proved an inexhaustible supplier of material to be publicized. From early in the century on he produced one hundred articles, addresses, essays, reviews, introductions, public letters, reports, references, and the like every year. By the time he retired he had published twenty volumes of these. He was sufficiently successful in creating himself into a recognized brand name that the *American Educational Review* felt it would be understood when it characterized some observations he made in 1924 as being "truly Butlerial." Butler's narcissism left little to chance. The distribution list he gave to the Carnegie Endowment for one of his speeches—in addition to his university, editorial, personal and political lists, which would be handled by Columbia—included the following: trustees of the Carnegie Endowment; trustees of the Carnegie Foundation; trustees of the Carnegie

Corporation; justices of the U.S. Supreme Court; judges of U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeal; judges of New York Court of Appeals; judges of the New Jersey Court of Errors and Appeals; president of the United States; vice president; members of cabinet and chief assistant secretaries; United States Senate, get their home addresses; House of Representatives, get their home addresses; governors of all the states; foreign ambassadors and ministers at Washington; counselors or chief secretaries of each embassy or legation at Washington; U.S. ambassadors, ministers, consuls general in foreign service; Carnegie Endowment foreign list; bishops of the Roman Catholic Church; bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church; Methodist Episcopal Church; no rabbis; go to the world almanac and find the president of all colleges; officers of education and religious organizations; old and new correspondents; foreign newspapers, a total, his secretary said, of roughly 9,000 copies.

No one would've been more surprised than Butler—the man the *New York Times* called at different points in his career, “the incarnation of the international mind,” “member of the parliament of man,” and “prime minister of the republic of the intellect”—at the instant oblivion conferred upon him at his death. His own view of his importance can perhaps best be seen in a small typewritten chart in a file of his papers labeled “personal odds and ends.” It suggests rather more recognition than history has granted him. Most likely the product of a self-indulgent reverie which he had scrawled in an idle moment in 1940, it had no doubt been typed into permanent form by a dutiful secretary. The horizontal line across the page contains the names Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler, Roosevelt, and NMB. The vertical line has the categories born, came to power, years in power, age. Amazingly the total for all five is 3,880 and divided by two is 1940, the year that Butler had this fantasy. And Butler was fascinated by numbers, and this simply assured him of his own status in his own mind.

Butler's mathematical demonstration of his own significance has not been shared by the world, even at Columbia. Though Columbia students generally recognize that their renowned Butler Library was named after somebody, few can identify the person. Butler appears to have vanished entirely from human memory.

“Randolph Bourne”: Excuse me, did you just say that there's a library named

after Butler?

Michael Rosenthal: I did indeed say that, yes.

"Randolph Bourne": Whose photograph is this?

Michael Rosenthal: I believe that's of President Butler himself.

"Randolph Bourne": Oh my, that is a . . . would everybody agree, that is a horribly ugly man. I mean he ran . . . You said there's a library named after him?

Michael Rosenthal: Indeed there is.

"Randolph Bourne": Would you like to point it out for me, is it . . .

Michael Rosenthal: Yeah, I think it's over there.

"Randolph Bourne": It's over here.

Michael Rosenthal: Yes, I think so.

"Randolph Bourne": Oh, it's over here. Pardon me for interrupting.

Michael Rosenthal: No, no, it's quite all right. What is your name, sir, if I may ask?

"Randolph Bourne": Continue. My name, forgive me, is Randolph Bourne, Randolph Silliman Bourne.

Michael Rosenthal: Randolph Bourne.

"Randolph Bourne": This is the Butler Library?

Michael Rosenthal: Yes.

"Randolph Bourne": They named this—Homer, Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero—they named that building after Butler? That thing is atrocious. That thing is as awful as the Eiffel Tower, the way it made de Maupassant reel from its vulgarity the first time that he ever saw that atrocious piece of work. My goodness!

Michael Rosenthal: Keep in mind . . .

"Randolph Bourne": That is an atrocious piece of work.

Michael Rosenthal: Keep in mind, Mr. Bourne . . .

"Randolph Bourne": What is your name, sir—Mr. Rosenthal, you said?

Michael Rosenthal: Keep in mind, Mr. Bourne, it wasn't—my name is Mr. Rosenthal, yes.

"Randolph Bourne": And you're a professor here at Columbia University?

Michael Rosenthal: That is correct, yes, yes.

"Randolph Bourne" Did you hear that? Did you hear that? This is Nicholas the Miraculous. You would not have been a professor here, a Jew would not have been a professor here under this man's reign. Congratulations.

Michael Rosenthal: There were, there were some well-behaved . . .

"Randolph Bourne": This is terrific.

Michael Rosenthal: There were some well-behaved Jews who were on the faculty at the time.

"Randolph Bourne": Oh, is that right?

Michael Rosenthal: Yes, and some students as well

"Randolph Bourne": Students as well. There were two or three of them. I think I remember them serving wonderful chicken-noodle soup, but I am terrifically happy to hear that.

Michael Rosenthal: Yes.

"Randolph Bourne": And oh my lands! Let's see, the campus has changed. Well they put this atrocity up, and they have absolutely ruined the beautiful view. There were farms, oh you could look out and you could see farms, except over to the right there was an old fellow that had—that raised swine, so there was a particular time of day that you could smell the pig waffling in this area, and it usually was around lunchtime. And usually at the same time you would see Mr. Butler, Nicholas the Miraculous, walking across the campus. So I actually never knew if it was the swine or Mr. Butler.

Michael Rosenthal: Yes.

"Randolph Bourne": But my, how the campus has changed. My Lord, I see, I see black people, oh that's terrific! I see . . . it appears that there are Latin people. I never would've seen this during my time, Mr. Rosenthal, people it appears from the Far East. Well it does seem like Columbia is changing. And this actually reminds me of an essay that I wrote. I'm curious, are people still as eager to assimilate?

Michael Rosenthal: Oh yes indeed.

"Randolph Bourne": There was such a—may I read . . .

Michael Rosenthal: Please.

"Randolph Bourne": . . .a piece of an essay?

Michael Rosenthal: Please, we would be very pleased. Thank you, thank you, Mr. Bourne.

"Randolph Bourne": Forgive me for interrupting.

Michael Rosenthal: No, no, no.

"Randolph Bourne": I'm sorry. By the way, if I bore you, there is straight down the hall—thank you, thank you. That was . . . actually I'd planned to just sit in the back and mind my own business, but I . . . when you said a library was named after him I had to get up here.

And by the way, if I bore you at all, there is—down the hall here there is absolutely some wonderful coffee. I planned to just sit here and drink the coffee all day and listen, but the coffee is actually better than it used to be when, down the way, I used to hang out with John Reed and Emma Goldman and the like and drink coffee at a wonderful place called Mama Bertolli's.

But anyway, seeing the people move around the campus here, and the change, it reminds me of an essay that I wrote called "Trans-National America." Now obviously with this thing here you weren't planning to expect me to speak today, because this was not adjusted to a man that's four foot ten, you know, unless my mouth was where my eyes are, how is that?

OK this is from a very popular essay of mine—I hope it's still popular—called "Trans-National America." Is that too much? Can you hear me in the back? Or perhaps I can just do this. How is that?

"We are all foreign born, or the descendants of foreign born, and if distinctions are to be made between us they should rightly be on some other ground than indigen-ousness. The early colonists came over with motives no less colonial than the lat-ter. They did not come to be assimilated in America, in the American melting pot. They had not the smallest intention of 'giving themselves without reservation' to the new country, to America. They came to get freedom to live as they wanted. They came to escape from the stifling air and chaos of the Old World." This is important, remember this. There'll be a test later. "They came to make their fortune in a new land. They invented no new social framework. Rather they brought over the bodily

old ways to which they had been accustomed. Tightly concentrated on a hostile frontier, they were conservative beyond belief. Their pioneer daring was reserved for the objective conquest of material resources. In their folkways, in their social and political institutions, they were, like every colonial people, slavishly imitative of the mother-country." Very important. "So that, in spite of the 'Revolution,' our whole legal and political system it remained more English than the English, petrified and unchanging, while in England law developed to meet the needs of the changing times." Isn't that ironic? And I wonder if Alexander Butler, I mean Butcher—I just wonder, you tell me—what he would've thought about the Anglo-Saxon founders that he so fully identified. No, Butler, he didn't have a name for a library for him when I was around.

Now this school of journalism here that you're sitting in, it was built at a very important time, 1914. Now that time was very important to me because there was a world war underway. I began to write about it. And there was a man—let me tell you a little bit about what it was like here. We would walk out on Broadway and you would see—I would see classmates of mine from the year before in doughboy uniforms marching down Broadway. It was a very frightening time. People were going out to war. And there was a professor of mine that I deeply admired, John Dewey, with whom I studied here at Columbia; I greatly admired him. And he wrote about the war. He said, "We shall have missed the great experience of discovering the significance of the American national life by seeing it reflected into a remaking of the life of the world. And without this experience we shall miss the contribution which the war has to make to the creation of a united America."

And I wrote back in "Trans-National America," "Against this thinly disguised panic which calls itself 'patriotism' and the thinly disguised militarism which calls itself 'preparedness' the cosmopolitan ideal is set. This does not mean that those who hold it are for a policy of drift. They, too, long passionately for an integrated and disciplined America. But they do not want one which is integrated only for domestic economic exploitation of the workers or for predatory economic imperialism among the weaker peoples. They do not want one that is integrated by coercion or militarism . . ." Hmm.

I'm just wondering if anybody here today knows what I was talking about when I wrote such things. Now, can anyone here today share with me, talk about the anxiety that I was feeling, do any of the people that work and study in this building—can they remember what happened in 1914?

Casey Blake: I do.

"Randolph Bourne": And understand the appearance of—you do, sir, yes?

Casey Blake: Yes I do.

"Randolph Bourne": And what is your name?

Casey Blake: My name is Casey Blake, and I'm an historian.

"Randolph Bourne": Oh, terrific, a historian! And you teach here at Columbia. Oh, how wonderful. I took histor . . . I wanted to ask one last question.

Casey Blake: Absolutely.

"Randolph Bourne": Mr. Rosenthal, sir, you taught literature. You're not making the poor students study Tennyson, do you? I abhor Tennyson. I begged them not to teach Tennyson. I yearned for Tolstoy. Are you allowing them to read Tolstoy?

Michael Rosenthal: We do Dostoyevsky.

"Randolph Bourne": Terrific! *Crime and Punishment* was my favorite. Forgive me. Now, Mr. Blake, please step up. Now you say that you can explain what that was like; you're a professor of history.

Casey Blake: Yes, I am.

"Randolph Bourne": Oh, that's terrific! How long have you been here at Columbia?

Casey Blake: Oh, I guess about five years.

"Randolph Bourne": Yes, and are you enjoying being here?

Casey Blake: In a manner of speaking, yes.

"Randolph Bourne": Did you spend any time in that atrocity over there? Oh, thank God the picture's gone.

Casey Blake: We had your picture up here for a while.

"Randolph Bourne": My picture was up?

Casey Blake: Yes.

Randolph Bourne: Are they going to put it back up?

Casey Blake: Yes, there will be more photos of you.

"Randolph Bourne": Oh terrific! And what were you going to speak about, Mr. Blake?

Casey Blake: Well, I've actually written about you.

"Randolph Bourne": Oh, you've written about me!

Casey Blake: And not badly, either.

"Randolph Bourne": Well that's terrific. Are you going to speak about me?

Casey Blake: Yes, I and a number of other people will be speaking about you today.

"Randolph Bourne": Well, that's terrific, because that's what I thought and that's

why I'm here, but I showed up and the first hour this gentleman was talking about Nicholas Murray Butler.

Casey Blake: We're getting Butler off the stage as quickly as possible.

"Randolph Bourne": Oh terrific, good. Then I'm going to turn it over to you and I'm going to assume that the smell then is not Mr. Butler, but the swine.

Casey Blake: Thanks very much.

"Randolph Bourne": Thank you very much, Mr. Blake.