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# Why the old traditions will not fail: landscape, legends, and the construction of place at Dartmouth College

Charles H. Wade

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College*, [drcharleswade@gmail.com](mailto:drcharleswade@gmail.com)

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WHY THE OLD TRADITIONS WILL NOT FAIL: LANDSCAPE,  
LEGENDS, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF  
PLACE AT DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
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in

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by

Charles H. Wade

B.A., Louisiana State University, 2001

M.A., Miami University, 2003

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	v
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
Chapter 2: Methods, Key Concepts, and Relevant Literature .....	13
Methodology .....	13
The Use of <i>Elite</i> in This Study and Others .....	24
The Ivy League and the Elite American Colleges .....	31
Tradition .....	38
Literature Review .....	41
Elites in the Social Sciences and Popular Literature .....	41
Elite Geographies .....	45
Collegiate Culture, Higher Education, and the Ivy League .....	47
Dartmouth College .....	57
Chapter 3: Early and Contemporary Dartmouth .....	61
Eleazar Wheelock, Moor’s Charity School, and the Origin of Dartmouth College .....	61
Contemporary Dartmouth .....	77
Chapter 4: Landscape .....	94
Chapter 5: Legends .....	139
Chapter 6: Place .....	178
The Concept of Place .....	178
A Brief Introduction to the Dartmouth Outing Club .....	183
“Welcome Home”: The Freshman Trips and the Beginnings of the Dartmouth Experience .....	196
The Safety Talk .....	207
An Evening at the Ravine Lodge .....	217
An Introduction to Dartmouth Night .....	232
Dartmouth Night, 2006 .....	244
The Outing Club and Dartmouth Night as Conduits for the Construction of Place at Dartmouth College .....	252
Chapter 7: Inside the “Dartmouth Bubble” .....	281
Introduction .....	281
Coeducation .....	282
Class .....	293
Diversity, Inclusivity, Multiculturalism, and Political Correctness .....	299
Activism, Charity, and Philanthropy .....	314
Resources, Power, and Control at the College .....	323
Admissions and Financial Aid .....	331
Self-Perception at Dartmouth .....	339

Chapter 8: Reflections on the Dartmouth Bubble .....	350
My Experience inside the Dartmouth Bubble .....	350
Dartmouth College and the Persona of Place .....	374
Chapter 9: Analysis .....	403
The American Obsession with the Ivy League .....	403
The Persistence of Tradition at Dartmouth .....	418
The “Dartmouth Experience” and Brand Development .....	430
Chapter 10: Conclusion .....	446
Why the Old Traditions Will Not Fail .....	446
Literature Cited .....	474
Appendix: The Wheelock Succession: Dartmouth Presidents, 1769-Present .....	502
Vita .....	503

## ABSTRACT

Dartmouth College, located in Hanover, New Hampshire, is one of the nine Colonial Colleges and a member of the exclusive Ivy League. Congregationalist minister Eleazar Wheelock founded Dartmouth in 1769 on the premise of training missionaries to Christianize the Indians of the region and, over the years, Dartmouth developed into a premier college. Dartmouth is famous for its traditions, its ardently loyal alumni, and as a classic New England liberal arts college. But this image does not correspond with a closer, more critical look at the College. Through both archival and ethnographic research, this dissertation examines the cultural landscape, folklore, place-making, and student culture of Dartmouth College.

Recurring themes include the persistence and preservation of Dartmouth's many "old traditions" and a vague but frequently used term, "the Dartmouth Experience." Primary research questions ask: What are the "old traditions" and why is Dartmouth adamant about not letting them fail? Why are these traditions important to understanding Dartmouth as a culture and place? And what is "the Dartmouth Experience?"

Chapter 1 provides an introduction and outlines the dissertation's content. Chapter 2 discusses the methodology, the main concepts employed, and a literature review. Chapter 3 provides some general historical background on the College and a description of contemporary Dartmouth. Chapter 4 is a landscape history of Dartmouth Hall and its role as an iconic building of the College. Chapter 5 explores the folklore surrounding the Old Pine, a site for the controversial and now-defunct Class Day ritual. Chapter 6 examines the Dartmouth Outing Club and Dartmouth Night, two key traditions that define Dartmouth as a place. Chapter 7 takes the reader inside the "Dartmouth Bubble" to gain a sense of daily life at the Ivy League school. Chapter 8 recounts my experiences as an outsider at Dartmouth and integrates the preceding chapters' findings to understanding its place identity. Chapter 9 examines the role of the Ivy

League in the American mind, the persistence of tradition at Dartmouth, and “the Dartmouth Experience.” Chapter 10 concludes with an argument on why the old traditions will not fail.

## **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

It seems rather unlikely that a small college begun some 240 years ago, hidden away in a serene New England valley, with the original intent to train missionaries to Christianize the Indians of the region would have reached such a high level of status and prominence in American higher education. But that appears to be precisely the case for Dartmouth College. In fact, Dartmouth was at one time considered to be a fairly obscure college, and it only began its rise to national and international distinction in the late nineteenth century (Birmingham 1961: 147). Founded in 1769 in the “wilderness” of Hanover, New Hampshire as the last of the nine American colleges founded before the American Revolution (the “Colonial Colleges”), Dartmouth slowly evolved into the elite and renowned Ivy League college that it is today while somehow retaining much of its original institutional character and identity.

As one of the eight Ivy League colleges, Dartmouth has an especially strong allure. In many ways, Dartmouth represents the idealized college (Tucker 1999), the quintessential New England liberal arts college popularized in film and literature. Indeed, Dartmouth is significant and distinguished because of its age, its many famous and fervently loyal alumni, and its many longstanding traditions. It is distinctive from the other Ivies because of its smaller size and remoteness, which beget a particular sense of place and insularity. These traits, in addition to the visual qualities of the College as seen in its cultural landscape, present an impression of Dartmouth as an Arcadian, unpretentious, secluded academic paradise in quiet, rural New Hampshire, much like the early stories and romantic images of the College suggest (Figure 1). But these images do not correspond with a more critical look at the reality of the College.

This contrast is more apparent when one considers that Dartmouth is part of an elite, wealthy, and powerful group of American colleges known for their exclusionary character. This





**Figure 1:** Watercolor of Dartmouth College by George Ticknor, 1803 (reproduction). From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

same character is well documented for both historic and contemporary Dartmouth. Through an examination of three main, interrelated topics (landscapes, legends, and place-making), this dissertation explores how Dartmouth represents itself today as a progressive, tolerant, even idealistic institution when its landscape, institutional history, folk traditions, and contemporary culture largely suggest otherwise. By employing archival and ethnographic methods, I recount an academic year that I spent at Dartmouth to provide a place study that investigates the importance and strong utilization of specific images and traditions at Dartmouth and how these elements greatly contradicted the more public, general impression and understanding of the College based on what I found from my perspective as a researcher. Simply put, I make my points and construct my arguments about Dartmouth by describing what the place looks like, what goes on there, and how its traditions and culture contribute to defining and understanding Dartmouth as a place. This allows for a multidimensional examination and understanding of the

College by not concentrating on a singular aspect and by exploring several key characteristics as opposed to relying solely on statistics, historical documents, or ethnography. Not only is this a geographical study, it is an example of how geography provides insight into certain important social and cultural issues, and I believe that it holds implications for other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, American Studies, and higher education in general.

This study originated from my longstanding interest in collegiate history, culture, and tradition. For a while I have been deeply concerned, along with many others, about the decline of a more traditional, liberal education and the shift toward careerism and utilitarianism in American higher education. Furthermore, I have, for many years now, had a seemingly inexplicable fascination with and skepticism toward the Ivy League and what it represents or, rather, what I initially *thought* it represented. In attempting to combine these interests and find the best site for a study in this area, I thought about which school best fit the ideal from these qualities. Although I did not know too much about it beforehand, Dartmouth College immediately came to mind. It might be important to mention at this point that Dartmouth does not completely fit my own concept of an “Ivy League” school; I tend to think, based on *my* concept, of Columbia and Penn as best fitting my idea of an Ivy college. This is largely due to my vision of a hypothetical elite school being located in a large, cosmopolitan urban setting and drawing a student body and faculty from this type of environment as well, which is often the case. Elite schools that instantly come to my mind do not tend to be in rural settings, despite Dartmouth and Cornell being prime examples.

If Dartmouth does not fit my concept of an Ivy League school, then why study it? Because to me, it represents a certain example of the collegiate ideal with its rich traditions and the immense school pride associated with it. Though not exactly an anachronism, Dartmouth

seems to be part of a dying breed of educational institutions. I discovered that I was not alone with this sentiment. Charles Sykes (1990: ix-x), in his study of the drastic changes in Dartmouth's once proud liberal arts common curriculum and its shift toward the politicization of its curriculum, explains his reasoning for selecting Dartmouth as a case study:

Certainly not because it is the most flagrant case (it is not), but because it is a microcosm of the changes in American colleges and universities over the last seventy years. Perhaps because of its size and its relative isolation, those issues tend to be writ larger at Dartmouth than other institutions. . . . To its deep chagrin, it has become emblematic of the academic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s.

But it is also a paradox. Dartmouth remains one of the most prestigious institutions of higher education in the nation. It is [highly] ranked. . . . Its student body is bright and ambitious; its faculty talented. At one time, Dartmouth was perhaps the premiere independent liberal arts college in the country and a leading light in the preservation of academic freedom. But those traditions only bring its current agony and confusion into sharper relief.

If a school of Dartmouth's traditions and obvious quality can fall so far, and so hard, what does that say of the virulence of the academic disease?

I find that Sykes's observations are just as true today, if not more so, than when he made them some twenty years ago. Taking all of this into consideration, what are some important things to consider when one looks at Dartmouth in depth in regard to collegiate culture and higher education in general?

First, Dartmouth regards itself as unique. Regardless of the accuracy of this perception, it is critical to accept this notion in order to understand the Dartmouth psyche. Three aspects wherein Dartmouth exhibits exceptionalism from most other American institutions of higher learning are: 1) it is a private, elite college; 2) it is a member of the exclusive Ivy League; and 3) it is somewhat anomalous *within* the Ivy League. Dartmouth is also the smallest school of the Ivy League in terms of total enrollment, the most rural and northernmost of the Ivies, and it displays a distinctly American image, as exemplified through much of its built environment and when compared to the markedly European-influenced atmospheres of some other Ivies, notably

Yale and Penn. Nor does Dartmouth follow the so-called British educational systems found at Harvard and Yale. The Ivies had somewhat similar beginnings but Dartmouth diverged on a different path (Tucker 1999). While in theory I could have studied Harvard, Yale, Princeton, or any other elite institution, I did not want to follow a cliché by picking a more obvious example of an elite college, so instead I chose to examine a school of roughly equal stature that generally receives less attention.

Even though it is part of the Ivy League and it hosts several graduate and professional programs, Dartmouth is not a full-fledged research university like Harvard or Princeton. Conversely, Dartmouth is neither exclusively a small, New England liberal arts college like Amherst, Bowdoin, or Middlebury. Still, Dartmouth possesses qualities of each of these types of colleges. To provide an accurate description of the College, Dartmouth perhaps best falls into the category of similar private institutions (“small universities”) such as Wesleyan University, Colgate University, and Lehigh University. Examples of comparable public liberal arts universities are the College of William & Mary and the University of Vermont. Thus, Dartmouth is in a small class of a distinctive type of college. Due to this dualistic status, Dartmouth “enjoys the intimacies and fervent loyalties of a small college, and a prestige far out of proportion to its size” (Birmingham 1961: 162).

I address several more of the College’s idiosyncrasies throughout this dissertation, but there is a peculiar character to Dartmouth that many assume, though few are able to fully articulate. For one thing, it is a small school, and it possesses a certain level of homogeneity, enough so that outsiders can be discerned fairly easily. Alumni are involved with the College and its current students to an unusual degree. Some observers go as far as to describe (somewhat playfully) Dartmouth as something of a cult (Gottlieb 2008a; Howe 2005, 2007c; Mathias 2006a;

Shribman 1999). Joseph Rago (2007) explains, “Dartmouth has long been famous for the intensity of its alumni’s loyalty. It is not unfair, or an exaggeration, to call it half college and half cult.”

In her memoir *It’s Different at Dartmouth*, Jean Kemeny (1979: 71-72), wife of former Dartmouth president John Kemeny, offers some idea of what makes the College so different:

The College is still small, and still loved – sometimes fiercely – by her alumni, faculty, students, staff, Presidents and first ladies.

And Dartmouth *is* different. Is it the place? The lack of formality and pompousness? Is it the direction the President takes? Is it the basic stuff of the College – her students and faculty? Is it all of these plus a special enthusiasm which sets the College apart and makes her a distinct, very different institution?

Dartmouth in another setting wouldn’t be the same. Here [in Hanover] there’s a freedom beyond the campus bounded only by hills and streams; here there’s still a quality of life unspoiled by urban haste and hassle.

The President makes a difference. The College has one who listens, who still pioneers, who unravels complexities and creates imaginative solutions, who will look and plan for the future beyond his own tenure.

Dartmouth is chauvinistic; it is not pompous. It can laugh at itself. Too many institutions take themselves so seriously; if *it* didn’t happen on their campus, *it* didn’t happen.

The College is comfortable with informality. A President’s wife can disrupt traditions and not be classed an interloper who stepped out of bounds. A student is uninhibited about ringing our doorbell [at the President’s mansion] and asking to see the President, for the President is likely to be available. Faculty and administrators are comfortable with friends outside their own departments, outside the academic community. Town and gown communicate.

Kemeny (1979: 72-73, 81) offers further examples of the high achievements of students (academic or otherwise), how the College values and appreciates students, the accessibility of the faculty, and the high levels of dedication of the faculty as scholars and teachers.

Another key attribute of Dartmouth and focal point of my study is the College’s rich and storied traditions. Traditions are commonplace at most colleges but, at Dartmouth, they take on an added significance. They play a highly integral role to understanding the culture and identity of the College. The traditions at Dartmouth are greater than the sum of their parts and hold

deeper significance than what may be immediately clear to the casual observer. A frequently referenced line from the College's alma mater goes, "Dear old Dartmouth set a watch/Lest the old traditions fail!" Aside from being a meaningful line to an important Dartmouth song, I believe this lyric has other more far-reaching implications. These "old traditions," such as Dartmouth Night and the Freshman Trips to name just two, are what initially attracted me to conduct my study at Dartmouth. There are many Dartmouth traditions that I do not examine in this dissertation that are fully worthy of further study but are beyond the scope of my study and therefore I concentrate on some of the main and most exemplary traditions and those that interested me the most. But from researching these traditions in general, I came across a term that piqued my interest that is frequently expressed around the College, though never adequately defined, known as "the Dartmouth Experience." Again, like Dartmouth's "old traditions," this has greater meaning than its face value and, after discussing their historical development and cultural significance to the College in the body of the dissertation, I give these concepts greater analysis in Chapters 9 and 10.

It was not long into my study that I realized another important concept would play a role in my research: elites and higher socioeconomic classes. As an elite college, Dartmouth has historically attracted many members of the upper classes over the years. I drastically underestimated this fact before I began my fieldwork. It emerged as perhaps the dominant concept in my study. Virtually all the sources I consulted on American elites mentioned in varying detail how the Ivy League schools are an integral feature of the American upper classes. But I did not anticipate that this would so strongly influence some of my most important discoveries at Dartmouth.

In fact, I do not feel that the topics of elites and traditions are that distant from one another, and I argue that culture and tradition are important components of elite culture and society. And sometimes they are best studied and understood more concretely, such as through the study of a place (e.g. Dartmouth) as opposed to examining them as mere abstractions as others have tended to study the elites in much of the extant scholarship. The fact that my initial interests were in the study of collegiate culture and tradition and, over the course of the project, morphed into a study of elites does not render these seemingly disparate topics to be mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they were combined into a study of elite culture and traditions through the medium of an elite institution. Where better to study elites than at an Ivy League college? Domhoff (1970: 10) remarks, “schools and clubs are institutions – collections of individuals who organize together for some social or educational purpose on the basis of rules and traditions. By studying the history and activities of these institutions . . . it is possible to learn a great deal about the life styles, beliefs, and activities of members of the upper class.” I discuss the concepts of elites and the importance of the Ivy League as a concept in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Taken together, these concepts direct the research questions and goals. The primary research question here is: What are Dartmouth’s “old traditions” and why will they not fail? Subsequently, why are these traditions central to understanding Dartmouth culture and to understanding Dartmouth as a place? What is the “Dartmouth Experience” and what does it mean? These questions guide the majority of my research, though when I look at the big picture in the end, further questions surface: Is the preservation and persistence of “the Dartmouth Experience” about collegiate pride and tradition or something else? How does Dartmouth uphold, and sometimes contradict, its idyllic image? And, perhaps finally, why is it that

American society holds so much awe, envy, and high regard toward its elite institutions, especially when one considers that we are ostensibly a democratic society that did not establish a hereditary elite such as those found in Europe? And should we? What does this say about us? From all of my findings and interpretations I hope to direct more attention to socioeconomic and educational inequality by showing that it is as much a cultural issue as it is one of wealth or pedigree, and I hope to make this clearer through a geographical study of Dartmouth College.

This dissertation contains ten chapters. The next chapter discusses the methodology, the main concepts employed, and a literature review. Chapter 3 addresses the early history of Dartmouth College to explain its origins, followed by a section on contemporary Dartmouth as it was during and around the time of my study.

Chapter 4 focuses on Dartmouth's cultural landscape through a landscape history and analysis of the College's most iconic building, Dartmouth Hall. Here I examine the building's construction, destruction, and reconstruction. I then deconstruct this particular landscape to assess its ramifications for the visual identity of the College.

In Chapter 5 I analyze aspects of Dartmouth's distinct folklore as it is manifested in both landscape and ritual. Specifically, I study the legends surrounding the Old Pine and Class Day that are considered central components of College folklore. In exploring the historical antecedents of this Dartmouth tradition, the distinction between fact and myth is blurry at best. And yet, despite the evolution of Class Day (with and without the Pine), it remained a controversial aspect of Dartmouth culture into the late twentieth century. The ritual of Class Day serves as a fascinating example of what unites and divides Dartmouth and poses the question of whether or not the "old traditions" truly fail.



Chapter 6 begins with a brief philosophical discussion of the concept of place and then moves to the importance of that concept at Dartmouth. Beginning with some historical background on each topic, I offer my own ethnographic and observational experiences to analyze two key place-making events, experiences, and long-honored traditions at Dartmouth through studies of the Dartmouth Outing Club and the homecoming tradition known as Dartmouth Night. These traditions are critical to understanding Dartmouth as a place and to understanding the active roles that people play in creating the College's particular sense of place.

Chapter 7 takes a less lofty approach than the previous three chapters as I recount some of my findings at Dartmouth in a more concrete fashion by offering some perspective as to problems and issues that have persisted at the College for years and how they surfaced during my visit. At Dartmouth, people like to refer to their college as being enveloped in an invisible bubble that they refer to as the "Dartmouth Bubble." Much of what goes on in the Bubble is rarely seen, heard of, acknowledged, or understood outside of it. But when I devote some attention to life inside the Bubble, we see that there is much more to Dartmouth's culture than its extravagant, romantic traditions.

Chapter 8 provides an entire section on my own personal experiences at Dartmouth and those, coupled with the several topics I examine in Chapter 7, create what I found to be strong contradictions between how Dartmouth may appear on the outside of its Bubble and how it appears when one actually spends some time inside of it. The College's icon of Dartmouth Hall, the lore and customs surrounding the Old Pine, and the hoary traditions of the Outing Club and Dartmouth Night combine to create a collective place identity at Dartmouth. This place identity, however, when one adds the typical, daily exchanges within the Dartmouth Bubble, reveals a dualistic identity to the College. I end Chapter 8 with a discussion of how an understanding of

Dartmouth's place identity is incomplete when one looks solely at its traditions and "fun" qualities. Through a closer and more critical examination of this identity one finds that Dartmouth's place identity is more complex, I argue that Dartmouth's image from outside its Bubble leans more toward its larger, more public persona; Dartmouth unquestionably has a place identity, though it is dwarfed by a larger persona, or what I call its place persona. Although most of the ethnographic portion of my study is found in Chapters 6, 7, and 8, I insert some personal experiences throughout the dissertation to illustrate points and provide support from my firsthand observations and encounters. I also include a few reference maps and many figures from both archived photographs and my own photography.

Chapter 9 provides an analysis by reevaluating my findings and revisiting my research questions to better understand why the Ivy League schools (Dartmouth or otherwise) have become so ingrained within American culture and why, as a society, we seem so obsessed with them. I then look more specifically at Dartmouth to offer my assessment of what I believe the seemingly mystical and ineffable "Dartmouth Experience" to be. It is in this section where I also tease out the complex and entangled qualities between Dartmouth's place identities and its place persona.

Finally, in Chapter 10, I conclude with an analytical yet personal essay that ties together my findings and interpretations to offer my thoughts as to the importance of traditions at Dartmouth and, more broadly, in the elite classes to argue why I believe that Dartmouth's "old traditions" will not fail. I hope my findings contribute to a greater goal for this research to examine, from a geographical perspective, some of the culture of the Northeastern establishment through the case study of an elite institution of higher learning. In turn, I hope my study will provide greater insight into the long extant yet little understood or researched issues of the

culture of elites, the phenomenon of the Ivy League, and their implications for historic and contemporary American culture.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **METHODS, KEY CONCEPTS, AND RELEVANT LITERATURE**

#### **Methodology**

This research employed two major methodologies, archival research and ethnographic observation, which intersect and complement each other throughout this dissertation.

Concomitantly, due to the visual nature of this study, I include a significant number of both archival and ethnographic photographs to supplement and support my findings. The research is entirely qualitative. Qualitative research is perhaps a more effective approach for studies based at colleges and universities, especially cultural and social studies, which allow the research to take a more discernable form when the researcher becomes familiar with the site, the people at the site, and their practices (Manning 2000: 137-38). I conducted my study in Hanover from July 2006 through May 2007.

Before proceeding with the intricacies of these methodologies, however, I wish to first examine the important point of how I obtained access to conduct my study at Dartmouth. This was fairly easy and straightforward. Initially, I contacted a general public relations office at Dartmouth (the Office of Public Affairs) about eighteen months before I anticipated arriving in Hanover to begin my study. In my first letter I introduced myself, explained my interest in Dartmouth as a prospective site for my study, provided a brief description of and rationale behind my study, and asked how to gain approval to come to the College to conduct my research. The response was fairly prompt, and after contact had been established, I wrote some more similar letters and went through a few other offices and those at the College I had contacted seemed willing to allow me to do my research.

After I had done all of this, I went to Dartmouth in June 2005 for a few days for a brief pre-fieldwork investigation to check out the campus to assess the feasibility of what I wanted to

study. This brief visit was a success and affirmed my enthusiasm for and my desire to execute the study. Although I was pleased with Dartmouth's responsiveness and general acceptance of my proposed research up to that point, I knew from my preliminary site investigation that I was going to be in a more exclusive environment than I was used to, and I wanted to have some assurance and documentation that Dartmouth knew and approved of the fact that I was going to be there because I did not want there to be any question about whether or not I "belonged" there. Therefore, in the spring of 2006, just months before I left to move to Hanover to conduct my study, I again searched for appropriate people to contact about gaining some sort of recognition from the College to avoid any potential problems. I sent another letter to a social sciences dean at Dartmouth introducing myself, briefly explaining my proposed study, provided my contact information, and a curriculum vitae with my credentials to ask for some sort of status as a visiting researcher or similar designation, as all major colleges have similar titles for visitors. Not too long after that, I received a letter from that dean designating me as a Visiting Scholar at Dartmouth for the 2006-07 school year. This basically entitled me to be there, to have a library card, and a Dartmouth e-mail account, though nothing more. These things, as minor as they may sound, proved to be a huge help later on.

In regard to the issue of a researcher wishing to work in an elite setting or with elites and gaining access to an elite institution or exclusive environment, I recommend that that researcher make appropriate contacts well before the main portion of the research begins. If possible, try to obtain written documentation from an overseer or someone in charge verifying that you are cleared to be working in that setting. Make copies of anything you send or receive regarding your research plans and always keep a paper trail. If it is not possible to obtain clearance in writing or a "title" or designation of some kind, be sure to acquaint yourself with people in

authority (administrators, security, etc.) at your study site so someone knows you by sight and is aware of what you are doing. The fact that I took this small but crucial step in my own research saved me from some sticky scenarios and awkward situations at Dartmouth, as shall become clear in Chapter 6. Although being a Visiting Scholar lent me some credibility, it did not automatically make my tenure at Dartmouth a smooth ride (see Chapters 6, 7, and 8). Still, it undoubtedly helped me to gain at least some additional access that I would not have had if I had not taken that initiative. Winkler (1987: 129, 137) postulates that some reasons for the relative scarcity of studies of elites in the social sciences is because elites often carefully control their environments and who they allow to observe them, along with the psychological element of researchers being apprehensive about seeking permission to work in more exclusive environments due to fear of rejection or status anxiety. Although Winkler is probably right that these are some key reasons for elites being a lesser-researched group or culture, I can say that, even as a graduate student with a limited record of research experience, I asked and was successful in gaining access, so I hope my study encourages others to consider working in this area of research.

The part of my study where access was of the least concern, however, was in the archival portion of my research. I accomplished the archival portion of my study through many months of research primarily at Dartmouth's Rauner Special Collections Library. Rauner houses a vast array of impeccably organized sources. In fact, the sheer amount of sources available was too large (in its entirety) to realistically incorporate into the scope of my study. The main proportion of my sources from my archival research came from the Dartmouth College History Collection, which consists of publications by and about the College, its graduate schools, and Hanover in a variety of formats such as books, newspapers, magazines, yearbooks, photographs, published and

unpublished records, and ephemera of all sorts (Rauner 2008). Though I cite much of the information that I include in the remainder of the dissertation from these sources, I relied primarily on clippings from various Dartmouth newspapers, national and local newspapers, the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, and various other printed sources. Sources from this collection are organized into vertical files categorized by subjects of numerous topics and periods of Dartmouth history, such as student organizations, building histories, and College traditions, and events.

In addition to archived sources on specific topics, I utilized several of the numerous published histories and anthologies on Dartmouth life, history, and traditions (see “Dartmouth” section of my literature review, this chapter). Other crucial textual sources included print sources that were published while I was at Dartmouth, namely student papers such as *The Dartmouth*, *The Dartmouth Review*, *Dartmouth Free Press*, *The Dartmouth Independent*, other newspapers and newsletters such as *Dartmouth Life* and *Vox of Dartmouth*, as well as *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*. And thanks to the Internet, I was able to read most of these publications (some of which have a fairly thorough archive digitized online) after my fieldwork ended to keep up with Dartmouth occurrences, and I was even able to include and cite any relevant articles or columns that I came across for my dissertation well after I left Hanover.

As could be expected, print sources about Dartmouth (either archived or contemporary) were clearly biased in many different ways, with varying degrees of credibility and scholarly value. Scholars have long warned about the celebratory and self-interested nature of local and institutional histories and internal publications, though I argue that, in the case of my study, as long as I accepted this fact and examined such sources critically, I found that they provide a wealth of useful information. As I discuss and explain momentarily, I did not conduct interviews

while at Dartmouth, so I therefore found the College's publications to provide insight where my own research limitations precluded me, providing invaluable information on numerous topics of Dartmouth culture and history in the words, observations, perceptions, and opinions of the authors, most of whom have or had a more intimate connection to Dartmouth than I could ever possibly have. Without these sources, much of the data I have gathered would have been inaccessible and unknowable to me. Although these sources often supported but sometimes contrasted my own findings, they were important to my understanding of Dartmouth not only in the past but in the period covering the ethnographic portion of my study. Additionally, Marcus (1983d: 35) argues that print sources are justifiable when studying elites because "[t]he study of particular texts [can] express elite doctrines, world views, and ideologies [that] can offer a valuable perspective on elite mentality." I certainly found print sources to be valuable to my study for the precise reasons that Marcus mentions.

Another important archival source that provides a more candid look into Dartmouth life can be found in Rauner's Photographic Records Catalog, which holds thousands of categorized photographs documenting the campus grounds, people, and events of the College going back several decades (Rauner 2008). This part of the archives was an abundant resource for finding images capturing Dartmouth culture from the College's past to support my research on topics where I utilize both print and visual archival sources as well as serving as attractive figures for my dissertation. Many of the photos available did not identify their photographer, though I provide credit when such information was available. The images that I include in this dissertation from this collection at Rauner are reproductions photographed by me. My own photography also served as an important source for visual documentation and support for my analysis of Dartmouth's contemporary cultural landscape and sense of place as I took many



photographs of the Dartmouth campus, Hanover, and major events at the College to examine how these events and landscapes aid in the active construction of Dartmouth's sense of place.

My own photography relates to my second major methodology of ethnographic observation. My approach for that part of my study was a simple, straightforward, fly-on-the-wall style of detached, unobtrusive ethnography to study both major events that exemplify the distinct culture of Dartmouth in addition to an account of some of the daily life at the College to record events and present them in somewhat of a narrative form (Kitchin and Tate 2000: 220-21). My style of observation was partially overt because I did not conceal the fact that I was doing observational research, but somewhat covert as well because, other than gaining clearance to do my project, I did not openly advertise to everyone the fact that what I was observing was for research purposes (Kitchin and Tate 2000: 220).

Kitchin and Tate (2000: 220) point out that "observation focuses upon people's behaviour in an attempt to learn about the meanings behind and attached to actions. Observation then assumes that people's behaviour is purposeful and expressive of deeper values and beliefs." I subscribe to this notion both in method and through my interpretation of my findings. Observation, common to cultural geographers and other social scientists, allowed me to record events as they took place as opposed to asking people to reflect on them in interviews or relying solely on archival material. It also allowed me to gain a sense of Dartmouth's major cultural events and daily activities in a more natural state as they occurred (Kitchin and Tate 2000). Observation and ethnography are greatly underutilized techniques in research on elites (Marcus 1983b: 4) and little research has provided attention to the cultural processes of elite organizations (Marcus 1983c: 14). Observational research on elites is important because little is known about "what elites actually do" (Winkler 1987: 129) and "identifying and studying the places and

spaces in which elite interaction takes place . . . is an important part of understanding how elites are formed and how they work” (Woods 1998: 2117). These issues comprise a significant portion of this dissertation.

In the presentation of my observations, I include what I observed, interactions between people and between others and me, and bits of dialogue when appropriate. I do not mention the name of anyone I interacted with to preserve their confidentiality, though in most cases names were never exchanged and personal interaction between others and me in a research context was minimal. If asked, I was always honest and upfront about who I was and what I was doing, though few people bothered to ask, and, when they did, they often showed a negligible interest. When I do specify names or quotes, they are only those from sources that have been previously published (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 35). Although observation was a near-constant technique that I employed while I was on campus and when I was not working in the archives, the majority of this research technique is centered on major place-making cultural features of Dartmouth (Chapter 6) and personal experiences of mine (Chapter 7 and 8). All observation was conducted in the more public, high-traffic areas of campus such as the Collis Center, Thayer Dining Hall, or Baker-Berry Library. Aside from the major events I discuss in Chapter 6, I made it a point to just sit and watch the flow and interactions of people at Dartmouth in one or several of the abovementioned campus locations for at least one hour or so each day during the school year, and I feel that I learned much from this simple technique.

Although I had initially considered utilizing participant observation, I opted against it after discovering the large amount of bureaucracy involved in doing that type of research at Dartmouth and my sense that it almost would not have been worth the trouble. My limited level of involvement within the Dartmouth community is among several limitations of my research.

First, although I had access to Dartmouth to conduct my study, my access was limited as far as how deeply I was entrenched in my field site. When carrying out ethnographic observation, I was usually right there with a clear view of what was happening, but my comprehension of whatever phenomenon I was witnessing was sometimes hampered due to my “outsider” status. In other words, I may have been front and center in some situations, but I was clearly not “in the know” or “one of the crowd.” My exclusion may have had some benefits, however, as Sibley (1995: x) argues that “explanations of exclusion require an account of barriers, prohibitions and constraints on activities from the point of view of the excluded.” Similarly, Winkler (1987: 130) insists that “with [studies of] elites, it is more-than-normally important not to rely solely on their own accounts of their lives. Social research on elites requires direct, systematic, replicable observation of their activities, conducted by outside, non-elite observers.”

Another related limitation due to this disadvantage was that I did not live on campus nor did I attend, observe, or sit in on any classes. I decided that it would be best to refrain from this sort of participant observation and stick to my proposed research guidelines of unobtrusive observation, though I feel that this also falls under the previous concern of bureaucracy that would have been involved and likely would have been an impossibility in my circumstances. I was always careful to never force myself onto anyone or into any situation. Thus, my style of ethnography does not follow the work of Moffatt (1989), who lived with and studied students as a professor, or Nathan (2006) who enrolled as and assumed the identity of a student. Although my study is not as ethnographically rich as these studies due to the elite and exclusive setting of my study, a “thicker” or more pure ethnography was not feasible in my situation because of my own limited use of ethnography and the restrictions I faced while studying at the College (Geertz 1973). In the genre of ethnographic studies in college settings, I more closely followed the

approach of Manning (2000: 147, 149) who remained mostly in the background when observing college rituals at Mount Holyoke, despite its disadvantages and the fact that she did not have the same level of understanding of the rituals of the direct participants. Had I observed Dartmouth in the classroom or lived on campus and had closer interaction with the students, it would have offered a perhaps richer but also lengthier and more cumbersome study.

As I mentioned above, I also did not conduct interviews while at Dartmouth. Though this could be viewed as a shortcoming of my research, I found that after looking into the proper procedures as to how to gain clearance for this sort of research with the College, there was an intimidating amount of bureaucracy involved. Knowing what I now know about Dartmouth and other Ivy League schools from firsthand experience, I have my doubts that I would have been able to find many at Dartmouth who would have been willing to take the time to sit with me for a substantive, in-depth interview. Everything at Dartmouth is conducted on their terms and I had little room for negotiation in the daily functioning of the College. I also feel that, in retrospect, many potential interviewees would probably not have been entirely upfront or forthcoming, as I explore further in Chapter 8. This is one major reason for my strong reliance on print sources, because they are much more accessible and not nearly as easily refutable as interviews.

There is then the issue of the level of familiarity I gained with Dartmouth and the accuracy of my interpretations. My understanding of the College is especially a concern when one considers Dartmouth's long history, its "storied" traditions, and the deep reverence that its students and alumni feel for the College. Abstract knowledge and a superficial appreciation for place is generally obtained in a fairly short amount of time, but "the 'feel' of a place takes longer to acquire. It is made up of experiences, mostly fleeting and undramatic, repeated day after day and over the span of years. . . . Knowing a place . . . clearly takes time. It is a subconscious kind

of knowing. In time we become familiar with a place, which means that we take more and more of it for granted” (Tuan 1977: 183-84). I certainly never took Dartmouth for granted, likely because I was always on alert and critically evaluating most everything I saw, along with my perpetual feeling of discomfort while there. And I certainly did not have the same perception of it as its students, faculty, or alumni. This relates to a dichotomy of “native” and “visitor” interpretations of place, where my assessments of Dartmouth will differ from those more intimately attached to the College, though I do not feel that my status as an outsider renders my interpretations to be invalid (Tuan 1974: 64-65).

I now turn to some other points of clarification that are important to cover before proceeding with the remainder of this study. First, Dartmouth College did not provide any funding for my research and it had no intellectual or creative control over the project. In light of this fact, I make no claim whatsoever that my work is objective or unbiased in any way. My biases are evident throughout this work to show how my initial preconceptions and understanding of Dartmouth greatly contrasted with the realities that I found through my discoveries and encounters. Thus, my work is reflective of only my interpretations of my findings. Although many of my interpretations are derived from facts and I am reasonably confident of my own arguments, I concede that my interpretations are solely mine and subject to question and debate. My research, especially the ethnographic portion, should make clear to the reader that because of my outsider status and chosen method of unobtrusive observation, I resorted to educated guesses in my interpretations and analyses of various Dartmouth cultural phenomena, which is common to much ethnography (Geertz 1973). I learned that values at Dartmouth are clearly different from my own and from most people I know or have ever known. But the largely impenetrable nature of the Dartmouth Bubble only allowed for my own

perspective and the inclusion of others when possible, when appropriate, and when available (most often through print sources).

I also wish to make clear that I had no connection to Dartmouth prior to my arrival for my study. I never attended the College, I never applied for admission to the College, I had only been there once before for the preliminary investigation that I mentioned above, and I have only known or met a handful of Dartmouth graduates beforehand. I hope my research shows that although I am an American who conducted archival and ethnographic research in the United States, I was not by any standard working within my own society, as some anthropologists might suggest. This relates to my advisory about the uncomfortable, stressful, and sometimes exhausting experience of working in elite settings if the researcher does not happen to come from an elite background. I think my discomfort showed while I was doing fieldwork, and it was undoubtedly noticed by people at Dartmouth, which may be one possible explanation for the constant awkwardness between that community and me. Brannen (1987: 180) articulates this sentiment well from his study on observing corporate board rooms (economic elites) and through his description of how tiring it can be to work in such an environment:

Watching work is a stressful occupation. There is the strain of “the outsider” trying to be at least temporarily “the insider” and added to this the strain of never being able to relax, of having to work even when others are engaging in relaxation. There are tremendous pressures to drop the observer role, temporarily to become what one is observing as a form of release. In addition, one’s sense of self and identity are under attack. The good observer is a chameleon changing his colour and fitting into his background so as to be socially invisible. The difficulties and problems of doing this, of maintaining the correct social distance as well as the correct degree of integration, of maintaining a sense of self as well as a sense of observer identity, are very great. To add to this the recording not only of the speech and behaviour of the actors being observed but also the need to be self-aware and to record one’s self-awareness is to heighten the degree of strain enormously. This may, however, be a necessary cost of the scientific enterprise of working on work through observation.

I think I completely understand Brannen's point, as I wish I could have simply enjoyed some more of the fun and interesting activities at Dartmouth that I examine in Chapter 6, for example. But the stress of attempting to blend in and maintain the role of an observer and my sense of self became an enormous challenge, as I discuss in Chapter 8. Because of my "social invisibility" (Brannen 1987: 180) and limited degree of inclusion in my study site, I found it at times to be tiring and, on some days, even exhausting. Brannen's point helped to reassure me and to warn others engaging in similar research that working in elite environments as an outsider can have some physical, psychological, and emotional costs that might differ from other types and categories of field research. Nonetheless, despite the numerous difficulties that I came across, I found my time at Dartmouth to be a fun, challenging, worthwhile, and rewarding experience.

### **The Use of *Elite* in This Study and Others**

Initially, my approach to studying Dartmouth as a site of elite culture was a secondary, perhaps tertiary, concern of mine. I even had a naïve idea of what "elite college" meant before I began my study. But over the course of my fieldwork, I came to realize that the elite nature of the College became a major and inescapable issue that changed the approach and tone of my research. The elite quality of Dartmouth quickly shifted to be one of the central themes of my project. But the term *elite* can be problematic. It can include several different meanings and connotations and in this section I explore some of the theory from social science surrounding elites and define the way in which I use it for this study.

"*Elite*," writes George Marcus (1983c: 7), "is a word that we use with facility in everyday discourse despite the considerable ambiguity surrounding it. . . . Clear in what it signifies, but ambiguous as to its precise referents, the concept of elite in general usage has a certain force; it locates agency in social events by evoking the image of a ruling, controlling few, while being

intractably vague.” While *elite* is often grouped with terms such as *class* and *state*, it is separate from these concepts because it usually connotes groups of people as opposed to formal organizations (Marcus 1983c: 8-9). “In casual English usage as a lay and social science concept, *elite* is a term of reference, rather than self-reference, and at base, it suggests some degree of organization among a category or group of persons. The term may sometimes designate individuals . . . but its use implies that such individuals are distinguished members of *an elite*” (Marcus 1983c: 9). Marcus (1983c: 10-12) points to three “broad qualities” of elites: 1) agency where elites are the causal agents behind events (often with a conspiratorial connotation); 2) exclusivity, which can suggest “superiority, but in essence denotes separation”; and 3) as an organized group separate from non-elites or as a dominant part of a larger institution or social system.

In his famous study *The Power Elite*, C. Wright Mills (1956) examines this titular group from a more distant and structural perspective, arguing that this intertwining elite is composed of military, corporate, and political elites who control American society. The power elite are those who form the power structure and have decision-making power and hold prominent positions in society and institutions (Mills 1956: 3-4). He articulates: “The higher circles . . . are often thought of in terms of what their members possess: they have a greater share than other people of the things and experiences that are most highly valued. From this point of view, the elite are simply those who have the most of what there is to have, which is generally held to include money, power, and prestige – as well as all the ways of life to which these lead” (Mills 1956: 9). Mills (1956: 3-29) mentions several characteristics of elites, but one important passage provides a succinct description of some of the key social qualities of elites:

The people of the higher circles may also be conceived as members of a top social stratum, as a set of groups whose members know one another, see one another socially



and at business, and so, in making decisions, take one another into account. The elite, according to this conception, feel themselves to be, and are felt by others to be, the inner circle of “the upper social classes.” They form a more or less compact social and psychological entity; they have become self-conscious members of a social class. People are either accepted into this class or they are not, and there is a qualitative split, rather than merely a numerical scale, separating them from those who are not elite. They are more or less aware of themselves as a social class and they behave toward one another differently from the way they do toward members of other classes. They accept one another, understand one another, marry one another, tend to work and to think if not together at least alike. (Mills 1956: 11)

But the implication that elites and upper classes are the same is a misconception according to some social scientists. Some scholars claim that, unlike a more popular notion, there is a distinction between elites and the upper social classes. Baltzell (1958: 6-7) argues that elites are successful people in positions of power with the ability to make decisions regardless of their social backgrounds; the upper class, on the other hand, is formed of a group of families with members who are descendants of successful people (elites) from at least a few prior generations. “A class . . . is largely a matter of family, whereas an elite is largely a matter of individual achievement” (Baltzell 1958: vii). But Marcus (1983b: 3) claims a broader definition, that “[i]n the social sciences, *elite* has remained a flexible cover term that refers to the rich, powerful, and privileged in any society, past or present, Western or non-Western.”

Although high income is often used to signify higher social standing, Fussell (1983) observes that one’s class often influences how one perceives the class hierarchy in America and, in the United States, social class is a fluid, qualitative, and even arbitrary concept. Fussell even argues that class is more of a reflection of one’s personal lifestyle as opposed to socioeconomic standing. There is also disagreement among experts as to whether there is such a thing as an American aristocracy. Some other scholars who have studied elites have noted the important point that elites are not strictly elites in political or economic terms. Domhoff (1970) rightly

points out that elites are found in the arts, media, entertainment, athletics, fashion, religion, academia, in addition to business, government, and the military. Considering these points, I think it is fair to say that elites can be members of the upper classes and members of the upper class can likewise be elites, so although I respect Baltzell's distinction, I do not feel that the two terms are necessarily mutually exclusive and, due to the context of my research, I use them interchangeably throughout this dissertation.

We must now consider how geographers have conceptualized elites. In most cases, geographers seem to define elites, though not always explicitly, as those of a higher socioeconomic status (i.e. the upper and upper middle classes, in the case of the United States). Oftentimes "elite" is either only vaguely defined or not defined at all in geographies of elites. Michael Woods (1998: 2105-06) provides six main, general characteristics of elites: 1) elites are context-specific, meaning that there are elites at various spatial and institutional scales; 2) there may be more than one elite in a given context; 3) there may be members that have a status equal to elites without being elites themselves; 4) the network of elites is fluid and dynamic; 5) neither elites nor non-elites are homogeneous; and 6) some elites and non-elites have more power and influence than others. Woods (1998: 2108) also challenges older notions of elites as they have held up in elite theory and "redefines" an elite 1) to have privileged access to or control over certain resources; 2) they are linked by a social and professional network that in turn can be used for the transmission of knowledge or information and recruitment; and 3) elites "are socially and discursively constructed as an elite, either by themselves or by others." I especially appreciate Woods's (1998: 2106) attention to the attribute of elites having privileged access; elites do not necessarily have a disproportionate control over resources, but due to their status and

connections, they have a greater chance at *accessing* these resources. Similarly, Mills (1956: 9, emphasis added) observed, “No one, accordingly, can be truly powerful unless he has *access* to the command of major institutions, for it is over these institutional means of power that the truly powerful are, in the first instance, powerful.”

Though I do not disagree with the other geographers who have studied elites and described them in a more socioeconomic sense, I feel that, in general, this body of work has not been as clear as it should have been in its approaches to studying elites. Adopting a more precise or transparent notion of “elite” may help geographers play a larger role in this important field of study. In this dissertation, however, I too use “elite” in the more socioeconomic sense of the term to denote people from wealthier backgrounds (upper and upper middle class) and people with greater access to more exclusive lifestyles and resources. I also must say that, given the focus of my study, “elite” can also refer to an educational and educated elite through the example of an Ivy League college. In this study I classify only the Ivy League and the Seven Sister schools as elite in the context of my research because they are the elite of the elites and possess a distinction, visibility, cachet, and history that the majority of other American institutions of higher learning simply do not possess. While not everyone at Dartmouth comes from a higher socioeconomic background, for the purposes of not overcomplicating my study, I submit that all students, faculty, and administrators at Dartmouth are elites by association due to their affiliation with this elite college.

This study is also partial to situating my study specifically within the literature on American elites. I draw my citations and sources for comparisons primarily from the work that has been written about American elites because it is perhaps richer and more extensive than similar work from other countries and because “the American upper class [is not] like that of any

other country, for it alone grew up within a middle-class framework of representative government and egalitarian ideology, unhampered by feudal lords, kings, priests, or mercenary armies” (Domhoff 1967: 12). Unlike most countries, the American upper classes grew mainly out of business and industry. These facts alone limit the amount of effective comparison that can be made between the elites of the United States and those of other countries.

I also wish to steer clear of the heavy economic and political terminology that pervades much of the scholarly literature on elites because I feel that it would cloud and convolute the points I wish to make and that it distracts from my purpose to study the social and cultural qualities of elites. Much of the work on elites in geography often only offers a distant examination of this group, through typical examples of looking at them through housing and residential patterns, landscape, large and impersonal social structures, or merely through theory. While I do not deny the importance and significance of such work, I feel that it is somewhat detached from some of the important issues surrounding elites that are too often overlooked. I believe that culture plays a more important role in the study of elites and socioeconomic classes than it is given credit for and should not be dismissed as a defining quality of elites. As opposed to classifying Dartmouth as an elite institution on obvious indicators such as the wealth of the College and many of its students and faculty, I aim to provide a more nuanced look at what cultural traits and processes play a major role in helping to construct Dartmouth as an elite institution.

Finally, an important disclaimer is needed when covering controversial and sometimes uncomfortable topics such as class. It is important to call some attention used to the tone I (and other scholars) take in the study of elites in particular. Winkler (1987: 130-31) tackles this thorny problem by rationalizing:

Observational methods are also vulnerable, in extreme form, to a problem latent in all elite studies, namely the relationship between the researcher and the elite. The heightened social significance of the elite means that the interpretation of data, implicitly if not explicitly, intentionally or otherwise, commonly has an evaluative character. It confirms or denies the social status of subjects; at the extreme, it reveres or exposes them.

The study of elites by observation facilitates and increases the tendency toward exposé. The researcher observes the elite in normal contexts of work or leisure. The researcher sees, in some degree, the private self behind the public presentation of the elite self. A selective attention to discrediting evidence may develop. Discovering the “reality” behind the “façade” may come to seem the principal or the only research task.

Sometimes the exposures are relatively harmless, showing merely the common humanity of the celebrated . . . . Elite studies in general and observational studies in particular are vulnerable to degeneration into an intellectually respectable form of muck-raking.

Upon finding some of the controversial information that I uncovered about Dartmouth, I was concerned that it would be an intellectual disservice if I did not cover and spend considerable time analyzing the numerous discrepancies I came across from my archival work and fieldwork. At the same time, I did not want to come off as unfair, overly or unnecessarily critical, or judgmental. George Marcus (1983c: 24) defends utilizing a critical approach in elite studies by arguing that “the familiar anthropological doctrine of cultural relativism will not do for Anglo-American ethnographers involved with elite subjects . . . in their own [Anglo-American] society, largely because scholarly and lay readerships are not inclined to accept work on elites in conformity with a relativist position.” As Marcus (1983c: 23) points out and from what I found as well, “ethnographers of elites may have difficulty in developing . . . a natural working empathy.” In providing accounts of elites through ethnographic methods, Marcus (1983e: 56) argues that, inevitably, the ethnographer is in the position to point out the flaws of elites due to the nature of this type of research. As such, “ethnographers of elites are likely to express an implicit or explicit moralistic tone that judges elites on the gap between the requirements and responsibilities of their position and the adequacy of their performance, which is never fully satisfactory in societies where elites always are other than they appear publicly to

be” (Marcus 1983e: 55). I found this to be very much the case, which will become more evident as my study unfolds. I attempted to be fair in my study of Dartmouth, though I never claim to be neutral or unbiased. My concern, like other social scientists, was to identify and scrutinize the many contradictions that I came across while studying the social and cultural features of Dartmouth, and the result only makes my own biases more apparent.

### **The Ivy League and the Elite American Colleges**

For decades, the term *Ivy League* has captured the American imagination. But what is it, exactly, and what, precisely, does *Ivy League* mean? Though there is a precise definition, there are more popular ideas, oftentimes inaccurate, as to what the Ivy League is and which schools comprise this elite cohort. Dartmouth president Ernest Martin Hopkins once wrote that “The Ivy League represents a stereotype in the public mind” (1961: n.p.). But what is this stereotype? It is likely a hodgepodge of elitism, intellectualism, exclusion, selectivity, competitiveness, tradition, age, heritage, history, discovery, scholarship, and leadership, among many other labels.

One major quality of the Ivy League that particularly intrigues me is its seemingly disproportionate, if not dominant influence on American education, in addition to greater American culture and society. Thelin writes that “the Ivy League has commanded attention and influence far beyond its actual numbers” (1976: 2). Birmingham (1961: 12) commented that the Ivy League “seems to set the social tone of the national college scene.” Hopkins (1961: n.p.) observed,

The standards of the Ivy League colleges have been a sort of academic measuring stick. Later-founded and tax-supported institutions have tended to model their academic code and scholastic standards after them. Therefore, as long as character, tolerance, and breadth of knowledge are considered qualities that the educated man should possess, the eight [Ivy] colleges . . . will hold a dominant place in American higher education.

This level of influence is most evident for the most famous of the Ivy League schools, Harvard University. Lopez (1979) wrote about “the Harvard mystique” in a book of the same name, detailing the power and influence of Harvard and the public perception of the University as an authority on all matters. Expounding on the amount of attention it receives, he mentions that Harvard “frequently gets more credit than it deserves and just as frequently gets more criticism than is justified. But no matter what is said or written about it, whether high praise or brutal damnation, the Harvard mystique persists with a sort of self-nourishing stamina – and its influence is perhaps most pervasive among people who have never been to Cambridge” (Lopez 1979: 2). And for those who may still doubt the importance of Harvard’s role in society, Lopez (1979: 9) asks whether such a mystique is justified and deserved and whether certain personalities who graduated from Harvard would have the same reputation and command the attention and respect that they receive had they attended or worked for a large state university. My view is that these personalities would not have received the attention that they did had they been affiliated with another less prominent institution. Although Dartmouth is distinct among the Ivies and my findings speak only for Dartmouth, I argue that, since I am using the Ivy League as a cultural and social construct, I can draw examples from the other Ivies for parallels and for points of comparison (especially since Dartmouth often compares itself to the other Ivies).

But as far as a definition, what is the Ivy League? Officially, the Ivy League is simply the name of a sports conference in Division I of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) comprising eight schools (listed from oldest to youngest): Harvard, Yale, Pennsylvania, Princeton, Columbia, Brown, Dartmouth, and Cornell. They are sometimes nicknamed the “Ancient Eight.” Harvard, Yale, and Princeton are sometimes referred to as “the

Big Three,” as they are the “leaders” and most prestigious of the Ivy League institutions. Regardless of the changing college rankings from year to year, however, Harvard is *always* “number one” and unquestionably the most powerful and prestigious of all American universities (Lopez 1979). As James Twitchell (2004: 139) put it, “Harvard is the megaphone of American education. When those in Cambridge whisper, the rest of us cup our ears to hear.” With the exception of Cornell, the remaining seven Ivy League schools, plus William & Mary (1693) and Rutgers (1766), make up the nine Colonial Colleges.

So how did this Ivy League form and where did the term come from? Before the late nineteenth century, New England schools had little contact outside of athletics (Thelin 1976: 21-22). Before World War I, Harvard, Yale, and Princeton were dominant forces in college football, though a formal conference had not yet developed (Thelin 1976). The colleges wanted to cultivate their own individual personalities, though they became self-conscious as universities began to form across the country at that time and the fate of the liberal arts college was uncertain, as they were perceived to be increasingly irrelevant (Thelin 1976, 2004).

But in the early twentieth century, the schools began to see themselves as a collective group and the idea of a New England liberal arts college became identified as a tradition of the American Northeast (Thelin 1976: 22). Around the 1920s, the schools became increasingly frustrated with “purposeless students” and their desires to go into business, and they instituted selective admissions policies to limit class sizes, with Dartmouth being the first school to initiate this policy, with the others following suit soon after (Thelin 1976: 22). The schools also created a residential-academic atmosphere modeled after the systems at Oxford and Cambridge (Thelin 1976: 22). In the 1920s and 1930s, the schools began to search for a collective symbol (Thelin 1976: 23). Elm was suggested, but ivy was chosen by taking cues from the trademark ivy at



Oxford University, despite the fact that ivy was not geographically fitting for New England (Thelin 1976: 23-24). Also around this time, Dartmouth, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale were popular places to scout out trendy student fashions, and a certain “Ivy” style was suggested and introduced in fashion advertisements (Thelin 1976: 24).

The Ivy League soon began to take a more solid form, as a piece of Ivy folklore recounts the origin of the term *Ivy League* into the vernacular:

The symbols of “elm” and “ivy” were scrambled and confused, holding a number of connotations once incorporated into popular and informal usage. One week-end in the mid-thirties Caswell Adams, sportswriter for the New York *Herald Tribune*, was assigned to cover the Columbia-Pennsylvania football game. This caused him to miss the Pitt-Fordham game at the Polo Grounds. Adams, a Fordham alumnus, complained to his editor, “...do I have to watch the ivy grow every Saturday afternoon? How about letting me see some football away from the ivy-colored [sic?] halls of learning for a change?” Adams’ colleague, Stanley Woodward, picked up the conversation and used the term “Ivy League” to discuss “what was happening on the fields of the East’s oldest colleges which, even then, and without a semblance of formal grouping, were natural and traditional rivals.” (Thelin 1976: 24)

The exact members of the Ivy League had still not been identified by this point, and it is worth mentioning that Woodward did not exactly use the expression as a term of endearment (Thelin 1976: 24). Still, “Ivy League” found its way into the popular press and in advertisements by 1934, even though the colleges still had not formally organized due to tensions and rivalries between the schools (Thelin 1976: 24-25).

Throughout the 1930s, various groups made informal proposals for the prestigious Northeastern colleges to organize. In December 1936, student newspapers at Columbia, Princeton, Dartmouth, Cornell, Harvard, Yale, and Penn ran a joint editorial urging for the creation of “an Ivy League in fact, not just the one in the minds of sportswriters” due to what they saw as the those seven schools’ common trait as “the oldest and most distinguished [colleges] in the country” (Thelin 1976: 28). The proposal was rejected by administrators and

athletic directors, as each school wanted to maintain its own individuality and some of the schools (Harvard, Yale, and Princeton) did not want to be associated with certain others (Penn and Cornell) which they saw as unfit for such a league (Thelin 1976: 28).

Around this time, “Ivy” was gaining both educational and cultural connotations and it began to include schools outside of New England (Columbia, Cornell, Princeton, Penn), even though these schools were developing into larger universities and their focus was on athletics (Thelin 1976: 28-29). But in 1939, Harvard, Yale, and Princeton signed a pact to implement mutual policies on scholastic eligibility, financial assistance, and recruitment from preparatory schools, and limits were placed on athletic publicity and postseason games (Thelin 1976: 30). In 1945, the schools from the 1936 editorial, plus Brown, entered a pact to avoid overemphasis on football and creating guidelines for athletic scholarships, postseason games, and player eligibility, though no formal conference was established, and the term “Ivy League” was not used (Thelin 1976: 30-31). The intention was to show that athletes were representative of the student body and not especially recruited to advance sports programs and counter the charge that athletes were not genuine amateurs (Thelin 1976: 31).

Another more rigid agreement was signed in 1952, and, in 1954, the presidents of the eight universities officially called themselves the “Ivy Group,” and the Ivy League became an official conference, introduced in 1956 (Thelin 1976: 32-33). Commenting on the impact of the formation of this group, Thelin (1976: 34) argues,

The Ivy Group athletic reforms, then, share company with selective admissions, geographical talent hunts, a shift from piety to intellect, residential quadrangles, and other policies whose cumulative impact was to shore up the historic college within a modern university. Important to note is that this “university college” idea associated with the Ivy League represents a markedly different setting and strategy than, for example, the undergraduate experience (and sports program) . . . [at smaller liberal arts colleges]. The temptation is to say that the Ivy League preserved the “collegiate way.”

Birmingham (1961: 2) claims that the agreement was intended “to cement traditional rivalries,” especially in football. But there were differing interpretations of what this new, official Ivy League represented: While the Ivies claimed that they wanted to be affiliated with schools of similar standards and more sophisticated tastes, there was suspicion from the outside that viewed such a group as a symbol of exclusion (Birmingham 1961: 2). Birmingham (1961: 2-3) notes the various connotations of “Ivy League,” at once evoking idyllic images of old, small, liberal arts colleges and also as a symbol of caste that now had a fitting label. The idea of the Ivies as symbols of caste, power, and wealth gained potency when one considered the relatively small size of the schools and the disproportionate power and influence that they maintained, which only grew over time (Birmingham 1961: 3).

Now that we have established a more official definition of what the Ivy League actually is, it is important to take into account, as evidenced from the last few preceding quotes, that although the Ivy League is formally nothing more than a collegiate sports conference, it carries other connotations, often related to a certain type of academics, exclusion, and elitism (Birmingham 1961; Karabel 2005; Thelin 1976). Thelin (1976) rightly argues that there is an entire culture to the Ivy League in addition to the cultures of each of its eight member colleges. Furthermore, it is important to not underestimate the impact of the Ivy League in American culture and society since it has been influential in areas as diverse as literature, movies, and athletics in addition to its scholastic traditions (Thelin 1976; Bernstein 2001). The Ivy League is also often imitated by other colleges, and its influence on other universities has been tremendous (Birmingham, 1961; Thelin 1976, 2004). For example, other groups of colleges have informally banded together to create groups known as the Seven Sisters, Public Ivies, Little Ivies, the Negro Ivy League, Southern Ivies, and even a Canadian Ivy League!

For as far-ranging of an influence that the Ivy League has had, it is curious that so little has been written about it in depth, academically or otherwise (Thelin 1976). Clarke (1957: 14) once charged, “It is the audacity of a band of eastern colleges, grouped together in smug mutual approval, impregnable from without and unquestioned in social prestige, that has too long gone unchallenged.” As I mentioned in the previous section, for the purposes of this study, I only consider the Ivy League (Table 1) and the Seven Sister schools (Table 2) to be labeled as “elite” schools, as they are the most elite of the elite, and the institutions from which I draw most of my comparisons to Dartmouth. While Duke, Northwestern, and Stanford are certainly elite schools, as the public colleges the University of California – Berkeley, University of North Carolina, and University of Virginia also maintain an elite status in American higher education, the Ivies and Seven Sisters have for decades held the distinctions of being the foremost and likely most influential colleges of the Northeast, and possibly the United States, and thus serve as the best representatives of the “elite” distinction and as the best points of comparison for the context of this study.

**Table 1:** The Ivy League colleges.

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Geographical setting</b>	<b>Approx. Total Enrollment, 2008-09</b>	<b>Founded</b>
Brown University	Providence, Rhode Island	Urban	8,000	1764
Columbia University	New York, New York	Urban	24,800	1754
Cornell University	Ithaca, New York	Rural	19,800	1865
Dartmouth College	Hanover, New Hampshire	Rural	5,800	1769
Harvard University	Cambridge, Massachusetts	Urban	19,100	1636
Princeton University	Princeton, New Jersey	Semi-rural	7,300	1746
University of Pennsylvania	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Urban	19,800	1740
Yale University	New Haven, Connecticut	Urban	11,400	1701

**Table 2:** The Seven Sister colleges.

<b>The Seven Sister Colleges</b>		
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Chartered</b>
Barnard College	New York, New York	1889
Bryn Mawr College	Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania	1885
Mount Holyoke College	South Hadley, Massachusetts	1888
Radcliffe College	Cambridge, Massachusetts	1894
Smith College	Northampton, Massachusetts	1871
Vassar College	Poughkeepsie, New York	1861
Wellesley College	Wellesley, Massachusetts	1870

## **Tradition**

A central and recurring concept throughout this work is that of tradition. The importance of tradition and specific traditions to Dartmouth, both historically and today, is virtually inarguable, and I examine several in depth in this dissertation. Jonathan Smith (2007: 183) writes, “Meaning, reasons, persons, and human places are . . . found only within the master narrative of a community, or what is often called a tradition.” The idea that tradition plays such a prominent role in understanding a people and their place is key to understanding Dartmouth, but we must also ask, “What is tradition?” “Tradition,” explains historian David Gross (1992: 3), “has been central to human life for millennia. Its main function has been to provide the values, beliefs, and guidelines for conduct that have helped mold communities into organic wholes. It has also been the crucial force providing linkage from one generation to the next. Where animals have had instinct to bind them together, human beings have had tradition.”

In terms of what comprise traditions, Gross (1992: 8) further explains,

The term “tradition” refers to a set of practices, a constellation of beliefs, or a mode of thinking that exists in the present, but was inherited from the past. . . . A tradition . . . requires the prior existence of something else which is then imitated or repeated. . . . It is not the assumption that an act was previously performed that makes it traditional; rather, it becomes traditional when it is replicated precisely *because* it was performed before. In every bona fide tradition, there is always an element of the prescriptive.

A tradition, then, can be a set of observances, a collection of doctrines or teachings, a particular type of behavior, a way of thinking about the world or oneself, a way of regarding others or interpreting reality.

Traditions bind people culturally and emotionally by defining values, establishing continuities, and codifying patterns of behavior (Gross 1992: 20). Traditions help us to understand the world, stabilize existence, preserve heritage, fortify communities, and give people a sense of belonging (Gross 1992: 20). Gross (1992: 8) disqualifies things such as manmade objects (e.g. buildings or symbols) as traditions, though they “may be conduits of traditional attitudes or patterns of conduct, but they are not themselves traditions.”

But sociologist Edward Shils (1981) partially disagrees with this assessment. To him, a tradition most simply, “is anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past to the present. . . . The decisive criterion is that, having been created through human actions, through thought and imagination, it is handed down from one generation to the next” (Shils 1981: 12). Differing from Gross, Shils (1981: 12) argues that traditions include “material objects, beliefs about all sorts of things, images of persons and events, practices and institutions. It includes buildings, monuments, landscapes, sculptures, paintings, books, tools, machines.” To Shils (1981: 12), a tradition can be whatever a society comes across that already existed that is not a product of physical, ecological, or physiological necessity. For the purposes in my research, I will be following Shils’s more flexible definition, as I found that tradition at Dartmouth, as they perceive and define it, is found in both material and nonmaterial forms.

In fact, the concept of tradition in a collegiate context may need to be fungible due to the myriad traditions at a variety of colleges and in multiple contexts. Educational anthropologist Kathleen Manning (2000) captures this especially well through her study of rituals and ceremonies at Mount Holyoke College. She observes that “higher education is awash with ritual

activity. The academic year is bookended with convocation and commencement. In between is a long line of building dedications, class galas, tree-planting ceremonies, alumni merrymaking, and founder's commemorations. Clearly, rituals and ceremonies are cultural markers of college campuses" (Manning 2000: 1). Shils (1981: 31) argues that the performance of a ritual action is not a tradition in itself, but it is a process that can be transmitted and eventually become a tradition. Distinctions aside, I argue that Manning's findings often translate well when compared to my study of Dartmouth, as both studies were conducted at sites of elite colleges with rich traditions, and many of the rituals and ceremonies she describes correlate with Dartmouth's "traditions," as they are known at the College. Therefore, Manning's (2000) use of "ritual" and "ceremony" could be categorized as traditions or as types of traditions. This may be clarified by her assertion that

Rituals are events rich with messages, meanings, and statements about the college in which they are enacted. Among other functions, *rituals express the traditions of a community*, welcome and initiate new members, create a bridge between the here-and-now and the there-and-then, preview the passage from college living to outside college reality, express the community's beliefs and values, and celebrate members' accomplishments. (Manning 2000: 8, emphasis added)

The importance of continuity and linkages with the past in the theory of tradition is also established in college rituals, as Manning (2000: 35) acknowledges,

Human actors do not live in a vacuum but rather base their present behaviors on models from the past. These models are often presented in dramatic and highly stylized forms through rituals. Incoming students learn the expectations of academic life through the speeches, processions, and symbols of convocation. These students do not invent their academic behavior anew but rather base it on models . . . that already exist within the campus community.

Despite the various opinions and interpretations of rituals, a general consensus about them has been well established at colleges and this allows them to persist (Manning 2000: 108-09). And

the persistence of these “old traditions” is one major phenomenon of Dartmouth College that I seek to investigate.

## **Literature Review**

### Elites in the Social Sciences and Popular Literature

Class has long been a subject of study in the social sciences. But the elites and upper classes, as many who have written about them have noted, have received considerably less attention than the lower and middle classes. This dearth in the literature is due to some of the obstacles faced in gaining access to study elites, which I addressed in my methodology. However, there have been several notable, significant, and influential studies on this elusive sector of society. There are four general categories of studies of elites: historical social records, personal memoirs, books for popular audiences, and academic overviews (Higley 1995).

First, we should address some of the major works written for more popular audiences on elites. One of the earliest studies is Thorstein Veblen’s (1899) *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Although Veblen’s study is one of the most enduring, it has received some criticism from other experts, such as Baltzell, who claims that Veblen’s understanding of the upper classes is “often inaccurate” (1958: 11). Other major works of a similar approach to studying the upper classes include Cleveland Amory’s *The Proper Bostonians* (1947) and *Who Killed Society?* (1960), Dixon Wecter’s (1937) *The Saga of American Society*, Ferdinand Lundberg’s (1969) *The Rich and the Super-Rich*, and numerous books by Stephen Birmingham, the best known perhaps being 1968’s *The Right People*. Included in this cohort of studies of the upper classes could be the innumerable biographies and autobiographies on the rich and famous, be they royalty, politicians, entertainers, or industrialists.



Although the work I just mentioned above is often not scholarly per se, I argue that one should not be dismissive of this body of work if one wishes to pursue research in this area because it provides some valuable information for a part of society that is understudied by scholars. Many of the findings from these writings corroborate with the scholarship on elites and, thus, can often be accepted as valid sources, sometimes with additional information not available from studies by professional social scientists. Some especially insightful non-scholarly works include Paul Fussell's (1983) *Class* and David Brooks's (2000) *Bobos in Paradise*. Fussell provides a concise, entertaining, and informal but thoughtful and penetrating guide to comparing the various attributes of the American classes. Although he does not provide a first-person account, Fussell offers some valuable perspectives into some of the distinct nuances that differentiate the classes that are often unavailable in many other studies that address elites and he describes some important characteristics of the classes that may go unnoticed by the untrained or inexperienced observer. I found *Class* to be an excellent informal but informative and worthwhile source for introducing important cultural and social qualities of the American class system that is not provided by most scholarly sources.

Another source that coincides with aspects of the more contemporary aspects and concepts of elites is Brooks's (2000) examination of the bourgeois bohemians ("bobos"), which combine bohemian values and ideas with entrepreneurial lifestyles and ambitions to create a fascinating paradox. Brooks argues that WASP society is effectively gone and that the bobos have become the new elites in contemporary America because of their professional lifestyles and credentials and their influence on contemporary society. Bobos are distinct from wider society because they are an *educated* elite and are also much more diverse than previous generations of elites (Brooks 2000). The bobo concept is especially informative to my study of Dartmouth,

which becomes more apparent in the following pages. Some other similar, more current works in this vein of popular literature are Conniff's (2002) *The Natural History of the Rich* and Frank's (2007) *Richistan*.

Although scholarship on elites is still in fairly short supply, a number of studies from across the disciplines have made notable and significant contributions. In education, some experts have published studies on the social roles of academic elites in the academy and in greater society (Boyd 1973; Etzioni-Halevy 1985; Kadushin 1974). Similarly, political scientists and theorists have examined political elites and their roles in governing and decision and policy-making (Prewitt and Stone 1973). Studies of elites in anthropology that are directly useful to this study are also rare, though George Marcus's (1983a) edited volume *Elites: Ethnographic Issues* provides some much-needed research in that discipline and offers some important perspectives to include in my study. Psychologist and sociologist William Domhoff has also made some important contributions with *Who Rules America?* (1967) and *The Higher Circles* (1970). I would cite Domhoff (1970) as a more scholarly alternative to Fussell (1983), since it covers many of the social and cultural attributes of the upper classes that are generally unexamined by other scholars.

The literature on elites is far and away best developed in sociology. One key early study came from Zorbaugh's (1929) study of Chicago class divisions in *The Gold Coast and the Slum*. Stanworth and Giddens (1974) edited *Elites and Power in British Society* with a comparable study of the United States being Suzanne Keller's (1963) *Beyond the Ruling Class*. Perhaps the best-known work in the subfield of elite studies comes from C. Wright Mills's (1956) classic *The Power Elite*, in which he argues that the United States is effectively controlled by an interlocking elite consisting of the government, military, and corporations. E. Digby Baltzell also wrote some

notable studies of the upper classes by looking at elites in more specific cases with his two famous books *Philadelphia Gentlemen* (1958) and *The Protestant Establishment* (1964) and some other lesser-known books that examine elites and the historical development of upper classes in northeastern American cities. *Philadelphia Gentlemen* is a study of the American business aristocracy, colonial stock, and Protestant affiliation with a focus on the metropolitan centers of the American Northeast, and “it is also an analysis of how fabulously wealthy, nineteenth-century family founders, in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, supported various exclusive institutions which produced, in the course of the twentieth century, a national, upper-class way of life” (Baltzell 1958: ix).

Though the term WASP (White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant) was evidently introduced into the lexicon by political scientist Andrew Hacker (1957), Baltzell’s (1964) *The Protestant Establishment* is famous for popularizing the term. *The Protestant Establishment* is essentially about the imminent decline of the old northeastern elites and how they will not survive without a greater openness and willingness to accept others into their ranks (Baltzell 1964). It appears that Baltzell’s (1964) premonition has come to pass considering Brooks’s (2000) argument that the WASPs, at least as they were once known in the United States, effectively no longer exist.

Finally, it is worth acknowledging some of the few methodological studies, also strongly representative of sociologists. Moyser and Wagstaffe (1987) edited *Research Methods for Elite Studies*, which contains chapters from numerous social scientists and their diverse portfolio of studies on elites in different places and contexts. The *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* (1993) also produced a special issue entitled “Fieldwork in Elite Settings,” with most contributions from sociologists, though unlike Moyser and Wagstaffe’s (1987) volume, it did not provide much work that was informative to my study. I feel that, along with geography and in

other more popular studies, the greatest weakness of all the literature in the social sciences on elites is that it is rather distant from the society it studies. In other words, there is much discussion of power, capital, and greater structures that envelope elite societies, but there is too little work that focuses on culture, meaning, and understanding who elites are, what they do, and why they do what they do.

### Elite Geographies

In addition to the study of elites in the wider social sciences, some special attention is needed concerning the study of elites by geographers. Though the study of the elite classes is a topic that is seemingly best developed in sociology and social psychology (Higley 1995), there has been some notable geographical scholarship on elites. The great majority of this scholarship has dealt mostly with landscapes (either historical, contemporary, or both) and/or the residences of the elite class and though there have been studies on European elites, most of the research tends to focus on the elites of Anglo America (see Cosgrove 1984, 1993; Cosgrove and Atkinson 1998; Cosgrove and Daniels 1988; Daniels 1994; Duncan 1973; Gade 1982; Higley 1995; Hugill 1995; Ley 1993; Wyckoff 1990). Higley, in fact, has acknowledged that most geographical scholarship on elites is about historical residential succession in elite urban neighborhoods. Higley further explains that there are two main kinds of geographies that deal with the upper classes: those of movements and place experiences of people as they move through an upper-class life and the kinds of geographies that map the upper classes.

Other work has examined elites from a more theoretical or structural viewpoint. *Environment and Planning A* (1998) had a special issue called “Researching elites and elite spaces” with largely theoretical and normative work along with some empirical work, and *Geoforum* released two special issues, one on “Networks, Cultures and Elite Research: The

Economic Geographer as Situated Researchers” (1999) and another on “Transnational Elites” (2002). Each of these special journal issues provided some work by geographers on elites outside the United States, but as I expressed above, I wish to rely mainly on the work of elite geographies focusing on the United States for my dissertation, as I am cautious to make too much uncritical comparison of my findings with scholarship based outside the American context.

In all of the scholarship on elite geographies, I found that two main substantial, in-depth studies stand out: Stephen Higley’s (1995) *Privilege, Power, and Place* and James and Nancy Duncan’s (2004) *Landscapes of Privilege*. Higley’s (1995: 1) book seeks to “explore the intersection of class, status, and geography at the upper end of the American socioeconomic spectrum” through a “comprehensive study of the geographic places created and maintained by the upper class of the United States, the processes that have been used to create and maintain them, and the intricately related educational and social systems of the American upper class.” Like most other similar studies in geography, Higley focuses largely on residential aspects of elites by studying, for example, more affluent suburbs of large cities, though he also devotes some attention to the educational institutions of the American upper classes. But Higley’s book holds some greater significance because it is the first accessible but scholarly book-length geographical study of elites that I have come across. Furthermore, it corroborates with both the scholarly and non-scholarly literature on elites outside of geography to affirm and reaffirm many of the general characteristics of the American upper classes (such as class values and lifestyles) that hold relevance to geographers working in this field.

Extending from Higley’s (1995) work, the Duncans’ (2004) *Landscapes of Privilege* is the culmination of decades of research focusing on various aspects of the social, cultural, and historical geography of the affluent suburb of Bedford, New York, located to the north of New

York City in Westchester County. The Duncans cover topics ranging from demographic qualities, values, residential preferences, landscape history and modification, and inclusion and exclusion, among other topics. I cite the Duncans' work throughout this dissertation as many of their findings supported and complemented my own concerning Dartmouth. Parenthetically, it is notable that James Duncan is a Dartmouth graduate.

Perhaps the most remarkable quality of *Landscapes of Privilege*, however, is that it is the only recent, in-depth study in all of geography and the other social sciences that I have come across that is not as distant and removed from its subject as so many other studies in this field. In other words, it is important because it provides a closer look at the people of Bedford and their culture to provide a greater understanding of who they are and how they create their distinct community of Bedford through not only topics such as landscape analysis or residential preferences, but through some interviews and descriptions of their lifestyles. It is unlike the work of Mills (1956) or Baltzell (1958, 1964) which provides valuable information, but is detached and hovers over elites, and provides only generalities and theories instead of specific, concrete information through archival or ethnographic research to help reveal more to readers about the culture of elites. This information is all too rare in the study of elites, and the Duncans' study and my own are the only two scholarly, in-depth studies of elites that I know of that provide a closer look at who elites actually are and how they live and act, what they do, how they think and feel about themselves and others, in addition to some of the more traditional topics covered on this sector of society.

#### Collegiate Culture, Higher Education, and the Ivy League

An abundance of literature on higher education is available, specifically regarding policy issues in higher education, admissions, budgeting, and ethics, among many other topics. There

are numerous college guides on the market for both parents and prospective students with some purporting to reveal to readers the secrets to getting admitted to the most selective universities. Frequent columns in newspapers and popular magazines both commend and condemn universities in general as well as recurring glorifications and indictments of the enigmatic institutions of the Ivy League. I do not intend to delve very deeply into these general topics for my own research, though it will be difficult to avoid them, and they will inevitably be addressed in some capacity in my conclusions. In this section of my literature review I focus on some pertinent scholarship on collegiate culture from across the disciplines and key work on the Ivy League.

To begin with some of the earlier studies on collegiate culture, Cowley and Waller (1935) were perhaps the first to address collegiate culture as a topic of scholarly inquiry in their paper “A Study of Student Life.” Another paper comes from Stroup (1956) who addresses why college students join student organizations. Sociologist Edward Y. Hartshorne (1943: 321), in an excellent paper providing both a theoretical and methodological framework for studying collegiate culture, explains that “the college community, like any other social community, is a social *system*.” Hartshorne even discusses topics that fall within the expertise of geographers in examining collegiate culture, such as the built environment (i.e. cultural landscape) and the social geography of a campus, though he does not use those precise terms. Hartshorne also addresses the formation of social and cultural groups on campus. These groups represent the social variety found on many campuses and consequently require the researcher to pursue a variety of opinions when attempting to determine the aspects of a particular college’s culture (Hartshorne 1943). I read from Hartshorne’s hypothetical discussion of how such social groups

come to be that these functions help (or sometimes force) students to find their “place” on campus.

Sociologist Janet A. Kelley (1958: 244) offers a broader theory to explain the varying character of collegiate cultures by noting that certain behavior reflects the culture of the school, developed from the cultural background that each student brings to the institution; the institutional culture built from its cultural heritage and social system created at that school; and the physical culture derived from both the physical and cultural geographic contexts of the institution in question, all of which influences student culture. Furthermore, one should consider that “student culture is a part of a total school culture and ‘the parts derive their properties from the whole’” (Kelley 1958: 249).

Deviating from the scholarship mentioned above, philosopher Baker Brownell (1959: 474-475), in a critical examination of relationships between colleges and the “outside” communities, sees the “problem” in this area as being that colleges themselves are not communities and the campus is “artificially detached . . . from the more natural groups and communities around it.” Other studies have shed some light onto the college experience. Horowitz’s (1987) book *Campus Life* examines the cultures of different social groups on campuses, but focuses on many different institutions, producing a more general overview of campus culture. Bushnell (1962) conducted a brief study of student culture at Vassar.

Some geographers have studied collegiate culture and their specific settings, and this appears to be a growing field within the various fields and sub-disciplines of geography. Blake Gumprecht (2008) provides a pioneering introduction in the study of collegiate culture from a geographic perspective through his in-depth study of the setting of many colleges in his book *The American College Town*. Gumprecht (2008: xvi) explains that very little has been written



about college towns and that his book is the first substantive study on the American college town. He justifies the importance of the topic, stating:

College towns are exceptional places, worth knowing and worth knowing about. They are an essential component of American geography. They are part of what makes life different in these United States. They reflect the singular nature of American higher education and the indelible characteristics of American culture. They are distinctive, memorable, lively, and ever-changing. Millions of people have lived or gone to school in college towns. Memories of the college years . . . are often intertwined with recollections of such a place. College towns, as a result, possess a prominent image in the American mind. (Gumprecht 2008: xvii)

From that point, he seeks to create a portrait of college towns by studying their development in the United States and their distinctive qualities (Gumprecht 2008: xvii). Gumprecht (2008: 1) generally defines a college town as “any city where a college or university and the cultures it creates [in that location] exert a dominant influence over the character of the town.” Gumprecht (2008: 1-2) aims to point out that college towns are a unique type of city because they are defined by the colleges that they host and “the impact of a collegiate culture is concentrated and conspicuous.” One general (though unscientific) index that Gumprecht follows in identifying college towns is the proportion of students (20 percent) in the population of the town in question. Though he does not offer a chapter on it in his book, Gumprecht (2008: xi) declares Lawrence, Kansas to be “the quintessential college town.” Some other examples of college towns that Gumprecht (2008) mentions or examines in various capacities include Athens, Georgia; Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Bloomington, Indiana; Ann Arbor, Michigan; Boulder, Colorado; and Eugene, Oregon.

Gumprecht (2008: 4-16) points out several characteristics that help define and distinguish the nature of college towns and their culture such as the proportion of youthful residents in the town, the college town’s comparatively highly educated population, more town residents that work in white-collar jobs, higher costs of living, the transient nature of college towns (such as

the frequent moving of students and faculty into, out of, and around town), residents are more likely to live in rental property, the comparatively cosmopolitan character of the towns, and the fact that they are “unconventional,” due to “their unusual demographics, many college towns are full of eccentrics, activists, and others who reject mainstream values. . . . College town residents are less religious than the general population and more likely to walk or bike to work. They are more likely to listen to public radio, vote for left-wing political candidates, and shop at food cooperatives” (12-13). Considering all of these points, college towns, with a few exceptions, are largely an American phenomenon (Gumprecht 2008: 16).

Though the preceding list conveys some general qualities of college towns, there are variations (Gumprecht 2008). College towns can be home to public research universities, private liberal arts colleges, land-grant universities, regional state universities, church-affiliated colleges, and historically black colleges, all of which influence the culture of the college and its town (Gumprecht 2008). It is worth pointing out that Hanover is cited by Gumprecht as a college town. In the case of Dartmouth and Hanover, Gumprecht (2008: 26, 28) offers some keen insight into the type of college town that Hanover is based on Dartmouth’s categorization as a private liberal arts college:

College towns . . . that are home to private liberal arts colleges are elite enclaves that have changed much less than other college towns over the last century. With their unhurried tempo and rarified atmosphere of an academic village, many project the air of the quintessential college town of literature and movies. Private colleges are smaller and more expensive than other types of schools, more selective in admissions, attract a larger percentage of students from out of state, and exert greater control over the lives of undergraduates. They have larger endowments and pay their faculty higher salaries. All these characteristics help explain why college towns with private colleges are different from other college towns and more extreme in many attributes. . . . College towns in the Northeast . . . tend to be more prosperous, educated, cosmopolitan, and liberal than other college towns, characteristics that reflect the historic strength of private liberal arts colleges in the region.

Other work by geographers on colleges and academia include Curry's (2001) study on the "place" of the university in society and events which contribute to the diminishing of qualities at universities and related consequences. Veness (2001) traces the story of how a graduate student finds her "place" in academia and how she adjusts to that environment. Veness (2001) also addresses and unravels how universities can serve as a type of "home" for students and how sometimes they are not "homes," which takes a darker tone than Gumprecht's (2008) descriptions of college and college life. And Lewis's (1972) classic "Small Town in Pennsylvania" describes the tension between the towns of Bellefonte and State College, home to Pennsylvania State University. Lewis calls attention to the more progressive, accepting, and vibrant atmosphere of State College (which he largely attributes to the presence of Penn State) and the socially traditional and conservative, economically depressed Bellefonte. Similarly, John Jakle (1983) examines the noticeable differences between the various affiliations of those who work for a major Midwestern university and its college-town setting. Houston and Pulido (2002) look at how social justice is "performed" at the University of Southern California. Jen Giesecking (2007) studies the conflicts of class, gender, and social expectations through a case study of women in the elite college environment of Mount Holyoke College. And Jonathan Smith (2007) provides a valuable geographical contribution to the study of collegiate culture from his study of the annual bonfire at Texas A&M University, to which I devote greater attention in Chapter 6.

Perhaps the most pertinent literature on collegiate culture for my study, however, comes from anthropology. Michael Moffatt (1991) offers a case study of undergraduates and their distinct culture at Rutgers University. Moffatt (1991: 44) argues that American collegiate culture is a mixture of institutional and youth culture and the United States is unique in that it offers the

experience of “college life.” Describing what constitutes collegiate culture, Moffatt (1991) points to the large quantities of free time many students encounter. This free time “includes such easy pleasures as hanging out in a dorm lounge or elsewhere, gossiping, wrestling and fooling around, thinking up the odd sophomoric prank, going to dinner or having a light or serious discussion with friends, ordering out for pizza, visiting other dorms, going out to a bar, flirting and other erotic activities, and so forth” (Moffatt 1991: 47). Balanced with the work and “academic” side of college, “[c]ollege life is the play that makes the work possible and that makes college personally memorable” (Moffatt 1991: 48). More details of the college experience from an ethnographic perspective detailed in Moffatt’s (1989) book *Coming of Age in New Jersey*, an in-depth look at undergraduate culture at Rutgers in the 1970s.

More recently, anthropologist Cathy Small, writing under the pen name Rebekah Nathan (2006) conducted an ethnographic study of AnyU (later revealed to be Northern Arizona University) in her book *My Freshman Year*. Nathan spent a year as a freshman at AnyU, where she lived on campus in a dormitory, took freshman-level courses, and interacted with undergraduates to gain a perspective of contemporary college life and culture. Unlike Moffatt (1989), Nathan did not reveal that she was a professor or that she was studying the students; her research was conducted more covertly. Nathan’s study provides some important insight for those wishing to better understand today’s American college student and from the numerous perspectives she includes ranging from domestic to international students and by contrasting her past experiences as a student, then a professor, and as a researcher/student that also allow for some policy implications for higher education.

Perhaps the most important study on collegiate culture that I uncovered with direct relevance to mine is educational anthropologist Kathleen Manning’s (2000) *Rituals, Ceremonies,*

*and Cultural Meaning in Higher Education*. Manning's study, mostly of the all-female Mount Holyoke College, parallels my own study on several levels and through both its objective and methodology. Manning focuses on the many rituals involved in collegiate culture and their central role in the identity of the college and the creation of community for its respective members. This book offers much to contribute and support my own study of Dartmouth.

Another full-length ethnography of collegiate culture, though less relevant to my study, is Holland and Eisenhart's (1990) *Educated in Romance*. Other shorter anthropological studies in collegiate settings include topics about studying (Anderson and McClard 1993), college language and slang (Hummon 1994), the campus tour (Magolda 2000), ethnographic studies of fraternities (Rhoads 1995), and college students' perceptions of families and careers (Stone and McKee 2000).

Moving on to the Ivy League, it is important and perhaps shocking to note that surprisingly little has been written about the Ivy League despite its prevalence in American history and culture. The Ivy League institutions seem quite proud of their own histories and have (sometimes several or many) reliable histories of variable quality available (for single-volume, general histories, see Bailyn et. al 1986; Bishop 1962; Bronson 1914; Kelley 1999; McCaughey 2003; Schlesinger 2005; Smith 1998; Thomas 2000; Wertenbaker 1946). I examine the many books written about Dartmouth in the next section. In line with my definition above regarding the elite colleges of the United States, Kendall (1975) and Horowitz (1984) have written solid studies on the history of the Seven Sister schools as a group, and some histories on the individual schools are available as well. Books or academic studies about the Ivy League as a whole or as a concept, however, are rare.

One notable exception is John Thelin's (1976) book *The Cultivation of Ivy*. In this book, Brown alumnus Thelin (1976: 1) examines the significance of the Ivy League's collegiate ideal within the context of American civilization through the use of "fashion advertisements, second-rate fiction, public relations brochures, pulp journalism, football, and campus souvenirs . . . [as] serious and useful indicators of institutional life." Furthermore, his "focus is on those traditions, rivalries, events, and similarities which converged to create a *collective* Ivy League identity," mixing a "real and embellished past which runs the course of a century of American history" (Thelin 1976: 1). Thelin (1976) traces the cultural history of the Ivy League from the late nineteenth century until the 1970s and provides a highly informative and readable account of this distinct and exclusive American institution.

Another book on the topic is Fred Birmingham's (1961) *The Ivy League Today*. Though it is a bit dated, it provides an insight into the Ivy League that I have not seen elsewhere. Birmingham, a Dartmouth alumnus, provides a sort of "tour" of each of the eight Ivies, discussing their histories, their individual qualities, their strengths and weaknesses, and their interrelations. Though Birmingham does not specifically say so, it appears that his book is a sort of catalog in prose form, perhaps attempting to "sell" the Ivy League to prospective students or perhaps explain and defend the institutions from criticisms from "outsiders." Regardless, it is an informative and valuable source.

There are some notable books available on specific schools within the Ivy League or on specific topics relating to this distinctive group of schools. Several books have been written about the suspicious and, some argue, corrupt admissions policies and standards at the elite schools (Golden 2006; Karabel 2005; Soares 2007; Synnott 1979). Karbel (2005) provides a thorough and penetrating historical sociology of the admissions processes at Harvard, Yale, and

Princeton and, likewise, Soares (2007) offers a similar study focusing on Yale. Journalist Golden (2006) looks at elite schools in general (not just the Ivy League) to expose the myth of fair admissions policies and meritocracy at the some of the country's most selective colleges. Other sources offer a look from the other side of the debate by showing how admissions officers at elite schools select their incoming students each year (Klitgaard 1985; Steinberg 2002; Stevens 2007).

Particularly informative are the studies that look at specific topics or experiences at these colleges up close. Perhaps the most famous among these is William F. Buckley, Jr.'s (1951) *God and Man at Yale*, in which he recounts his undergraduate experience at that school, (negatively) commenting on the liberal and secular atmosphere of the university and the conformity and indoctrination into the Yale ethos. In *The Forging of an Aristocracy*, historian Ronald Story (1980) analyzes the social history connecting Harvard and the greater Boston elite in the nineteenth century. Story shows how Harvard has, for a long time, played a prominent role in the network of the Boston elite by educating the leaders of Boston society and their children and by maintaining its connections with other elite Boston institutions (hospitals, banks, law firms, etc.).

Harvard Law School's first Mexican-American graduate Ernesto Hank Lopez (1979) investigates in *The Harvard Mystique* the mystique behind Harvard by weighing public perception of the school against his personal experience as well as Harvard anecdotes, hearsay, folklore, and legends about the school and some of its famous alumni. The book focuses mainly on the many branches of Harvard, particularly its graduate schools, to explore their characteristics, inner workings, and the power they wield on the national and international scene that, in turn, produce the mystique and perpetual appeal of Harvard (Lopez 1979). From a more

personal standpoint, Ross Douthat (2005), in his beautifully written memoir *Privilege*, writes of his upbringing in an upper-middle class family from New Haven, Connecticut and the thrill he had when he found out that he was accepted to attend Harvard. Douthat (2005) envisions an ideal intellectual environment as a sort of egalitarian, academic paradise, only to find, through the many experiences he shares, that his preconceptions of Harvard were less than accurate.

Despite their focus on Harvard, the work of Lopez (1979) and Douthat (2005) offer an array of useful information and perspectives that helped me to better understand Dartmouth and, more generally, the Ivy League, elites, and related social and cultural issues. Much like the non-scholarly work on elites written for a more popular audience, these sources help to fill a void on this topic by providing information seldom found in the more academic literature. In summary, collegiate culture (and its many dimensions and related wider topics) is a major aspect of both traditional and popular American culture. Even though scholarly sources are underrepresented in the vast literature (in the broadest sense) on college life available, all sources seem to affirm that collegiate culture is worthy of serious study.

### Dartmouth College

Due to the abundant amount of published information about Dartmouth, many solid, rich sources are available that document several major aspects of the College. Compared to most colleges, Dartmouth has one of the best and most thoroughly documented collections of institutional histories available. I divide the sources into five main categories: histories, anthologies, memoirs, biographies, and miscellaneous.

There are several general histories of Dartmouth College that provide a solid account of the history of the College (Chase 1928; Lord 1913; Quint 1914; Richardson 1932; Smith 1878). They are rather biased and celebratory, however, and should be examined with a more critical



eye and combined with outside sources if one wishes to use these sources in a more scholarly manner. It has also been some time since a general history of the College has been published, which dates some of the available histories.

Subcategories of the College histories also include biographies and memoirs. Examples relevant to this study include the biographies on Wheelock (Hoefnagel and Close 2002; McCallum 1969). Some work on specific historical events about or involving the College has also been published, such as studies on the Dartmouth College Case by Stites (1972) and Tobias (1982). A somewhat unconventional book offering a more critical perspective on the College comes from Charles Sykes's (1990) *The Hollow Men*. In addition to some excellent retellings of specific events and periods of Dartmouth's past, Sykes concentrates on the demise of a traditional liberal arts college and its shift to a highly politically correct curriculum and environment. Histories of Dartmouth's graduate schools, namely Thayer (Frye 2007; Kimball 1971), Tuck (Broehl 1999), and the Dartmouth Medical School (Putnam 2004) are informative, though they are beyond the scope of my study. And histories on specific aspects of Dartmouth such as the Second Grant (Daniell and Noon 2007) and the Outing Club (Hooke 1987) are good for more specialized aspects of the College's history and culture.

In particular, I found that memoirs, though clearly not scholarly sources, were helpful in providing detailed accounts with valuable information on the experiences of individuals at Dartmouth in specific times and in specific contexts. Jean Kemeny (1979), wife of former Dartmouth president John Kemeny, wrote a memoir of the time she and her family spent at Dartmouth in the appropriately titled *It's Different at Dartmouth*. The book is especially notable for its perspective, being that of a college president's wife, a little-exposed viewpoint in the literature on academia and college history and culture. Benjamin Hart's (1984) *Poisoned Ivy*

offers a biting critique of his experience at Dartmouth in the late 1970s and early 1980s, through his recollection of his difficulties as an outspoken conservative at a “liberal” Ivy League campus and as one of the founders of *The Dartmouth Review*. And Gina Barreca (2005) discusses an important time in Dartmouth’s history from an uncommon perspective in her memoir *Babes in Boyland*, in which she recalls being not only among one of the first classes of female undergraduates at Dartmouth in the early 1970s, but her (sometimes vain) attempts to fit in as a working-class Italian girl from Brooklyn at the WASP-dominated Dartmouth.

Somewhat between the histories, biographies, and memoirs are the several anthologies about Dartmouth. The anthologies often take an historical bent in their presentation of the College and its culture and also frequently include personal experiences of students, faculty, and alumni throughout the years. One of the foremost anthologies is Hill’s (1964a) *The College on the Hill*, which covers some historical periods of the College, though it is by no means objective or unbiased. For example, quotes from famous figures in Dartmouth’s history are highlighted in red, analogous to how the King James Bible quotes Jesus. This is one example of how people perceive Dartmouth and hold a mysterious and unusually high esteem for the College. Others include Brown’s (1969) *A Dartmouth Reader* and Latham and Shribman’s (1999) *Miraculously Buildded in Our Hearts*, both edited anthologies with diverse accounts from people affiliated with Dartmouth from its founding through the late twentieth century. These volumes provide a great insight into how Dartmouth was perceived and experienced in the past and give great descriptions of Dartmouth as a place through those who have personally experienced it. Graham’s (1990) *The Dartmouth Story* offers brief but substantive information on some of the major historical figures and meaningful places and traditions associated with the College. Similarly, Meacham’s (2008) *Dartmouth College: An Architectural Tour* is an informal and

accessible but useful guide to campus landmarks and the landscape and architectural history of Dartmouth's campus and properties. I found Meacham's (2008) book to be enlightening for someone (such as me) in regard to the intricacies of Dartmouth's geography that would go beyond casual observation or archival work.

Finally, miscellaneous sources include those that do not easily fit in the categories mentioned above like undergraduate and graduate theses, occasional academic papers about Dartmouth and its related figures, or histories not specifically about Dartmouth but contain significant information about the College, such as town histories or books about Hanover (Barrett 1997; Childs 1961; Lord 1928), or general histories of New Hampshire. One great miscellaneous source is the *Dartmouth Song Book* (Zeller 1950), a collection of many songs written about Dartmouth, some dating back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of these songs are still sung by Dartmouth's singing groups and are interesting because they preserve images and memories of Dartmouth in song.

Of course, as I mentioned in my methodology, Dartmouth's archives are full of information and Dartmouth newspapers and its alumni magazines frequently print short pieces on College history. In all, there are perhaps a few dozen books in print about Dartmouth, including others not mentioned here covering topics from the College's history to biographies of former College presidents. The sources above do not by any means represent an exhaustive list of publications about Dartmouth, as I excluded some due to their irrelevance to my project or the fact that they went beyond or outside the scope of my study. But what should be clear is that there is an extensive and thoroughly documented body of work about Dartmouth College.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **EARLY AND CONTEMPORARY DARTMOUTH**

##### **Eleazar Wheelock, Moor's Charity School, and the Origin of Dartmouth College**

To provide some historical context for this study, we must address the epic beginnings of Dartmouth College. And the beginnings point to the story of the College's founder, the Reverend Dr. Eleazar Wheelock. Indeed, "[o]f the pre-revolutionary colleges in America, Dartmouth is the solitary example of an institution owing its existence to the vision, energy, and untiring effort of a single individual. The story of the college in its early years is, then, the story of Eleazar Wheelock" (Richardson 1932: 13). Or, put another way, "from its very beginning, Dartmouth College had been inseparably identified with the Wheelock name, and New Hampshire people were accustomed to thinking of them as synonymous" (Turner 1983: 298). Thus, the stories of Wheelock and the College are closely intertwined.

The purpose of this section is to present a concise, general, and selective overview of the intersecting stories behind Eleazar Wheelock, his charity schools, and the founding of Dartmouth College. It is in no way meant to be an authoritative history or a dramatic reinterpretation of these events, as several other more detailed sources are available for consultation.

We must begin with a look at the man named Eleazar Wheelock (Figure 2). Though little is known about his childhood, his ancestry traces back to Shropshire, England (Smith 1878: 6). Eleazar was born April 22, 1711 in Windham, Connecticut, the only male child of Ralph Wheelock and Ruth Huntington. Wheelock reportedly decided to enter the ministry at age sixteen, and he enrolled at Yale College in 1729, which he was able to afford due to a bequest from his grandfather. Wheelock graduated in 1733 and remained at Yale for one postgraduate year, where he was ordained in 1734. In 1735 he settled as the Congregationalist minister of the second parish of Lebanon (now Columbia), Connecticut, and married the widow Sarah Maltby.



**Figure 2:** A portrait of Eleazar Wheelock painted “from memory” by Joseph Steward. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

After Sarah died in 1746, Wheelock later married Mary Brinsmead, with whom he had five more children (Hurd 1969: 26).

Shortly after Wheelock moved to Lebanon, he established a “Lattin School” [sic] for “Lattin Scholars,” [sic] where the income he earned from his school supplemented his ministerial salary and supported his growing family, consisting of his wife, three stepchildren, and three of his own children (Hoefnagel and Close 2002: 10). The school was a personal undertaking of Wheelock’s and not an incorporated entity (Hoefnagel and Close 2002: 15). Admission to the school required proficiency in reading and writing, which was often taught to the applicant by his hometown minister (Hoefnagel and Close 2002: 10). Most students were from Connecticut, were sons of farmers, and were between twelve and eighteen years old (Hoefnagel and Close 2002: 10-11). While most students were “independent,” meaning that they paid tuition (which could be paid in money, kind, services, or a combination), others were “charity” students

(Hoefnagel and Close 2002: 10-11). The boys lived with the Wheelock family. One charity student that caught Wheelock's attention and would later earn his own part in Dartmouth history and lore was a young Mohegan Indian from Connecticut by the name of Samson Occom.

Occom, who knew English, had converted to Christianity at the age of seventeen (Hurd 1969: 28) and came to attend Wheelock's school as a charity student in December 1743 and remained until 1747, where he was reportedly a good and dedicated student (Hoefnagel and Close 2002: 15; Richardson 1932: 28). Occom was ordained in 1759 and he established a school and worked as a schoolmaster and preacher for the Montauk tribe of eastern Long Island (Meacham 2008: 11-12; Richardson 1932: 28). It was through his success with Occom that Wheelock got the idea to establish a charity school for the education of Indian youth to be missionaries to their home tribes. Wheelock, who was not fond of Native culture, effectively wanted to change his students and sought to train, civilize, and Christianize his male students (girls were taught skills in homemaking) with the idea that they would be more effective at civilizing and converting Indians than white ministers and that Indians would not be in competition with whites for landing ministerial positions (Richardson 1932: 30-32).

The school was established in 1754 and named Moor's Charity School after its benefactor, Joshua Moor. Moor's received support through charitable contributions and Wheelock's own money, which left him with a good deal of personal debt (Hoefnagel and Close 2002: 27). The growth of the school was slow and complicated due to the French and Indian Wars, though it had considerable public support (Richardson 1932: 33). A board of trustees formed, and it moved to educate the Indians and the poor in reading, writing, the liberal arts, agriculture, and Christianity. Though the school was unincorporated and did not have a charter, it taught college-level work, and it made arrangements with Princeton and Yale to accept

students and grant degrees (Richardson 1932: 37). Enrollment eventually grew and the school always managed to somehow survive. Wheelock traveled around New England soliciting donations, was moderately successful, and he made many new contacts in the process (Hoefnagel and Close 2002: 27).

Because of the poverty of the colonies, perhaps half of the money for the school came from England and Scotland (Richardson 1932: 49). With this in mind, Wheelock saw Britain as the best way to finance his school due to its interest in Native Americans (Daniell 2007).

Wheelock then sent his minister friend Nathaniel Whitaker and Occom to Britain in 1766 to collect funds for the Indian school. Occom and Whitaker traveled around England and Scotland giving sermons and meeting with members of the clergy, nobility, and royalty. Regardless, Occom gave over 300 sermons, even while wearing Indian headdress and clothing, though he evidently provided some proof of the success of Wheelock's school by serving as an example of Wheelock's ability to civilize and convert Indians, which resulted in the influx of contributions (Graham 1990: 11; Quint 1914: 8). While in Scotland, Whitaker received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from the University of St. Andrews, and an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree was also awarded to Wheelock from the University of Edinburgh (Richardson 1932: 63).

The money they raised amounted to £9,497 from England and £2,529 from Scotland for a total of £12,026 (Richardson 1932: 66). Today, this amount would be equivalent to millions of dollars (Daniell 2007), and this amount is reportedly the greatest sum of money raised in Britain for an American educational institution before the Revolution (Hill 1964b: 28). Most of the donors were unknown and gave small amounts; funds came from individuals, churches, and committees (Richardson 1932: 66-67). Some key donors made major gifts such as King George III, who contributed £200 (the largest single gift), largely through the influence of William

Legge, Second Earl of Dartmouth, who also made a substantial initial contribution of £50; other significant donations came from wealthy London merchant John Thornton and newly-appointed Governor of New Hampshire John Wentworth (Quint 1914: 6; Richardson 1932: 56-60).

Benefactors from the colonies included Benjamin Franklin, John Phillips (founder of Exeter Academy), and Benedict Arnold (Graham 1990: 11).

Considering their success, Occom and Whitaker realized that it was necessary to establish a trust for the funds they had collected. Many of the donors began to grow restless and uncomfortable with the idea of giving money to the unseen Wheelock living in America (Quint 1914: 11) and some did not like the idea of just handing money over to some Indian (Daniell 2007). Thus, Occom and Whitaker created a trust with Lord Dartmouth as president, Thornton as treasurer, and others representing Protestant denominations. Wheelock, however, did not want to cede all of the power to the English trustees to avoid alienating the Americans who supported the school; the deed, sent to the trustees in 1768, was met with no rejection (Richardson 1932: 62). After two years in Britain, Occom and Whitaker returned home in 1768. The cost of the mission came to £1,000 and Occom and Whitaker each received £100 for their service and to support their families in their absence (Hoefnagel and Close 2002: 31).

Meanwhile, Wheelock continued to operate his charity school, even in the face of problems with finances and enrollment. By 1765, Wheelock had over one hundred students who went on to be missionary-teachers to the Mohawks of the region, but he saw that the Indian teachers were only marginally successful, that they did not overly enjoy their work, and that Indians did not serve as good mentors for other Indians (Quint 1914: 17-19). Rather, he found that it was easier to teach English youth to convert Indians (Daniell 2007).



The tides slowly began to change in his favor in 1768 as Wheelock, “whose ears were keenly attuned to the public sounds that might be of advantage to his enterprise, heard from some Oneidas who visited him at Lebanon” about an upcoming council for all the tribes in that jurisdiction (Quint 1914: 22-23). Sir William Johnson called for the conference, held at Fort Stanwix that fall, with the intention to set up a fixed, permanent boundary between Indian and English lands, though these types of conferences usually came about with the idea of attempting to cheat the Indians out of something and, in this case, it was land (Quint 1914: 23; Richardson 1932: 72-73). The gathering attracted thousands of Indians and representatives from most of the Northeastern colonies. The result was a new tract of land for the English measuring 800 miles long and 100 miles wide (Quint 1914: 24-25).

After the new attainment of land, Wheelock decided that his plan to train Indian missionaries was essentially a failure due to their inadequate preparation and that, with a new abundance of funds, a new direction (and location) was necessary for his school (Hoefnagel and Close 2002: 35; Richardson 1932: 78-79). Considerations for the site of the new school included its potential location for securing a charter, the availability and interest of local tribes, sufficient distance to lack temptations for students, quality land and soil, and affordable means to build the school (Hoefnagel and Close 2002: 36). Offers for a school site came from places such as the Bay of Fundy in Canada, Virginia, the Carolinas, Long Island, an area near present-day Pittsburgh, Albany, a few sites in Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. By 1768, Wheelock’s plan was beginning to transform from a vision to a reality, and he made further demands through the leverage of his now large endowment to require the site to provide a large amount of land to train students in husbandry; to establish the school in an independent parish that would allow the school legal authority over its immediate neighborhood; it had to be accessible to large

populations of Indians; the region had to be inhabited by sober, pious people; and provisions for the expenses of the removal and for Wheelock and his family after his resettlement (Richardson 1932: 80-81).

For some time Governor Wentworth had been courting Wheelock and making offers of land and a charter. New Hampshire was the only colony at that time without a college and Wentworth was fond of the idea of establishing one in the colony. The Connecticut Valley was proposed, which the trustees found agreeable. The area was also close enough to Indian land to find prospective students, but there was concern about being a target for potential raids. Although Wheelock sent a team to scout some other prospective sites, it was evident by that point that he had pretty much decided that he was to relocate to New Hampshire.

The trustees chose New Hampshire in April 1769 and the news reached Wheelock in August (Richardson 1932: 84). Wheelock composed the charter which has several unusual qualities. For example, Wheelock was the sole author of the charter, and he was given complete control over the institution (which he wanted), including the right to name his own successor. The charter also did not specify the specific location of the school, only that it was to be placed in the colony of New Hampshire. Daniell (2007) states that Wheelock used careful language to appease the English trust, even though he had no genuine intention of giving them any power over the school, and Wentworth was receptive to Wheelock because of his strong desire for a college in New Hampshire.

In the charter, Wheelock used the word “academy” as opposed to “college,” and used Princeton as the model for the institution (Daniell 1969). Though up until that time, the school was referred to as an academy, Wheelock wanted it to be a college, as “[t]here is evidence that for many years he had hoped that eventually a college would be the outcome of his efforts, and it

is probable that the dignity associated with a college presidency was not unattractive to him” (Richardson 1932: 86). Wheelock sent the charter to Wentworth in August 1769, and “[i]n it he termed the new institution an academy, but added as a postscript this historic suggestion: ‘Sir – if proper to use the word ‘College’ instead of ‘Academy’ in the charter I shall be well pleased with it.’ That postscript was the real founding of Dartmouth College” (Quint 1914: 28). The initial, proposed name for the school was Wentworth College. But Wentworth, acting as viceroy of King George III, granted a royal charter on December 13, 1769 and named the school Dartmouth College in honor of his friend Lord Dartmouth. The completed charter reached Wheelock in March 1770, the last such American college the British monarchy chartered (Figure 3).

Wheelock’s action set off a chain of controversies both in the colonies and Britain. The English trustees, including Dartmouth, “were wrathful over the rather subtle evolution of the Indian Charity School into Dartmouth College” though “[i]t is probable that the unexpectedness of the move shocked the Englishmen more than any imagined evil in it” as Wheelock had “kept his trustees entirely in the dark as to the charter until it was obtained. Their charge of disingenuousness against him was deserved” (Quint 1914: 28-29). Turner (1983: 298) adds that since the beginning there had always been confusion “as to whether Dartmouth was an Indian school (as the Earl of Dartmouth believed) or an English boys’ college (which Wheelock intended), and this was reflected in an overly complicated organization” where Moor’s was a separate corporation from Dartmouth and each had its own treasury and sources of income. The Earl disapproved of the charter granted by Wentworth for a “college” and so Wheelock had set up two trusts “with English trustees administering the Dartmouth fund for the benefit of ‘Moor’s Charity School’ and its projected enrollment of Indian lads, while American trustees controlled



**Figure 3:** The charter of Dartmouth College on display at the College's Baker Library. Photo by author.

the other funds in maintaining the college. Wheelock disregarded the distinction and used income from the English funds to support his entire enterprise" (Turner 1983: 447). To be sure, Daniell (2007) explains that Wheelock never had the real intention of educating Indians, and although he never seemed to *exclude* them, he did not exactly go out of his way to accommodate them, either, though he *was* interested in attracting the sons of the elite to come to Dartmouth (Russell 2008).

This fact points to another enraged party upon hearing the news about the new Dartmouth College – Samson Occom. After Occom had returned from Britain, he had to cope with the problems of raising a large family on a small salary, living in poverty, alcoholism, and the outlook of a bleak future (Hurd 1969: 28). After the establishment of the College, Occom

accused Wheelock of spending the money he raised in Britain to educate the Indians for the education of whites (Hurd 1969: 28), the two quarreled over expense accounts, and Wheelock dismissed Occom (Hurd 1969: 28).

More controversy ensued in New Hampshire over where to locate the new Dartmouth College. Towns across the colony vied for the school to locate in their settlement and they offered grants of land and sometimes money. It is likely that Wheelock, aware of the excitement among the towns in the Connecticut Valley, hoped that there would be increasing bids for the College if he gave them enough time to consider the advantages of locating the College in their specific town (Richardson 1932: 95). In the spring of 1770, Wheelock toured New Hampshire for eight weeks and decided upon Hanover (founded in 1761) as the site (Quint 1914: 30). Wentworth favored the town of Landaff, somewhat to the north of Hanover, but Wheelock decided on Hanover and he received unanimous approval from the trustees in July 1770 (Richardson 1932: 97). For years after the decision to locate the College in Hanover, accusations and resentment came from other towns that had hoped to secure the College for themselves, with some bitterness directed personally at Wheelock, accusing him of being involved in some sort of scheme, but Wheelock noted the practical location of the school (near a river and Indian land) and he claimed that God chose the site, despite the fact that land values in Hanover increased substantially (Quint 1914: 30-31; Richardson 1932: 98-100).

Wheelock arrived in Hanover in August 1770 with about thirty students (only a few of whom were Indians) to only a few temporary structures prepared for them; his family and slaves arrived shortly afterward. Most chroniclers claim that the surroundings were sparse and rustic. Wheelock was apparently not fond of the environment and he referred to it as a “horrid wilderness” (Graham 1990: 4). Daniell (2007) argues that the area was not a true wilderness and

that such claims have been slightly exaggerated. The area was, however, forested by giant white pines (which later became a symbol of the College) with some standing 250 feet high with five-foot-diameter trunks, which were eventually cleared by students and laborers over a period of 60 years (Graham 1990: 4). Wheelock had trouble securing basic necessities, along with attracting and retaining service providers, but eventually there was more settlement and population growth, a community formed, and Hanover began to take shape.

One aspect of Hanover society at that time that played an underappreciated role in the early formation of the College is Wheelock's slaves. Around the time of Dartmouth's founding, slavery was at its height in New England and though some sources about slavery at the College conflict, a more recent study claims that Wheelock had at least seven slaves that he brought to Hanover (Zug 2007: 42). Though they were not given formal credit, Zug (2007: 43) gives strong reason to believe that slaves, along with "charity" students, labored on College projects such as building, clearing land, farming, laundering, cooking, and they likely helped build the original Dartmouth Hall.

In the early 1770s construction began on the "College," which housed students' rooms, the library, and a classroom. Moor's coexisted with Dartmouth for some time after the founding of the College, albeit only in name. The early years of the College showed a steady increase in the enrollment of students. Paying students enrolled in greater numbers and some students were interested in attending "on charity" to forgo their tuition under the agreement that they later serve as missionaries to the Indians, though their attitudes about that often changed once they ended their studies (Richardson 1932: 118-19). To gain admission, students had to prove that they were of a "good moral character" and show a familiarity with the classics and mathematics (Hoefnagel and Close 2002: 68). The charges were at Wheelock's discretion and though they

were not fixed expenses, there seems to have been a general charge of £20 per year, which included tuition, room, and board, and could be paid in livestock or other commodities (Richardson 1932: 119). Most students came from Connecticut.

Even though he could not afford professorships, Wheelock evidently did not have trouble finding teachers, but he did often call upon family members and Dartmouth graduates who had attended the College on charity to teach as repayment for their expenses (Richardson 1932: 121). Wheelock fully accepted the classical curriculum, and though no record of courses before 1796 is available, early coursework included languages, elementary mathematics, speaking and writing, geography, logic, English and Latin composition, metaphysics, and natural and physical law, though Wheelock was still primarily concerned with missionary training (Richardson 1932: 119-21). Dartmouth held its first commencement in August 1771 with four graduates (who had done their early studies at Yale by way of Moor's) receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree. Dartmouth is the only college in the United States to have graduated a class every year since 1771.

Despite its seemingly auspicious beginnings, Dartmouth soon found itself in debt. Wheelock spent money fast, and he had failed to keep his own accounts and those of both Dartmouth and Moor's separate and, furthermore, overdrew on the accounts. The Provincial Assembly of New Hampshire was still cold toward Wheelock, and he was not given a salary (Quint 1914: 46). The charter had taken power over the institution away from the English trust, and it was viewed to be a college for whites and not an Indian school, which deviated from the initial agreement. And there was much truth to this, as Wheelock had intended for Dartmouth to be a college for whites to convert Indians; still, Indians were brought to Hanover as students to allow the College to keep its funds (Hill 1964b: 33). Indian enrollment began to dwindle soon

after and then dissipate until there was a resurgence in Native American recruitment in the 1970s. Moor's eventually closed in 1849.

On the other hand, the English still had control over the money that had been collected and Wheelock had to convince them of the new direction in which he was leading the school (Richardson 1932: 112-13). Wheelock wrote to the English trust to ask for money but was not given a warm response; they felt betrayed, and they wanted their money to be used for its intended purpose (Richardson 1932: 113). Another part of the problem was the looming War and the lack of concern for a small, remote school (Quint 1914: 48). The Scots, who had been only marginally supportive of Wheelock all along, completely pulled their money in 1775.

One person who especially felt jilted was Samson Occom. After watching how the College developed, Occom deduced that it was a “fraudulent diversion of the money from the ‘poor Indians’ to the whites” (Richardson 1932: 114). In 1774, following a series of financial disagreements, Occom and Wheelock cut off communication and never spoke to each other again. Hurd (1969: 28) observed the irony of how hard Occom worked to help start the school though he never visited Hanover and never saw Dartmouth. Occom, who had continued preaching among the Mohegans, died in poverty in upstate New York in 1792.

But Wheelock persisted, and he eventually received more money, since the trust saw that he was making progress with the school from its initial funds (Richardson 1932: 117). More money was necessary as enrollment increased, more buildings were needed, and, as the population of the Connecticut Valley grew, there was a greater need for preachers in the newly-settled towns of the region. A special meeting was held in the provincial capital of Portsmouth in May 1773, and a new trust was established, which freed the College of financial control from the English.



But Dartmouth's new independence only partially solved its financial problem as the College went into a deficit in 1775 (Richardson 1932: 144-45). As the Revolution approached, relationships between some parties changed, and Dartmouth again found itself needing to redefine its mission (Richardson 1932: 145). Without the English funds, Dartmouth was in poor financial shape, and Wheelock asked for loans and attempted to collect debts and sell property, but was unsuccessful (Richardson 1932: 147-49). Many graduates who had attended Dartmouth on charity backed out of agreements to preach to the Indian nations or simply lost interest in the idea of being ministers; Wheelock could not force anyone to uphold their agreement, and he was not very successful in collecting debts (Richardson 1932: 154-55). Fortunately, John Thornton stepped in and paid off all of the costs, the overdraft of the funds, and Wheelock's personal debts (Daniell 2007). One project that the new funds went to was the construction of a mansion for the College president. The Wheelock House (Figure 4), as it is now known, stood where Reed Hall



**Figure 4:** The Wheelock House. Photo by author.

stands today and served as the president's home until 1830, and with the erection of Reed Hall it moved in 1838 to its current location on West Wheelock Street (Meacham 2008: 230).

Alterations notwithstanding, it is the oldest surviving building in Hanover (Meacham 2008: 230).

Despite some financial relief for Dartmouth, attention shifted toward the War. Another serious concern at this time was remaining on good terms with the Indians, as the Connecticut Valley was vulnerable to attack, though Wheelock's friendly relationship with many of the tribes proved to be beneficial (Richardson 1932: 155-56). In fact, Dartmouth notified the Continental Congress of this concern, and Patrick Henry, chairman of the Committee of Indian Affairs at that time, granted substantial aid to the College (Richardson 1932: 156). Though Richardson (1932: 164-65) describes a tense atmosphere in the Connecticut Valley during the War, Dartmouth was the only college in America to operate during the Revolution without any major interruption.

That is, without any interruption directly related to the War. Things changed in Hanover when Eleazar Wheelock, at sixty-seven years old, died on April 24, 1779. His death is largely a result of a decline in health, as he suffered from asthma, skin ailments, and epileptic seizures later in life (Hurd 1969: 29; Quint 1914: 60). He did not just lie down and die, however, as he continued to preach and teach, even if he had to be carried in a chair, and even up into his last days he saw students and gave sermons in his bed at home (Hurd 1969: 29-30; Quint 1914: 61). Wheelock was succeeded by his son John who became the second president of Dartmouth College, which was considered highly unusual at the time. There were even accusations of an attempt to create a family dynasty. Wheelock was buried and still remains in the Dartmouth cemetery in Hanover.

Some of Wheelock's assets were provided to his "helpless" son Ralph and the remainder given to his wife (Richardson 1932: 188-89). Wheelock parceled his land out to his children,

which allowed them much influence and control in Hanover (Hurd 1969: 29). After their deaths, the principal was to become the property of the College and used to endow the presidency. The College received all of the land where College buildings were erected, along with the sites selected for new buildings (Richardson 1932: 188-89). Hoefnagel and Close (2002: 102) report that Wheelock's wealth, primarily from land holdings, was appraised at a value of £4,624.10.

Though a substantial amount has been written about Eleazar Wheelock, and many records have been preserved, he remains somewhat of a mysterious figure, and opinions of him vary widely. Many of his students were fond of him, though Wheelock had his share of detractors. Physically, Wheelock was of an average height and reportedly had a great speaking voice (Hurd 1969: 25-26). Richardson (1932: 192) describes Wheelock as courageous, energetic, industrious, and having high ideals, though he was also authoritative and dictatorial. "Although probably quite unconscious of it," Richardson (1932: 191-92) wrote, "he was thus greedy for power, not for reasons of self-aggrandizement, but because power in his hands seemed to him necessary for the success of the cause." Though he was thoughtful and pious, a loving husband and father, and a dedicated teacher, he is also described as humorless and as having a morose disposition (Hurd 1969: 25-26). Though Wheelock was kind to his slaves (Hurd 1969: 26) and he emancipated some of them before his death, he willed a few to his son John and others remained in Hanover until they died (Zug 2007: 43). Even after Wheelock's death, accusations were charged against both him and his son John for shady dealings, though after the accounts of the College were examined for the time that the Wheelocks presided over the College, they were both exonerated (Hoefnagel and Close 2002: 32-33).

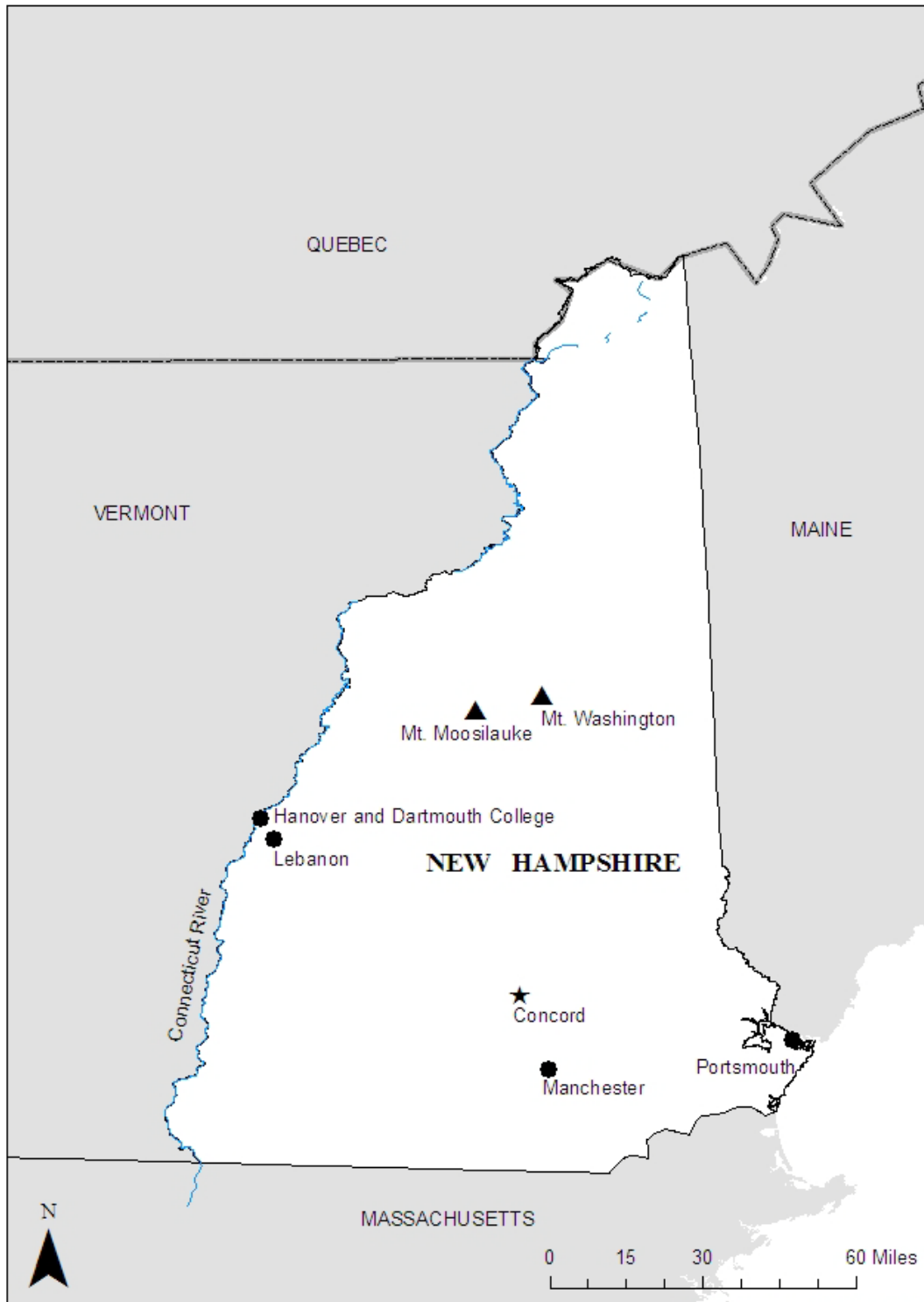
Perhaps the most interesting part of Wheelock's legacy is his status, even today, as an icon of Dartmouth College. He is regarded as a type of local folk hero, and he lives on in

images, history, folklore, material culture, and songs at Dartmouth. Robert Graham (1990: 1) keenly observed that the “early history [of the College] also provides insights into the Dartmouth of today. The circumstances – and, perhaps more enduringly, the place – of the College’s founding have left an indelible imprint on the character of Dartmouth and have nurtured through more than two centuries the celebrated Dartmouth spirit.” I fully concur with Graham that Wheelock and his influence persist at Dartmouth and perhaps set the tone for many aspects of the College that I investigate in the following pages.

### **Contemporary Dartmouth**

Before I commence with the main portions of my study, it is necessary to devote a section to some of the basic qualities of Dartmouth College and its geographical context to provide some necessary background and factual information to readers who may be less familiar with the College and its surroundings. First, we should begin with the setting of Dartmouth, the Town of Hanover, New Hampshire. Hanover’s first settlers arrived in 1765. Hanover had a population of about 10,850 in 2000 (U.S. Census 2000). Hanover is in a valley along the Connecticut River in New Hampshire’s Grafton County, right across the river from Vermont, and located in a region known colloquially as the Upper Valley (Map 1; Figures 5-7). One notable characteristic of Hanover is that it is a stop along the Appalachian Trail. Hanover is also a bit removed from the core of New Hampshire and its population centers.

When compared to some of its surrounding towns, Hanover is conspicuously more upscale and offers some stark demographic contrasts to many of its neighbors, making it somewhat of an anomaly in the state. Economically speaking, in 2004, the median household income in New Hampshire as a whole was \$53,377 and \$46,952 in Grafton County (U.S. Census 2000). Hanover in 2000 had a median household income of \$72,470 and a family income of



Map by Russell Fielding, 2008

**Map 1:** A general reference map of New Hampshire listing some main cities and features along with various locations from my study.



**Figure 5:** The Connecticut River in the summer, looking south. Photo by author.



**Figure 6:** The frozen Connecticut River in the winter, looking south. Photo by author.



**Figure 7:** The bridge connecting Hanover to Norwich, Vermont, taken from the Vermont side of the Connecticut River. Photo by Don Wade.

nearly \$100,000 (U.S. Census 2000). In 2000, 18.7 percent of New Hampshire residents possessed bachelor's degrees and 10 percent held graduate degrees (U.S. Census 2000). Comparatively, for Hanover in 2000, 35.1 percent had bachelor's degrees, 42.6 percent had graduate or professional degrees, and 14 percent held doctorates (Gumprecht 2008: 7; U.S. Census 2000). Hanover is also appreciably more ethnically diverse, as 88 percent of the town's population was white in 2000 compared to 95 percent for all of New Hampshire (U.S. Census 2000).

Notwithstanding statistics, Hanover is also visually distinct from most of rural New Hampshire (Figures 8-9). There were some familiar businesses that align its streets such as Gap, Quizno's, CVS, and the obligatory Ben & Jerry's (a staple across much of New England). Although it is a small town, there are noticeably few chains despite a markedly cosmopolitan air for a town of its size. There are a few bookstores (the Dartmouth Bookstore is quite large), several banks, basic services, some clothing stores (with more upscale boutiques and some



**Figure 8:** A view of Main Street in Hanover from the south edge of Dartmouth's campus. Photo by Don Wade.



**Figure 9:** Some of the shops and buildings along Main Street in Hanover. Photo by Don Wade.



outdoor clothing and sporting goods shops), but relatively few restaurants (and several are on the higher end). Following Gumprecht's (2008) definition, Hanover is very much a college town, albeit a more affluent one. Hanover is clearly in symbiosis with its most important neighbor, Dartmouth College, and, as is the case for college towns, everything is affected by the domineering presence of the local college (Gumprecht 2008). As established earlier, Dartmouth is a member of the Ivy League and is a Colonial College, founded in 1769 with a Congregationalist affiliation. Compared to its fellow Ivy League institutions, Dartmouth is the smallest, northernmost, most rural, and reportedly the most conservative of the eight schools. Technically, and by its own admission, Dartmouth is most accurately described as a small university. In fact, there once was a Dartmouth University that operated on the College's campus in Hanover from 1817 to 1819. The New Hampshire state government contended that since Dartmouth had received state money (which it did), the legislature wanted to change the charter of the College to become a public institution and begin more professional and practical programs in medicine, law, and agriculture.

The College continued to operate and it fought for autonomy all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1818 for what became the landmark case of *Trustees of Dartmouth College v. Woodward*. Representing the College, Dartmouth alumnus, lawyer, and statesman Daniel Webster argued in front of the justices on the unconstitutionality of New Hampshire interfering in a private contract, concluding his argument by famously stating, "It is, Sir, as I have said, a small college, and yet, there are those who love it. . ." After a year of deliberations, the Court ruled in favor of the College, significantly paving the way for the rights of private colleges and helping to affirm their independence from government interference (Sayigh and Vabson 2006). Dartmouth University closed and several decades later a public university was established in the

state, to become what is today the University of New Hampshire. Like Wheelock, Webster became somewhat of a folk hero at Dartmouth, and his famous quote is regularly heard, seen, and printed on campus to this day (Figure 10).



**Figure 10:** Daniel Webster painting in Thayer Dining Hall. Photo by author.

Though Dartmouth is a liberal arts college, it has some features that would technically classify it as a university. This can be attributed to the graduate schools at Dartmouth and the degrees that they offer. The College's graduate division in Arts and Sciences, developed in the 1960s, offers some master's programs but concentrates on doctoral programs, mainly in the natural sciences. The Dartmouth Medical School, founded in 1797, is the fourth oldest medical school in the United States. It grants the M.D. in addition to Ph.D.'s in basic science programs. It is affiliated with the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, a large academic hospital headquartered in nearby Lebanon. The Thayer School of Engineering (Figure 11), founded in



**Figure 11:** The Thayer School of Engineering. Photo by author.



**Figure 12:** The Tuck School of Business. Photo by author.

1867, offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in several areas of engineering. The Tuck School of Business (Figure 12), founded in 1900, offers a well known and respected M.B.A. as its only degree program. Tuck is the first *graduate* business school in the world, though there are other older collegiate business schools. There are also several graduate programs at Dartmouth that allow students to work toward dual or combined graduate degrees between these schools. Postgraduate enrollment at Dartmouth was nearly 1,700 in 2006-07 (DCFB 2006).

For the remainder of this section, I concentrate on facts about the undergraduate college and the College itself. As a side note, it is often referred to as “the College” with a capital C, though I have seen some variation with this unwritten rule. Unless noted, the statistics I rely on for this section reflect Dartmouth from the time period of my study, the 2006-07 school year. These statistics are compiled by Dartmouth’s Office of Institutional Research, and I cite from the reports titled Dartmouth College Fact Book (DCFB), Dartmouth Common Data Set (DCDS), and Dartmouth College Facts and Figures (DCFF).

There were nearly 1,100 freshmen entering Dartmouth in the fall of 2006, creating an undergraduate enrollment that year of nearly 4,100 (DCFB 2006). Though females slightly outnumbered males for the freshman class, Dartmouth was 52 percent male and 48 percent female for its total enrollment that year (DCFC 2006). The demographic composition of Dartmouth for that year was a student population consisting of 55 percent white students, 12 percent Asian American, 11 percent international, 8 percent unknown, 6 percent African American, 5 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent Native American (DCFB 2006). “Unknown” can mean that a student is multiracial or that the information was simply not reported (DCFF 2007). When comparing the statistics of the undergraduates to those of the entire institution, the statistics of the ethnic composition of the student body are relatively consistent (DCFB 2006).

From the applicant pool for that school year, Dartmouth admitted 2,186 from 13,938 applications for an acceptance rate of 16 percent (DCFB 2006). Forty-nine percent of those admitted enrolled at the College to make up the Class of 2010 (DCFB 2006). Eleven percent of those that enrolled were legacies (DCFB 2006). Of these students, 66 percent received their education from public school, 31 percent from private school, and 3 percent from parochial schools (DCFB 2006).

The greatest proportion of the Class of 2010 came from the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States (31 percent), followed by New England (21 percent), the West (16 percent), the South (15 percent) the Midwest (10 percent), and 7 percent were international students (DCFB 2006). The student body represented 48 states, with the most represented states, in order of the number of students from those states, being New York, Massachusetts, California, New Jersey, Connecticut, Texas, Pennsylvania, and Illinois, though the ranking of several of those states were separated by a margin of only a handful of students (DCFB 2006). The most represented countries from the international students, in order of the number of students, were Canada, South Korea, China, and India, with a smattering of students from a variety of other countries (DCFB 2006). Like many other private colleges and some public schools, Dartmouth classifies its students by the year of their graduation. For example, a student who was graduating the year that I was there (seniors) would be identified in print as Joe Student '07, and, instead of referring to himself as a senior, Joe would simply call himself a “seven,” as he is a graduate of the Class of 2007.

For the Class of 2008, the most popular majors, in order of popularity, were economics, government, history, psychology, English, biology, and engineering sciences (DCFF 2007). Proportionally, the most popular areas of study for the Class of 2006 in terms of degrees granted

were the social sciences (50 percent), humanities (23 percent), and the sciences (19 percent) (DCFB 2006). The four-year graduation rate at Dartmouth within about the last fifteen years has maintained percentages in the upper-eighties, with the six-year graduation rate in the mid-nineties (DCFB 2006; DCFE 2007). For the same rough period, Dartmouth has retention rates in the upper-nineties (DCFB 2006). The total undergraduate tuition and fees for undergraduates for the 2006-07 school year was \$43,341 following a steady increase over the last several years (DCFB 2006). Some much more detailed information regarding admissions, tuition and fees, and financial aid is available in the Dartmouth Common Data Set (2006). As of 2006, Dartmouth had nearly 66,000 living alumni living predominantly in New England, the Mid-Atlantic, or Western U.S., with the most represented forms of employment for all Dartmouth graduates being finance/financial services, health/science, education, law, and consulting (DCFB 2006).

In the fall of 2006, Dartmouth's total faculty count was 951, with the greatest proportion making up the faculty at the College (537) and a significant number at the medical school (311), with far lower numbers at Tuck and Thayer (DCFB 2006). Dartmouth also has a fairly substantial number of non-tenured appointments for lecturers, visiting appointments, or part-time faculty. Though I could not find any actual statistics, I have heard anecdotally that a fairly significant number of Dartmouth faculty and staff are alumni of the College and this was especially the case well into the twentieth century. At the time of my study, the College President was historian Dr. James E. Wright, the sixteenth president of the College, in what they refer to as the Wheelock Succession (see Appendix). The Wheelock Succession is often used as a timetable to divide the different eras of Dartmouth history. Since the early 1970s, the school

year is divided into four ten-week terms for what the College calls the “D-Plan,” though it is effectively a quarterly academic calendar.

Dartmouth also boasts having a high “quality of life,” which presumably refers to its active, involved student body and the atmosphere on campus. Dartmouth is famous for its fervently loyal alumni and its intricate alumni network. I discuss this in greater detail later, but to provide an idea of the involvement of Dartmouth alumni, they gave over \$96 million in donations to the College just over the 2005-06 school year (DCFB 2006). Though college traditions are present at many major colleges, Dartmouth is also especially known for several longstanding traditions that have helped solidify its identity over the years. In particular this includes the popularity of the Dartmouth Outing Club, an outdoor student organization, and usually one major traditional campus event each term with Dartmouth Night/Homecoming in the fall, Winter Carnival in the winter, and Green Key in the spring.

Also notable and noticeable is the residential characteristic of the College. The great majority of students are from a reasonable distance from the College, and consequently live on campus, and those who do not often live right in Hanover. In 2006, 77 percent of students lived in residence halls and 9 percent lived in housing in the Upper Valley region, with the remainder often living in one of the College’s many Greek houses for fraternity and sorority members (DCFB 2006). The Greek system is especially popular at Dartmouth, which is often attributed to its rural environment and the (very) limited social outlets in Hanover and the Upper Valley. The Class of 2008, with 1,055 students, had a 60 percent participation rate in Greek organizations, including the “co-educational” houses (DCFB 2006). Though they are found throughout the campus, most Greek houses are clustered along Webster Avenue on the northwestern side of campus, near the President’s house. Though Dartmouth is residential, it is known for students

taking terms off for internships and studying abroad, and 51 percent of students study overseas, in an exchange program, or through a foreign internship (DCFF 2007).

Also striking is the popularity of athletics and athleticism at Dartmouth. In 2005-06, Dartmouth had 34 varsity teams, with 940 intercollegiate athletes, and high participation in intramural sports (DCFB 2006). Dartmouth is in Division I of the NCAA (I-AA for football) and in the Ivy League Conference. Dartmouth's athletic colors are green and white and its team is referred to as the Big Green, though the absence of an official Dartmouth mascot has been the center of controversy for years, as I examine more closely in Chapter 7. But plenty of other activities abound on campus including singing, musical, and performing groups; clubs for political, religious, ethnic, and special interests; undergraduate and graduate honorary and academic societies; and secret societies. There are also a bewildering number of publications for a school of Dartmouth's size. The central student publication is the daily student newspaper *The Dartmouth*, though there are also more ideologically-oriented papers such as the leftist *Dartmouth Free Press* and the conservative and controversial *The Dartmouth Review*, along with *The Dartmouth Independent* and a multitude of other student papers, magazines, and journals. The College regularly publishes newsletters such as *Vox of Dartmouth* and *Dartmouth Life* and its bi-monthly *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*.

Perhaps all of these creative outlets have helped to establish the long list of famous Dartmouth alumni. Though the following list is abbreviated, it is worth mentioning some of the more famous names who have graduated from Dartmouth College for this study. Over the years, Dartmouth has produced numerous politicians, business leaders, professors and academic leaders, athletes (and Olympians), and members of the military and the religious world. But here



I wish to only briefly acknowledge some of the more famous names of Dartmouth graduates to show some of the wide-ranging influence the College has had across society.

In the realm of government, law, and public affairs, some prominent Dartmouth alumni include Nelson Rockefeller, Daniel Webster, George Perkins Marsh, Paul Tsongas, Rob Portman, Joel Hyatt, Salmon P. Chase, and Amos Tuck, namesake of Dartmouth's business school and a co-founder of the Republican Party. Alumni who served in presidential cabinets in recent memory include Timothy Geithner, William Lynn, Henry Paulson, Robert Reich, and C. Everett Koop.

In media, famous Dartmouth graduates are journalists Thomas Braden, Robert Hager, George Herman, A.J. Liebling, and Jake Tapper; commentators and pundits Keith Boykin, Dinesh D'Souza, Gregory Fossedal, Laura Ingraham, Mort Kondracke, and Paul Gigot; film critic Ty Burr and music critic Robert Christgau.

Famous Dartmouth alumni in the entertainment industries include actors Rachel Dratch, Stephen Macht, Michael Moriarty, Robert Ryan, Andrew Shue, Aisha Tyler, and Josh Taylor; producers Harry Ackerman and Shonda Rhimes; television executive Pat Weaver; filmmakers Buck Henry and W.D. Richter; writers Peter Viertel, Budd Schulberg, and *Animal House* inspiration Chris Miller; playwright Peter Parnell; and composer Erich Kunzel.

Dartmouth's contributions to the literary world include poets Philip Booth, William Bronk, and Richard Eberhart; novelists Norman Maclean, Bruce Ducker, and Louise Erdrich; and children's author Theodor Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss.

Some famous people who attended Dartmouth but did *not* graduate from the College are children's television personality Fred Rogers, poet Robert Frost, author Joseph Campbell, and

explorer John Ledyard. There have been several Dartmouth alumni who have won prestigious awards such as Pulitzer and Nobel prizes.

Returning to Dartmouth's presence in Hanover, it is also necessary to describe the physical setting of the College – the campus itself – to offer a sampling of what the place looks like and help to orient the reader to some of the major sites on the Dartmouth campus where I actually conducted the major parts of my study. The campus itself is fairly small, at slightly less than 270 acres, and it is centered around “the Green,” which also functions as a public green space for Hanover, as town greens are well known features of New England towns (Wood 1997; Figure 13). The Green is framed by Wheelock Street on its south side and Main Street on its west side. I lived on East Wheelock Street, about a seven minute walk from campus, during my study. The main campus buildings generally follow a Georgian American Colonial style, though there are several exceptions ranging from Gothic to Romanesque to Modernist architectural styles. The campus does not have enclosed quadrangles like some other Ivy League schools, such as Yale and Penn. The campus is quite green (except in the winter) and evokes an idyllic sense of the quintessential small, New England liberal arts college. President Dwight Eisenhower, speaking at Dartmouth's 1953 commencement, said of Dartmouth in an oft-repeated quote about the College, “This is what a college is supposed to look like.” This sentiment is likely influenced by the prominent white buildings overlooking the Green from its east side known as Dartmouth Row, which I examine more closely in Chapter 4.

Another dominant building seen in the figure above and in greater detail below, is the Baker Tower, which serves as the façade to Baker and Berry Libraries (Figure 14). There are several other more specialized libraries scattered throughout the campus. Along East Wheelock Street and the southern side of the Green are the Hanover Inn and arts centers such as the

Hopkins Center, the Hood Museum, and the Loew Auditorium. The athletic facilities, such as Alumni Gym, the football stadium, and several fields and field houses are further east along Wheelock Street. There is also the Dartmouth Skiway in Lyme, New Hampshire and a boathouse along the Connecticut River. The Hanover Country Club and the Outing Club's house are northwest of the campus along Occom Pond. Among other things, the outdoorsy ethos at Dartmouth relates strongly to the motto of the College: *Vox Clamantis in Deserto*, or "The voice of one crying in the wilderness." Dartmouth owns and maintains much more property, usually under the guise of the Outing Club, which I explore more fully in Chapter 6.

Heading north on Main Street and on campus along the western side of the Green are the student union, the Collis Center (Figure 15); Robinson Hall, which houses the offices for *The Dartmouth* and as headquarters for the Dartmouth Outing Club (see Chapter 6); McNutt Hall, Dartmouth's undergraduate admissions office; and Parkhurst Hall, Dartmouth's main administrative building. Dormitories, Greek houses, and various other buildings are scattered throughout the campus.



**Figure 13:** The Green from its southern side. Photo by author.



**Figure 14:** Baker Library Tower. Photo by author.



**Figure 15:** The Collis Center. Photo by author.

## CHAPTER 4 LANDSCAPE

While walking in the town of Hanover, New Hampshire and approaching the intersection of Wheelock Street and Main Street, it is difficult for one to not have his or her eyes immediately captivated by the sight of the four white buildings of Dartmouth Row on the campus of Dartmouth College. Prominently and majestically sitting atop a hill overlooking the Green and the western part of campus, it is clear from the situation of the buildings and their aura as to why this place is nicknamed “the College on the Hill.” Although these buildings comprise only a handful of buildings on the Dartmouth campus, it is evident – just from looking at them – that they are held in higher esteem within the Dartmouth community compared to the other buildings on the campus. Looking at the buildings of Dartmouth Row – Wentworth, Dartmouth, Thornton, and Reed Halls – causes me to instantly imagine the days of a classical curriculum and the romantic ideal of a small, New England college based on the principles and teachings of the liberal arts. These beautiful and seemingly quaint Colonial-style buildings, however, play important roles in the history of the College and are key features within the cultural landscape that both actively and passively represent Dartmouth’s place identity (Figure 16).

Robert Graham (1990: 14) describes the aesthetic and symbolic significance of Dartmouth Row:

Elegant, serene, settled, even luminous in the sunlight, the four buildings of Dartmouth Row represent a rare instance of colonial architecture in transition to Georgian and Greek Revival. They remain to this day the crown jewels of the campus, now in curious harmony with the newer buildings of neo-Georgian, neo-Romanesque, and modern designs. Indeed, the singular architectural achievement in the design and setting of the Dartmouth Row group has been recognized by their designation as a national historic landmark. . . . The harmony with which Dartmouth Row presides over the Dartmouth campus underscores that, in modest degree and different ways, Eleazar Wheelock shared some qualities of the proverbial Renaissance man that [Thomas] Jefferson personified in full measure.



**Figure 16:** Dartmouth Row on a spring afternoon. From left to right: Wentworth, Dartmouth, Thornton, and Reed Halls. Photo by author.

In this chapter I provide a landscape analysis of Dartmouth Row, with a particular focus on the saga behind the centrally important building Dartmouth Hall, as a prime example of Dartmouth’s identity as it pervades the cultural landscape. Dartmouth Hall also embodies the “ideals” of the College and serves as a symbol for the unusual affinities that those affiliated with the College both in the past and present feel toward the school. Russell (2008) submits, “[T]he architecture of a college campus reflects the ideas and ideals that the college most cherishes, and . . . we can see the history of Dartmouth stretched out before us in its buildings.” Although some of this chapter reads like an architectural history, it is important to note that architecture plays an essential role to understanding an individual college’s identity and the image with which it wishes to represent itself (Thelin 2004: xx-xxi). Thelin (2004: xxi) articulates, “Understanding the role of [campus] architecture sometimes means paying attention to buildings apart from the conspicuous great campus construction of bell towers and arches. For example, a university’s

historical saga often depends on certain shrines for enduring inspiration not because they are magnificent architecture but rather because they are hallowed ground for important events.”

Along with Dartmouth Hall, the oldest academic buildings in the United States such as Princeton’s Nassau Hall, Brown’s University Hall, Harvard’s Massachusetts Hall, and Yale’s Connecticut Hall “have become monuments that convey dignity and command respect” (Thelin 2004: 1). My focus on Dartmouth Hall provides for an excellent elucidatory case for these captivating points.

Nick Simonelli (1970), in a short article discussing Dartmouth’s early buildings, correctly observed that “Dartmouth Hall is the logical place to start when examining old College facilities, for it was the first built.” Although this chapter focuses on Dartmouth Hall, I feel that the three other buildings of Dartmouth Row deserve at least some acknowledgment, and here I give them some attention before I proceed with my rendition and analysis of the story behind Dartmouth Hall.

According to one architectural historian, Dartmouth Row remains the best surviving example of pre-Civil War New England Old Row architecture and planning (Tolles 1973: 507). Dartmouth is an archetypal New England “hilltop college,” along with other examples such as Amherst, Williams, Bowdoin, and Wesleyan (Thelin 2004: 53). These colleges are historically significant because they eventually became “nationally respected models for liberal arts colleges” (Thelin 2004: 53). Through the use of their idyllic visual appeal, New England colonists sought to create a “school upon the hill” much like the ideal of the “city upon a hill” (Thelin 2004: 11).

Descriptions of Dartmouth Row have noted that “Dartmouth has in the old Dartmouth Group a rare example of classic architecture dating to Colonial times. Steeped in the tradition of

an old New England college, the group stands as a memorial to the past and an inspiration to the future. . . . As the Dartmouth group differs from other architectural groups of its time, so can the newer architecture differ and yet retain the spirit of its inspiration, making of the college plan an interesting yet harmonious whole” (Larson 1925: 387). In regard to the visual and emotional appeal of the buildings, Kaufman (1966) wrote, “Dartmouth Row is the intellectual heart of a great college, center of youthful socialization that breeds lifelong friendships, and an architectural wonderland that lifts the spirit.”

Edward Relph (1976: 30) observed that “the spirit of a place lies in its landscape.” This is a key point because “place has a physical, visual form – a landscape. Certainly appearance, whether of buildings or natural features, is one of the most obvious attributes of place. It is substantial, capable of being described. As visual landscape place has its clearest articulation in distinct centres or prominent features” (Relph 1976: 30). Landscape is both a context for and an attribute of place (Relph 1976: 123). One of the best ways to study the relation between landscape and its contribution to a place and its culture is through the built environment. Although geographers have studied architecture as one aspect of the cultural landscape for decades, I found that the buildings at Dartmouth hold an especially strong significance to the history, culture, and identity of the College and therefore they deserve considerable attention.

Connecting architectural studies to geography, Lees (2001: 53) wisely states:

In a world of rapidly accelerating global flows, architecture is an important way of anchoring identities and of constructing, in the most literal sense, a material connection between people and places, often through appeals to history. Recent work in cultural geography has concerned itself . . . with the contested meaning of history and its representation in the built environment. . . . Architecture is about more than just representation. Both as a practice and a product, it is performative, in the sense that it involves ongoing social practices through which space is continually shaped and inhabited. Indeed . . . the use and occupancy of the built environment is as important as its form and figuration.



Similarly, Tuan (1977: 107, 116) explains, “Without architecture feelings about space must remain diffuse and fleeting. . . . Architectural space continues to articulate the social order, though perhaps with less blatancy and rigidity than it did in the past. The modern built environment even maintains a teaching function: its signs and posters inform and expostulate. Architecture continues to exert a direct impact on the senses and feeling.” This chapter will show a clear example of the effect a piece of architecture has as a material symbol and one form of representation to a particular place.

Referring to Dartmouth, Graham (1990: vii) wrote, “In the campus today – for all its serene and settled beauty – one can ‘read’ Dartmouth’s history. Remnants and reminders of the past abound in buildings, landscapes, paintings, monuments, and memorials.” Dartmouth professor Packard (1941: 6), explaining this sentiment in the context of Dartmouth’s buildings, wrote, “Architecture is a remarkably accurate index of the cultural vitality of the community or institutional ‘organism’ which it houses. With devastating candor it preserves for future generations to read a precise record of the strength and weakness, the vision and the blindness, the wisdom and the folly of its original sponsors. The autobiography of Dartmouth College has been written, and will be written in its sticks and stones as irrevocably as in any other records of its life.” I did not fully realize just how much architecture and the cultural landscape contribute to the identity of the College until I began to research the buildings of Dartmouth Row.

Looking up at Dartmouth Row from the Green, at the far left of the cluster, stands Wentworth Hall (Figure 17). This building, erected in 1828, is named after New Hampshire’s colonial governor John Wentworth, who aided Wheelock in obtaining the charter for the College. For a long time it served as a dormitory, but a fire in 1911 called for a redesign (Meacham 2008: 33), when the building was “completely reconstructed” in 1912, “with careful preservation of

exterior walls and general appearance” (Richardson 1942a: 12). Wentworth Hall was gutted and the interior rotated to make room for lecture halls, along with more structural support (Meacham 2008: 33, 35). At the time of my research, Wentworth Hall primarily housed administrative offices.



**Figure 17:** A view of Wentworth Hall from behind Dartmouth Hall. Photo by author.

From the same vantage point on the Green immediately to the right of Dartmouth Hall is Thornton Hall, also erected in 1828 (Figure 18). This building is named after John Thornton, a wealthy and philanthropic English merchant. Thornton had ties to English royalty, was in regular communication with Wheelock, and made regular, generous donations to the College (Richardson 1942a). After the outbreak of the Revolution, Thornton appealed to Lord Dartmouth to not cut off funding to the College (Richardson 1942a). Thornton Hall was also a rather unpopular and decrepit dormitory for many years, and many students opted not to live there (Meacham 2008: 36). The College began installing recitation rooms in 1871 and Thornton



**Figure 18:** Thornton Hall. Photo by author.

became the home of the Thayer School in 1874 (Meacham 2008: 36). Like Wentworth Hall, Thornton Hall received similar upgrades in 1924 with greater structural support (Meacham 2008: 36; Richardson 1942a). Both Wentworth and Thornton Halls were unpainted for many years, though whitewash was added in the 1850s to fit in with Dartmouth Hall (Meacham 2008: 36). Both buildings were finally painted white in 1912 (Meacham 2008: 36).

To the right of Thornton Hall, and at the right extremity of Dartmouth Row, is Reed Hall (Figure 19). Reed is named after the Honorable William Reed. Reed was a wealthy merchant from Marblehead, Massachusetts, served in Congress for two terms, later became a philanthropist, and was elected as a Trustee of Dartmouth in 1834 (Richardson 1942b). It is unclear what Reed's interest or connection with the College was, though he was a devoted Congregationalist (Richardson 1942b). After his death, Reed left money to the College, which it used to construct Reed Hall in 1839 (Richardson 1942b). The color of Reed Hall alternated



**Figure 19:** Reed Hall. Photo by author.

between yellow and white a few times before remaining permanently white by about 1912 (Meacham 2008: 37). Reed was intended to house specialty rooms that did not fit in Dartmouth Hall, such as a gallery, the library, some laboratories, and some dormitories that eventually expanded into the other rooms (Meacham 2008: 37). The building was redesigned in the early 1930s with structural improvements (Meacham 2008: 37-38). With the exception of the removal of four of the eight original chimneys, the exterior of Reed Hall remains unchanged (*Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* 1932). Architect Ammi B. Young designed the original Reed, Thornton, and Wentworth Halls.

This brings us to Dartmouth Hall, obviously a campus centerpiece and, as perhaps the great majority of Dartmouth students, faculty, staff, and alumni would agree, the most important building on the campus and perhaps *the* preeminent symbol of the College (Figure 20). An old newspaper article stated, “‘Old Dartmouth!’ No two words mean more to alumni and to students



**Figure 20:** Dartmouth Hall, present day. Photo by author.

and Faculty than those” (*The Hanover Gazette* 1904). “Since its erection, Dartmouth Hall has been the nucleus about which the traditions of the College have centered” (*The Dartmouth* 1904). Francis Lane Childs (1936: 17) wrote, “For nearly a century and a half Dartmouth Hall has dominated the campus of Dartmouth College, and it still does. With Baker Library towering far above it, with comfortable, even luxurious, dormitories and efficient modern laboratories and recreation buildings stretching far and wide to house the complex activities of the present-day institution, this old hall remains the focal point of Dartmouth sentiment.”

Although Dartmouth Hall is an old, venerable, and notably historically significant building, what is it that makes it so unusually special, especially from the perspective of the Dartmouth community? To understand, or at least attempt to understand, it is necessary to examine the dramatic history behind Dartmouth Hall.

Initially, Eleazar Wheelock discussed plans for the College buildings with New York carpenter Comfort Sever (Graham 1990; Meacham 2008: 29). Sever provided a design in 1772

that is likely the one selected by Wheelock and requests were sent out for materials (Meacham 2008: 29). The next year, the Provincial Assembly appropriated £500 for construction, and by 1774, Wheelock had persuaded the trustees to let laborers begin digging a foundation on the hill east of the Green, though most left by 1775 with the War looming on the horizon (Meacham 2008: 29). By that time, Wheelock had used all of the English funds and the trustees had backed out (Meacham 2008: 29). Wheelock died before the construction of Dartmouth Hall began.

After sufficient funds had been raised, Eleazar's son and second president of the College, John Wheelock, began construction in 1784, drawing from Sever's memory of Eleazar's vision, in particular one of a building modeled after Princeton's Nassau Hall (Childs 1936: 7; Graham 1990: 16). "In March, 1784, the Board of Trustees resolved, as soon as two thousand pounds should be subscribed, to erect, on the spot Dr. Wheelock had chosen, a brick building three or four stories in height and long enough for six rooms on each side, with ample hallways" (Childs 1936: 7). After the setting of the stone foundation in 1784, work began on the site that year for a building 175 feet long, 52 feet wide, and three stories above a ground story, allegedly the largest of its kind in New England (Childs 1936: 7; Hill 1964b: 52).

Wheelock planned for a brick building, though a nearby sawmill provided timber due to the high costs of building, not to mention the abundance of wood in the area (Hill 1964b: 52). Due to other complications, there was a size reduction to 150 feet long, 50 feet wide, and three stories in height. The frame of the building, consisting of New Hampshire pine 15 inches square and 75 feet long, 50-foot-long roof cords, and oak uprights, took ten days to raise in the summer of 1786 (Hill 1964b: 52). The frame's cover came in 1787 and, although the building had not been completed, it hosted commencement in September of that year (Hill 1964b: 52). The remainder of building materials came from several other areas of New England (Hill 1964b: 52).

“The College,” as it was then known, was complete by 1791, “but from the day of the first lecture and from the first night that students slept in its barren and drafty chambers this noble building became the center and soul of the Hanover Plain” (Hill 1964b: 52; Figure 21). The long delay in completing the hall was largely due to the scarcity of labor and supplies during the War and also because all ties with Britain had been severed (Graham 1990: 15). For forty years, Dartmouth Hall was the entirety of Dartmouth College since it housed all of the classrooms, offices, the library, a laboratory, chapel, all dormitories, the dining hall, and all social activity (Graham 1990: 16; Simonelli 1970), with the Commons and chapel built separately from the College a few years later (Hill 1964b: 53). In fact, it did not become known as Dartmouth Hall until much later, with Childs (1936) citing the date at 1828 and Graham (1990) slightly later. The reason for this was due to the construction of new buildings at the College and the need to differentiate the main building from Thornton and Wentworth Halls. This and the fact that, by the 1830s, memories of the Revolution and the War of 1812 had dissipated, and it seemed appropriate to name the principal building in honor of the Second Earl of Dartmouth (Graham 1990: 16). In accordance with Wheelock’s original wishes, Young built Wentworth and Thornton Halls with brick, introducing “a bit more of the Greek Revival to Dartmouth Row, which, because of its total impression of clean and unadorned lines, has been characterized by some as ‘Rural Georgian’” (Graham 1990: 21). The final costs for building Dartmouth Hall are not accurately known, but it was not paid off until 1808 (Childs 1936).

Sources help to illustrate the rustic conditions associated with living at (and in) the College during the early years. The original College did not have stoves installed until 1822; before, heat came from open fireplaces and lights from flaming pine knots and tallow candles (Childs 1936). Old Dartmouth also lacked toilet facilities and residents used an outhouse, also



**Figure 21:** A photo of the original Dartmouth Hall from about 1870. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

known as “the Little College” and in the mid-nineteenth century as “The Temple of Cloacina” and later as “Number Ten” (Childs 1936: 9). Because of the building’s hazardous conditions, some recommended demolishing it or moving it and preserving it as a relic, but instead the College carried out a moderate remodeling in 1895, installing electricity and steam heating (Meacham 2008: 31).

There was a fire at the College in 1798, and a tornado struck it in 1802, though it suffered little damage from those incidents. Through the years, upkeep of the building was likely below par, though it retained “all the elements of the ideal academic community” (Keyes 1920: 880). After suffering severe dilapidation, it received paint and maintenance in 1828, around the time the clock was installed (Childs 1936). Additional upgrades followed in 1848, after Dartmouth Hall fell into disrepair which then affected enrollment, as some students opted to rent rooms in town and unused rooms were vandalized (Childs 1936). In fact, one could argue that the



students did the greatest amount of damage to Dartmouth Hall, as it served as the site of numerous pranks and raucous behavior over the years (Childs 1936), though space constraints prevent me from going into these sometimes amusing anecdotes of early student life.

Despite the destructive behavior of some students in their rudimentary surroundings during the early days of Dartmouth, one destructive event – both physical and emotional – proved to be among the most pivotal moments for Dartmouth men in the history of the College.

On the “frigid” morning of February 18, 1904, chapel service had just begun

when indistinct shouts were heard outside. As the students poured out of Rollins Chapel they could see smoke and then flame coming from the small room under the bell tower of Dartmouth Hall. Almost immediately the cupola was a pyre, and as it crumpled into the roof smoke suddenly curled from under the eaves in many places. By now the fire department had arrived but was reduced to semi-paralysis as sheets of ice began to cover men and equipment. Eating down into the top story, the flames raced through the corridors . . . and transformed the whole building into so hot an inferno that it melted the bell soon after it had plummeted through three floors to the cellar. Shocked spectators remembered a few moments when, after all except a chimney and fragment of wall had been consumed, the massive hand-hewn timbers of the frame, outlined in fire, still stood, the last reminder of the energies of the early College. Every spectator, recalled Professor Eric Kelly, shared a feeling that somehow or other the world had come to an end. (Hill 1964c: 297-98)

Attempts, though futile, were made to curtail the fire and damage. The recorded temperature that morning was 20 degrees below zero, and water thrown on the building quickly turned to ice (Childs 1936: 15). The “holocaust” lasted for 107 minutes, and in an atmosphere of “stunned horror the corporeal body of Old Dartmouth Hall had dropped into its self-made grave” (Braman 1964: 28; Figure 22). The day after the fire, *The Manchester Union* (1904) reported,

As Dartmouth hall was going down it was easy to distinguish looks of sadness and even grief on the faces of faculty, students and townspeople, for the loss represented not merely material things, but the rich store of over a century of famous history. Almost in unison, the students, looking on and powerless to aid, repeated the phrase, “How I hate to see that building go, it is so ancient and famous.” No doubt when the thousands of alumni read of the disaster, the same sentiments will be expressed.



**Figure 22:** Dartmouth Hall burning in the fire of 1904. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

It is curious to see such strong emotions, as Braman (1964: 28) mentions how Dartmouth Hall had been seen as a nuisance and an eyesore in years past. Students referred to it as the “Old Barn” and “Noah’s Ark” in the 1840s; President Bartlett referred to it as a “menace” in 1887, and President Tucker called it a “tinder box” a few years after that (Braman 1964: 28). It was described as having “grown in trouble, and nurtured in adversity, – a hopeless drag on the prosperity of the College” (Braman 1964: 28). Childs (1936: 15) observed that “[t]here had been times in its one hundred and twenty years of existence when, already old but not yet venerable, Dartmouth Hall had been sneered and scorned, but the moment that it disappeared all Dartmouth men discovered how deep and abiding had been their real affection for it – the last remaining physical link with the College of the Eighteenth Century.”

Evidently, the group sentiment changed swiftly and drastically on that February morning. Classes were cancelled for the remainder of the day. Most students living in the building lost

everything except what clothes they were wearing and had to temporarily quarter with other students (*The Manchester Union* 1904). Though the blaze claimed many recitation rooms, other buildings had room for additional occupancy and a class recess was unnecessary (*The Manchester Union* 1904). Still, morale was low that day, as

the forenoon seemed like a long funeral period. For 110 years old Dartmouth hall has stood the strain of storm and tempest, of fire and water, and out of its halls have emerged many of the world's brightest men. . . . Visions of these traditions swam before President Tucker and the professors of long standing in the college as they viewed the sacred edifice slowly razed to the ground. (*The Manchester Union* 1904)

The sentiments quickly changed again, as later that afternoon there was a special chapel service, as well as announcements for immediate plans to rebuild Dartmouth Hall (*The Manchester Union* 1904). The intent was not to be a sort of memorial service, as President Tucker assured, but to reach out to the College as a whole (*The Manchester Union* 1904). “Dr. Tucker said that Dartmouth hall was now a memory to every one in its material form, but that the spirit and tradition that created it was still untouched. He said that the college life would go on with only the break of a day and that the old college as embodied in Dartmouth hall would be perpetuated in some lasting form” (*The Manchester Union* 1904). Tucker’s inspiring and reassuring words were only the beginning of an emotional outpour from Dartmouth men far beyond Hanover.

While the fire was still burning, President Tucker called for a meeting of the Board of Trustees to discuss rebuilding plans. And in the midst of the catastrophe, alumnus, “charismatic Trustee and perennial booster” (Meacham 1998: 8) Melvin O. Adams called for a meeting of the alumni to discuss raising funds for the rebuilding, “concluding his notice with words that have become famous in Dartmouth annals: *‘This is not an invitation; it is a summons’*” (Childs 1936: 15, emphasis in original).

Word of the fire spread fast and wide. In the following days, newspaper headlines from all over the Northeast dramatically announced the event: “Dartmouth Hall Ruined by Fire” (*The Dartmouth* 1904); “Couldn’t Save Old Dartmouth Hall: Fire Started While Students Were Gathered in Chapel at Morning Services And Building Was Soon a Mass of Smoldering Ruins” (*The Boston Globe* 1904); “FAMOUS OLD DARTMOUTH HALL DESTROYED BY FIRE,” followed by shorter pieces documenting the scene such as “Students Fight Bravely to Save Old Structure” and the “great sorrow throughout Hanover” (*The Boston Journal* 1904). Dean Emerson is quoted in this column with grave words: “This is the greatest loss in buildings that Dartmouth could suffer. One-half of all the other buildings could have better been spared . . . . Every class met here from 1791 on. The loss is deplorable” (*The Boston Journal* 1904). The article continues, “Many of the older members of the faculty and old townspeople were in tears as they saw the building go down to ashes” (*The Boston Journal* 1904). Perhaps the most ominous headline of all came from *The Manchester Union* (1904), boldly reading: **FLAMES DEVOUR DARTMOUTH HALL**, with the opening lines of the story solemnly declaring, “Dartmouth college is in mourning: Old Dartmouth hall, the priceless possession of all her graduates and faculty, is in ashes.”

Eric Kelly (1904: 291) succinctly describes the sense of great loss at the scene: “One can hardly understand the emotions of the Dartmouth men who were present at the burning of the hall. There was a feeling that somehow or other the world had come to an end, – or at least that one world had come to an end and that another was just beginning. . . . [I]t takes some great event, some cataclysm perhaps to bring home the values of such association.” One indication of the impact felt by alumni and friends of the College was through the hundreds of messages that

came through the telegraph and telephone offices; so many, in fact, that only a fraction were received due to the available accommodations (*The Manchester Union* 1904).

Following Melvin Adams's actions mentioned above, alumni met in mass numbers to respond to the call to rebuild Old Dartmouth in documented cases in Boston, New York, Chicago, and Montréal (*The Boston Evening News* 1904). A few days after the fire, at the Boston meeting, *The Boston Sunday Globe* (1904) reported:

Dartmouth alumni of Boston held a meeting in Lorimer hall yesterday afternoon that will be memorable for the tender and loving sentiment expressed for the "old mother," as the college was reverently called, and for grief at the irreparable loss sustained by the college and alumni through the destruction by fire of Dartmouth hall last Thursday morning.

It was a notable group of men, young and old, who gathered in the hall at 3 o'clock and expressed to each other their sense of grief at the loss of the old hall, and at the same time pledged to the official representative of the college their cooperation in the task of rebuilding.

At the Boston "rally," President Tucker spoke and gave a sober perspective on the meaning and importance of Dartmouth Hall in the wake of the fire:

We have lost our visible connection with the century that gave birth to the College. Dartmouth Hall survived the 19<sup>th</sup> century and stood without a flaw, continuing to respond to all the urgent and pressing demands of the everyday work of opening 20<sup>th</sup> century. It represented to us a wealth of tradition of which we now understand the value. It not only embodied the tradition of the College, but carried with it the traditions of all men who belong to her. . . . You can rebuild Dartmouth Hall, and in a certain measure satisfy your sentiment. You cannot rebuild her and satisfy the work for which she stood. . . . Dartmouth Hall is now a memory, but the spirit which inspired it remains untouched, and will rise to face the future years. (Braman 1964: 30)

Although the spirit that Dartmouth Hall embodied could not be deterred in the minds of Dartmouth men, the destruction of the building in no way prevented them from rebuilding the hall. In fact, they set out to build an *exact replica* of Dartmouth Hall.

The alumni especially felt that it was necessary to rebuild Dartmouth Hall due to its sentimental value and strong symbolic significance. *The Dartmouth* (1904) notes, "There was

scarce a corner in the old hall that did not suggest memories of the undergraduate life of the College and the changes incident to more than a century of evolution and development. To the white-haired graduate, revisiting his *alma mater*, the Old Pine and Old Dartmouth were the two objects about which were gathered the dearest memories of his undergraduate life.” Indeed, Dartmouth Hall had affected all students at some point and to some degree while they were at the College (*The Dartmouth* 1904). The loss of Dartmouth Hall was especially significant because “[t]he disaster denoted a turning point in the history of the College; more than any other single event, it served to crystallize alumni sentiment, and in the immediate and generous response in money given at this time marked the beginning of that never-failing support of their alma mater that has characterized the alumni body ever since” (Childs 1936: 15). Braman (1964: 30) claims that the fire was an event that “tested” the alumni sentiment.

And the alumni came through indeed. The alumni raised money for rebuilding within a few months after the fire. And the rededication of the building did not go without a grand ceremonial procession. The sixth Earl of Dartmouth, great-great grandson of the second Earl, was especially invited to come from England to the College for the event. He laid the cornerstone of the new building on October 26, 1904, which created an impressive spectacle that drew in large numbers of alumni (Childs 1936; Figure 23). Lord Dartmouth represented “the ideal image of an old English lord in an American’s eyes” (Meacham 2008: 32).

The “replica” of the old Dartmouth Hall was feasible at the time because there were pictures available of the old building to use as a guide (Schuyler 1910: 427). Architect Charles Alonzo Rich redesigned and rebuilt the building by tracing an outline of a projected photograph of the original hall (Meacham 2008: 32). The reproduction was made of red brick and subsequently painted white – whiter, in fact – than its predecessor (Meacham 1998: 29). Rich



**Figure 23:** Lord Dartmouth at the ceremony for the cornerstone of the new Dartmouth Hall, October 1904. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

carefully planned for the new Dartmouth Hall to take on a Colonial style, following the traditional college type that builders had used well into the nineteenth century; therefore, “the building was a survival as much as a revival” (Meacham 1998: 28). The new building was about six feet taller and six feet wider than the original (Childs 1936; Braman 1964). The belfry was duplicated, the flanking doors moved one window space toward the center, and there was a projection added in the rear of the building to balance the vestibule in the front (Braman 1964: 30). Rich lengthened the windows on the first floor and progressively shortened each tier, creating a 3-2-1 ratio for each story, to give the illusion of a lower building and to match the architecture of Reed Hall (Braman 1964: 30; Graham 1990: 19).

Not only was Dartmouth Hall rebuilt, but it also incorporated actual pieces of the old building into the new structure. Meacham (1998) refers to the pieces of Old Dartmouth as

“found objects.” Doing this allowed buildings to “rescue a piece” of their history, “preserving the memory of the past in a form that was indeed physical and authentic, if fragmentary” (Meacham 1998: 31). The fabric of the building was evident long before the fire, as students fought to preserve it from a plan to move or demolish the building in 1893 (Meacham 1998: 31). When the building burned, people scavenged among the debris for potentially useful remnants (Meacham 1998: 31). The Boston alumni chapter seemed particularly fervent about this and resolved to use old fragments in the new building: “sentiment will be preserved as much as possible by utilizing foundation stones, windows, and other things which have been saved from the fire” (Meacham 1998: 31). Furthermore, there are instances where the event of the fire allowed for the creation of souvenirs, where parts of the bell that melted from the fire “still exist in the form of little bell-shaped paperweights and watch charms treasured by alumni fortunate enough to possess them” (Childs 1936: 13-14).

Remaining pieces of the old hall incorporated into the new one include three of its “original New Hampshire granite steps, which have now been climbed by some two hundred classes of Dartmouth students,” at the side entrances of the new building (Graham 1990: 20; Meacham 1998: 31); the now-antique original lock, fitted with its original key, and forged by an early Hanover blacksmith (Braman 1964; Graham 1990: 20); as well as most of the foundation of the original building (Meacham 1998: 31).

Two front windows nearest to the center of the building, rescued from the old hall “while it was still burning” were the only ones to survive the fire and were placed on the first floor “to preserve some of the associations of Old Dartmouth” (Graham 1990: 19; Meacham 1998: 31). Graham (1990: 19-20) explains that the windows “were incorporated in the new Dartmouth Hall as mementos of the wooden edifice that had stood at the heart of Dartmouth for more than a



century.” Additionally, three plaques, all cast from the brass of the cupola bell that fell and melted from the fire, are found on the front of the building. Two are below each original window and another “recalls the 1904 fire and the almost Phoenix-like revival of the hall” (Graham 1990: 20; Figure 24). Each one reads:

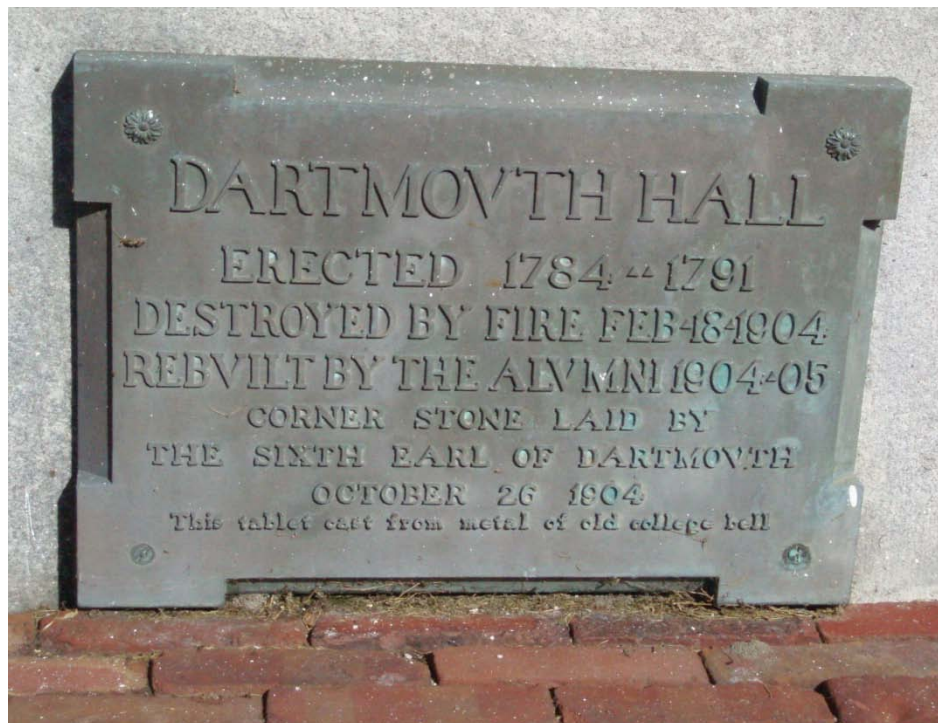


**Figure 24:** Plaque marking a window saved from the original Dartmouth Hall from the 1904 fire. Photo by author.

THIS WINDOW, WITH THE ONE VPON THE  
OTHER SIDE OF THE MAIN ENTRANCE, SAVED  
FROM THE FIRE OF FEBRVARY 18, 1904, IS  
INSERTED IN THIS STRVCTVRE AS THE ONLY  
MEMORIAL OF THE EXTERIOR OF THE  
ANCIENT BVILDING. IN OTHER RESPECTS THE  
EXTERIOR OF THE PRESENT BVILDING IS A  
REPRODVCTION IN BRICK OF THE ORIGINAL  
HALL.

The third plaque, commemorating the rebuilding of the entire hall, reads (Figure 25):

DARTMOVTH HALL  
ERECTED 1784 ΔΔ 1791  
DESTROYED BY FIRE FEB Δ 18 Δ 1904  
REBUILT BY THE ALVMNI 1904 Δ 05  
CORNER STONE LAID BY  
THE SIXTH EARL OF DARTMOVTH  
OCTOBER 26 1904  
This tablet cast from metal of old college bell



**Figure 25:** Plaque commemorating the destruction of the original Dartmouth Hall and the laying of the cornerstone for the new one in 1904. Photo by author.

These plaques are a way of “textualizing” Dartmouth’s landscape so both visitors and members of the Dartmouth community can “read” the landscape and affirm for themselves that it is indeed historic (Duncan and Duncan 2004).

The exact cause of the 1904 fire was never determined. Some cited “faulty wiring” as the reason, though no one was at the exact spot when the fire started (*The Manchester Union* 1904).

The rebuilding cost was \$101,700, and construction for the new edifice took about two years

(Graham 1990: 19). At the new building's dedication ceremony on February 17, 1906, President Tucker remarked:

You could not restore the ancient traditions: you could [sic] not replace the marks left by the generations from their work and their play; you could not reproduce the very walls which held the spirits of the past. You have followed the order of nature which teaches us that the only way to recover lost values is to re-create them. This hall in which we stand is a re-creation, faithful wherever it was possible to the details of the old hall, but built in the freedom of the spirit rather than in bondage to the letter. You have given us a building adapted in every part to the uses of a modern college. In its outward appearance, as in the spirit which pervades it, it stands for the Dartmouth of a hundred years ago; in its adaptations, and appointments, and equipment, it stands for the Dartmouth of today. Whatever may be its semblance, no more modern building faces the College green than this re-creation of the old Dartmouth Hall. (Meacham 1998: 28)

The institutional commitment of Dartmouth was tested again after another fire damaged Dartmouth Hall on April 25, 1935. A similar response followed, with the story making headlines in various newspapers. Initially, the damage was estimated at \$100,000 (*The Manchester Union* 1935a), though it was later adjusted to \$200,000 (*The Manchester Union* 1935b), with the fire destroying the cupola and the upper levels (Meacham 2008: 32). Again, plans for reconstruction were immediate and, as the fire was still burning, President Ernest Martin Hopkins announced, "We will rebuild at once" (*The Manchester Union* 1935a).

This fire was first believed to have been the result of arson, though that was quickly discredited (*The Manchester Union* 1935a). Insurance paid \$79,000 toward the damage, which mostly affected the interior of the building, and alumni raised additional funds, though apparently there was no major campaign like the one that followed the 1904 fire (*The Manchester Union* 1935a, 1935b; Childs 1936: 16). By this point, the trustees decided to make the new building fire-proof (*The Manchester Union* 1935b), and it was rebuilt with steel and concrete (Childs 1936: 16). There was another rededication ceremony with several speakers (such as the president of Yale), a glee club performance, and the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of

New Hampshire “pronounce[d] a blessing upon the rebuilt edifice” (*The Dartmouth* 1936). At the event, President Hopkins cited Dartmouth Hall as “an outward manifestation of an inner grace of the College” (*Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* 1936: 13). The building was reopened the following school year. The current, resurrected Dartmouth Hall displays two gables on the front of the building, with one reading “1904” and the other “1935” to memorialize the two fires.

Interestingly, upon examining the various accounts of the history of Dartmouth Hall, the 1904 fire, and its subsequent rebuilding, there is a noticeable disagreement among various authors as to how much the building has changed over the years or if they acknowledge any changes at all. The 1904 column from *The Dartmouth* describing the fire states, “Standing *unchanged* from the early struggles of the College to its present condition of development, it [Dartmouth Hall] has been the link binding the old to the new” (*The Dartmouth* 1904, emphasis added). The author then contradicts himself and discusses changes in the hall before the 1904 fire (particularly the chapel, museum, etc.) and later states, “The original interior plan was very unlike that with which the undergraduates of the present day are familiar” (*The Dartmouth* 1904). Remarking after the dedication of the new building in 1906, Childs (1936: 16) observes, “Outwardly, as has been stated, the hall seemed unchanged, but inside the arrangement was entirely new.” Schuyler (1910: 427) comments, “The reproduction is exact enough to deceive the returning old graduate, who does not observe until he comes close, that brick painted white has replaced the clapboards, nor that some four feet have been added, for reasons of utility, to the total height.” While acknowledging some changes over time, Braman (1964: 30) maintains that “The new Dartmouth Hall was the spit and image of the old, with a few minor variations.” And Meacham (2008: 32) adds, “The resulting building, nearly indistinguishable from its predecessor in photographs, continues to preside over the Green and to symbolize the college itself.”

It is perhaps Graham (1990: 19) who provides the most observant, sober, and balanced take on the new building by conceding, “Variations in the new Dartmouth Hall were minor in terms of appearance, although they were significant in substance on several counts.” It is with this succinct and, in my opinion, agreeable assessment of the changes to Dartmouth Hall where I wish to begin my analysis of the significance of this event to the history of the College, its cultural landscape, and its institutional identity.

Upon learning about the history behind Dartmouth Hall, I decided that what struck me about it was the immense and deep emotional response that the Dartmouth community seems to feel for the building, especially surrounding the decision to entirely recreate the building following the 1904 fire. I was taken by this anecdote so much, in fact, that I felt that it warranted deeper research, as I saw it as perhaps an extreme or at least unusual instance of what Tuan (1974) refers to as topophilia.

Of course I understand that a community such as Dartmouth could hold a building in such a high esteem because it *is* historic and it *does* serve as an appropriate symbol for the College. I find it understandable as to why, after a devastating event such as a fire, the College would want to rebuild a building that was so important to the school. I admit that I have an emotional attachment to some material possessions of mine and if they were lost or destroyed, I would undoubtedly feel a great sense of loss and would want to replace them if possible. Tuan (1977: 17) observes, “Human beings not only discern geometric patterns in nature and create abstract spaces in the mind, they also try to embody their feelings, images, and thoughts in tangible material. The result is sculptural and architectural space, and on a large scale, the planned city. Progress here is from inchoate feelings for space and fleeting discernments of it in nature to their public and material reification.”

Similarly, Shils (1981: 63) argues that preserving old buildings is necessary because buildings are identified with certain places and help to create their identities. Old buildings can be “objects of veneration” or “objects of piety and [they] remain usable for their distinctive purpose” (Shils 1981: 65, 68). “The veneration of the old,” writes Shils (1981: 69), “turns the reception of a physical thing into an appreciative tradition; . . . it is also appreciated for its association with the past. Association with past greatness is added to the appreciation of pastness as such. Pastness even generates greatness. The attribute of pastness makes the thing of the past worthy of preservation, of becoming a tradition to be maintained and passed on. Both the object itself and the belief about it become traditions.” Dartmouth Hall serves as an appropriate illustration for both Tuan’s and Shils’s points, which also provide a framework for understanding the rationale behind the fervor to rebuild Dartmouth Hall.

But after further scrutiny of Dartmouth’s landscape, deeper analysis of the historical context surrounding the 1904 and 1935 fires, and further engagement with the relevant literature in cultural and historical geography, I have come to the conclusion that Dartmouth Hall is indeed a symbol of the College and its place identity, though there is more to its symbolic value than what Dartmouth sources or the Dartmouth landscape may openly reveal. In other words, Dartmouth Hall is much more than a storied old Colonial-style academic building.

This is evident from my examination of much of the language used to describe Dartmouth Hall, the activities that it hosted, the actions performed in and around the building, and the emotions that it aroused that are documented in various sources. Several sources describe Dartmouth Hall as inspiring and important to the College because it has long been the center of much of its tradition and culture (Larson 1925; Kaufman 1966). I have no doubt as to the accuracy of such statements.

But the 1904 fire serves as an exemplary case. Consider the fact that Braman (1964: 28) referred to the fire and destruction of the building as a “holocaust”; the (overly?) dramatic reports from newspapers describing the scene of the fire; the *immediate* call to raise money to rebuild Dartmouth Hall while it was still on fire and “summoning” of alumni to raise money; the voluminous response from alumni in calls, telegraphs, and money; media, particularly newspapers, greatly sensationalizing the event; people personifying the building, “mourning” the loss as if it were a funeral; and the insistence that an exact replica of the old building be constructed, even with parts of the original building *built into* the new one!

Following the 1904 fire, *The Boston Evening News* (1904) picked up on the seemingly extreme emotion surrounding the destruction of the building and asked if similar sentiments would have been generated if another Dartmouth building burned: “And consequently the simple report of a college building destroyed by fire – would this not suffice?” Apparently a simple story and quiet attempt to rebuild the building and carry on with the functioning of the College would not have sufficed. But why? Dartmouth was fully aware that the new Dartmouth Hall was a reproduction, given Tucker’s remarks at the rededication ceremony and the plaques now found on the building. Therefore, there must have been deliberate motives for maintaining such a “tradition.” Internally, some criticism came from Dartmouth regarding the romantic ideal that College was trying to maintain in its landscape, even well after the fires at Dartmouth Hall: “[A] college is fully justified in trying to preserve its old buildings as long as they can be made safe and useful. But it does not follow that new buildings for this reason should be made to look like old ones in order to create a spurious illusion of associational values which never existed. That it the fundamental fallacy of the pipe-dream period of antiquarianism and eclecticism from which we have so recently emerged” (Packard 1941: 6).

A closer look at the historical context surrounding the events of the 1904 fire in particular sheds light on the sorts of changes that were occurring at Dartmouth at that time that might have provoked such an extreme response following the fire. One major change was the fact that, around the turn of the twentieth century, Dartmouth was making the slow transition to becoming a university (Meacham 1998: 2). The College administration resorted to “[t]he ideas of democracy and spirit [which] took on a sort of talismanic power and came to represent the cherished collegiate ideal to a school that feared the transformation it was undergoing” which subsequently created the desire for the College to return to these values (Meacham 1998: 2). College architect and alumnus Charles Rich took on the job of designing two dozen buildings between 1893 and 1914, including the new Dartmouth Hall. “These buildings represent the attempt of an architect and his patron to preserve collegiate values in order to weave the university easily into the College,” which ended up making “Dartmouth practically unrecognizable to observers who had seen it in the nineteenth century” (Meacham 1998: 2). Examples of other noticeable changes at the College around this time included the introduction of elective courses, departing from the previously proscribed curriculum, and Dartmouth offering a B.S. in addition to the traditional A.B. (Meacham 1998: 4).

Dartmouth was not a unique or isolated case in this dynamic period, however. Peer institutions and fellow Colonial Colleges Princeton and Columbia were also transitioning from college to university, and such a change was visibly evident in their campus landscapes (Meacham 1998: 5-6). These changes in infrastructure and the idea of transitioning from college to university were interpreted as threats and a potential loss of identity to Dartmouth; Dartmouth was adamant about remaining a College and not becoming a university or even taking on the name of a university as Princeton and Columbia had (Meacham 1998: 6). “But Dartmouth’s



collegiate culture was not set in stone,” and Rich and the administrators followed a specific strategy to preserve “this culture even as they created what amounted to a new campus. The new would not overwhelm the old in some sudden shift; instead the transition would be as gradual and sensitive as Rich could make it. Rich in effect slipped the university into the college, and he did so by designing his buildings with collegiate values in mind” (Meacham 1998: 7).

Meacham (1998) cites the original values that Rich strove to preserve in the College landscape as Dartmouth democracy and the Dartmouth spirit. Meacham’s (1998: 8) use of “democracy,” however, does not connote the concept of a “majority rule” as much as the idea of an “anti-aristocratic ideal.” At this time, administrators were actively combating social and class disparities like the institutionalized Princeton eating clubs or the senior societies at Yale, especially as more students from wealthy business backgrounds began attending Dartmouth (Meacham 1998: 8-9). “No longer was Dartmouth a college for teachers and preachers as it had been earlier in the [nineteenth] century since an increasing number of students were becoming men of affairs” (Meacham 1998: 9).

Meacham (1998: 17) explains “‘Dartmouth spirit,’ as Tucker’s administration promoted it, was a sense of loyalty and affection that students and alumni felt for their institution. This loyalty had its basis in a sentimental connection to the past, a connection that the administration created self-consciously. Spirit depended on both old and newly-minted traditions. . . . Spirit, because it relied on memory, inevitably also depended on the physical, the place itself.” Tucker further understood that places or societies in a state of flux used the past to inculcate new values and sought to capitalize on the past and nostalgia, making it advantageous for the current demands of the College (Meacham 1998: 18). Following this logic, Rich imbued the new buildings with a sense of history to “mitigate the intrusion of the university that the buildings

represented. Therefore Rich and his patrons devoted much of their effort to making the new buildings bolster collegiate values, particularly college spirit” (Meacham 1998: 20). In doing so, Rich resorted to Colonial styles, which allowed Dartmouth to create a past through its landscape, even making some buildings “more” Colonial by making them appear to be older than they actually were (Meacham 1998: 21-22).

Again, Dartmouth was not alone in this movement to resort to the past, as the other schools of the Ivy League followed suit. Thelin (1976: 68) observes, “The ‘historic ambience’ is strong in the architecture of the Ivy League institutions. The irony of the Ivy League image is that the campuses of the 1960s appeared to be ‘older’ than they were in 1890 – despite expansion and addition of new facilities and activities.” One outrageous example of this paradox is at Brown, with its seemingly old quadrangles and buildings. However, the buildings were constructed in the 1950s by Thomas Mott Shaw, the same architect of the colonial Williamsburg restoration project (Thelin 1976: 68). The desire to appear old and historic stems from the

Ivy League’s association with pseudo-antique mementos and revivalistic architecture [which] is the key to its distinctive place in Americana: the public expects, demands, that the old colleges behave in an *historic* manner. Edwin Slosson noted in 1910 that the prevalence of the “English Collegiate” style had caused “academic” to be associated in the popular mind with “peaked windows and gargoyles.” When Dwight Eisenhower visited Dartmouth in 1953, he exclaimed, “This is the way I have always thought a college should look,” echoing Patton and Field’s 1927 contention that the composite New England College brought to mind a distinctive campus ambience, architecture, and arrangement.

According to these ground rules, it was all right for the old colleges to add computer centers, physics laboratories, and graduate departments so long as innovations were clothed in colonial motifs and 12<sup>th</sup> century stone. Historicism gave the Ivy League colleges a split personality within the mass culture. (Thelin 1976: 69)

Thus, the “look” and design of certain colleges to appear a certain way is partly the result of a two-way interaction between the expectations in the public mind and the image that the colleges themselves wish to project.

Dartmouth Hall, however, was an actual replication, and “[t]he iconic significance of the old edifice made it imperative” for Rich to approach the design as a special case (Meacham 1998: 28). Meacham (1998: 28) argues, perhaps correctly, that “[t]he new Dartmouth Hall is thus not a mere simulacrum. The subtle contradictions between the desires for tradition and modernity that the building betrays make Dartmouth Hall one of the most curious buildings on the campus.” Expounding further on the unusual case of Dartmouth Hall playing a key role in both preserving tradition and creating a new ones, Meacham (1998: 29) explains that Dartmouth Hall “accommodated modern needs despite its mimicry of an historic building. The fire was in some ways a boon to the administration, in that it finally allowed the College to be rid of an awkward, unsafe and outdated building.” Rich's master plan proposed as much, but “now, rather than having to demolish the old building over the objections of alumni, the College could have a new Dartmouth Hall and raise alumni spirit at the same time” (Meacham 1998: 29). Doing so gave the alumni a physical reminder in the landscape of the College of a romanticized past and helped them to at least “hold onto a sense of ‘college’ even as the school took on the elements of a university” (Meacham 1998: 44).

Dynamic occurrences beyond the confines of Hanover also likely played a role in the reluctance toward change felt by many at Dartmouth. Around the turn of the twentieth century in New Hampshire, the state became noticeably more industrial and less rural and agrarian; technological changes such as the railroad, the advent of the telephone, rural mail delivery, and greater access to news covering global events (e.g. the Spanish-American War, the Boxer Rebellion, and the state of the global economy) reduced the state’s isolation and remoteness; an increasing immigrant population also produced a more culturally pluralistic society (Wright 1987: 1-16). After describing the growing tourism industry in the Granite State at this time,

Wright (1987: 4) also explains that “New Hampshire was not simply a bucolic sanitarium, a ‘play-place’ fixed in time; rather it was becoming a modern, urban, industrial state.” Dartmouth was starting to become more cosmopolitan and “[President] Tucker oversaw the broadening of its curriculum with a corresponding decreased role for classical and religious training” (Wright 1987: 15). Indeed, “[a]s the [twentieth] century turned, some Granite Staters looked backward and expressed regret about things that now seemed lost” (Wright 1987: 2).

These same changes were occurring all over New England at this time. Wood (1997: 173-74) mentions that architecture in particular helped to embody the traditions and sentiments that Americans sought in the late nineteenth century, as “Americans increasingly came to extol a less complicated past and exhibit a fresh historical consciousness. Myth became tradition as architects reinterpreted forms associated with the created past to contrive a revival colonial landscape.” The popularity “for things colonial and for tangible signs of the past led to the invention of a strong national image of a traditional colonial New England landscape that was celebrated in public and private building form and landscape design and institutionalized by historical societies and architectural preservationists” (Wood 1997: 174). In regard to these types of landscapes, Riley (1994: 147) comments, “The landscape of nostalgia . . . is an attempt to re-create physically an environment of saccharine comfort associated with a past life thought more simple and reassuring than today’s.” Similarly, Lowenthal (1979: 109, 118) explains,

As the past decays, both on the ground and in our memories, we make the most of those relics that survive. When we recognize an historical object or locale, we mark it with signs, celebrate its setting, herald its existence in print, protect or restore it, recreate it in replica . . . . Partiality toward origins and beginnings also affects which artifacts are preserved and how they are displayed. This concern takes two forms: a competitive urge to push back the beginnings of history . . . to a time as remote as possible; and a preference for ancient as opposed to recent forms and relics.

Following Lowenthal's point, I would like to bring up the details concerning the specific form and style of Dartmouth Hall that might provide some additional suggestions as to what it represents in the landscape. As mentioned above, the buildings of Dartmouth Row can generally be classified as a Georgian Revival style of architecture. Though "Georgian" is more of a political term than a stylistic one (Donnelly 2003: 115), it was a popular style of architecture in America from the Colonial to the Federal Periods and later brought back to the American landscape in the late nineteenth century in a movement known as Colonial Revival. Wood (1997) mentions, however, that the Georgian style was rare in rural New England and more popular among the mercantile elite in coastal or urban areas. The Georgian style in general, in both past and present use, is typically associated with elites (Donnelly 2003; Duncan and Duncan 2004; Eberlein 1915; Jakle 1983; Morrison 1952; Wilson 2006; Wood 1997; Wyckoff 1990).

Criticism of the Georgian style has noted that, "It was essentially the architecture of a well-to-do, polished and, if you will, somewhat artificial state of society that demanded a medium of courtliness and circumstance of surroundings for its proper existence" (Eberlein 1915: 100-01). Donnelly (2003: 179) mentions that "buildings of the Georgian period attest to confidence and a desire for [a] permanent expression of status." Morrison (1952) notes that the American colonies used the Georgian style to emulate the English aristocracy (272) and that it is also "pre-eminently an expression of wealth" (473). In regard to the Colonial Revival movement and the return of Georgian styles in the late nineteenth century, Wilson (2006: 5) points out that themes of the Colonial Revival movement in the United States include education, literacy, and "the overelaboration, enlargement, and improvement on the past, as well as the commercial interest in resurrecting a piece of American history as a shrine and a tourist attraction." Some people or groups may have used a Colonial Revival style because they were concerned about

losing their status or may have been suffering from neurasthenia (Wilson 2006: 5). Criticisms of Colonial Revival range from accusations of it being feminine to even being xenophobic, and “that it was the expression of an Anglo-white-gentrified and elite class who, traumatized by their displacement from power, employed colonial imagery to maintain status and ‘Americanize’ immigrants, African Americans, and other people of diverse origins” (Wilson 2006: 6). The Colonial Revival’s reliance on the past as a reference to artistic is viewed by some critics as unimaginative, nostalgic, and fearful of the present and future; such a retreat to “the safety of history has been interpreted by some historians as a sign of a society in crisis, and even as a sign of mental illness” (Wilson 2006: 6-7) Similarly, the Duncans (2004: 150) note that for some, these forms of historic preservation can be symptomatic of a society in economic and cultural decline. In the New England context, Wood (1997: 175-76) affirms, “The effect of celebrating and institutionalizing the invented tradition was most clearly expressed in New England’s elite landscape. Wealthy urbanites replicated the aesthetic of the Colonial Revival to further reshape the New England landscape and our subsequent conception of it. . . . In interior New England, the process typically involved the self-conscious transformation of the landscape of the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century elite into a utopian, suburban, resort landscape.”

Considering these points given the event of the 1904 burning of Dartmouth Hall, the historical context in which the event occurred, and the greater geographical context, it becomes clear that from the changes occurring at Dartmouth and in greater society at that time, the rebuilding and replication of Dartmouth Hall suggests that the process of the rebuilding was more complex than a simple act of trying to preserve a memory in the landscape or restoring institutional pride. Part of this realization comes from my own firsthand experiences with the building. My first impressions upon looking at Dartmouth Hall evoke a sense of literacy,

scholarship, and romanticism, which are undoubtedly part of what the building's planners wanted to convey and what I feel the College most likely wants outsiders or the casual observer to infer. Landscapes, however, are often not as innocent as they may appear (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 27). The Duncans (2004: 4) argue that "place-based identities can be insecure, even among those with the resources (time, money, and skills) to create ideal settings in which to substantiate desired social identities . . . . [S]uch a high degree of attention . . . to the visual, material, and sensual aspects of place and place-based identity leads to an aestheticization of exclusion." What appears as an innocent appreciation of landscape and enthusiasm for preserving local history and the environment "can act as subtle but highly effective mechanisms of exclusion and reaffirmation of class identity" (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 4).

One quality of Dartmouth Hall that one can find easily is that, upon entering the building, it does not take long to realize that its contemporary interior blatantly contradicts its outward (some might even say antiquated) appearance. Much like the library based on the design of an ersatz Roman Colosseum that Lees studied, Dartmouth Hall is "self-consciously old and new" (2001: 64). While the classrooms in Dartmouth Hall may superficially resemble old recitation rooms from some select point in the building's history, it is clear that they are all equipped with modern technology – electricity and computers being among the most obvious examples. Indoor restrooms (particularly for women) are another unmistakable example of the building's evolution. The features of the new Dartmouth Hall reflect conscious planning, with the interweaving of new and old and noticeable physical/structural (brick instead of wood) and programmatic (only offices and classrooms and removing dormitories and the chapel) changes (Meacham 1009: 29). "In some ways Dartmouth Hall stands as a metaphor for the whole project of placing the university into the college by invoking collegiate values: here was a building that

mimicked the past, and yet everything that went on inside was different from what had gone on before” (Meacham 1998: 29).

The contradictory nature of the new hall is an obvious case of “enhancing the past” (Lowenthal 1979). Clearly Dartmouth wanted a tangible and visible reminder of its romantic past, the “good old days,” if you will – but not at the expense of the chance to advance and grow as an institution. “When the recognizable past falls short of our historical ideals, we remold it to our desires. Old landscapes, buildings, and artifacts are decorated, purified, homogenized, emulated, copied. Some additions aim to make the past more visible, more apparent; like markers, they advertise the antiquarian landscape or artifact” (Lowenthal 1979: 116).

But Old Dartmouth can only remain loyal to its romantic past to a certain degree before it must take on some elements of social conformity or modern necessities. One feature I noticed was the handicapped entrance found at the building’s posterior. This is clearly to provide entrance to disabled people who may need to enter the hall, to be both accommodating to those people and to provide an entrance as required by law. But what I found to be especially noticeable about it was that it was located at the *back* of the building, as an entrance for the disabled would have drastically altered the face of the “old” Colonial building. Thus, the disabled must comply with the design preferences of the College to be careful to not ruin the aesthetic appeal of the building.

And, yet, parts of the original building are incorporated into the new one. I interpret this as a way to *force* memory back into a material form and to, perhaps, provide a way to salvage the best of what remained from a previous era by assimilating it into a new one. On the one hand, Dartmouth commemorated the old, lost building. But on the other hand, it seems as if they are trying to act as if the fire and destruction never happened by creating a new, ersatz reproduction.



In this case, the best of both worlds are possible by selectively determining what to keep in the built form and still allowing for the building to evolve along with the College. By doing so, they are, in effect, subtly creating a “new and improved” Dartmouth Hall that is as recognizable as the original and embodying all that it symbolizes but still suiting the current needs and demands of the College as evidenced by its current full, technological capabilities. Lowenthal (1979: 117) remarks

Giving tangible form to what we feel ought to have been, as opposed to what the surviving remains suggest, prompts other alterations of the past. Some restorers genuinely believe that they are rectifying the historical record, correcting the defects of differential erosion, replacing evidence obliterated by time or by enemy action. . . . Other historical remains are selectively preserved – some embellished, some eliminated – out of deliberate partiality; the desire to celebrate noble and virtuous episodes and to forget the unseemly....

Meacham (1998: 31) mentions that the action of including old pieces of buildings into newer ones was not considered “unusual” during that time period, citing examples of similar cases at both Yale and Allegheny College. Although it may not have been uncustomary at the time, I will still argue that it is at least a little strange, as much of the design and aesthetic of the building is deliberate, if not calculated, in the way it looks, functions, and, I believe, what it *means* as a material representation of Dartmouth in the cultural landscape.

From the points I have raised above in my investigation of Dartmouth Hall as a leading symbol of the College, it is worth pointing out that many characteristics of the building are consistent with the landscapes and material culture of the upper classes. “Landscapes, especially those that are highly controlled, are integral to the performance of social identities. Collective memories, narratives of community, invented traditions, and shared environmental concerns are repeated, performed, occasionally contested, but more often stabilized or fixed in artifactual form” (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 29). The fact that landscapes help to shape and represent

cultures is well documented, though the Duncans (2004: 29) note that this is especially true for the wealthy, who have the means to better control their landscapes. “Because landscapes are integral to identities and because of deep emotional attachments to places, threats to the landscape are often interpreted as threats to identity. Thus the reaction to what some may consider trivial questions of differing aesthetic judgments may be surprisingly intense” (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 29). These seemingly minor details exemplify why I, as well as *The Boston Evening News* (1904), had difficulty comprehending the reaction of the Dartmouth community after the 1904 fire and subsequent burning and rebuilding of Dartmouth Hall. Schein (1997: 675) argues, “People attach cultural meaning to objects separate from the economic value of those objects. In this way, consumption practices, undoubtedly overlain by symbolic associations, play an important role in shaping the contemporary American landscape.”

In effect, there was a profound attachment to Dartmouth Hall that was felt by its students, faculty, staff, and alumni and yet, when a disaster occurred, the seemingly (or perhaps calculatedly) unassuming College and its connections had the resources to “buy” a new Dartmouth Hall in a period of time much shorter than that in which the original was constructed and with notable enhancements. The impact of the event would not have been complete without inviting “the actual flesh-and-blood Lord Dartmouth” to come all the way from England to attend the cornerstone-laying ceremony (Meacham 1998: 19). How many American educational institutions can claim to have direct connections to British royalty? After another fire in 1935, the damage was not nearly as severe as that from the 1904 fire, though I imagine that it is reasonably safe to infer that the call for help would have been just as dramatic as it had been in 1904 had Dartmouth Hall suffered more serious damage.

Still, the Dartmouth community recreated their icon to evoke a specific image or ideology, an homage to a specific time period, though they were actively selective in the result of the final product and all of its accuracies and inaccuracies (Schein 1997: 672-73). For example, one piece of history that is missing from much of the record of the Dartmouth Hall saga or in its landscape is the belief that Wheelock's own slaves at least helped in the construction of Dartmouth Hall (Schein 1997: 672-73; Zug 2007). Here we see a case where the beauty of Dartmouth Hall "obscures the exclusion as well as the exploitation" that produced it (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 26). Historical correctness becomes an afterthought, revealing "the importance of representing the aura of the past" (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 163), even when it may disregard the contradiction of merging old and modern. Nor did this prevent wistful recollections about the building later on. For example, Braman (1964: 30) testifies, sounding somewhat in denial, to the continuing importance of Dartmouth Hall in his sentimental column on the building:

However, in all the changes, the building never lost its character. Nothing affected its exterior proportions, its simple but sufficient ornamentation. It was perfectly related to its surroundings. In earlier times it had seemed only the expression of the rugged life out of which it came, and by which it was surrounded. Although in the broadening work of the College it had ceased to be the physical center of activity, it drew onto itself the mantle of sentiment and tradition. The newness of other things about it made it still more venerable. The Past was still with it, and about it still hovered the memories of those who had spent their college years within its walls and shadows, and had gone away – many to worthy lives and notable fame.

No other building exists for Dartmouth men which so links the past with the present. It will continue in its future to stand as a reminder of the sacrifice, faith, and energy of those who in earlier times had made the present possible.

From its use of Dartmouth Hall as a major College icon, Dartmouth is trying to represent itself one way; but through a more critical examination of the cultural landscape, it is evident that there is a subtext that is less evident from what one many gather from a superficial reading of the landscape. My own ignorance of the significance of the College's choice of Georgian-style

architecture for its principal buildings allowed me to miss the immense wealth, power, and prestige manifested in the landscape, and these attributes only became apparent to me upon researching the background story behind Dartmouth Hall. Perhaps my outsider status caused me to initially miss the intricacies of “a tightly bonded social world where landscape offers a non-verbal communication of inclusion and exclusion” (Ley 1993: 220).

Nonetheless, I can now assess from my own experiences at Dartmouth and living in the Upper Valley for a brief time that Dartmouth Hall is more of a showpiece for the grandeur of the College. One example of how this is observable is because it is an academic building at an elite college, it does not particularly beckon to the people of the surrounding working-class communities, nor is it there for them. Rather, their roles are more in providing services at the College, especially food service or maintenance work. Although many events throughout the course of the 2006-07 school year were open to “the public,” in most cases I did not typically see many local participants take in the guest lecture of a prominent visiting scholar or major personality or public figure that may have been hosted on campus (and there were many during the course of the school year), sometimes even in Dartmouth Hall. Tuan (1977: 102) reminds us that “the built environment clarifies social roles and relations. People know better who they are and how they ought to behave when the arena is humanly designed rather than nature’s raw stage.” The Duncans (2004: 33-34) also note how often it is overlooked that aesthetic choices can themselves be ideological and their basis in class or ethnicity can help secure the hegemony of specific groups, in this case, the College itself.

Aesthetics are another way in which the landscape acts as a mechanism of exclusion at Dartmouth. Very much in concert with the Duncans’ (2004) study of the wealthy suburb of Bedford, New York, similar conclusions can be drawn from the cultural landscape of Dartmouth

College. As an exclusionary landscape, Dartmouth is similar to Bedford chiefly in regard to “the romantic ideology, localism, anti-urbanism, anti-modernism, and ethnic- and class-based aesthetic” found at the College that ties into its “celebration of the natural environment, historic preservation, and the claimed uniqueness of a local landscape [that] has often diverted attention away from the interrelatedness of issues of aesthetics and identity on the one hand and social justice on the other. . . . [L]andscape as an aesthetic production acts as a subtle but highly effective mechanism of exclusion . . . . backed up by appeals to an unquestioned desire to preserve a valuable and unique sense of place” (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 7).

Not only is Dartmouth Hall prominent in Dartmouth history and lore, its importance is highlighted (literally) through major events at the College (which I explore later) and the fact that it, with the possible exception of the Baker Library tower, is the only academic building that is illuminated on the campus at nighttime (Figure 26). I see the use of this illumination as Dartmouth’s way of speaking softly but carrying a big stick. The architectural style of the building commemorates early America and the liberal arts tradition of a small, romantic New England college, loudly imbuing institutional memory and nostalgia. Softly, however, perhaps even as a whisper or a silent stare down from its situation atop a hill overlooking the Green, some other academic buildings, and Main Street in Hanover, it tacitly reminds those who look upon it of the wealth, power, prestige, and perhaps even the dominance and superiority of the College. Sibley (1995: 76) writes, “For some, the built environment is to be maintained and reproduced in its existing form if it embodies social values which individuals or groups have both the power and the capacity to retain. For others, the built environment constitutes a landscape of domination.” Tuan (1977: 112) also explains, “The designed environment serves an educational purpose. In some societies the building is the primary text for handing down a



**Figure 26:** Dartmouth Hall illuminated at night. Photo by author.

tradition, for presenting a view of reality.” Judging by the prominence of Dartmouth Hall in the local landscape, it is clear whose tradition and whose reality takes center stage.

This observation is also tied to the strong need felt by the College to preserve “Old Dartmouth.” While preserving a building is one thing, the insistence on *recreating* it, as it had suffered damage on more than one occasion, particularly to the extent that is evident from Dartmouth’s case, indicates to me that the College is unquestionably using Dartmouth Hall as a way to get some sort of message across to those who look (or possibly even dare to look) at the College. Historical preservation can even be seen as a red herring, as it is typically employed by elites in “preserving” their “historic” landscapes. “The passion for preservation,” Tuan (1977: 197) explains, “arises out of the need for tangible objects that can support a sense of identity.” Dartmouth’s visual sense of identity was clearly very carefully chosen.

Historic preservation is used as a code for aesthetic consistency as an excuse to use specific types of architectural styles, especially in the case of styles that appeal to the upper classes (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 156). This principle of “consistency” also applies to the use of the same general architectural style in a given locale, regardless of any disparities in the ages of the buildings. I saw this in effect firsthand while I was at Dartmouth with the opening of new buildings on campus, particularly new residence halls featuring “brick exteriors, white trim, and copper roofs, echoing Dartmouth’s traditional Georgian architecture within a contemporary design” (Haas 2006b; Figures 27 and 28).

“In order for the village to look authentic,” in the case of Bedford, “nonhistoric buildings must blend with the historic buildings by referencing history; but unlike with postmodern buildings that reference history, they must not call attention to themselves. They must naturalize rather than denaturalize as postmodern buildings are often thought to do. In this way, the colonial New England village is created through a blending of the historic and the aesthetically pleasing” (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 155). Perhaps the fact that new buildings follow the original architectural style suggests that, in material form, the “tradition has been passed on” to modern buildings, maybe even by force. The fact that the other Georgian or Colonial-revival style buildings on campus (and there are several) are not painted white like the buildings of Dartmouth Row signifies the centrality of Dartmouth, Wentworth, Thornton, and Reed Halls in providing a visual identity to the College. Although Rich may have set out to redesign the College to take on an air of democracy and equality, the final results of his work leave the important question leftover for those educated in the “language” of the landscape as to whether his ambitions were successfully met or not, especially considering the College’s landscape at the time of my research.



**Figure 27:** A new residence hall built in the Georgian style, completed in 2006. Photo by author.



**Figure 28:** Another new residence hall built in the Georgian style, completed in 2006. Photo by author.



Dartmouth Hall serves as a physical reminder in the landscape of Dartmouth's age and role in early American history and the College's role in the early history of American higher education, even if the history surrounding it was somewhat forced or even purposefully created (Meacham 1998). From an examination of the building's history, its role in the history and symbolic identity for the College, and the scholarly literature I have used to interpret the significance of Dartmouth Hall as a material embodiment and representation of the College, I have come to the conclusion that, from reading the cultural landscape of the College, the "text" of Dartmouth Hall reads as something to the effect of "As a Colonial College, we are very old and established. We were one of the first ones here. Therefore, *we* lead and *you* follow."

Kreis (2000), commenting on the domineering presence of Dartmouth in the Upper Valley, lamented in a column, "[T]he bane of Dartmouth's almost feudal dominance of Hanover, [is that] a town whose organic development as a real place is forever thwarted so that it may recall an idyllic village life that perhaps never really was." The multiple messages emitting from Dartmouth's landscape thus create a complex contradiction as to how the College wishes to appear to outsiders and how it uses its image to control those in its vicinity. Yet the principal symbol of this ideology was threatened more than once in the history of the College and was swiftly restored in each instance. The loss of Dartmouth Hall would have meant the loss of the school's visual reminder of the College as a dominant force and the positional power that Dartmouth holds both locally and on the national landscape of American higher education.

## CHAPTER 5 LEGENDS

Early on in my field research at Dartmouth, while scouting the campus one day, I was taking photographs of some of the buildings and important campus landmarks that would serve as figures for my dissertation. I had noticed, while walking to and from campus everyday, a wooded area behind Dartmouth Row, Bartlett Hall, and some dormitories. While out shooting photos in this area one day, I became curious as to where the road passing the Shattuck Observatory led. So I followed the road, ascended the hill, and – completely by accident – I discovered a somewhat secluded part of the Dartmouth campus with a memorialized tree stump, an old stone tower, a statue of Robert Frost, various plaques on rocks, and a natural amphitheater. I did not recall reading, seeing, or hearing anything about this part of campus before my arrival in Hanover and it provided a genuine sense of shock and wonder upon my first time seeing this mysterious area of Dartmouth.

On this hill stands the stump of the Old Pine (sometimes referred to as the Lone Pine) and Bartlett Tower. It is a site that is home to some of Dartmouth's most important folklore and folk culture. To this day it serves as the spot for Class Day, a graduation ceremony that has involved generations of Dartmouth graduates. I researched this aspect of Dartmouth tradition and found that not only is it a definitive trait of the College's culture, but that it has also been the subject of considerable controversy. The folklore of the Old Pine and the rituals of Class Day are some of the most mysterious but captivating of Dartmouth trademarks. Perhaps most intriguing about them is the fact that the Old Pine, the large tree once standing in this clearing, died and Dartmouth cut it down over one hundred years ago. From the lore and ritual involving the Pine, however, one could almost forget that the tree no longer stands, though its memory and ghostly presence still lingers at Dartmouth.

Robert Graham (1990: 214) explains the seemingly mystical characteristics of the Pine:

Sometimes it must seem like there is a bit of the Druid in Dartmouth men, and now in Dartmouth women. At least to me, this glade [where the pine was] echoes of legends full of a wonderful, benign magic that touches even the coolest of contemporary cynics. This stump, petrified with preservatives, is all that remains of the Old Pine, sentinel and symbol of the College almost from its founding; yet, to the present, it serves once a year, like some Druidic altar, as the focus of a profoundly moving moment in the communal life of each successive Dartmouth class.

Regarding the cultural significance of trees more broadly, Kit Anderson (2003: 4-5) avers, “Big trees . . . play an important role in the structure of landscapes and the experience of place. Few are neutral in their meaning. They can reflect cultural identity, notions of the sacred, concepts of nature, and individual or group memory . . . . Learning to decipher trees’ messages is an exercise in natural and cultural history.” To trace the origin of the Old Pine and the story behind it requires a referral to the early history of the College. Upon researching this origin, however, one quickly discovers that the Old Pine is not a unique feature of Dartmouth because, like several other pieces of Dartmouth culture, it involves the complex intertwining of fact and legend (Graham 1990: 214).

Eleazar Wheelock discovered that when he came to Hanover in August 1770 to begin Dartmouth College, the township was densely wooded with maple, beech, birch, ash, oak, but also pure tracts of white pine along the rivers and the Hanover Plain (North 1967: 3). A distinguishing feature of these pines was their size and height, with some early sources claiming that the trees lacked branches up to their first hundred feet (North 1967: 3). Thus, the trees of the area were viewed as superlative to provide masts for the British Navy or wood for the homes of settlers (North 1967: 3). Over the years, the College cleared land and felled trees, but patches remained, most notably a group on a hill northeast of Dartmouth’s Green (North 1967: 3). These trees were shorter and more crooked and therefore less useful to the Crown or the townspeople

than the other pines and were not viewed as desirable to fell for building purposes (North 1967: 3-4). From this group, one tree in particular gained fame and prominence in Dartmouth history and was subsequently named the Old Pine (North 1967: 4, Figure 29). Graham (1990: 214) recounts, “A pygmy among the two-hundred-foot-tall giants on the plain, the Old Pine nevertheless stood out because its trunk was not arrow-straight like those felled for masts for the British Navy or for building boards for shelters and classrooms. Rather, its trunk and main branch were bent and twisted, as if from wrestling with the winter gales from its precarious footing atop this granite outcrop. And, like the runt of the litter, it was perhaps beloved all the more because of the marks of its struggle for survival.”



**Figure 29:** The Old Pine, about 1890. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

The actual age of the Pine is disputed. Arboriculturists estimated that it originated within a few years of 1783, though tradition maintains that it was “already a flourishing young tree of twenty-five or so” by 1769 (*Hanover Gazette* 1922; North 1967: 4). Defending this questionable

point, North (1967: 4) argues that “it really does not matter whether the Pine was older and more venerable than the College or whether it grew up during those years when the College itself was slowly coming to maturity and developing many of the traits and attitudes that make it Dartmouth.” Echoing North’s defense of the legend, Tuan (1990: 435) argues that “to understand human reality better, it helps to see people and their works as compounded of realism and fantasy.” Furthermore, “[c]ulture is a product of imagination and fantasy” (Tuan 1990: 443). I agree with both North and Tuan because although many of the “facts” behind the Old Pine are murky, they are nonetheless critical to understanding the significance of the role of legend in Dartmouth culture. Furthermore, these legends in turn help to create another, separate reality for Dartmouth.

Returning to the Pine, it could probably not have been classified in the same cohort of the other prominent, stately trees found around Hanover, as it was estimated to be only about 71 feet tall in maturity with a slightly twisted trunk and main branch, possibly by accident or from the wind (Graham 1990: 214; North 1967: 4-5). Nonetheless, “it grew to be a rugged, stalwart, unmistakably independent sort of tree, suitable indeed to become the very symbol of Dartmouth” (North 1967: 5).

The intricacies of how the Pine came to be such a prominent Dartmouth symbol are also sketchy. Still, it is widely visible on College imagery both in the past and present, from the weathervane on Baker Library (which depicts Wheelock teaching an Indian sitting under the Old Pine), on the College seal, on Dartmouth’s current flag (Figure 30), on some Dartmouth stationery, and on Dartmouth doctoral robes (Graham 1990: 215; North 1967: 5; *Valley News* 1967). A senior society at Dartmouth is named Palaeopitus, a Latinized version of “Old Pine” (Meacham 2008: 131). Indeed, legend has it that the College celebrated the Pine in song and



**Figure 30:** The Old Pine on Dartmouth's flag, displayed at the visitor's information center on the Green. Photo by author.

ceremony as far back as the eighteenth century (Graham 1990: 214). Anderson (2003: 150) explains, "Over time, as trees acquire symbolic meanings, even their images have power. Like all good symbols, trees are multivocal, giving them depth and endurance in human societies."

The legend behind the Old Pine, though still somewhat ambiguous, does trace back to the early days of the College. One particularly early legend involving the Pine is that of The Three Indians. At some point in the early days of the College, as the legend goes, three Indian students completed their studies at Dartmouth and allegedly gathered around a favorite pine of theirs and composed and sang a song called "When Shall We Three Meet Again?" (also known as "Three Indians") to commemorate their friendship, their sadness at parting upon graduation, and their pledge to return someday to meet again (Graham 1990: 214; North 1967: 5).

Although the exact date the song's composition, the identity of its composer(s), or when it was first sung is unknown, it had become a tradition for seniors to sing the song by the Old

Pine during graduation before the end of the eighteenth century (Graham 1990: 214). Though more formal and accepted College histories bring up the fact that there was only one Indian in Hanover between 1782 and 1785 and none between 1785 and 1800, the legend of The Three Indians had become established by 1812 (North 1967: 8). Again, North (1967: 8-9) remarks, “It is not at all necessary to believe the legend a record of facts; the fact of the existence of the legend is quite enough, for whether or not there ever were three Indians who parted beneath their favorite pine, the legend survived and became the ancestor of the historical tradition that grew up around a very real pine, Dartmouth’s Old Pine.” The accuracy of the tale, however, did not prevent further legends and traditions from being built (literally and figuratively) around the Old Pine.

Despite the historical inaccuracy of the legend of the three Indians, the song “When Shall We Three Meet Again?” was known at Dartmouth as early as the 1830s, and the Old Pine was already established as a social space for students in the early years of the College (North 1967: 9). Growing out of this legend, another Dartmouth tradition known as Class Day emerged, which also has a legend attached to it. The hilltop of the Old Pine, according to the legend, was once hunting ground of three Abenaki Indian communities (Graham 1990: 215). Each year, as the groups seasonally migrated to other lands, the chiefs from each group met “to pledge their return in friendship and peace. And, the legend holds, after smoking a pipe of peace together, they ceremonially broke it to seal their pledge” (Graham 1990: 215). Some versions of the legend claim that Indians planted the Old Pine (Kemp 2002).

Dartmouth students from the early nineteenth century reportedly met informally in small groups (not as a whole class) to hold memorial services around the Old Pine and smoke a peace pipe (North 1967: 9-10). Eighteen-fifty-four, however, appears to be the official date of the

beginning of the Class Day exercises at Dartmouth with the class joining hands and singing “When Shall We [All] Meet Again?” around the Old Pine (North 1967: 10). The second meeting was held in 1856 and included a reading of chronicles and prophecies along with the smoking of the pipe (North 1967: 10). It was the meeting of 1856 that solidified Class Day as an official Dartmouth event at the Old Pine, with variations to the event evolving over the years (North 1967: 11). It is unknown from the early ceremonies if students passed around a single pipe, or if they used individual pipes, or even the specific kind of pipe that they used, but the breaking of the pipe against the Old Pine and the subsequent scrambling to collect pipe fragments as mementos was customary from about 1870 until that tradition ended in 1893 (Kemp 2002: 7; North 1967: 11). Kemp’s (2002: 7) research, however, notes that it is unclear when the pipe smashing tradition began; many different versions of the pipe were used in graduation exercises during the nineteenth century, though none mention the smashing of pipes. The first record of a pipe used in connection with Commencement is mentioned in the 1883 yearbook the *Dartmouth Aegis*, which lists class officers with one being the “custodian of the pipe” (Kemp 2002: 7). Early on, there may have been one pipe that was smoked by an entire class during Class Day, and some later on brought their class pipes to reunions “as a symbol of their undergraduate experiences and a representation of their attempt to honor each other in friendship for the remainder of their lives” (Kemp 2002: 7).

Describing the ceremony in a more modern context, Graham (1990: 215, Figures 31-33) explains Class Day: “[O]n the day before their Commencement, the seniors gather for Class Day in the natural amphitheater just over the cliff to the east. There they smoke clay pipes symbolic of their friendship as a class. Then, when Class Day ceremonies are finished, they troop up the cliff and, in waves, break their pipes upon this ancient stump – signaling their will to remember,





**Figure 31:** Class Day, 1919. Students sit with pipes in hand as they listen to a speaker dressed in an Indian costume. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.



**Figure 32:** Old friendships solidified at a Class Day from the late 1980s. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.



**Figure 33:** Smashing pipes on the stump of the Old Pine on Class Day, 1983(?).  
From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

to hold fast their friendships, and to return to this magic place where in some measure they left their youth and gained their maturity.” But this exercise did not outlast Graham’s book for long.

For years “a living pine had been almost inseparable from the name of Dartmouth, and the Old Pine itself had become a living guardian of the traditions and ideals of the College” (North 1967: 12). This changed, however, when, on July 29, 1887, the Pine was struck by lightning and damaged. On June 14, 1892 the main branch of the Pine was broken by a “whirlwind.” After this damage, the alumni took notice. “As if it were an old friend, the word passed around among the alumni, ‘The Old Pine is dying’” (*Hanover Gazette* 1922). Efforts were made to save the tree, but after a series of failures, the Old Pine was cut down on the afternoon of July 23, 1895 after its last Class Day (North 1967: 12), though the *New York City Post* (1922) reported that it was cut down on February 23 and 24 of that year.

Alas, the Old Pine did not last beyond the nineteenth century – at least not as a whole tree. Instead of uprooting the entire tree, the stump was left and preserved with mercury chloride. The *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* (1912: 348) explained, “In order to perpetuate the memory and keep vital the host of traditions which cluster about the Old Pine, steps have been taken to preserve the venerable stump and to cause to grow on the same spot a ‘probable son of the Old Pine.’” Concrete was laid to encircle the stump and the space inside it was filled with cinders and sand to protect the stump against decay, dampness, and fire (*Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* 1912: 348). On the stone circle, a tablet was attached (Figures 34 and 35), reading:



**Figure 34:** The Old Pine today, with Bartlett Tower in the background. Photo by author.



**Figure 35:** The tablet at the foot of the Old Pine stump. Photo by author.

“LEST THE OLD TRADITIONS FAIL”  
THIS TABLET MARKS THE OLD PINE  
CONTEMPORARY WITH THE LIFE OF THE COLLEGE  
AND GUARDIAN OF ITS TRADITIONS.  
HAVING BEEN STRUCK BY LIGHTNING IN 1887  
AND BY A WHIRLWIND IN 1892 IT WAS  
CUT DOWN IN 1895. REPLACED IN 1912

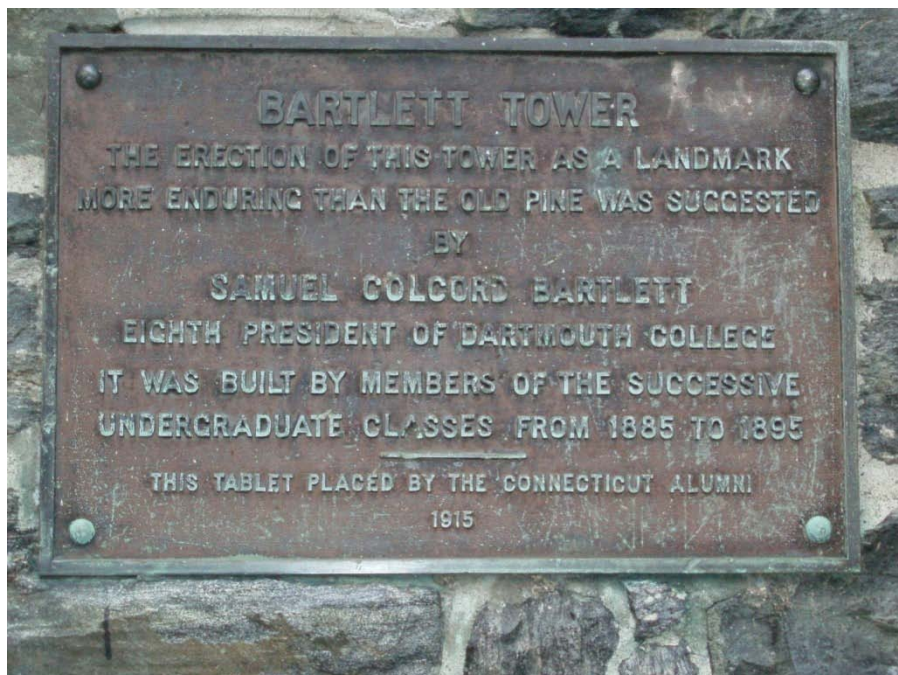
Dartmouth may have been preparing for the eventual loss of the Old Pine, however.

“[H]aving sensed the end was near for the Old Pine (Graham 1990: 215),” Bartlett Tower was built slightly to the north of the Pine’s stump (Figure 36). It was created, as its plaque says, “as a landmark more enduring than the Old Pine” (North 1967: 12, Figure 37). The idea for the tower was suggested by President Samuel C. Bartlett, for whom the tower was named. Undergraduate classes constructed Bartlett Tower between the years of 1885 and 1895.

A legend behind the tower claims that Bartlett, while walking with his son on campus one day, came upon a rock and the boy envisioned it as a place to build a castle to brighten up the



**Figure 36:** Bartlett Tower. Photo by author.



**Figure 37:** The plaque on the side of Bartlett Tower. Photo by author.

area's gloomy appearance (Berry 1980). This caught Bartlett's imagination and construction of the tower began. Bartlett's son, also named Samuel, dedicated the tower to his father who raised the College from "financial despair" and considered the tower to be a permanent tribute to the Old Pine (Berry 1980). Bartlett wanted a large stone tower in a medieval design to provide a view of the campus (Berry 1980). He solicited donations from students to erect "a lasting monument of their devotion to their Alma Mater," and the site was chosen to be near the Pine and the observatory (Berry 1980). The tower was completed in 1895, built of native New Hampshire stone, with a copper roof, and eighty-six stone steps inside (Berry 1980).

Some criticism of the tower surfaced even during its construction, as some students from the class of 1893 denounced it as "the most sentimental farce in the college category" and it became a target for graffiti and some anonymous "poetry" carved into its walls (Berry 1980). Indeed, Berry (1980) claims that the notion of the tower replacing the Old Pine is a misconception and argues, "Despite what the plaque by the tower entrance implies about the column being a monument to the old pine, President Bartlett, it appears, was more concerned about the lone visitors to his castle than about remembering the venerated conifer. The tower was more of a daydream, the product of an afternoon walk with his young son."

Though some Dartmouth students may have agreed with Berry's (1980) point about the tower, North (1967: 12-13) defends the tradition surrounding this part of Dartmouth lore: "[T]radition held firm; through the years Class Day exercises were held around the stump; peace pipes were ceremonially broken against it; and, although the tree itself no longer stood, the Old Pine continued to hold its place in men's minds as the traditional symbol of the College." And from this symbol, the Dartmouth tradition of Class Day developed, as described in part above.

Though in the latter part of the twentieth century, along with a rapidly diversifying Dartmouth came diversified ideas, and some began to openly question and criticize the Class Day ceremony. The increasing diversity at Dartmouth began under the presidency of John Kemeny in the early 1970s, when women undergraduates gained admission in 1972 and the College began to actively recruit Native Americans by 1973 (Kemp 2002: 10). Before this time, Dartmouth “was mostly a white and male homogenous student body” (Kemp 2002: 10). These issues receive closer attention in the following chapters. By 1987, Native American students began to openly speak out about the breaking of clay pipes during the Class Day ceremony, and in 1992 Native American students decided to protest the ceremony, citing that it was sacrilegious to smash clay pipes and that Dartmouth was disrespectful toward Native American traditions (Kemp 2002: 12). Controversy ensued throughout the Dartmouth community as to whether to continue, modify, or discard the tradition, and a range of opinions were voiced in student publications.

Students in favor of keeping the tradition offered a variety of justifications for continuing the pipe smashing tradition at Class Day. One student remarked, “It seems that NAD [Native Americans at Dartmouth] has missed the point of the ritual . . . The whole ritual is about Dartmouth, not about Native Americans . . . The tradition is harmless” (Zandvliet 1992). Another student suggested, “As a tradition means something different to each person involved, it should be left to each ’92 to choose the extent of his involvement” (Mosk 1992). Another argued, “[T]he clay pipe tradition as it exists today is one which has grown past its ignorant origins. The ceremony may once have been intended as a mimicry of Native American tradition, but this is no longer the case. It is a tradition which has taken on new meaning in the 100 or so years since its inception” (Clausing 1992).

Speaking out against the pipe-breaking ceremony, Kemp (2002: 14) asks why Dartmouth students felt the need to uphold the tradition when they were aware that it was offensive to some students. Kemp (2002: 14) also argues that their concept of Dartmouth tradition is skewed because it follows that of the white, male-dominated College of years past:

[These students] subscribe to the same ideology of the white male who claimed an empty identity of being a savage, uncivilized Native, and at the same time being a cultured intellectual. The four years of college was a time of hardcore masculine activities, like athletics and drinking, as well as one of intellectual pursuits. These men acted upon their barbaric and wild nature in the rolling hills of New Hampshire. They acted the role of Indians, while at the same time educated their minds as dictated by the Western canon. The Indian mascot existed because there was a desire to become like the Indian, at least in the perception of the students.

Kemp (2002: 14-15) argues further how the mentality of this tradition is also institutionalized into part of Dartmouth's institutional identity:

The Dartmouth College motto, "Vox Clamantis in Deserto," ["The voice of one crying in the wilderness"] is another manifestation of this mentality – that Dartmouth men are both savage and civilized. With the desire to exclude people from being "Dartmouth men," all "others" must be put in their place. There is no room for non-majority people at Dartmouth, with this state of mind. The clay pipes tradition excludes a segment of the Dartmouth community. The exclusion of those who do not have the ability to *be* Dartmouth men is paramount to understanding the rhetoric and mindset of the white men who wanted to keep the tradition.

Voicing opposition to the ceremony in an editorial titled "Walk Out with us on Class Day," NAD's then-president Lloyd Lee pointed out that, in the midst of the controversy surrounding Class Day, the pipe smashing ceremony had failed in its intention to create unity among the student body due to the controversy that surrounded the issue (Lee 1992). Alluding to events from that time such as the Rodney King verdict and the issues it brought out regarding inclusion and exclusion in America (as well as Dartmouth), Lee (1992) proposed a dichotomous view to the opinions on Class Day, positing that if seniors wanted others to feel excluded at Dartmouth then they should continue to smash pipes on Class Day; otherwise, the tradition



should be discontinued. Building on Lee's column, Kemp (2002: 15) points out that, at Dartmouth, there is a portion of the student body that *does* want to exclude others and make them feel uncomfortable. "Whether they know it or not," explains Kemp, "they [the exclusionary cohort] are excluding parts of the Dartmouth population because of their sense of entitlement to the College. If a student feels uncomfortable with a tradition at Dartmouth, the reason [for that discomfort] must be quashed with overwhelming and lofty ideas claiming that the protesting students are in the wrong because they are in the minority. The students who want to see change . . . should either be quiet about it, or learn to adapt to the tradition" (Kemp 2002: 15-16).

Getting at the heart of the matter, however, Kemp (2002: 16) asserts:

I argue that a tradition like the smashing of clay pipes on Class Day was not only was divisive and offensive [sic], but also based on the right of particular identities to co-exist with the white male identity. Essentially, these men had free reign at Dartmouth College for two hundred years. Although Dartmouth College was not a stagnant environment, the students and the alumni perceived it as such. In this situation, perception was reality and because tradition became so important and maintained itself so strongly at Dartmouth, this provided the environment for exclusion. The new ideas and perspectives that were present at the College, starting with the 1960s, began to seep into the fabric, yet little was done to make any ease for transition from one outlook and mission of the College, to another. With the particular example of the clay pipes, it took over twenty years from the admittance of Native American students, for the tradition to be terminated.

As the discourse surrounding the issue of clay pipes waned, the Senior Executive Committee (SEC) voted unanimously to end the pipe smashing ceremony for the 1993 Class Day (Kemp 2002: 16). Instead, they opted for a candlelight ceremony, though the traditional ceremony was not completely eradicated (Kemp 2002: 16). Pipes were still available to be purchased by seniors and about one quarter of the class that year bought pipes to smash them against the stump on Class Day (Kemp 2002: 16-17; Lakhman 1993). Kemp (2002: 17) interprets those seniors' decision to buy and smash the pipes by arguing:

Inherent in understanding why more than one-fourth of the class partook in the tradition, is that they did not consider the culture of their Native American classmates as a peer to

their own culture. However, these students did not see their actions as such. These students who smashed their clay pipes on the Lone Pine stump were attempting to fit into an old Dartmouth, where protest of the rugged savage Indian yet intellectual civilized man, was unheard of. These students wanted to become a member of this group, through the ritual of smashing his or her pipe.

Looking further into the question of tradition and what it means at the College, Kemp (2002: 17-18) explains from her research that, at Dartmouth, traditions are often blindly followed by students without regard to their meaning or how they originated, claiming that students follow traditions because a) they are fun or amusing, and b) since they participated in the tradition, they feel that it is their obligation to pass it on to subsequent generations of students. She adds, “[Dartmouth] Students wanted to enjoy themselves by excluding others” (Kemp 2002: 18).

Early in the fall term of 1992, the Dartmouth administration got involved in the issue and began to consider how the pipe smashing tradition should be handled. Should it be eliminated and how or who should make the final decision (Kemp 2002: 19)? “Questions arose regarding whether each class should decide, what position the College should take, what to do if the Student Assembly took a stance, and to what extent the Dean of Students area would be involved in an alternative ceremony” (Kemp 2002: 19-20). Students, administrators, and a faculty member formed a committee to investigate the issue further and assess whether or not to continue the ceremony as it was. Shortly after its formation, the committee sent out a survey to the student body asking four questions:

1. What lasting images/places of Dartmouth are most important to you, and why?
2. What is your opinion of the inclusion of the clay pipes ceremony in the Class Day exercises and what do you think the ceremony is intended to accomplish?
3. What feelings should a successful Class Day evoke from graduating seniors?
4. Can you provide an example of a unifying and culminating experience or ceremony for graduating seniors which might evoke those feelings within the context of Class Day? (Kemp 2002: 21)

Students also voiced their opinions about the pipe ceremony through student media. In regard to the entirety of the controversy surrounding the issue, one student wrote, “The Class Day Ceremony Committee is another example of the inept Dartmouth problem-solving process of forming a committee to talk about an issue until everyone is sick of hearing about it” (Huffman 1993). Kemp (2002: 21) claims, however, that most students contributed constructively to the discussion, regardless of their opinion on the issue. This attitude contrasted the fact that some of the older alumni were vehemently opposed to the discontinuation of the ceremony in light of the College’s profound recent changes, such as Dartmouth becoming coeducational, the introduction of sororities, the banning of the Indian as a College mascot, and the more aggressive recruitment of non-white students (Kemp 2002: 21-22).

In an attempt for a public statement on the issue of clay pipes, the committee invited Lakota elder Avis Archambault to come and speak at a forum; Archambault explained at the forum that the smashing of clay pipes at Class Day was “just wrong” (Kemp 2002: 23). Students suggested ways to make the event more authentic or respectful toward Native cultures, though NAD explained that that was not feasible within the short context of Class Day and that there were other options for students to educate themselves about Native Americans while at Dartmouth (Lockwood 1993).

Then, on April 27, 1993, *The Dartmouth* ran a story titled “Clay pipes Ended,” (Chiu 1993) reporting the committee’s decision to end the tradition. One Native American student and committee member in the article is quoted, “It’s been an issue that has concerned NAD for the last 15 years. For the College to come to this decision is a remarkable victory” (Chiu 1993). Kemp (2002: 25) and Kochansky (1993) both refer to sources in their research that address the point that Dartmouth traditions do not always cater to all kinds of Dartmouth students. One of

Kochansky's (1993) sources remarked, "Some of the traditions that are still around today were started by white, upper-middle class men, and may not be as important to blacks, women or poor people." Kemp (2002: 25) likewise states how change at Dartmouth may have created a need among some students to hold on to the tradition because people were concerned with maintaining a certain status quo administrators like John Kemeny were trying to change the status quo by actively changing the demographics of the student body.

And it was these students who favored discarding the tradition who lobbied for the end of the ceremony at the College, and found an appropriate way to do so. NAD decided to perform a cleansing ceremony at the base of the Old Pine that was open only to a few students and administrators (Kemp 2002: 27). At the ceremony, the Native students presented the Dean of Students with a blanket and they performed an honor dance to show appreciation for the Dean's efforts to end the pipe smashing ceremonies (Newby 1993). An observer at the ceremony said how the pow-wow was "healing" and that "it symbolized the end to institutionally sanctioned sacrilege" (Newby 1993).

Kemp (2002: 29) concludes her paper with this final argument concerning the pipe smashing tradition:

The elimination of Class Day's clay pipes smashing ceremony was a major triumph in Dartmouth's history. It proved that traditions are rich and have meaning, but that those meanings change over time. Traditions' meanings can also evolve when the group that normally ritualizes the tradition no longer legitimates that tradition. With the clay pipes debate, the graduating class had developed into a wide array of students from a variety of backgrounds. The College declared the smashing ceremony unnecessary, outdated, and detrimental. It was divisive and offensive to a segment of the population. The College was able to put a period of its history behind it in ending the ceremony because it was the final institutionalized remnant of the Indian mascot. The mascot, an offensive caricature, was held dear by many alumni and some students who believed themselves entitled to Dartmouth's educational resources while their classmates were not. In smashing the clay pipes tradition, Dartmouth embarked on the destruction of its informal institutional commitment to exclusion.

It is difficult to imagine how after having been around for well over one hundred years, a strong tradition such as the breaking of clay pipes on Class Day could have ended so abruptly. Upon the announcement to end the pipe smashing, Clark (1993) reported that the tradition was “considered offensive to many Native American tribes as well as an inaccurate representation of Dartmouth history.” In the same article, NAD argued, “Research clearly shows that the pipe ceremony is a parody of Native American spiritual practices. Its origin has been falsely attributed to three Native American graduates who smoked and broke clay pipes to cement their friendship . . . yet the first time three Native Americans graduated from Dartmouth together was in 1970” (Clark 1993).

But just a few years before, it was a highly regarded tradition, at least according to some records. A press release on June 11, 1987 announcing the upcoming Class Day ceremony provided a colorful and warm description on the event: “The ‘peace’ pipes will be distributed to seniors during annual Class Day ceremonies Sunday, June 13, in the Bema, a natural amphitheater on the college campus. The students, after puffing on tobacco-filled pipes, climb a nearby hill and break the pipe on an old tree stump. Shards are shared with friends as keep-sakes” (*Dartmouth News* 1987). Five years later – to the exact day – another press release by the same news service solemnly reported:

Dartmouth seniors have decided to not include a clay pipe ceremony in this Saturday’s Class Day activities, because the 121-year-old tradition is offensive to certain Native American tribes.

The decision affects only this year’s graduating seniors, and is not binding on future senior classes.

A number of Native American students and some of their classmates had planned to walk out of this year’s Class Day . . . if the pipe ceremony was repeated on June 13. Pipes are regarded as sacred objects in the religious ceremonies of many of the Northern and Southern Plains tribes, including the Comanches [sic] and the Sioux. (*Dartmouth News* 1992)

The debate surrounding the clay pipe smashing at the Class Day ceremony brings up a number of issues and themes about Dartmouth that are worth a closer examination. First, I would like to address the notion of ritual, as I consider Class Day, both past and present, to be a ritual for both the graduating seniors at Dartmouth and as an aspect of Dartmouth culture more generally. For this topic I turn to some of the literature on ritual by anthropologists, most notably the work of Victor Turner. Although much of Turner's best known work examines the rituals of rural African societies and it may be difficult to draw clear comparisons and parallels to his research and my study of Dartmouth, I found some of his general theories to be appropriate to apply to my analysis of Class Day.

Turner (1982: 11-12) observes, "People in all cultures recognize the need to set aside certain times and spaces for celebratory use, in which the possibility of personal and communal creativity may arise." Celebrations may be spontaneous, though they are often associated with events such as life experiences, work, seasons, religion, social status, or shared community celebrations (Turner 1982: 12). Turner (1982: 16) continues, "When a social group . . . celebrates a particular event or occasion . . . it also 'celebrates itself.' In other words, it attempts to manifest, in symbolic form, what it conceives to be its essential life, at once the distillation and typification of its corporate experience."

Much of the work on rituals and ceremonies by anthropologists has focused mainly on these events as religious or magical, largely because anthropologists have largely studied societies where most everything holds a religious significance (Moore and Myerhoff 1977: 3). It is also necessary to point out that it would be an overstatement to describe Class Day as being a religious ceremony, as I read its intentions to perhaps be somewhat spiritual, but not religious per se. Thus, I must mention that there is a distinction between religious and secular rituals. Such a

distinction does not mean, however, that secular and religious ceremonies are *entirely* different and cannot share some related theories, analyses, or interpretations (Moore and Myerhoff 1977: 5). While the intentions and greater contexts that distinguish between these two categories of ritual are often different, ritual acts and processes, both religious and secular, often hold similarities (Moore and Myerhoff 1977: 5).

Moore and Myerhoff (1977: 4) declare, “Secular ceremonies are common in industrial societies and are found in all contexts.” Additionally, “The connection between many secular ceremonies and the larger sets of customs and attitudes which comprise the context in which they make sense need not be explicit. . . . Secular ceremony seems connected with specialized parts of the social/cultural background, rather than with the all-embracing ultimate universals to which religious rituals are attached” (Moore and Myerhoff 1977: 11).

In the collegiate context, Manning (2000: 3) maintains that rituals are an excellent form of embodying meaning in a college’s culture and often express meanings in clearer and more direct ways.

Rituals are more than “social glue” that holds society together. They happen too often to serve only that function; their spiritual, religious, and emotional nature point to something more. Despite the commonplace presence of rituals and ceremonies on college campuses, there is nothing ordinary about these activities. Rituals, with their fluid, dynamic, complex, and adaptable form, are a potent ingredient of campus cultural demarcation and transformation. . . . [R]ituals maintain while simultaneously transform campus cultures. (Manning 2000: 2)

Manning (2000: 3-9) even offers a complex categorization of collegiate rituals that are beyond the scope of this research. Considering these points, I consider Class Day to be consistent with the various definitions of a ritual. Although it may be better classified as a secular ritual, insights from experts in all forms of ritual are useful in aiding my interpretations of this part of Dartmouth culture.

In his discussion, Turner (1982) devotes considerable attention to the use of material culture in rituals and ceremonies. Explaining the significance of material culture to such celebrations, Turner (1982: 15-16) states:

Objects certainly “speak,” that is, they directly communicate a message through visible and tangible qualities such as form, color, texture, size, and so forth; but the “message” is greatly enhanced and expanded when the objects are recognized as being culturally specific symbols to be decoded and set in their proper celebratory context. A symbol is something that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention. . . . But celebratory objects are, first and foremost, material objects, though they represent ideas, objects, events, relationships, “truths” not immediately present to the observer, or even intangible or invisible thoughts and conceptions. Such celebratory symbols, moreover, usually stand for many things and thoughts at once.

Though it is not the sole piece of material culture under scrutiny in this part of my study, the clay pipe that was once used and smashed at the Class Day exercises is the most obvious piece of material culture that applies to Turner’s passage above. Before I can proceed with deeper analysis regarding the cultural significance of the clay pipe in the context of Dartmouth’s Class Day, another major important point needs to be addressed.

The clay pipes used in the Class Day ceremonies were obviously meant to represent (no matter how superficially) pipes used by American Indians and served as a material representation of the College’s historic association with Native Americans in Dartmouth lore and history (regardless of the sincerity or authenticity of such a relationship). The utilization of the pipes brings up the matter concerning the use of Indian culture (ersatz or otherwise) by non-Indians, or what some scholars have termed “going native” (Huhndorf 2001) or “playing Indian,” which is a form of “recreation” most typically associated with white males (Deloria 1998). Playing Indian allows whites to contrast themselves against “savage” cultures and also to use the image of the Indian as an idealized version of themselves to embody the lost virtues of Western culture (Huhndorf 2001: 6). “Savage” Indians represented a way for white Americans to be both wild



and civilized (Deloria 1998), a point that Kemp (2002) made in her examination of the white Dartmouth males' role in creating the Class Day ceremonies (refer back to Figure 31). Deloria (1998: 4) addresses the concept of noble savagery, "a term that both juxtaposes and conflates an urge to idealize and desire Indians and a need to despise and dispossess them."

Huhndorf (2001: 14) traces the phenomenon of going native to the late nineteenth century and cites it as a form of escapism and nostalgia, derivative of the rapid industrialization of the American economy at that time and its association with white racial dominance and social progress. This sentiment developed out of modernizing white America's desire to return to a state of "primitiveness" (Huhndorf 2001: 14). Huhndorf (2001: 14) explains further that, "Idealizing and emulating the primitive, modernity's other, comprised in part a form of escapism from the tumultuous modern world. . . . Ultimately, however, escapism is not the most fundamental goal of going native. Ironically, even as they articulate anxieties about modernity . . . [times of social crisis and doubt that prompt people to go native] also reaffirm the racialized, progressivist ethos of industrial capitalism." Deloria (1998: 7) agrees that with the onset of modernity, "Indian play [was used] to encounter the authentic amidst the anxiety of urban industrial and postindustrial life."

With these points in mind, we must return to Turner's work on the use of material culture in ritual. Turner (1982: 16-17) states that an object used in a ritual often carries meanings in its form or from the material from which it is made, though this meaning may not always be obvious to an outside observer. In fact, celebrations and their related objects are often based on myths, though they are not always explained by myths (Turner 1982: 18). Meanings behind rituals might not be able to be articulated into words and the "'true' or 'inner' meaning of a symbolic object may only be known or shared by the initiated few" though esoteric knowledge is

rare in the case of public rituals (Turner 1982: 18-19). Class Day would technically qualify as public ritual. Regarding the totality of the interrelationships between rituals, their meanings, and their associated material culture,

Such objects are the product, center, and soul of a social group's self-manifestation. They are created to "speak" to at least the members of the culture they embody and manifest. And if they speak they are also "heard," for they have been brought forth from experiences shared with those of their "receivers." The fabricators of these celebratory objects share "social being" with all other members of the celebrating society, its history, traditions, religion, contemporary triumphs and tragedies, its hopes and fears for the future. There is perhaps no need to render into words what the symbols "say," for they transmit their messages in a number of sensory codes simultaneously. (Turner 1982: 19)

With these points I have established that rituals hold a cultural significance which cannot be divorced from the cultures that create and celebrate these rituals or the material culture that these rituals utilize in their celebrations. I cannot profess to have entirely cracked the "codes" surrounding Class Day, the clay pipes, or their related controversy, but regardless of the degree of what the symbols of this ritual may have "said," it was enough to create a permanent change to an old tradition at Dartmouth College. To some, the clay pipes stood for tradition and perhaps pride, but to others they signified racism, exclusion, and intolerance. Indeed, Turner (1982: 21) observes, "Any major celebration, since it brings many members of a society into a single sociocultural space for a limited period of time, brings into proximity persons and groups with either endemic or transitory antagonisms." These antagonisms were apparent as old traditions were threatened with the onset of an increasingly multicultural Dartmouth.

The concepts presented above correspond closely to my findings regarding the Class Day ceremonies. How could the pipe smashing tradition at Class Day, which had been held so affectionately for well over one hundred years be suddenly terminated? Was the smashing of clay pipes innocent fun and a neat quality of Dartmouth's ostensibly unique culture and sense of

place, or was it an offensive, exclusionary practice used to reaffirm upper-middle-class, white, masculine values (Kemp 2002)? Initially, I saw the pipe smashing ceremony to be a quite fun, innocent, and neat sentimental exercise for graduating students. But with closer examination of the context surrounding the legends and the eventual reaction to the ceremony, I found the issue of pipe smashing to be much more complex than a mere graduation exercise. This realization occurred to me after closer scrutiny of the geographical context of the issue, when one considers the other previously mentioned topics of the Old Pine, Bartlett Tower, and their situation on the campus, as well as the location of the ceremonies on the Dartmouth campus.

The Old Pine, as it was known in Dartmouth legend, ceased to exist after 1895. But to this day, it plays an important role in Dartmouth imagery and in its “protected” location on a wooded hill surreptitiously overlooking the campus. Douglas Davies (1988: 34) explains that a tree “stands, both literally and metaphorically, as a living entity spanning many human generations. As such it avails itself as a historical marker and social focus of events. As links with the past, be it actual or mythical, particular trees make ideas more realistic and dynamic in the present.” Anderson (2003: 149) reminds us, “Essential to acknowledge is that trees are not passive backdrops for human activities, but active participants in the ongoing creation of places and landscapes, as well as personal and cultural identity.” The role that the tree played is especially significant in the case of Class Day. Though the focus in the recent past has been on whether or not to continue the tradition of smashing pipes, the significance of the Old Pine itself was rarely addressed in these debates.

Still, the location and sociocultural functions of some trees allows for them to play a part in rituals. Anderson (2003: 8) says:

As symbols of the center, specific living trees in the landscape sometimes take on a sacred character. Yet usually it is not the trees themselves that are objects to be

worshipped; rather, they are the place where the sacred world can break through into human reality, where communication with the gods is possible. . . . Certain tree places, either individual trees or groves, are thus set aside, declared separate, off limits, different from the ordinary or profane. People will forego material gain to protect such trees, and mourn trees that are damaged or killed.

Although I mentioned above that the Class Day ritual could not be accurately described as a “sacred” ritual in the literal sense, it and the Old Pine (as evidenced by their importance to the College’s identity) hold a profound significance to Dartmouth. There is clearly a certain spiritual quality to these features of Dartmouth lore, as the stump of the Pine was preserved and memorialized and it is located in a secluded part of the campus intended for the Class Day ritual. Meacham (2008: 131) notes that after the decision to chemically preserve it, the stump has persisted “as a sort of holy relic, a carefully tended monument to a symbol.” All of these points correspond to Anderson’s quote above. To understand the further importance of these points to my study calls for the introduction of Paul Chamberlain’s (2001) concept of *topomystica* or “mystical place.”

Chamberlain’s (2001: 98) research illustrates that “there are places in the landscape that do give spiritual meaning to people’s lives in a way that traditional belief systems do not. . . . [A]lthough [the concept of] mystic place is closely related to sacred space, it has attracted devotees in the West who would probably not consider themselves to be religious in the traditional sense of the word.” Defining *topomystica*, Chamberlain (2001: 102) explains, “Any definition of *topomystica* . . . must recognize that as well as being places of activity that are peculiar, mysterious, or beyond human reason, they must also be locations at which people experience a feeling that a supernatural force is at work[.]” though “some mystic sites cannot be categorized at all” (119). In my study, the “mysterious force” at work in the Class Day ceremony and the legendary Old Pine would be the legends behind Class Day and the Old Pine

and, perhaps more broadly, the elusive and (ostensibly) inexplicable “Dartmouth spirit,” a part of “the Dartmouth Experience,” which I analyze more deeply later on.

In relation to the Dartmouth spirit, some of Chamberlain’s (2001: 104) criteria for identifying a mystical place coincide with an idea of the sentiment behind the Dartmouth spirit and its relation to the Old Pine: “A definition of topomystica should incorporate three criteria: (1) it is a place at which events are peculiar, mysterious, or beyond human reason; (2) the cause of these events is attributed to supernatural power, superimposed upon the site by the human imagination, creating a *genius loci*; and (3) the supernatural force that human beings superimpose on the site can either be beneficial, or threatening, to those who come into contact with it.”

Following these criteria, the Old Pine fits the attributes of helping to create a mystical place. For one, the legend behind the Pine was never proven or verified, though it was used (or, perhaps, “superimposed”) to give the Pine a sense of awe or heritage to distinguish it from the many other pines in the New Hampshire forests surrounding Dartmouth. This distinction helped to create a *genius loci*, or spirit of place, as the hill housing the Pine was set aside (literally and figuratively) for the purposes of a bonding ritual for graduating seniors, creating a space for memory. For over one hundred years this was the site of the major Dartmouth tradition of Class Day, though some deemed certain qualities associated with the ritual to be threatening toward specific groups of students, particularly Native Americans, which follows Chamberlain’s point of a mystical place not always being perceived as such by all involved parties. Though the site of Class Day may have been seen as “beneficial” for a long time among Dartmouth men, it later held some “threatening” connotations with the subsequent classes of a multicultural Dartmouth.

Over time, the legend of the Old Pine matured, as did the tree, though the Pine itself eventually died. The death of the tree did not diminish the spirit surrounding it, however, as some special trees tend to linger in certain cultures' memories. Anderson (2003: 149) explains, "[F]ully grown specimens [of trees] capture the imagination and evoke awe among humans. . . . Over the years they gather stories and legends about them. Even after they die they continue to inhabit the landscape, physically or, once their wood is removed, as memories." This is an important point considering that the Old Pine did die, but it was memorialized with a plaque and attempts were made to preserve it. Therefore, the Pine's sentimental value did not die along with it. Meacham (2008: 131) writes that the Old Pine became a "locus" for students' sentimental connection to the College and that the students had "attached as much importance to the stump of the old tree as they had to the tree itself." North (1967: 14-15) exemplifies the sentimental nature of the Pine:

[L]ittle remains of the Old Pine itself. A few mementos, carved from its wood after the tree was cut down, have found their way back to the College to be preserved in its Archives. Perhaps the most interesting of these is a chain, of oval links about three inches long, whittled from a single piece of the soft, mellow wood. . . . Holding the chain in one's hands it is not difficult to believe that on a sunny afternoon nearly two hundred years ago three Indians gathered beneath the tree of which it once was part and sang their farewell songs or that somehow, through the years, generations of Dartmouth men had not infused into this wood some of their love for the college it once, while living, symbolized.

North (1967: 15) abruptly changes his tone, however, and laments, "The stump [of the Pine] itself has disintegrated, heart, wood, and bark, and only vestiges of the original wood remain, carefully assembled and bound around a substitute core, a touching relic of a once proud and stalwart tree." More recently, Kemp (2002: 9) informs us:

Mystical lore surrounds the physical stump of the Lone Pine today. The Facilities, Operations, and Management Department of the College maintains the stump by nailing bark onto it every year in May; in the past twenty five years, the stump itself has been replaced four times. The stump's heavy upkeep highlights the desire of the Dartmouth

community to keep its traditions, symbols, and links to the past. Even though the tree was destroyed through acts of nature over one hundred years ago, it remains a symbol of the College's early years, the supposed remnants are still preserved in a way to maintain a link to the past. Years not to be forgotten when Dartmouth was a homogenous community and rugged, savage students inhabited the "College on the Hill." The Lone Pine keeps the past available to a community that no longer needs a link with a time when the student body looked so different than it does today.

From personal experience, I touched the "stump" of the Old Pine while I was at Dartmouth, and it was clearly not wooden; it felt more comparable to a fiberglass-like material. What might this say in regard to the insistence of preserving the tree as a continuing symbol of the College?

Recalling the memory of the Old Pine, it is important to not forget Bartlett Tower. I disagree with Berry's (1980) claim that there is only a weak connection between the Pine and Bartlett Tower, as she seems preoccupied with criticizing Bartlett's personal romantic ambitions. The fact that the plaque on the Tower states that it was erected "as a landmark more enduring than the Old Pine" (refer back to Figure 37) suggests that there is some truth to this statement, and one must also consider the Tower's proximity to the stump of the Pine, looming over it, as if it might be protecting the stump.

In fact, I argue that the Tower's purpose is to somehow protect the Pine and the "old traditions," and I am sure that many at Dartmouth would agree. Perhaps it was Bartlett's intention to build the Tower to provide a more permanent symbol to the legends of the hill where the Old Pine once stood. Through the sentiment surrounding the loss of the Pine, it may have been an attempt to create order out of disorder (Tuan 1974: 146). Chamberlain (2001: 105) notes, "Topomystica is irregular in shape when found in natural topographical features in the landscape, but where sites lack any discernable natural characteristics, or where there is a need to increase the mystical appeal of a site, geometry has been superimposed on the site. Geometry is

order; order implies design; and design suggests a hidden force, or supernatural power, is at work.”

Though Bartlett Tower may have been seen by some as an overly sentimental (maybe even desperate) attempt by the College to hold onto its imagined romantic past, it is important to remember that it is still standing and, from what I have researched, there has been no serious action to tear it down or relocate it. Given that the Tower still stands, I deduce that it still holds some value to the College and I suspect that its value is somewhat understated. Similarly for the Old Pine, it may not be standing where it once was, but its importance has not necessarily diminished. Thus, its absence in the landscape does not immediately render the Old Pine to be completely “gone” or even totally forgotten. The Old Pine especially is still an important symbol for the College, and its remaining (though fragmentary) presence in the landscape and Dartmouth’s continuing use of its image might imply who might still remain in control at Dartmouth and who might be guarding the “old traditions.”

This chapter focuses on several legends of Dartmouth and an underlying theme has been how these legends have persisted in one form or another despite the controversy and challenges that have encircled them. The legend of The Three Indians is likely just that – a legend. But from that legend grew other legends that helped to develop critical traits of Dartmouth’s culture and identity for many generations of students. Class Day, in its traditional form, was once a capstone to “the Dartmouth Experience,” though its customary form ended after vocal opposition from some students within the historical context of the growing prominence and momentum of political correctness in American society in the early 1990s.

After researching some of the traditions of pipes and pipe smoking from Native American societies, it became obvious that, in my opinion, the pipe smashing exercise was



clearly a form of mockery of Indian traditions, or, in other words, a way of “playing Indian.” I do not feel that the pipe smashing ceremony was necessarily meant to be deliberately offensive or directly hurtful toward Native Americans, though it was perhaps insensitive. Still, the motivations behind the criticism are questionable. The fact that the ritual went on for so long without much protest says to me that there may not have been a substantial voice *to* protest the ceremony, as it is now established that Dartmouth did not begin to become a more diversified institution until the early 1970s. But why is it that Dartmouth waited until people complained before they saw any flaw to the tradition or ceremony? And why was it that people who were *not* Native Americans at Dartmouth felt the need to speak out all of a sudden in an attempt to end the pipe smashing if it was fairly common knowledge for so long beforehand as to what the details of the Class Day ceremony were? It is also notable that the College did not act on the matter until a substantial conflict of interests emerged. To me, these questions relate to a central theme of this dissertation to which I give more consideration in the following chapters: privileged, white guilt and Dartmouth’s place persona.

All of the elements of my analysis of the abovementioned Dartmouth legends – the Old Pine, The Three Indians, Class Day, the clay pipes, and Bartlett Tower – show convincing evidence that, despite the evolution of these legends over the years, they are contemporaneous with many qualities of elites and are not likely to be merely innocent folklore. Regarding the Old Pine and trees more generally, Anderson (2003: 8-9) mentions that “the symbolism of particular trees has been used by the powerful to assert their control over land and people. In Georgian England, the elite class manipulated landscape trees and woodlands to maintain their power and make the existing social order look natural.” Even after the Old Pine died, it was

purposefully preserved to keep its presence in the landscape to recall the glorious old days of Dartmouth. And even after the wood of the stump disintegrated, a “stump” was set up to safeguard the Pine’s memory and reestablish order in the face of drastic changes occurring at Dartmouth at the end of the romantic nineteenth century.

The fact that the Pine is hidden from clear view (remember that I found it by accident when hiking around the more secluded areas of campus) insinuates that it may not be meant for everyone’s eyes. Perhaps the intention behind the Old Pine was for those who felt entitlement at Dartmouth, as Kemp (2002) mentions the white elites at the College who wanted to keep the ceremonies and traditions as their own. Anderson (2003: 152) affirms, “People . . . use such symbolism [the type of tree and where it is planted] to announce to each other which places in the landscape matter, and where power is concentrated.” By keeping the Old Pine from public view, it excludes others. Thus, only those who know of the Pine and its location can participate in the annual ritual.

Recall that Turner (1982: 16) noted how a ritual is a way for a group to “celebrate itself.” Clearly, at Class Day, the Dartmouth seniors are celebrating their accomplishment of completing college. But could they be celebrating something more? As far as smashing the clay pipes, I interpret this part of the ritual as a clear example of “playing Indian.” The object used in the ritual that “speaks” or conveys a message (Turner 1982: 15) would be the clay pipes. It is critical to acknowledge that the pipes were made of clay. They were meant to be smashed and not intended to be permanent; therefore, they are clearly a prop used by Dartmouth students in their play as Indians. This form of play is built upon the legend of the Indians who reportedly did the same at the site of the Pine “many years ago.” Kemp (2002: 7-8) reveals that an informant of hers told her that

the attitude of [white, male] alumni in regards to the Indian representation through the myths, legends, and symbols. . . . [is that] that they were taught a “wonderful” belief of educating the Indian at Dartmouth; the alleged original purpose of the College was to educate and “honor” Native Americans. When the wealthy, white male who attended the College saw himself as honoring Indians because his education occurred in an environment that, according to legend, was a place for Indians. The Indian mascot and other aspects of Dartmouth tradition shrouded with the myth of the Indian were not seen as troublesome or offensive. It was an empty symbol, standing for no one but himself.

But it may not be an empty symbol, as Deloria’s (1998: 7) research indicates that playing Indian, throughout various times in American history has provided “a host of . . . Indian performance options [that] have given meaning to Americans lost in a (post)modern freefall. In each of these historical moments, Americans have returned to the Indian, reinterpreting the intuitive dilemmas surrounding Indianness to meet the circumstances of their times.”

Again, we see the role of nostalgia as a factor in the Class Day ceremonies, which was established with the pipe-smashing tradition developing in the late nineteenth century. As I addressed in the previous chapter, this was a time that was ripe for nostalgia at Dartmouth and in greater New England given the widespread changes occurring in these places in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Meacham 1998; Wright 1987: 1-16). This sense of nostalgia also allowed for a way to hold on to the days where the ways of the old guard of Dartmouth men were remembered, as evidenced visually in the landscape through the persistence of Bartlett Tower and the motivations behind its construction.

“Going native” or “playing Indian” (in addition to the reconstruction of Dartmouth Hall) were ways for the Dartmouth community to deal with such changes. Huhndorf (2001: 5) argues that some “forms of going native also support European-American hegemony. While those who claim benevolence toward Native peoples, they reaffirm white dominance by making some (usually distorted) vision of native life subservient to the needs of the colonizing culture.” The use and smashing of clay pipes at Class Day is a clear example of Huhndorf’s point and supports

my argument of Class Day and its related legends as elitist in nature. I find the notion of wealthy college students wanting to play Indian to be paradoxical, but Myerhoff (1977: 199) informs us, “Ritual is full of contradictions and paradox. Most paradoxical of all, by selecting and shaping a fragment of social life, it defines a portion of reality. . . . Rituals are not only paradoxical intrinsically, they are built out of the paradoxes suggested by their symbols. They cope with paradox by mounting the mood of conviction and persuasion which fuses opposing elements referred to by their symbols, creating the belief that things are as they have been portrayed – proper, true, inevitable, natural.”

Though the smashing of pipes was a ritual that was created from a myth, the legend grew to be an accepted truth at Dartmouth until it was eventually challenged. “Ritual’s surreal, magical quality can be used, scrupulously and unscrupulously, to convince people of realities that may or many not be true” (Manning 2000: 32). Though rituals may not be based on fact, they are often accepted as a truth or reality (Manning 2000: 106-07). The ritual that lasted for over one hundred years, however, aided in creating a nostalgic atmosphere, with the memorialization of the Old Pine and the erection of Bartlett Tower. The legends did not die down, however, and it was through these legends that created a mystical place – a topomystica – that was defined by the situation of other material culture, namely the “stump” of the Pine, the Tower, and the several signs found around these landmarks on the hill. Imbuing this part of campus with legends and “mysticism” was necessary to give the graduating students a sense that they were special. They were not just graduating from college – they were graduating from Dartmouth College. And the significance of this event was established through the presence of storied landmarks and special rituals that were rooted in the mysterious legends of the early days

of the College. Thus, a special experience was necessary for those who were privileged enough to graduate from such an exclusive institution.

Manning (2000: 29) remarks, “Time and place are specially set aside and accentuated to temporarily disconnect the ritual participants from their community. This separation marks them as special: they are the people for whom the ceremony was organized.” She continues, “Without rituals, there would be nothing to mark this cultural change in status as extraordinary. There would be less meaning created for individuals and within communities because these inexplicable changes would be treated as commonplace” (Manning 2000: 30). Rituals are so important and abundant at colleges because much of the college experience (such as the work involved), is not visible to or completely shared by everyone; without rituals, much of the collegiate experience and changes in status would lose meaning (Manning 2000: 30).

The Old Pine and Class Day exercises are an example of a Dartmouth legend and tradition that both united and divided a college. The controversy surrounding Class Day came to the fore with the growing influence of political correctness as well as the rapidly diversifying Dartmouth. The fact that Class Day met with objection during this time period suggests that Class Day might be more representative of the tradition of white men who were dominant in the Dartmouth ethos for so many years before, as that is the image and mentality that the opposition associated with the ritual. If Dartmouth traditions are so strong, why did this one falter in the face of change? Considering that Dartmouth folded in response to the controversy implies a degree of feeling shame or guilt on their behalf which I feel to be quite oversensitive and melodramatic. After all, while the pipe-smashing ceremony may have been exclusive, why is it that Dartmouth has not rushed to change other exclusionary traditions or institutions? Is this a case of being selective as to what offends some and not others? Although the pipe ceremony is

an example of a tradition that failed in my opinion, I do not feel that it in any way made Dartmouth to be more inclusive or tolerant.

The College, however, seems to be in denial about the failure of such a tradition, as it sought to preserve part of it as if it had never been lost by first preserving the stump and eventually “making a new one,” in addition to creating the permanent structure of Bartlett Tower. Though Class Day as it was once known may cease to exist, it is clear that Dartmouth has not forgotten this old tradition, as evidenced by the various memorials in the landscape surrounding the “stump” of the Old Pine.

Seldom mentioned, however, is the New Pine. The “New Pine” is located slightly down the hill from the Old Pine and it, just like many other Dartmouth monuments, is marked with a plaque (Figure 38). This tree was planted in 1967 by the members of the Class of 1927. North



**Figure 38:** The New Pine today, near the entrance to the Bema and slightly down the hill from the Old Pine. Photo by author.

(1967: 15) explained that “it seems to the Class of 1927 fitting that there should stand, at the of its [the College’s] third century, a New Pine, just as tradition says a young pine stood on the start ridge at the founding of the College.” And the planting of the New Pine did not go without ceremony. The *Valley News* (1967) reported:

[At the ceremony] 125 members of Dartmouth’s class of 1927, two of them in Indian dress, one masquerading as Eleazar Wheelock, and a number who dressed conventionally and smashed clay “peace pipes” enthusiastically on a granite rock commemorating [sic] the old pine stump on which they broke similar pipes on graduation day 40 years ago, gathered in the Bema to dedicate a New Dartmouth Pine Tree.

It was an elaborate ceremony attended by about 250 alumni and wives to whom “Old Ivy” traditions are worth holding. . . .

This year, as Dartmouth begins preparation for its bicentennial celebration, the Class of 1927 offered to plant a new 25-year-old pine on the traditional spot in an effort to immortalize the significance of the Dartmouth pine.

The “Indians” at the ceremony beat drums and brought a wheelbarrow with a wooden keg full of small bottles of rum, which they passed out to their classmates (*Valley News* 1967). President James Dickey spoke, the alumni drank their rum, smoked from their pipes, and subsequently smashed them, leaving the scene singing “Men of Dartmouth” (*Valley News* 1967).

Numerous familiar issues are brought up again in reconstructing the scene I just described, and it is not necessary to repeat many of the arguments that I have already made from this chapter. As Relph (1976: 32-33) explains, “Much ritual and custom and myth has the incidental if not deliberate effect of strengthening attachment to place by reaffirming not only the sanctity and unchanging significance of it, but also the enduring relationships between a people and their place.” While some traditions seem to disappear, a tradition can “in fact maintain its continuity, but underground and out of sight. This occurs especially with those traditions that are repressed or persecuted by official society. Even though they may seem to have been abolished, they actually slip just below the surface and preserve themselves in secrecy” (Gross 1992: 10).

And at Dartmouth, it appears that even old traditions that fail die hard. Perhaps we can leave this chapter with the final thought that just because some traditions may fail, it does not mean that they cannot be reborn or recreated, or that their significance has diminished, and it certainly does not mean that they or what they symbolize has been forgotten.



## CHAPTER 6 PLACE

### The Concept of Place

Place has long been a traditional topic of interest for cultural geographers despite the fact that it is still a somewhat controversial theoretical topic and elusive concept to define conclusively or with complete accuracy. The discourse on place has not been monopolized by geographers, however, as it has been explored by anthropologists, architects, historians, psychologists, sociologists, literary theorists, and philosophers, though the literature on place is perhaps the most extensive in geography (Adams, Hoelscher, and Till 2001: xiv).

Place is important and worthy of study because it is something that cannot be avoided.

Anthropologist Miles Richardson (1984: 1) writes:

Wherever one finds humans . . . one finds them struggling to define their place, both in the concrete sense of “here we are” and in the metaphorical sense of our place in nature’s scheme. Despite its universal occurrence, place, either in the territorial sense or in the philosophical one, remains an issue. This is because it is a human construct, which is to say, it is both grounded in the physical world and partakes of that world’s earthiness and it is lodged in the world of symbolic discourse and shares in that world ghostly illusiveness. Place becomes, then, something both fixed and fleeting, something you can walk on and something you can speak, a curious and uneasy product of experience and symbol.

Though places are often a central topic for the work of social scientists, anthropologist Margaret C. Rodman (2003: 205) reminds us, “Places are not inert containers. They are politicized, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple constructions.” She continues by arguing that place is not solely an academic construct and that places are not defined solely by researchers, or by what happens in their particular settings, and that places have multiple meanings (Rodman 2003: 205). Furthermore, places need to be understood apart

from the meanings they hold for their inhabitants as well the need to examine places separately from being mere research sites (Rodman 2003: 205).

Although Rodman offers a useful reminder regarding the separation between the theories of place that researchers develop and the meanings and realities of place held by the cultures being researched, in addition to the need to understand the multidimensional qualities of place, it is necessary to examine some of the various definitions of “place” to understand how they apply to this study. J. Nicholas Entrikin (1991: 6) elucidates, “The geographical concept of place refers to the areal context of events, objects and actions. It is a context that includes natural elements and human constructions, both material and ideal.” Entrikin (1991: 6-7) goes on to describe geographers’ desire to understand both the physical setting of particular ways of life as well as the symbolic sentiments that humans attach to those contexts. “We live our lives in place and have a sense of being part of place, but we also view place as something separate, something external. . . . Thus place is both a center of meaning and the external context of our actions” (Entrikin 1991: 7). Entrikin (1991: 7) also mentions that although people may “socially construct” places, there is still some “tension” between subjectively knowing places and understanding them objectively.

Expanding on this intellectual conundrum but offering some clarification, Tim Cresswell (1996: 156-57) argues:

Place always exists in a state between objective fact and subjective feeling. Because we live in place, as part of place, and yet simultaneously view place as something external, place can be thought of as a center of meaning and external context for action – as ideal and material. Place combines realms that theory has sought to hold apart. Place, as a phenomenological-experiential entity combines elements of nature (elemental forces), social relations (class, gender, and so on) and meaning (the mind, ideas, symbols). Experience of place, from a phenomenological perspective, is always an experience of all three realms, each of which affects our actions in place.

Thus, a theme of experience unfolds in regard to examining people's experiences at Dartmouth and my witnessing of their experiences as well as my own, although I was somewhat detached from the Dartmouth community at large. This may not be a disadvantage in my analysis of Dartmouth, however, as Tuan (1975: 152) explains:

Place is a center of meaning constructed by experience. Place is known not only through the eyes and mind but also through the more passive and direct modes of experience, which resist objectification. To know a place fully means both to understand it in an abstract way and to know it as one person knows another. At a high theoretical level, places are points in a spatial system. At the opposite extreme, they are strong visceral feelings. Places are seldom known at either extreme: the one is too remote from sensory experience to be real, and the other presupposes rootedness in a locality and an emotional commitment to it that are increasingly rare. To most people in the modern world, places lie somewhere in the middle range of experience.

And it is these actions and experiences in a place that most concerns me and that I argue are most critical to understanding Dartmouth as a place. These ideas are consistent with much of the literature in cultural geography regarding an emphasis on studying experiences to gain a greater understanding of a particular place. Michael Godkin argues, "The places in a person's world are more than entities which provide the physical stage for life's drama. Some are profound centers of meanings and symbols of experience. As such, they lie at the core of human existence. . . . [P]laces become reservoirs of significant life experiences" (1980: 73). Similarly, Entrikin (1990: 11) contends, "Places take on the meanings of events and objects that occur there, and their descriptions are fused with human goals, values and intentions. Places and their contents are seen as wholes." And, in closing this point, Edward C. Relph (1976: 43) maintains:

The basic meaning of place, its essence, does not therefore come from locations, nor from the trivial functions that places serve, nor from the community that occupies it, nor from superficial and mundane experiences – though these are all common and perhaps necessary aspects of places. The essence of place lies in the largely unselfconscious intentionality that defines places as profound centres of human existence. There is for virtually everyone a deep association with and consciousness of the places where we were born and grew up, where we live now, or where we have particularly moving

experiences. This association seems to constitute a vital source of both individual and cultural identity and security, a point of departure from which we orient ourselves in the world.

There are several, perhaps many, topics to investigate while attempting to analyze, unravel, or demystify Dartmouth's sense of place and how it is constructed. Many at Dartmouth would insist that this cannot be done, as Dartmouth is a place so unique and so special that it cannot possibly be fully understood or appreciated by outsiders. As David M. Shribman (1999: xi) notes in the preface to an anthology celebrating the exceptional place that is Dartmouth,

It might otherwise be a place faraway, forgotten and forlorn, surrounded as it is by mountain fastnesses, much of the year buffeted by the wolf-wind wailing in the doorways, buried by the snow drifts deep along the road, chilled by the great white cold that walks abroad. But to the thousands of men and women of Dartmouth, it is a special place – of lore and learning and legend, of challenge and commitment and change, of trial and triumph and tremulous moments too numerous to count. No college started so modestly and succeeded so majestically. No college marries so gracefully the whimsy of the young and the wisdom of the old. No college claims more loyalty from its charges.

I have come across many other sources that seem to imply that Dartmouth is so incredibly unique that its appeal cannot be articulated, as if it were a place that is completely inexplicable. I feel, however, that this sentiment is very much an exaggeration.

Shribman (1999: xiv, emphasis added) builds on this strange quality by even going as far to claim that the people at Dartmouth are an exceptional, rare breed:

While preparing this volume we [Shribman and his co-editor Edward C. Lathem] developed a fresh appreciation for *that peculiar slice of humankind known as the men and women of Dartmouth*, who in Hanover learn to analyze the verse of Milton, explore fluid dynamics, wrestle with Lu Xun, confront Aquinas, discover radiogenic isotope geochemistry, climb Moosilauke, build their own kayaks, sharpen an ax with a dual-grip handstone and slip across a snowy campus on cross-country skis to an early-morning class on Flaubert. We know, of course, that the still North remembers them, the hillwinds know their name. We know, too, that the granite of New Hampshire keeps the record of their fame.

I make no claim that I have somehow completely deciphered the Dartmouth mystique or gained an enlightenment apparently available only to those at the College that possess the core

knowledge necessary to understand the elusive qualities that make Dartmouth such a special place or its people so ostensibly remarkable in the eyes of its own. But I have, through both archival and ethnographic research, given close scrutiny to understanding how Dartmouth is created, or constructed, as a place, by these people.

This chapter focuses on how some Dartmouth traditions have contributed to the College's institutional and institutionalized culture that create or help construct it as a place. In other words, I examine some of the major cultural attributes of Dartmouth that make it Dartmouth and not somewhere else (Relph 1976). These are some of the cultural characteristics that help to make a small New Hampshire college become Dartmouth College.

Building on the topics I have mentioned and investigated in the previous chapters, I should make it clear that I feel that the “construction of place” at Dartmouth is not limited to student culture and traditions. I have found that Dartmouth Row, the Green, Baker Tower, and the legends behind Eleazar Wheelock and the Old Pine are just as crucial to the “Dartmouth Experience” and the idea of Dartmouth as a distinct place as the people who have taught and learned at the College. In this chapter, however, I focus specifically on the Dartmouth Outing Club (often referred to simply as the “DOC”) as a major College organization and the annual event of Dartmouth Night and their critical role in helping to define a large part of the essence of Dartmouth culture. Although Dartmouth Night is not technically a part of the Outing Club, few at Dartmouth would deny that it plays a major role in helping to define the experience of place at Dartmouth. As Jonathan M. Smith (2007: 197) wisely observes in his own study of tradition at Texas A&M University, “Cultural geographers have a special interest in the way in which stories are embodied in the physical material of the landscape, but . . . stories are also embodied in the

social material of institutions, practices, rituals, and identities. And these, too, are part of a place.”

Following from my brief discussion on the theory of place, I argue that, in the specific context of this chapter, the actions and interactions of the Dartmouth community aid in giving the College its distinct sense of place and are key to understanding the nuances behind the construction of the larger concept of place at Dartmouth College. How do these cultural attributes help to define Dartmouth as a place? I aim do this by focusing on some of Dartmouth’s major “unique” or special cultural traditions, and how those traditions were created, how they have evolved over time, and how they are as important now to understanding Dartmouth as a place as they have ever been.

### **A Brief Introduction to the Dartmouth Outing Club**

One of the first features of Dartmouth College that I was familiar with before I knew about the College beyond a superficial sense was that many at Dartmouth do not view their remote location in rural New Hampshire to necessarily be a disadvantage when it comes to life at the College or “things to do” in general. Indeed, one could say that the College outright capitalizes on its natural surroundings. And after some considerable research, I discovered that this physical quality plays a substantial role in understanding and analyzing Dartmouth as a place. I had heard years ago that Dartmouth students actually enjoy going outside and running around in the woods, camping, and climbing mountains among many other outdoor activities, regardless of the time of year. In fact, as I describe in this chapter, these sorts of experiences are oftentimes a freshman’s first formal introduction to life at the College. And this major tradition at Dartmouth was one of the key cultural traits of the College that intrigued me and that I found worthy of closer scrutiny for my study.

An undated, unpaginated pamphlet titled “Introduction to the Dartmouth Outing Club” that I estimate to have been published in the mid-to-late 1970s explains, “A great deal of the character of Dartmouth College is derived from the physical setting of the school on a major New England waterway [the Connecticut River] between the White Mountains of New Hampshire and the Green Mountains of Vermont” (DOC Pamphlet n.d.). This statement is a clear example of the College’s professed affinity for nature and the interplay between its human geography and the physical geography of the College’s surroundings. It continues:

one need only walk a mile or so on either side of the College Green to be strolling among the woods, brooks, and rolling hills of the rural Vermont and New Hampshire countryside. Dartmouth has more than a minor stake in that countryside; indeed, Dartmouth students are perhaps better endowed with the makings of a diverse outdoor experience than any other group of students in the nation. (DOC Pamphlet n.d.)

After listing and describing some of the land and features owned and operated by the College (which I address shortly), the pamphlet mentions, “It is thus readily understandable that with such land as its raw material, the student body at Dartmouth College has constructed one of the most comprehensive outdoor programs in the country” (DOC Pamphlet n.d.).

This may not be a completely accurate statement, however, because the Dartmouth Outing Club was not always a part of the Dartmouth Experience. In fact, when the idea of a club to participate in outdoor sports was originally proposed, it was met with a good bit of confusion (Emerson 1935). Founded in 1909 by a small group of students led by Fred Harris, the Dartmouth Outing Club began with the intention of turning the dreary Hanover winters into a fun time for the College (DOC Pamphlet n.d.) and “getting enjoyment from the out-of-doors” (*Vermont Tribune* 1961). Emerson (1935: 7) describes the early reaction of the campus to the initial idea behind and eventual acceptance of an outing club at Dartmouth:

If we could go back to those early days we would realize how much courage, persistence, and genuine enthusiasm was behind that early movement. Life [sic] in Hanover during the winter was tolerated but not enjoyed. The campus looked askance at these nuts who persisted in putting on skis [sic] and snowshoes and wandering off to the mountains week-end after week-end. That wasn't a normal thing to do in those days. That feeling persisted for many years but Fred Harris '[19]11 and his cohorts persevered in their plans, interested faculty members, and finally developed an organization which was not large but made for numbers in its enthusiasm and vigor.

Shortly after the Club's founding, Case (1914: 387) noted the irony of its quickly growing popularity by observing, "The long, tedious winter, as old as the hills themselves, this winter which Dartmouth . . . has for a century been trying to forget, suddenly becomes one of the conspicuous features of [Dartmouth's] college life." One event that helped to propel the popularity of the Outing Club and in Dartmouth more generally came in 1920, when Harris wrote an article for *National Geographic* titled "Skiing Over the New Hampshire Hills" which detailed some of the DOC's activities (French 1960). Harris's article is credited "with increasing the number of applicants to Dartmouth that spring from 825 to 2625, thus necessitating the [College's] selective admissions process" (French 1960: 7).

And again, only a matter of years later, Feth (1938: 5) confirmed that the DOC had become "a firmly established part of Dartmouth tradition" as evidenced by the fact that when "[t]he 'queery' of the past who dared to venture the winter hills on snowshoes or skis, has become almost the accepted pattern of the Dartmouth man in winter." These individuals were even assigned a pejorative nickname – "chubber" – which referred to Outing Club "types" (Feth 1938: 6; Figures 39-44). Chubber "describes the ultra-unconventional member of the organization – the man . . . who prefers a constant, year-round costume of dungarees and flannel shirt to the more normal campus garb" (Feth 1938: 6). Though "chubber" initially held a negative connotation, it soon lost that designation and was later used almost as a term of endearment (Feth 1938: 6). I do not recall hearing the term "chubber" often when I was at





**Figure 39:** DOC trip to Mt. Washington, about 1915. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.



**Figure 40:** A senior trip, photographed at the Base Station of Mt. Washington, 1927(?). Photo by S.A. Osborn. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.



**Figure 41:** A group of students at Mt. Katahdin (Maine), June 1946. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.



**Figure 42:** DOC on a White Mountain trip, 1954(?). From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.



**Figure 43:** Braving the elements on a DOC trip, 1960s(?). From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.



**Figure 44:** A DOC group in the woods, 1990. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

Dartmouth, though I did see a handful of people who generally fit that description, as I address later in this chapter.

Notwithstanding the “chubber” label, the DOC slowly grew to become a highly popular student organization at the College. Annual mid-winter trips into the White Mountains began in 1911, though Woodward (1927: 416) is quick to point out that the “activities of the Club are not only attaining a new peak of energy in number of trips and extent of country reached but are breaking new and promising ground in scientific interest in mountaineering.” Describing some of the DOC’s early experiences, however, Woodward (1927: 417) recounts, “Back in 1911 the mountains presented a quite different spectacle to the first Outing Club climbers. Without equipment or experience they were appalled by the vast snow cap with its sudden changes of bitter weather.” Woodward (1927) also refers to this trip by terming it an “expedition” and recalling the feat of “conquering” mountains.

Offering a sort of tour of the property of the DOC’s trails and cabins, Clark (1922) provides a similar personal experience from the early days of the Outing Club, noticeably placing a special emphasis on the hardiness of the students, the remoteness of the cabins, the babbling brooks, and howling winds, with “forbidding” mountains and rustic trails. I find that this is worth mentioning because I noticed that similar sentiments surround the Outing Club today, as it seems to go out of its way to appear rustic, which I soon describe ethnographically.

Much like several other aspects of Dartmouth, there appears to be a strong need for the Outing Club to project a certain image of itself. This need is evident from the DOC’s early history, as many of its trips were photographed, filmed, and recorded in scrapbooks which are still produced and are available in the archives of the Dartmouth libraries. Woodward (1927: 420) explains, “The Scrap Books are filled with accounts of fierce struggles in deep snow, low

temperatures, and gales, to say nothing of the physical difficulties encountered in topography. Men have been blown off the Carriage Road, have taken dizzy slips down the treacherous snow slopes, have frozen faces and fingers.” Woodward (1927) then proceeds to vividly provide an account of his own trip with a group from 1925, emphasizing the ruggedness of the climb and the potential (but unrealized) danger of the trip.

Despite the seemingly melodramatic tone of some of these early accounts of the adventures of the Outing Club, Madeline Eno (2002: 38) perceptively refers to the passages in these logbooks as “a literature – albeit a forgotten one – of nature, of the trail and of college years lived on the edge of wilderness.” Exemplifying the recurrent theme of place and memory in evaluating Dartmouth and in the “Dartmouth Experience” of students, Eno (2002: 38) helps to explain the significance of tradition and continuity for the Outing Club and its activities in shaping such a critical aspect of Dartmouth culture:

For as long as a logbook remains in a cabin, it has a guaranteed readership – a community of those who know exactly what it means to be in that place, in that season, to sit in that particular chair looking out that exact window. But these writers fade into anonymity when, every summer, DOC crews remove logbooks jammed with entries and turn them over to the College library, where they are cataloged, boxed and carefully shelved in a climate-controlled environment. Reading them decades later, what becomes clear is the desire to connect, in the charming lingo of their times, with those who share an understanding of the outdoors and know that it will endure for as long as there are trails and cabins.

Regardless of what year a particular logbook was completed, Eno feels that there are connections among the past and current Dartmouth classes and one major tie that binds Dartmouth students and alumni is the experiences shared from the popular organization known as “the DOC.” “Beneath all the words in this logbook literature,” Eno (2002: 39) concludes, “lies something universal – that understanding that comes with leaving civilization behind, if only for a short time.”

But if “leaving civilization” became such a popular activity for Dartmouth students, why was the “chubber” or outdoorsy image of the College initially viewed as a contradiction? And how did the Outing Club become such a popular activity and a seemingly essential part of “the Dartmouth Experience?” After all, I established above that Dartmouth’s physical setting has always played an integral role in the identity of Dartmouth as a place and an institution.

As Emerson (1935: 7) argues that the outdoor tradition at the College traces back to Wheelock and the tale of his triumphant conquest of the Hanover Plain, claiming there is “[n]o doubt” that Wheelock loved the scenery and the wilderness, despite other historical evidence suggesting the exact opposite. This article is worth examining because it uses the story behind Wheelock to somehow justify Dartmouth’s connection to its past and to nature by relying mainly on folklore over fact. Wheelock did not just arbitrarily decide to go up to New Hampshire and found a college; he was recruited and he also lobbied himself quite aggressively for the job. The article also states that Nature “provided” the site for Dartmouth, but, in fact, Wheelock purposefully built and established the College there. The wilderness surrounding Hanover, despite what the legends may say, was not created for the purposes of a college – Dartmouth was purposefully carved *out of* nature. Thus, in my view, it stands to reason that, historically, there would have always been at least an element of Dartmouth students interacting with nature. Why else would a college be built in the woods of rural New Hampshire if not for at least some acceptance of the idea that one would interact with nature to some degree while at Dartmouth? I am not sure that this is a completely answerable question, though the fact that the Outing Club formed at a particular time and with particular goals in mind raises some more points to consider.

Today, the Dartmouth Outing Club plays a crucial role in Dartmouth culture and, I have found, is a major aspect of understanding Dartmouth’s place identity. As of the time of this

dissertation, the DOC is a student-run organization comprised of a student directorate and around a dozen member clubs. The directorate includes a president, vice president, and the heads of the member clubs. The member clubs are smaller organizations within the wider DOC that focus on more specific interests of outdoor activities. Currently, the clubs include Bait and Bullet (hunting and fishing), Boots and Saddles (horseback riding), Cycling Club, Cabin and Trail (hiking, maintenance of cabins and trails, wilderness skills), Environmental Studies Division (environmental education), Ledyard Canoe Club, Dartmouth Mountaineering Club, Organic Farm, Dartmouth Ski Patrol, Snowboarding Club, Winter Sports Club, and Women in the Wilderness. There is also a Board of Directors for the DOC, which includes full-time DOC employees to plan Club events, and an Advisory Council which consults with the College administration to plan for more long-term Club events and activities.

Membership in the DOC requires that a member must belong to at least one of the smaller clubs; Cabin and Trail is the most popular. Membership in the DOC is open to members of “the Dartmouth Community” and apparently anyone who pays the nominal membership fees, though this is subject to the approval of the DOC’s general manager. Still, many of the DOC’s facilities are open to the public, though some are reserved exclusively for students, alumni, and College employees. Currently, the Outing Club owns and maintains close to twenty cabins that are located throughout New Hampshire. The DOC is housed on the Dartmouth campus in Robinson Hall (Figure 45).

Among the highlights of the Outing Club are Mt. Moosilauke and the Ravine Lodge, located 42 miles northeast of Hanover. This is the culmination point of the annual Freshman Trips where the freshmen convene in groups after their experiences in the wilderness under the guidance of DOC trip leaders. The lodge is situated on about 4,700 acres of land on Mt.



**Figure 45:** Robinson Hall, headquarters of the Dartmouth Outing Club. Photo by author.

Moosilauke that is largely owned by Dartmouth College, and thus it is frequently referred to as Dartmouth’s “own” mountain.

In the extreme northeastern corner of New Hampshire, Dartmouth also owns what is known as the Second College Grant. The 27,000 acre piece of land, near the border of Maine and slightly south of the Québec border, was given to the College as a “gift” by the state of New Hampshire in 1807. The College uses the land for DOC activities (the Grant has a few cabins on its property) and for logging. A recent column commemorating the bicentennial of the Grant mentions, “Accessible via miles of dirt road, the Grant is a scenic natural area where students, faculty, and employees can experience a range of activities or enjoy the rare sense of solitude that comes from being in a vast wilderness” (S. Smith 2007a). Additionally, “About 4 percent of the Grant is logged each year, producing 7,500 cords of lumber, some of which is fashioned into



campus furniture. . . . Every bookshelf, desk, and dresser (503 full sets) in the recently opened McLaughlin Cluster and Tuck Mall Residence Halls are made from Grant wood, as are some 3,000 beds on campus” (S. Smith 2007a). The same column emphasizes the remoteness and uniqueness of the Grant, balancing its use for profit as well as conservation, and quotes one DOC employee who reminds the reader of the Grant’s special qualities and its true purpose:

Areas that are selectively cut are allowed to recover at least 15 to 20 years, and 10 percent is a designated natural area that cannot be logged. As a result, the grant [sic?] is a vital ecosystem where mountains, river valleys, and forests provide habitat for moose, coyotes, ruffed grouse, peregrine falcons, pine marten, and osprey. The Dead Diamond and Swift Diamond rivers offer cold, clear water for native brook trout, a fish that can only live in the purest water. . . . “It’s truly a unique model of land use. . . . We balance sustainable harvest with recreation and the preservation of natural habitat. But the reason Dartmouth still owns the Grant is not because of the land – it’s because of the people. Members of our community really use this place. They fish in the spring, hike in the summer, hunt in the fall, and back country ski in the winter. We’ve had three generations of Dartmouth families going there every year.” (S.J. Smith 2007a)

Thus there is much of the wonderful outdoor facilities to enjoy – for members of the Dartmouth community. I did not visit the Second Grant during the course of my fieldwork, though I do not feel that it is something that would have appealed to me anyway.

One major Dartmouth tradition that I was truly disappointed to not have the opportunity to study up close is Winter Carnival, “the trademark of Dartmouth College” (DOC Pamphlet, n.d.) and once considered one of the “three major functions of the [Outing] club” (*Vermont Tribune* 1961). Winter Carnival began in 1911 in the early days of the Outing Club, usually held in the mid-winter and revolving around a theme, where Dartmouth would host myriad events and activities, including indoor and outdoor sports competitions (highlighting the Dartmouth ski team), snow and ice sculpture contests, and the invitation of female guests from nearby female colleges for the weekend. The event also hosts numerous parties, and many alumni return to Hanover to take in the festivities of the Carnival weekend. Much to my chagrin, I did not see

much of anything happening for Winter Carnival 2007. Part of this is due to the fact that, according to many sources, Winter Carnival has greatly declined in popularity over the years and is simply “not what it used to be.” I saw only one major snow sculpture on the Green when I was at Dartmouth (Figure 46), and there were undoubtedly many parties that weekend, though, of course, I was not invited to any and I was not about to go and crash them. I also did not want to hang around campus unnecessarily in the frigid February New Hampshire weather. Therefore, because of the lack of any firsthand experiences of mine to include about Winter Carnival, I disappointedly decided to forgo an analysis of it for my study.



**Figure 46:** The main snow sculpture (and only one that I remember seeing) at Winter Carnival 2007. The theme that year was “Down the Rabbit Hole,” with the sculpture representing the white rabbit from Lewis Carroll’s stories. Evidently he was an avid skier. Photo by author.

In this chapter, however, I do focus on some of my direct and indirect experiences with the Dartmouth Outing Club to aid in understanding their key role in helping to define Dartmouth as a place. By employing both ethnographic and archival research in studying how Dartmouth

students, through the vehicle of the DOC, have helped to shape the College and some of their experiences there, I aim to unravel how they play an active role in creating Dartmouth College and “the Dartmouth Experience.” Highlighting the importance of the Outing Club to Dartmouth culture, President Ernest M. Hopkins, in a quote famous at the College, remarked:

I would insist that the man who spends four years in our North Country and does not learn to hear the melody of rustling leaves or does not learn to love the wash of racing brooks over their rocky beds in spring, who has never experienced the repose to be found on lakes and rivers, who has not stood enthralled on the top of Moosilauke on a moonlight night or has not become a worshipper of color as he has seen the sun set from one of Hanover’s hills, who has not thrilled at the whiteness of the snow-clad countryside in winter or at the flaming forest colors of the fall – I would insist that this man has not reached out for some of the most worth-while educational values accessible to him at Dartmouth. (DOC Pamphlet n.d.)

From this quote it is clear just how nature and students’ interactions with nature are so important to being a Dartmouth student. Put more directly, however, President John Dickey “hailed the [Outing] club as the ‘custodians of the factor of place.’ President Dickey said that the College is dependent on place for its unique character and personality, and that the Outing Club personifies this factor” (*The Dartmouth* 1960).

In the following pages, I build on the premise of the Outing Club playing a major role in defining Dartmouth as a place through my experiences observing part of the Freshman Trips, a visit to Mt. Moosilauke and the Ravine Lodge, and the major annual College event Dartmouth Night. In each section I provide the necessary historical background for the topic at hand and combine my own observations and experiences to help gain a deeper insight into the construction of place at Dartmouth College.

### **“Welcome Home”: The Freshman Trips and the Beginnings of the Dartmouth Experience**

For over seventy years, one of the most important and, perhaps for many, the first formal introductions to Dartmouth and Dartmouth culture for freshman is the Freshman Trip. These

trips are organized and conducted under the auspices of the Outing Club. The trips began and grew out of an event in 1935 in which a group of upperclassmen invited some freshmen to join them on a hike from Haverhill, New Hampshire to Hanover before the beginning of the school year (Bryant 1981; DOC website 2008). A detailed history behind the trips and their evolution seems to be lacking, though they reportedly grew quickly in popularity ever since the initial outings. The DOC website (2008) reports that beginning in the late 1980s, the DOC decided that trips should be for all incoming students, though it does not specify who, exactly, participated in the trips before that time. The consistent statistic that I saw and heard reported in numerous places was that around 85 percent of all incoming freshmen participate in Freshman Trips.

The trips themselves occur during the first ten-to-fourteen days or so before the beginning of Dartmouth's fall term. Students arrive in groups of roughly 100 students called "sections" each day (DOC website 2008). The first several sections are students from New England and New York who are bused to Hanover and return home before the school year begins (DOC website 2008). The remaining sections are students who fly in for their trips and move into their dormitories after they return to Hanover (DOC website 2008), though I am sure that there is some flexibility to the trips' organization. Upon leaving the Dartmouth campus, however, the students in each section, colloquially referred to as "trippees," split into smaller groups to pursue outdoor activities of their choosing under the guidance of two trip leaders, often simply called "leaders." The smaller groups, consisting of maybe about ten tripees or so, participate in a variety of outdoor activities such as camping, canoeing or kayaking, mountain climbing, fishing, horseback riding, or hiking, plus several other options. Trips last for five days and end at the Ravine Lodge, where the various groups from each section reconvene before they return to Hanover. Students run the entire operation.

Writing about some of the logistics behind the Freshman Trips, Chamberlain (1980) keenly observed, “This item is surely not what it may seem at first glance – a huge troop of fledgling Ivy Leaguers, resplendent in new back-to-campus fashions . . . romping off on a ‘high adventure’ overnight in the fields out back of their dorms.” This was my impression as well, as I describe shortly. But he continues, noting that the trips are “an earnest effort to acquaint students with the beauty beyond the ivy on the library walls” (Chamberlain 1980). I suspect that that is only part of the picture, however.

Heinrichs (1990) provided a journalistic description of a Freshman Trip from 1988, calling the trips an “initiation rite” and citing “The point” behind the trips “was to make them [the freshmen] all feel part of the institution, to give them a sense of Dartmouth’s rich outdoor tradition, to give them somebody to say hello to during the first weeks away from home.” The DOC itself explains the “mission” behind Freshman Trips is “to provide a safe and positive outdoor experience for all incoming students, so that they may be warmly welcomed to the Dartmouth community and have the opportunity to learn about our natural surroundings, bond with classmates, and connect with dedicated upperclassmen that act as role models and mentors” (DOC website 2008). It continues, “The primary **goal** of DOC Trips is to enable current students to **welcome** the incoming class to Dartmouth while providing them an introduction to their classmates and the outdoors. . . . Trips have become a **Dartmouth tradition** for all incoming students and are ingrained in **Dartmouth culture**” (DOC website 2008, emphasis in original).

One Dartmouth alumnus active in the DOC succinctly explained, “Trips aren’t just for those interested in the outdoors. . . . It’s about bonding and introducing people to Dartmouth” (S.J. Smith 2007c). In the same column, a Dartmouth alumnus and administrator remarked on the key role the trips play in Dartmouth’s place identity: “So much of Dartmouth’s identity is its

sense of place. Students who participate in Trips connect quickly and deeply to the College. When they start the fall term, they don't begin in this challenging academic environment alone: they are already part of a community that has a shared experience” (S.J. Smith 2007c). Again, though these descriptions and interpretations of the Freshman Trips are agreeable and conducive to helping establish my arguments on the significance of the Outing Club to Dartmouth’s identity, I suspect that they are offering only part of the picture as to the reasons behind the trips and the purposes of the DOC as a whole.

Although I had heard about all the basics of the trips before I came to Dartmouth, I was a little puzzled about when or where it all took place or how it was organized. It was not until early September 2006 that I noticed the campus becoming a little more active that I deduced that the trips were about to begin. This was most obvious from the occurrences in front of Robinson Hall every afternoon. For a few days in early September, every time I came to campus, I noticed groups of students with suitcases and backpacks congregated in front of Robinson. I realized that most of them were freshmen, as I often saw parents dropping off their sons or daughters with supplies that appeared to be for the purposes of an outdoor excursion of some kind.

At first, I did not think much of it, until I happened to walk by Robinson one day and take note of the festive atmosphere. This atmosphere was especially noticeable, given the fact that both Dartmouth and Hanover were practically dead for the last two weeks or so of August after the majority of the sophomores had left campus following the end of the summer term. But the change was not subtle. Music was *blasting* outside of Robinson and some very (literally) colorful characters were frolicking about, interacting with the young freshmen. I then deduced, “This must be the time when freshmen come to Dartmouth to run around in the woods before school starts!” (I had not yet completed the background research on the Outing Club at that

point, hence my less-than-sophisticated initial observation.) Realizing that this was important material for my research, I casually observed from a distance one day and decided to return the next day and get a closer look. I decided to ask for some informal permission first, just to let someone know I would be there observing the activities and to check if that was okay, so I “blitzed” someone in the DOC administration, though I did not receive a response by the next day. I then decided I would just do it in person when I got there the next day.

Taking into account that most of the activity outside of Robinson began in the mid-afternoon, I made it a point to hike up the hill to campus to be sure to arrive in time to catch all of the action. And things were in full swing on the afternoon that I arrived with the intention of studying the events up close. I anxiously approached the grassy area in front of Robinson and stood off to the side for a few moments before I was ready to let myself be noticed. A banner was hanging from the front of Robinson colorfully declaring to the incoming freshmen, “Welcome Home ‘10s.” I was particularly intrigued with how the sign actually used the word *home*. Clearly, Dartmouth regarded itself as much more than an institution of higher learning (Figure 47).

In front of Robinson, the “trippees” were simply hanging out, meeting each other and talking to each other about their vital statistics – “Where are you from?” “What’s your major?” were typical questions I overheard some tripees ask each other. There was clearly some understandable excitement among them as they were beginning their college experience.

It was hard to hear much of anything, though, given the near deafening music playing, obviously a device used to locate the site of the activities, but also undoubtedly to help create a festive and welcoming atmosphere. Isn’t that the sort of reception you would want at your new

home? The music played was an eclectic mix of contemporary pop, dance, and hip-hop, but also a healthy amount of 1980s pop and, if memory serves, even a few show tunes.



**Figure 47:** “Welcome Home 10s.” Photo by author.

Onlookers (presumably College faculty and staff) offered some surprised and often confused reactions as they strolled past Robinson on the sidewalk. A good number of parents were there as well and initially seemed a little put off from the spectacle, though they quickly became more relaxed and amused after standing around and watching for a few minutes. The initial shock and curiosity was mostly directed at the members of H-Croo who were the ones in charge of the event.

H-Croo (a curious shortening of “Hanover Crew”) are likely the first members of the Outing Club that the arriving tripees meet upon reaching Dartmouth. My understanding is that H-Croo is sort of the Hanover branch of the Outing Club that greets the incoming tripees and sends off the tripees returning from their Freshman Trips. There are some other “croos” in the



Outing Club, another one of which I will describe later on, that play various roles in the functioning of the DOC.

But to stop there in describing the H-Croo would be unthinkable. For the H-Croo are not what I would describe as a typical welcoming committee, which partially explains the often astonished reactions from parents, the abovementioned passer-bys, or even a trained social scientist. Though this reaction is probably not an accident and perhaps planned to some degree, it does not take long for the uninitiated at Dartmouth to realize that it is all in good fun. Adequately describing the H-Croo in full would be a challenge for even the most poetic among us, I believe, though I will do my best in attempting to provide even a trite account of what I saw.

H-Croo consisted of about a dozen individuals, all upperclassmen, and all are evidently quite committed and involved with the operations of the Outing Club. They are most noticeable for their flamboyant and outrageous outfits and (sometimes dyed) hair – bright, sometimes fluorescent, mismatched colors and sometimes gender-bending pieces of clothing, giving them a cartoonish look and appeal, almost as if they were extras from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. They are clearly not shy, at least while in costume and character, as they provide an outgoing, friendly, playful, helpful, and undeniably theatrical welcome to those who have freshly arrived to begin their studies at Dartmouth, both inside and outside of the classroom (and at least while in costume and character).

This welcome is probably most apparent when a new group of tripees arrives on campus together on a Dartmouth coach, which has likely picked them up from the airport, probably from Manchester, Boston, or New York. Each time a bus pulled up and stopped in front of Robinson, several members of H-Croo enthusiastically ran up to facetiously intimidate the tripees.

Meanwhile, the tripees unloaded their stuff from the bus and dumped it to take part in the jovial scene in front of Robinson, either by chatting and interacting (and some dancing) with their fellow tripees or H-Croo, passing the time after checking in and receiving a DOC t-shirt to wait for the remaining groups of students to arrive (Figure 48). At the same time, other trips return to campus, and they are greeted again by H-Croo in a similar fashion. I found it difficult to differentiate, with the constant arrival and departure of people, exactly who was arriving and who was leaving.



**Figure 48:** Tripees arrive at Dartmouth and are greeted by H-Croo in front of Robinson Hall. Photo by author.

After a sizeable group assembled in front of Robinson, I took this cue to mean that things were about to begin. To be on the safe side, I decided it was best to introduce myself to someone in H-Croo and let them know that I would be observing and ask if that would be okay. I briefly watched one guy handing out paperwork and such and waited until he was not too busy. I then approached him and held out my hand, offering a simple “Hi,” to which he promptly extended

his hand and earnestly responded, “Welcome home,” just like the banner on the front of Robinson read. I gave a nervous laugh and asked if there was any way I could speak with “the person in charge” for a moment. “Sure,” he said, and walked off for a minute to fetch the chief H-Croo person who came over to me after a minute or two.

Initially, the H-Croo chief had a bit of a concerned look on his face, perhaps thinking that I had a problem or complaint of some sort, but as he came over and introduced himself I smiled and told him my name and briefly described my project and that I wanted to just watch the beginning of the Freshman Trip activities and maybe take a few notes. I showed him a copy of my letter from the Dartmouth administration since it was the only real proof that I was “legitimate” on the Dartmouth campus, and he looked it over and seemed satisfied with my intentions. “I’ve heard that the Outing Club is a pretty big deal and that it’s a major aspect of the College’s culture and identity, which is why I just wanted to check things out for a day or so,” I explained. “It’s a *huge* deal. *Very* important to Dartmouth culture,” he affirmed. I asked again if he was okay with me hanging around and he offered a quite sincere “Sure, I don’t think that would be a problem at all.” Feeling satisfied with his friendliness and enthusiasm about my research, I replied “great” and went back to the sidelines to watch the rest of the activities.

For a while, most of the activity centered around the music playing as both H-Croo and the trippees danced and played a variety of games (Figure 49). There was a clear emphasis on group participation, and I think I stood out because I did not participate, as I sat or kneeled to the side with my notebook, close enough to carefully and intently watch what was happening, but far away enough to not look like part of the group. Some of the activity was focused on smaller groups, but after a while the trippees came under the command of the H-Croo chief, who emceed using a microphone. At this time, the trippees as a whole were taught Dartmouth trademarks



**Figure 49:** Some members of H-Croo cavorting with trippees in front of Robinson Hall. Photo by author.

such as “The Salty Dog,” which might be described as the College’s folk dance and a game called “Bear, Fish, Mosquito.” Apparently, both of these activities are well-ingrained Dartmouth traditions. Watching the spectacle made me wonder what the purpose of it all was aside from being a fun, social activity. The DOC and the Freshman Trips are student-run activities, and they are not part of an official orientation program for the College. In fact, the scene reminded me more of a bizarre type of summer camp with a Peter Pan-like bent to it as, going by the tradition, young freshmen arrived in Hanover each year to begin their Dartmouth education, but before the serious studying begins, they are whisked away into the wilderness by fanciful characters for several days of fun and games. Welcome home, indeed.

Not long after this thought occurred to me, however, the wackiness ceased for a short time and H-Croo sat together on the front steps of Robinson and formally introduced themselves by passing a microphone. They basically just explained who they were, where they were from,

what they were studying, and some of their activities and accomplishments at Dartmouth. The tripees obediently sat and listened, as did I.

The group then split and returned with swimsuits and towels. They then reconvened in front of Dartmouth Hall to play another series of getting-to-know-you type games on the hill in front of the building, this time directly involving each tripee. I went up to sit on the front steps of Dartmouth Hall to watch and take notes. I wondered if there was any significance to holding this part of the program in front of Old Dartmouth. After the games ended, they met their trip leaders and broke up into smaller groups and were led off to a campus swimming pool. I did not follow them, as I felt uncomfortable doing so for that part of the program. I later learned that the tripees had to take a swim test to verify their basic swimming abilities before they went off on their trips.

After the swim tests, it was getting close to dinner time. This was clear from the fact that food was being grilled on the front porch of the Collis Center. Sensing that more activity was afoot, I made my way over to Collis to hang out before the tripees came back for dinner. I noticed yet another welcome banner hanging front the Collis façade boldly declaring, alongside the Dartmouth seal, “WE’RE GLAD YOU’RE HERE” (Figure 50). Maybe so, but I did not feel right sitting there and watching people eat, so I went into town to get something for myself. I also erroneously assumed that dinner was the end of the evening and thus the end of my day.

But on campus the next day, I ran into the H-Croo chief again. I thanked him for letting me hang out and watch the stuff and asked if there was anything else about the program that I should know about. He told me about the Safety Talk that happens after dinner. “You mean there’s *more*?” I asked, a little surprised. Indeed there was, and it was starting at about nine that evening with the new group of tripees that had arrived that day. I asked if it would be okay



**Figure 50:** “We’re Glad You’re Here,” alongside the Dartmouth seal in front of Collis. Photo by author.

again if I came by just to watch and he confirmed that it would, so I said I would be back later that evening to eagerly check out the Safety Talk.

### **The Safety Talk**

Although it was unknown to me before I arrived at Dartmouth, once I got there and started looking into the Freshman Trips I heard about the so-called Safety Talks that happen the night before each section of tripees leaves for their trip. All I really heard beforehand was that it was just something that needed to be seen to be believed, and I trusted that claim given what I had already witnessed with the antics of H-Croo.

Following what I was told earlier, I arrived at Collis a little before nine that evening and waited around the building until the section of tripees came back for the event. I followed the big group as everyone herded in to the area of the building that had been cleared of its normal assortment of tables and chairs, allowing for a spacious gathering place on the floor. A “stage”

area was set up and sectioned off where the fireplace was, and the group sat and waited for the talk to begin. I sat along with everyone, though off to the side, crouching down with my notebook and pen in hand. Although I had my camera out, I opted not to shoot any pictures for that part of the tripees' program since that would have likely been a distraction to everyone else.

I noticed on the other side of the room that some other students, apparently not part of H-Croo and possibly not part of the organization had come by to watch the talk. Some faculty and other adults were there as well. But I was there on the floor with the other tripees (probably between 100 and 120), though no one acknowledged that I was there, despite the nods and friendly smiles I offered to those around me.

After the place was packed, H-Croo began by discussing the necessity of safety on the Freshman Trips, leading the tripees to believe that the next three or so hours of their lives would be taken up by a necessary crash course in outdoor safety or wilderness survival. And, from my judgment of the reaction of the tripees to this news, most of them seemed to fall for it. This was augmented by the suddenly serious and solemn tone that H-Croo provided. Plus, roll was taken for each group of tripees to be sure that all of the students were there.

The seriousness lasted for a good fifteen or twenty minutes and, as the talk slowly progressed, it became clearer that the "Safety Talk" was a ruse for even more fun and games. Suddenly, the course of the talk changed to singing and dancing from H-Croo, which caused a confused but pleased (and possibly relieved) reaction from the crowd. I will not reconstruct in detail what happened because, once again, H-Croo's actions and performances are nearly indescribable unless they are witnessed firsthand and also because of space limitations. But what I can say is that for about the next two hours, the tripees (and I) were treated to a series of skits,

dance numbers, and medleys all performed by H-Croo in their typical flamboyant style. The songs were semi-original, as the lyrics to popular and well-known songs had been rewritten and reworked to appeal to the incoming freshman class with a quite humorous bent to them. I found the performance to be quite impressive, as it was clear that it had taken a good bit of time, planning, and talent to coordinate such a show. Some of the songs, skits, and medleys lasted for *several* minutes and I found them to be quite clever. The reaction from the tripees was favorable as well.

At the end of all of this, *everyone* stood up and sang the alma mater. I felt that with this there was some sort of unifying action by including everyone. Also, I thought that it was probably yet another form of indoctrination to remind the students where they were and what institution they were now a part of. It was clear that many of the tripees were still learning the song, as it is one of the more important pieces of Dartmouthabilia.

Then, as the sentimentality slowly dissipated, loud dance music, similar to the type played outside of Robinson earlier, blared from Collis's loudspeakers and the place became an impromptu dance party. I just sort of laughed at all of this and stood off to the side to let everyone have their fun. This lasted for only a short while, though, as it was around eleven o'clock at that time and H-Croo announced that the tripees should head back for their dormitories for the evening, as they should get as much rest as possible before they head out for their trips early the next morning.

As the freshmen slowly filed out of Collis after their brief "dance party," I lagged behind to watch the mass of students leave to be sure to get the full picture of the crowd as they retired to the dorms for the evening. As I neared the front door, I noticed two men in uniform projecting a strong air of self-importance and superficially resembling police officers standing off to the



side. They were both scanning the room looking for something or someone, and I did not think anything of it until I noticed one eye me closely, sizing me up as if to see that I met some sort of description, and stopped me to say, “Hey, can we speak with you for a minute?”

“Sure,” I answered calmly, wondering what they wanted.

“Can we see your ID?” he asked.

“What ID do you want to see?” I asked, slightly confused.

“Your Dartmouth ID.”

“I don’t have one,” I responded.

“What do you mean you don’t have one?” he asked in near disbelief.

“I don’t have one,” I repeated.

“Are you a student here?” he asked skeptically.

“No,” I answered.

Then, in a demanding and accusatory tone he said, “Business hours are over. You’re not supposed to be here. What are you doing here?” I answered that I had come to the Safety Talk as part of my research for my Ph.D. “Oh yeah? What’s your research about?” he ordered. I then offered a concise and rather diluted description of my project, unclear if it made any sense to the security officers. They did not appear to be that interested anyway. After I had explained it, the first guard said, “Well, I don’t see what your research has to do with being here.” I then explained that I had heard that the Outing Club was a major feature of Dartmouth culture and that it was important that I came by to the Safety Talk that evening just to watch the event and take a few notes since it was part of the major operation behind the Outing Club. I mentioned that I had even spoken to a member of H-Croo beforehand to explain who I was and asked if I could attend the Safety Talk and my request was not met with any objection.

Still unsatisfied, the guard then said in a semi-serious tone, “Have you been asking people where they were staying?”

“What? What do you mean?” I asked, very confused.

“It’s a pretty straightforward question,” he shot back sarcastically.

“No, I haven’t spoken to anyone. I don’t know what you mean.”

“Well, we’ve received a call that there’s a suspicious person at Collis and that you’re making some people here uncomfortable. And we were told that you were asking freshmen where they were staying on campus.”

“Well that’s not true at all,” I confirmed.

“What’s your name?” he asked and I told him. “Do you have any affiliation with the College at all?” I then proceeded to explain that I was a visiting researcher. They continued to probe me further, asking things like where I *did* go to school and if I had “any proof” of my status at the College.

“Yes, I do,” I responded, taking off my backpack and taking out the photocopy of the letter sent to me by one of the deans granting me the temporary appointment as a Visiting Scholar. The guard read it over carefully as if he were trying to judge the letter’s authenticity and he then radioed back to the security office and gave them my name to check and see if I was in the Dartmouth directory. After about thirty seconds the person on the other end of the radio confirmed that I was “legitimate.”

The first guard then asked if I had “any proof” that I was, in fact, the person whose name was mentioned in the letter. By this point I was getting a little annoyed and asked what else they wanted from me. He asked if I had any ID at all, and I said that I did, taking out my driver’s license. The guard then took my license and copied down information from it in a little

notebook. He then asked where I lived and took down my local address. I thought that this was unnecessary and a little extreme, but I complied.

Still eyeing me suspiciously, the guard lectured to me that anyone with an affiliation with the College needs to have a Dartmouth ID, citing concerns about “people who shouldn’t be here.” He informed me that “this College is a very tight-knit community and people who don’t belong here stick out like a sore thumb,” though he did not really elaborate on what determined whether one “belonged” there or not, continuing to hint that I still was apparently not wanted there. I said that I had tried to obtain an ID but could not. My story was still not registering with them, and they asked where I went to try and get one. I said I had gone to the ID office in Thayer Hall and that the employees there would not help me because I was not a Dartmouth student or employee. From the looks on their faces, they seemed to have trouble believing me.

They asked if I had spoken with or met with any of the administrators, and I confirmed that I had. They then quizzed me on some of the names of administrators, though I always provided a satisfactory response. After this, the first guard said that he believed everything I had told him, and the fact that I had a copy of my letter helped my situation, but he continued, “I’m not sure what to make of you, because everything you’ve said has checked out. We’re going to let you go because you’re not really trespassing, but based on what we were told over the phone, we don’t know what to think.” There was an awkward silence because I was unsure of how to respond to that until after a minute he continued, “I’m going to ask you to leave right now and to not come back to any of these buildings [Collis, Thayer, Robinson] until you get a Dartmouth ID.”

Since I thought I had already gathered all of the information I needed for that night I just said “okay” and left. H-Croo, however, had returned from escorting the trippedes outside and

stayed in the background at Collis, watching me suspiciously, not a single member coming by to ask what was happening. As I left Collis, I looked back at the “We’re Glad You’re Here” banner hanging from the face of the building and just shook my head. Glad *who* was here? The streets of Hanover were empty and quiet by this point and the freshmen had obviously gone to bed for the night, getting ready to leave for their trips early the next morning.

It was a long and uncomfortably quiet walk home that night. After I got there I sat down feeling confused, alarmed, even mortified! Worried that I had somehow jeopardized my standing with the College or potentially alienated myself from everyone there, I made a late-night call to my dissertation advisor in Baton Rouge. We discussed the situation and he suggested that the next day I should go talk to the administrators that I knew and maybe someone in the main security office.

After a difficult night, I walked back to campus early the next afternoon, passing H-Croo in front of Robinson as they prepared for the next incoming group of tripees and straight into Parkhurst to try and find the deans that I had spoken to before. Fortunately, some were there, and I introduced myself again and explained the situation. They said that they had received the report from security and were skeptical that I was actually up to anything questionable or inappropriate. It was then that I realized that the fact that I had gone through the proper channels months before and I had been approved with even a simple de facto designation from the College greatly helped both my case and me.

After a short while at Parkhurst, I took some deans’ suggestions to go over to the Safety and Security office (I had just assumed that they were actual campus police beforehand, which they are not) and introduce myself to some people over there. I did just that and spoke for another short while with the head guy in security who was quite friendly and said that, from his

point of view, he had no suspicion that I had done anything wrong, and he acknowledged that I was fully cooperative with the officers the night before. I asked about getting an ID, explaining that I had attempted to get one in the past but was told that I was “an unusual case” and that “it probably isn’t necessary” for me to have an ID. Although I would have felt much better about getting one (especially considering the events of the previous night), I let it go.

I did learn, however, that an unidentified member of H-Croo was one of the people who was apparently “uncomfortable” from my presence and took the liberty of calling security to come and check me out. I found that to be a very telling moment of how people at Dartmouth perceived outsiders or people who, for some reason, did not appear to “fit in” to their unwritten standards. After I left the security office, I thought about the situation some more and my thoughts of shame and guilt turned to resentment.

I think what bothered me the most about the night before was the fact that I had been there for most of the evening and nobody even bothered to ask me who I was or what I was doing there. It was as if they just assumed that because they did not know me that I was up to something devious. I would have had no trouble explaining myself, but since no one asked I figured that nobody seemed to mind that I was there. How silly of me. There I was, a guest of the College, conducting a legitimate academic study at a world-renowned institution – ostensibly a leader in promoting scholarship – and someone had completely jumped the gun and called security on me for no apparent reason. I had not spoken to or bothered anyone that night. I was just sitting off to the side at Collis, watching the spectacle like everyone else, quietly taking notes. Perhaps even stranger was the fact that, by that point, I had been at Dartmouth for over two months, working on campus every day, and almost no one had said a word to me up until then. I thought about it some more a few days later and realized that even when I spoke to the

administrators they were rather stand-offish toward me. Instead of saying “Sorry for the confusion,” they gave me more of a “Be more careful next time.”

But the story does not end there.

Two days later, on a Friday, I was on campus again working on my research. It was in the late afternoon when I decided to relax on the Green and admire the campus, enjoying some of the warm, late summer weather before grabbing something to eat and heading home for the evening. I was on the Green directly across the street from Collis and noticed that H-Croo had nearly finished setting up for the next batch of tripeeps for their Safety Talk that evening. I had been sitting on the Green for a while, minding my own business, until I had the urge to use the restroom. I figured, with no one around, that it was safe to leave my backpack on the Green for just a few minutes, and I walked across the street to go into one of the buildings and quickly use the restroom. The only one that was open was Thayer, so I found my way to the restroom in the basement and promptly returned to my spot on the Green.

I remained there for maybe another thirty minutes when I decided to call it a night and got up to walk home. I thought I might try to get some dinner in town first, so I walked across the street again toward Collis and I suddenly heard a “Hey! Can I talk to you for a minute?!” shouted toward me. I looked over my shoulder to see two Safety and Security officers, different from the previous two, walking over to me. I stopped, and they approached me and asked me what I was doing. I answered that I was walking home for the evening. Then one of the officers said, “I thought one of our officers told you to stay away from these buildings.” I informed them that I had no intention of going near them.

Then the same guy said, “Well, we got a call a little while ago and we were told that you were seen hanging around the buildings.” I replied that I had been sitting on the Green, minding

my own business, but I had gone inside Thayer for a few minutes. He asked me what I was doing in there and, starting to get agitated, I said “I went in there to go to the bathroom. Is that okay? Would you prefer if I pissed right here on the Green in front of everyone?!” They chuckled understandingly and reassured me that “No, that’s okay.”

One officer mentioned that, once again, someone from H-Croo saw me go in Thayer and called security to come back and question me. I was getting tired of this, and I explained how I was at the College to conduct research (having to give yet another watered down description of my project), and that the administration knew I was there and what I was doing, as well as the officers’ own boss in Safety and Security. After they heard this, they were noticeably more relaxed. Once again I flashed my letter of invitation from the College, and they asked me some more empty questions, and even for my address and phone number in Hanover. I saw no real need for them to have this information, but I provided it to avoid any conflict and also because of the fact that I really had nothing to hide. They were much less forceful than the previous two officers, showing little concern about me being there, and they dismissed me. I continued on my way home after that. One irony from all of this was that when I got home and checked my Dartmouth e-mail account, I found a response from the person I had contacted several days before asking about observing H-Croo and such and the response expressed no objection. I had to laugh after reading that.

After all of this blew over, however, I made it a point to always carry a photocopy of the letter from the dean with me whenever I was on campus in case I ever ran into another similar situation or someone else questioned whether or not I “belonged” at Dartmouth. I started to wonder, “Is this how the College treats all of its guests? Surely they have visiting researchers here all the time. Does everyone else get the third degree just for sitting on the Green?” It was

only early September. The school year had not yet officially begun, and I was already starting to seriously question my preconceptions and initial attitudes about Dartmouth.

### **An Evening at the Ravine Lodge**

Though still feeling rather put off from my experiences with H-Croo the week before, I nonetheless found it necessary to continue the ethnographic portion of my study of the Outing Club. I was unable to participate on an actual Freshman Trip, which I really was not interested in doing anyway aside from intellectual curiosity. Plus, I could only imagine the difficulty involved in trying to ask to participate in something like that given my experiences after just hanging out and watching the freshman welcome and Safety Talk. But I did feel that it might be worthwhile to look into the tail end of the Freshman Trips and the culmination of each trippee section's excursion into the New Hampshire wilderness for several days. The details of what I know of the trips are based solely on what I have heard and read. I cannot elaborate on what occurs while the trippees are enjoying their trips because, much like Winter Carnival, I do not have any ethnographic evidence from my time at Dartmouth to add to this part of my study. Also, it might be best to not speculate about the trips, despite some of the amusing anecdotes that the freshmen have had to share from the records that I have seen.

But an evening at the Moosilauke Ravine Lodge would hopefully be different as long as I took cues from my prior experiences. With that in mind, I e-mailed the general address of the Ravine Lodge Crew ("Lodj Croo") beforehand, briefly explaining myself and my study, and seeking their approval if I were to come up to the Lodge in a few days to continue work on that part of my project. Fortunately, I received a prompt and friendly response from one of the main Lodj Croo members affirming that I would certainly be welcome to come up and "observe" for



an evening. I was pleased and excited to hear this, given the fascinating story behind Mt. Moosilauke and the Ravine Lodge and my decision to include it in my study.

Forty-two miles northeast of Hanover stands Mt. Moosilauke, “Dartmouth’s wilderness door to the heart of the White Mountains” (DOC pamphlet, n.d.). Moosilauke has an elevation of slightly over 4,800 feet and is the most westerly of the higher White Mountain peaks (Bryant 1981). Its association with the College dates back to 1933 when the DOC first purchased land there, and the land holdings gradually increased over the years via gifts from alumni and other foundations to about 4,700 acres, including the summit of the mountain (Bryant 1981). The summit property of the mountain was donated to the College by the alumni Charles and E.K. Woodworth in 1920 (Monahan 1950).

There are varying stories behind the name of the mountain. One claims that it was originally named Moosehillock because of the large amount of moose that ranged on its slopes (Monahan 1930: 196). Another story alleges that the name comes from an Indian word *Moosi*, meaning “bald” and *Auke* for “place,” “with the ‘l’ added for the sake of euphony” (Monahan 1930: 196). I have also heard varying pronunciations of *Moosilauke* as well, with some pronouncing it “Moos-il-aw-kee” and others “Moos-il-lock,” though I was introduced to it as the former. I also came across some dispute as to the precise location of the mountain, with some parties placing it within the town limits of Warren, New Hampshire and others in Benton. Consulting any general road map of New Hampshire, however, would inform one that Mt. Moosilauke is more or less midway between those two towns, and perhaps closer to Glencliff than the other two.

Particularities and trivia aside, the main point of interest to my study and this part of the chapter is the Outing Club’s Ravine Lodge (Figure 51). Although the original Ravine Lodge was



**Figure 51:** The Ravine Lodge at Mt. Moosilauke, with trippees and Lodj Croo members hanging around outside before dinner. Photo by author.

built in 1938, the story behind it extends significantly further back. A precursor to the lodge was a stone structure named the Prospect House, built in 1860 (Monahan 1930: 196). The Prospect House once served as a hotel, though it burned down in 1942 (Monahan 1930: 197). The DOC built a cabin on Mt. Moosilauke in 1920, though it also burned down in 1935 (Monahan 1930; Stevenson 1936: 11). Alumnus Dick Butterfield drew the plans for the Lodge and alumnus Dick Goddard designed the bunks on the property (*Manchester Union* 1939), though the concept for the lodge came from the direction of the famous Maine woodsman and Outing Club advisor Ross McKenney with the intention of using it as a summer camp and a winter ski lodge (DOC pamphlet, n.d.). It was known as the Ravine Camp until it became the Ravine Lodge in 1949 “to describe better the nature of the facilities” (Monahan 1950: 24). Various upgrades were made to the lodge and the property over the years, though it slowly deteriorated until the early 1970s when it was revived following the actions of former Dartmouth ski coach Al Merrill and from

the encouragement of Dartmouth President John Dickey (DOC website 2008). It was Dickey who especially promoted its use for the Freshman Trips because he saw them as a means to create a “sense of place,” which he saw as critical to the college experience (DOC website 2008). And I had the privilege of witnessing this aspect of the Dartmouth Experience up close on my visit to the lodge one Monday evening in September.

It was about a fifty-minute drive northeast of Hanover, partially on an uncomfortably curvy road, passing several small, rural mountain towns on my way up to “the Lodge.” (It was even more uncomfortably curvy on the way back, having to drive in the dark, with the constant worry that I was going to hit a bear or a moose.) I was eager to see what it was all about, as this was clearly a sample of Dartmouth culture away from Dartmouth proper. I arrived in the late afternoon, not long before dusk.

After some more sharp curves, I eventually turned onto a road that literally led into the woods that formed a cul-de-sac. Not many other cars were parked there, and I obeyed the sign to park on a particular side of the road. There, after descending a rustic stairway, stood the Lodge. I entered and saw a good number of people frolicking about outside, and immediately I could tell who was a member of the Lodj Croo. Much like H-Croo, they were dressed in a similar fashion, with wild clothes and outlandish hair, though I was not nearly as taken aback by it this time. I also received some friendly “hellos” from the Lodj Croo, as they seemed to know who I was without having to introduce myself. I vaguely remember trying to at least talk to a few of them and identify myself, but they seemed much more ho-hum and casual about the fact that I was there. (I later learned that the person I had been in touch with earlier had informed them that I would be there, which made me feel considerably better and more relaxed.)

Before checking out the interior of the lodge in detail, I decided to inspect the grounds first, as the sun was rapidly setting, providing for a beautiful new view of the coming New England autumn that I had not yet experienced in my time there. Of course, it was augmented by the turning leaves in the forests that surrounded the Lodge. From that I deduced that the decision for the site of the Lodge to be located here could not have been an accident.

Outside of the Lodge, however, was some bustling activity, as sort of makeshift soccer and football fields had been set up, along with Twister mats and a crude slip n' slide (Figure 52). Trippees (not the same group that I had seen before) were engaging in various activities with members of the Lodj Croo, such as playing these or other games, while other smaller groups of tripeeps had congregated, and they just sat there and chatted and got to know each other. Apparently the formula for allowing freshmen to befriend each other before the school year began appeared to be quite successful from what I gathered. Sure enough, the tripeeps were wearing their "outdoor" clothes. I saw a few cabins on the property as well, where the tripeeps stayed during their Lodge visit (Figure 53).

I surveyed the grounds a bit, encountering some of the trails that lead to the Lodge from the surrounding forest and mountainside until the focus shifted to the inside of the Lodge when it was evident that dinner would soon be served. I followed the herd of tripeeps into the Lodge. The tripeeps were initially prevented from going upstairs to the dining hall, though I was unclear why (I had half-correctly assumed that Lodj Croo was still setting up the plates and silverware, though there was much more to come, as I explain momentarily). The tripeeps were kept in a sort of basement nicknamed "the library," which was decorated with many old, nostalgic pictures on the walls recalling the "old days" of the Lodge and the Outing Club's early experiences at Mt. Moosilauke. Downstairs also housed the restrooms and some showers which were what one



**Figure 52:** Trippees and Lodj Croo members playing around outside the Lodge before dinner. Photo by author.



**Figure 53:** One of the cabins on the Ravine Lodge property. Photo by author.

would expect to find at a typical lodge or summer cabin – minimalistic, outdoorsy, Arcadian, but with some amusing decorations that I will let the reader discover for him or herself. But I will say that it added to the charm and appeal of the Lodge, as this was all clearly part of the purpose behind and experience of going up to “the Lodge.” There was an obvious and deliberate attempt to create a sense of place.

The tripees continued to socialize downstairs and I sensed that some were a bit perturbed as to why they were being kept there. I, however, had the fortune of going upstairs before dinner and I began to explore the dining hall, the kitchen, and get a peak of the rooms where the Lodj Croo slept while spending their time during the Trips there (basically, it was just cots from what I saw). The kitchen was buzzing with Croo members preparing dinner and again I tried to interact a little. They offered polite but terse greetings, but I just took that as a response to me arriving at a busy time.

The dining area was by far the most interesting part of the Lodge, with its myriad decorations on the walls – deer and moose heads (wearing hats and bandanas, of course), trail maps and signs, pictures, and seemingly random junk strewn around, all with a campy appeal to it (Figures 54 and 55). The tables were neatly set with (Dartmouth) plates and silverware, with settings for well over one hundred (Figure 56). I realized that I was not the only guest there that night aside from the tripees, as traditionally, a faculty member gives a talk, and the Croo mentioned that President Wright and Mrs. Wright would also make an appearance after dinner. Some time passed until it was clear that dinner was about to begin, so I picked a seat in the back corner. The lights dimmed sharply, and I noticed that many of the Lodj Croo members began taking their places and seemingly “getting in character.” At that point it became clear to me that this evening would include more than just dinner.



**Figure 54:** A taste of the interior decorations at the Ravine Lodge. Photo by author.



**Figure 55:** Some trail signs on the walls of the dining area at the Ravine Lodge. Photo by author.



**Figure 56:** Dinner tables set up, with a decent view of the interior of the Ravine Lodge. Photo by author.

Shortly after I sat down, the tripees were led upstairs, immediately reacting to what I think we could all sense was going to be more fun from the Dartmouth Outing Club. The room was almost entirely dark – even the windows were covered – and the tripees filed upstairs. I could hear their reactions in their voices, as there seemed to be some initial confusion with the dark, and then sort of surprised laughs as if to say “We should have known something was up,” and then to a sense of excitement for the pending entertainment.

After the tripees stumbled to find their seats, the “show” began. Again, I opted to not photograph this part of my Lodge visit because it would have been distracting and would have definitely encroached on the performance. (I had enough difficulty as it was taking notes in the dark!) I am also at a bit of a loss for words to adequately describe what happened; then again, I am not even sure that it *could* be satisfactorily described or if it is even *supposed* to be describable. But once again the tripees and the other guests were treated to an elaborate and



theatrical spectacle, only this time from the Lodj Croo. Like H-Croo, they had reworked familiar songs to apply to the tripees and Dartmouth, complete with complementary music and lights. This time even called for some group participation and the Croo members were a bit more aggressive than H-Croo, getting into everyone's face (including mine) and even touching people (including me), but in a playful and sometimes flirtatious way. One has to give them a lot of credit for never breaking character and not missing a beat as far as the songs and dances went. The Croo was clearly very committed and "into it."

Dinner was served during the show, which might qualify this as a sort of "dinner theater." I felt a little guilty eating their food, but there was plenty for everyone, and no one really seemed to care. Dinner itself was rather basic and bland: soup, salad, lasagna, corn, and water, and some kind of cake for dessert. I saw some significance in the simplicity of it all, as I address in this chapter's conclusion. A longstanding tradition at the Lodge that I had heard about was that for breakfast, the Croo serves the tripees green eggs and ham. This is likely a sort of novelty event, though it is primarily a reference to Dartmouth alumnus Theodor Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss. Unfortunately, I did not have the rare privilege of being served green eggs and ham, but I digress.

Nearing the end of dinner, I seem to remember some more light that was allowed into the room, as the trip leaders (not in wild costumes like the Lodj Croo) were each introduced and given ovations from their groups, and also from the other tripees and Croo members. After people were finished eating they delivered their plates to the front of the room where some of Croo had carts to transport all of the plates, silverware, and garbage back to the kitchen.

The tripees were then led downstairs again for the clean-up and bathroom break, though I remained upstairs as the Croo cleared and moved the tables. Those in the kitchen were

apparently on dish duty and some others swept the floor of the dining area that would soon serve as the place to sit for the next part of the evening. As the floor was swept I stepped outside on the deck to get out of the way. Being outside that night allowed me my first taste of cool, New England mountain weather. It was technically still summer at this point, but I was quite surprised to see some Croo members wearing hats, gloves, and coats. This was necessary since the doors to the deck had been opened; unfortunately I came unprepared and had to bear it.

After the floor was clear I took the brief opportunity to take advantage of the now-lit room to take a closer look at the dining area and its myriad ornaments. As Figures 54 and 55 showed above, there is an obvious attempt to make the Lodge look and feel a certain way. Certainly, it is an old, wooden lodge on the side of a mountain in rural New Hampshire. But seeing the trail signs, maps, and dead fauna strategically adorned on the walls gave me pause to consider just how much thought and planning went into creating the Lodge's appearance and ambience. There was a clear imbalance between the complexity and simplicity that I had witnessed from my experiences with the Outing Club in all of its forms thus far. For some reason, this part of Dartmouth culture and the image it was attempting to convey just did not seem to completely fit the features of the lodge or the DOC activities despite the earnest attempts of everyone involved. Something did not add up.

I could not give this much more thought at that time, however, because at just about that moment President and Mrs. Wright arrived and were greeted by the Lodj Croo. This was a big deal because it was their first time up at the lodge that summer. Again, I opted to keep a low profile and not interfere. The trippees were then brought upstairs and sat on the now-clean hardwood floor, leaving a space for the Croo and that evening's guests to speak. Everyone was huddled together, and I sat near the wall, once again surrounded by trippees. This was probably

my first good opportunity that evening to see them up close (and with the lights on), and I tried to offer some friendly smiles and nods to those around me but, just like when I was at the Safety Talk at Collis, no one even seemed to notice that I was there.

Some of the Lodj Croo had changed costumes during the break and “roll” was taken. After everyone’s attention was focused toward the front of the room, the Director of the DOC Trips was recognized and given a standing ovation, followed by a short speech (I seem to remember that the night I visited the Lodge was the last night accommodating tripees; in other words, it was the last night of the Freshman Trips programs). This recognition was undoubtedly well deserved, as throughout my experience of observing some the major annual functions of the Outing Club, I was continually impressed with the amount of work and planning that goes into all of the programming, not to mention the seemingly endless energy, enthusiasm, and dedication of all of the Croos. That aspect of the operation never ceased to amaze me.

After some more fun and games (an amusing ad-lib game with input from the tripees), the tone took a bit more of a serious tone, as President Wright spoke, providing a more formal welcome to Dartmouth. Appropriately, he talked about the Freshman Trips and their integral role in Dartmouth tradition. He also mentioned how that evening, September 11, 2006, was the fifth anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the effect that had on the Dartmouth community. He explained that at the time of the attacks, the school year had not yet officially begun, but Freshman Trips were being conducted at a full scale. In what I found to be a bit of a chilling moment, he expressed the difficulty of telling students that were on the Trips, especially because of the fact that a significant number of Dartmouth students come from the New York and Washington areas. It was hard to not only break the news, but to get a hold of the tripees and Croo members who were at the Lodge or camping in the woods to notify them of

the extremely serious and tragic news. Because of all the confusion and uncertainty surrounding the attacks at the time, no one knew whether or not they should continue with the Trips; some tripees were taken back to campus to check in with their loved ones and others went home. As I had noticed upon my visit, communication at the Lodge is fairly limited, as there is virtually no cell phone reception. I did not remember seeing a television at the Lodge, and I know from personal experience of driving in that area that radio signals are often difficult to receive in the mountains. There was a phone line to the Lodge, and it did have Internet access, but aside from these basics, I found it to be quite remote. Putting this together from listening to Wright speak, I thought to myself, “Jeez, I never even *thought* of that! Can you imagine just going off to college, camping out in the woods or being at the Lodge having a good time, making new friends, and someone having to stop everything and tell you this?” From the looks on the faces of the tripees around the room, they appeared just as riveted with Wright’s talk as I was.

Wright did not end on a solemn note, however, and he offered everyone a sincere and warm welcome to Dartmouth, handing the floor over to a faculty member for his speech. As I had heard before, it is customary for a Dartmouth faculty member to give a welcome speech to each section of tripees as they conclude their Trips at the Lodge. After this, again following tradition, a member of the Lodj Croo gives a “sense of place” talk. The meaning behind the phrase “sense of place” seemed to be pretty vague and broad in this context because I was told that whichever Croo member spoke that evening was given pretty much free range for what he or she wanted to discuss, and the topics could be quite variable, though the central idea was to discuss their personal experiences and impressions about Dartmouth. But I found the talk that evening to be quite engaging and inspiring and the student to be surprisingly articulate and wise for an undergraduate (which I base on past experiences and many years as a university student).

As the student wrapped up his talk, I could only imagine what would happen next that evening. The entire group was then split up into three subgroups, each of which was fronted by a leader. From that point, the whole group was drawn into the “Rain Storm game,” a participatory game involving eye contact and hand motions (with no talking) directed by the leader of each group and accompanied by some interesting lighting techniques. I was a bit confused as to why we were doing this, aside from it being a kind of a neat game to play that I had never seen or heard of before. Then it occurred to me just how much the whole idea of the Freshman Trips was like a big summer camp. I had noted this element earlier from watching the tripees’ interactions with H-Croo. But sitting Indian-style on the floor of the Moosilauke Ravine Lodge, on the side of a mountain in rural New Hampshire, with a group of people all wearing outdoor clothes, and following along with the hand motions of a leader (a sort of camp counselor?) in a big, group participation game activity drove it into my mind how this was not by any means a typical experience for college students. Why were we all here? How did the idea behind all of this even start? Why would anyone even want to do this? How does it connect with being in college anyway? And what was the purpose behind it all? It was not as if the students were twelve years old anymore, going away to camp for the summer. But from the looks of the popularity of the Outing Club and the reactions of the tripees, it was clear to me that I, as an outsider and non-member of the Dartmouth community, had come across something quite special and was fortunate enough to gain a glimpse of the inside of the strange and exotic customs of the Dartmouth Outing Club.

The game lasted several minutes, and while at first I was critical of its seemingly juvenile quality, I found that I had been drawn into it quite easily. Afterward, the Croo was formally introduced to the tripees. This proved to be a rather emotional part of the evening, as this was

the last night hosting the Freshman Trips at the Lodge for that summer. The Croo members took turns introducing each other, mixing sincerity and humor, and touching on where each member came from, what they studied at Dartmouth, and some of their activities and accomplishments. I was especially taken in by the fact that the Croo members seemed incredibly tight; they spoke so highly of each other and were so supportive of their fellow members. Many of them were seniors, but some were graduates who had stuck around Hanover to work at the College or for the DOC before they continued on to the next chapter of their lives. It made me think of how it must be hard to *not* become close to each other after spending so much time together at a remote lodge in the mountains, clearly having a lot of fun.

Once again, after this part of the evening was over, everyone got up to sing the alma mater, which was followed by yet another brief “dance party.” I stayed off to the side and just watched until it was over. But this was followed by more dancing, as apparently many of the tripees had mastered the “Salty Dog” while on their trips.

I asked a Croo member how much later this would continue, and I was informed that it had a while to go, though thankfully there was nothing planned that was essential for me to see and include in my research. I was pleased to hear this as it was getting near midnight at this point, and since I was not spending the night there, I had an hour drive back to Hanover ahead of me on a cool night in the dark on some back roads, so I decided it might be a good time to leave. I saw a group of Croo members and thanked them for letting me hang out for the evening, but again, they just offered a slight smile.

Feeling a yawn coming on, I headed out the Lodge’s side door and hiked (and shivered) back up the hill to my car. I had much to think about on the drive home as I contemplated what I had seen and experienced on a memorable evening at the Lodge and how neat it all was. It

struck me just how rare it is that any college, let alone Dartmouth, can have such impressive facilities and original programming for members of “the Dartmouth community.” The Freshman Trips are a unique quality of Dartmouth, and I enjoyed my opportunity to watch some of the Outing Club’s operations up close. But it also occurred to me that there was likely a reason why it all seemed to be such a closely guarded tradition and why, despite the seemingly simple concept behind the Trips and the DOC, it all seemed so peculiar to me.

### **An Introduction to Dartmouth Night**

About a month after my visit to the lodge, the Dartmouth fall term was in full swing. It was mid-October and Homecoming weekend was rapidly approaching. It was also at that time of the year when what I found to be the most interesting annual Dartmouth event was about to occur – Dartmouth Night. Each year, for over the last 100 years, an autumn evening has been set aside and known as Dartmouth Night. Today, Dartmouth Night (and the few days before and after) is when the campus hosts numerous activities, highlighted by a giant, ritualistic bonfire on the Green. The bonfire, the history and folklore behind it, and the traditions that have grown out of it (some of which have persisted and some which have long passed) provide a fascinating glimpse into Dartmouth culture.

However, the tradition of bonfires at Dartmouth precedes the current, more formal, and organized event of Dartmouth Night, and past bonfires were by no means restricted to celebrating the football team. Bergstrom (1988) clarifies that football only first began to be associated with Dartmouth Night in the 1920s. “Memorial Field was dedicated on Dartmouth Night in 1923. The raucous pre-football rallies, though, remained quite separate from the somber official activities” (Bergstrom 1988). Conway (1979) contends that “Bonfires were a little more wild back then [in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries].” The first

recorded Dartmouth bonfire occurred in 1888 after the baseball team's victory over Manchester College (Conway 1979). And not only freshmen, but upperclassmen and townspeople as well, ran around Hanover that night looking for any sort of combustible material to throw into a makeshift bonfire on the Green (Conway 1979; Santo 2006b). The report of the celebration from *The Dartmouth* (1888) described the scene and atmosphere: "The convulsive joy of the under class men burst forth on the night of the first Manchester game in the form of a huge Campus fire. It disturbed the slumbers of a peaceful town, destroyed some property, made the boys feel that they were men, and, in fact, did no one any good."

Despite the description of this raucous scene, it did not discourage future revelry from the Dartmouth students. On the contrary, it appears that it was around this time that marked the birth of a new Dartmouth tradition. Conway (1979) reports that the first official bonfire was held in 1893 after the football team shut out Amherst, 34-0. A column in *The Dartmouth* from 1893, though not explicitly stating the reason behind the victory celebration, vividly describes the enthusiasm and wildness surrounding the early days of the impromptu Dartmouth bonfires:

If anyone wishes to see college men when they are really enthusiastic, he will do well to visit a college town immediately after some notable athletic victory. Ten chances to one he has never seen anything like it before, except, perhaps, in a presidential campaign. No sooner has the victory been announced than the college bell begins to ring and continues until five or six men conclude to express their exuberant feelings in a less tiresome way. Some foresighted students have procured several small cannon[s] for the occasion, and their loud reminders of the day's success are heard in quick succession. The vigorous yelling of the afternoon, which may have materially aided in winning the game, does not seem to have had the least effect on the throats and lungs of the victorious party. The regular college yells do not suffice to give vent to their enthusiasm; screeches, screams, howls, also go to make up the medly [sic] of sound. Appropriate songs, improvised during the closing minutes of the game, are sung to familiar tunes. By some natural law the students find their way to the Old Chapel and make the roof and walls of old Dartmouth [Hall] ring again with the shouts and yells of victory. Committees are rapidly dispatched for members of the faculty, and others are appointed to arrange for further celebration. The speeches of faculty and students are vociferously applauded, and everybody is eager to laugh at anything that can in any way be construed as a joke. A line of march is soon formed, with the victorious team and a drum corps at the head, if it



can be obtained, and two or three hundred men spend one or two hours in parading about town, cheering at the professors' houses, and taking possession of things generally. At a late hour the huge bonfire is started on the campus, and war-dances of various descriptions are executed around it. In the light of its brilliant flames the men "bunch up" and yell for everything and everybody that have had any conceivable connection with the recent victory. Thus the hours of evening wear away, and, even after the larger number have departed, there are still some who linger around the fire and watch the weird and fantastic reflections it makes on the windows of Wilson Hall and the Wheelock. Not until the early hours of morning do the streets of Hanover resume their wonted stillness and all the students join "the great majority of the horizontal." (*The Dartmouth* 1893)

The bonfires became popular at the College despite their related pandemonium and they were held both before and after athletic events (Rago 2006).

The first official Dartmouth Night occurred on September 20, 1895 inside Dartmouth Hall. An article from *The Dartmouth* (1895) discusses the new College tradition from that time and describes both the excitement and solemnity surrounding that evening with its emphasis on College history through the visible portraits of famous alumni and past College presidents, as well as the presence of other prominent alumni. President William Tucker inaugurated Dartmouth Night, with Rago (2006) reporting that it was part of Tucker's "self-conscious effort to strengthen and deepen what he called the 'Dartmouth spirit.' Or, as he put it another time, it was a way to 'capitalize the history of the College.'" The focus on history and heritage was clear from *The Dartmouth's* (1895) description of that night, which featured speeches from several prominent alumni that emphasized the history and distinctive traits of the College (such as the Old Pine and Dartmouth Hall), their love for and loyalty to Dartmouth, and its role and influence in their lives. The piece then triumphantly declares,

The custom of "Dartmouth Night" was successfully inaugurated, and will be a most pleasing feature of college life. All the speakers breathed love and devotion for Dartmouth college, and their tributes to their Alma Mater were eloquent and full of inspiration. To have the young and the older alumni come back and testify to the value of their training here was a most beautiful and touching scene, and loyalty and affection for the college were instilled in the students, and no one present went away without a

sympathetic [sic] appreciation of what worth college education possesses. (*The Dartmouth* 1895)

I believe that those words remain as true and integral today to Dartmouth culture as when they were first printed, and in more than one way.

Thus, the tradition of Dartmouth Night was born and it has evolved and developed a great deal over the years, as many sources describe, though bonfires were, at least for a while, still somewhat of a random celebratory occurrence on the campus and not always connected to more formal and serious occasions such as Dartmouth Night (Bergstrom 1988). The College initially celebrated Dartmouth Night in Dartmouth Hall until 1907 when it was moved to Webster Hall (the current site of Rauner Library) and, as the event developed over the years, it gradually moved to the Green to accommodate the growth of the celebration (Davis 2007). Homecoming football games at Dartmouth were first begun in 1936, (Rago 2006) and College events and the rally were combined in 1946; from that point on they were intentionally scheduled for the week of the Homecoming game (Bergstrom 1988). “Thus, Dartmouth’s own unique variety of homecoming was born” (Bergstrom 1988). With the combination of the bonfire, the football game, and the associated events, the College officially named the weekend Homecoming in 1988 (Davis 2007). Due to the popularity of the bonfires in the 1950s, however, they were held for all football games and not just during Homecoming (Buntz 2007a).

Rago (2006) contends that perhaps the most famous Dartmouth Night was in 1904, which was highlighted by a visit from William Legge, the Sixth Earl of Dartmouth. Lord Dartmouth came (along with a young Winston Churchill) that year to the College to lay the cornerstone of the new Dartmouth Hall, as the old one had completely burned down in February of that year. A huge bonfire was also planned for the Earl, but the students were not fully content with “just a fire,” so the idea to form a parade of students before the fire was introduced (Rago 2006). Thus

began the tradition of marching freshmen around the Green before the bonfire (Rago2006). With this new segment of Dartmouth Night proposed, the “Earl took up the lead [of the parade] and the students, dressed in their pajamas, marched around the Green” (Bergstrom 1988).

From what I have heard and from what many sources indicate, this activity, still practiced in a similar form, is known as the “freshman sweep.” This was also the year that began the tradition of students circling the fire. The College cancelled the parade with the onset of World War I and it did not resume for another fifty-eight years. Another tradition that required adjustment for Dartmouth Night was the introduction of women to the College. Before coeducation, women from other colleges (such as Mount Holyoke or Smith) came to Hanover for the weekend events much like their weekend visits for Winter Carnival.

Though there have been changes to the event over the years, Bergstrom (1988) maintains that the main sentiment behind it has remained relatively consistent. And although the bonfires and Dartmouth Night were not always connected, some of the historical background of each at Dartmouth helps to understand the evolution of Dartmouth Night as it is known today. The early bonfires and their construction have a bit of tradition associated with them as each incoming class at Dartmouth competed for various records in regard to the bonfires, such as the highest, fastest built, or most inflammable (Conway 1979). Conway (1979) reports that the bonfire of May 22, 1909 holds some significance in this regard as the freshmen at that time “gathered fifteen truckloads of wood and doused them with 86 gallons of kerosene after Dartmouth won the New England Track and Field Championship.” As early as 1907, upperclassmen forced freshmen to build the bonfires (Conway 1979). The wood used in the pile came from various sources, such as old, leftover ties donated from railroad companies (Conway 1979). The College became increasingly more involved in the bonfire planning and related events (Conway 1979),

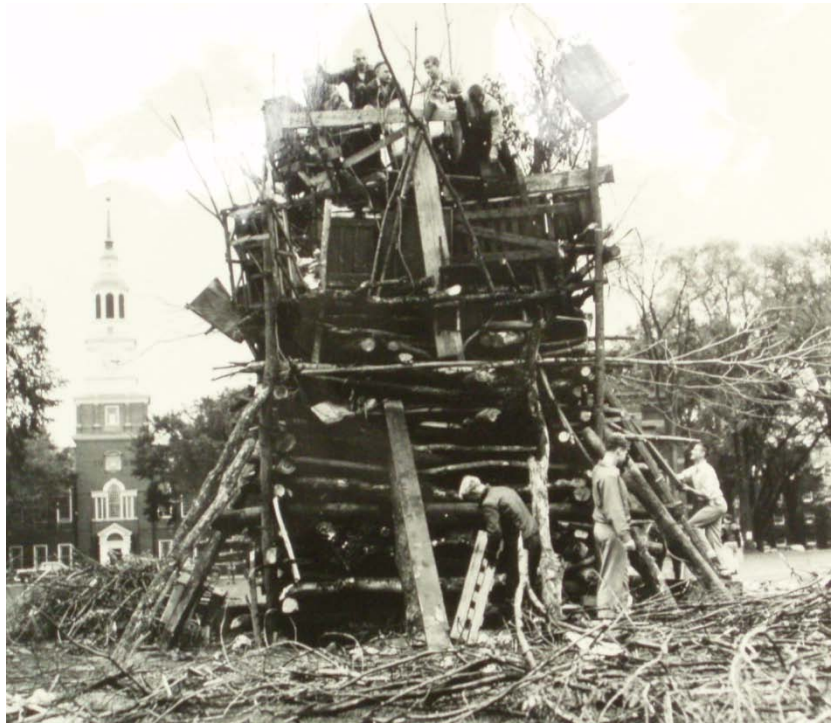
most likely because of safety issues relating to the amateurish and precarious pyres that students created early on (Figures 57 and 58). Or, as Buntz (2007a) reports, “Building bonfires actually became so prevalent at Dartmouth that the administration was forced to intervene ‘to save what was left of town outbuildings and other combustibles not firmly pegged down.’”

Weather has also occasionally affected the Dartmouth Night festivities. The bonfire was cancelled in 1954 due to Hurricane Hazel (Conway 1979). In 1963, the area was under a severe drought and the Hanover Fire Chief forbade a bonfire for the opening home game, as Dartmouth Night and snow prohibited a later fire (Conway 1979). At other times in the past, snow has interfered with the bonfire construction and its ability to burn (Conway 1979).

As one might expect, the Dartmouth bonfire has its share of related humorous anecdotes over its long history. In 1955, the Class of 1959’s fire underwent two premature burnings (Conway 1979). In 1966, the pyre was ignited a mere twenty minutes after its completion (Conway 1979). The fire was delayed for twenty minutes in 1968 when pranksters switched the kerosene used to light the fire with water (Buntz 2007a). In 1971, a farmer from Etna, New Hampshire, donated his entire barn for use in the pyre. Students arrived to pick up the wood and found more than enough inside so they simply took what they needed and left the barn standing (Conway 1979). Two days later, police showed up on campus with a farmer accusing students of raiding his barn and the students then realized that they had visited the wrong barn (Conway 1979). Apparently not fighting much further, the farmer wanted his cow stanchions most of all, and these were returned, and the College compensated the farmer for his loss (Conway 1979). And in 1976, the Class of 1980 prematurely burned their pyre two days before Dartmouth Night, though they were able to rebuild it in time for the event (Conway 1979). Santo (2006b) reports



**Figure 57:** Bonfire pyre from May 1911. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.



**Figure 58:** Building a bonfire pyre, 1949(?). From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

that there have been several incidents in the last fifty years or so where upperclassmen successfully prematurely burned the pyre by overpowering freshmen guarding the structure.

And, much like some of the other major College traditions, Dartmouth Night and Homecoming have also been a source of controversy from time to time. During World War II, the festivities were scaled down considerably (Rago 2006). This did not prevent the revelry entirely, however, as soldiers stationed throughout the world during the War still celebrated Dartmouth Night (*Manchester Leader* 1944). In fact, Dartmouth alumni from around the country still celebrated Dartmouth Night even if they were not in Hanover. For a time, the event was broadcast over the radio at various alumni centers. As one newspaper put it, “A Date set aside once a year for the express purpose of perpetuating the Dartmouth spirit – ‘Dartmouth Night’ this evening was being celebrated by more than just a cheering throng of undergraduates in Hanover. College alumni all over the nation and throughout the world are meeting to reestablish spiritual ties lest, as the late President Tucker once put it, ‘The old traditions fail’” (*Manchester Union* 1948). I am unsure if these get-togethers still take place or not, though, with today’s technology, there are several different ways to remotely enjoy Dartmouth Night.

Further controversy surrounding the bonfires developed in the late 1960s with the growing environmental movements of the time. Conway (1979) reports that interest in Dartmouth Night died down by 1967, and though the event still took place, the tradition was reestablished in 1972. Environmental groups spoke out against the bonfires in the 1970s but they continued, though permits are now required (Conway 1979). Rago (2006) reports that, from 1969 to 1972, “campus political sentiment was such that there was no official celebration of Dartmouth Night.”

An article representative of the time from a Connecticut newspaper covers the mystique of what it saw as an antiquated tradition as well the contradiction between the pushing of social consciousness at an Ivy League school and the wastefulness of such a “tradition” through the thousands of hours and dollars needed to construct a giant bonfire, only to burn it over the course of a few hours (Bristol Press 1971). The article continues to discuss the expense of the bonfire, citing Dartmouth sources who insist that it is worth the cost “because it reinforces ‘the Dartmouth experience.’ No one can define it” (Bristol Press 1971). The same source continues, defending the tradition, and is quoted, “There’s a value there [with the bonfire] that’s kind of intangible. . . . It manages to hang on despite a general loss of tradition” (Bristol Press 1971).

Tradition seems to be exactly what some students were attacking in the 1980s, however. On Dartmouth Night in 1986 and 1987, a “dissident group” of “embittered women” that called itself “Womyn to Overthrow Dartmyth” and “Wimmin’s International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell” (W.I.T.C.H.) dressed as witches and crashed the celebrations that year, “throwing bloody tampons in 1986 and red-dyed eggs representing bloody ova in 1987” (Bergstrom 1988; Rago 2006). Rago (2006) reports that the eggs were thrown at the podium during the 1987 address, whereas Bergstrom claims that the group “attacked the celebrations on the Green” (1988). Bergstrom (1988) adds that they were “unpopular protests by militant feminists” but continues, explaining, “To justify this exceptionally distasteful expression of dissent, these organizations released a statement saying in part, ‘The blood, the eggs here before you, are part of an unending cycle, as is the struggle against oppression . . . A witch is a woman who has freed herself from the bonds of heterocentrism, and from the bonds of profit-seeking education.’” Threats that explosives had been planted in the bonfire were made in 1983 and 1991 (Davis 2007), and in

1987 the pyre had to be disassembled due to a bomb scare, though police found nothing (Buntz 2007a).

In the October 18, 1989 issue of *The Dartmouth*, the members of Dartmouth's now-defunct Phi Sigma Psi fraternity (which would become the current Panarchy, a coeducational undergraduate society) curiously took out an ad in the paper openly expressing its disapproval of the bonfire, which I quote in its entirety:

**THE MEMBERS OF PHI SIGMA PSI WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS  
THEIR VIEWS OF DARTMOUTH NIGHT:**

First and foremost, the burning of the bonfire is a great waste of wood which could be used to heat 3 needy Upper Valley homes for the entire winter or 300 homes on Dartmouth Night. This translates into 17 cords of wood weighing 26 tons and costing \$2,400. We feel that an esteemed institution of higher learning, as Dartmouth claims to be, would have the moral conscience to abandon the flagrant display of wealth that is manifested in the burning of wood 80 tiers high. The amount of wood is equivalent to clearing an old-growth grove of white pine the size of Baker [Library's] lawn. Even if the wood were not used for heating, it could be mulched for fertilizer or could be turned into paper. In the face of these facts, the burning of the wood is a careless waste of the earth's natural resources. One may argue that the bonfire is the main attraction of Homecoming Weekend for alumni who in turn are partially responsible for the funding of the College, and thus, the bonfire is not a waste of money. However, we feel that alumni would continue to come to Hanover for Homecoming and would continue to make contributions regardless of a bonfire. If the alumni were genuinely concerned about their alma mater, they would pay less attention to upholding irreverent tradition and more attention to upholding the academic reputation of the institution.

Secondly, we feel that Dartmouth Night is a glorification of a Dartmouth that no longer exists. It is a reminder of traditions and values that exclude much of the Dartmouth community. By focusing on the football team, it demonstrates the College's commitment to male athletics over other activities such as women's sports and the arts. Dartmouth Night inevitably encourages traditions, such as the singing of the old Men of Dartmouth, which ignore the diversity of the student body, and indoctrinates present students into acting with a mob mentality.

Finally, we do not condemn the celebration of community, but then we do not see Dartmouth Night as such a celebration. Instead, it is an extravagant and unnecessary ritual of scorching a mountain of wood; it is a night which intoxicates people with the smell of antiquated tradition. We realize that many would not agree with these views. But regardless, one cannot argue that the burning of 26 tons of wood for the sheer amusement of several hundred is not wasteful. (*The Dartmouth* 1989)



There is much that one can take from Phi Sigma Psi's statement above. But perhaps much to that organization's dismay, Dartmouth Night continues to be a major annual event at the College and only seems to get "bigger and better" every year, based on the numerous reports I have read and heard.

Part of the seemingly ever-growing enthusiasm for Dartmouth Night is evident from some reckless behavior surrounding the event, such the freshman sweep turning into riots in both 1992 and 1997 "with downtown Hanover laid waste" (Rago 2006). One year, unknown assailants physically attacked and injured four Dartmouth security officers in the ensuing bonfire pandemonium (Eddy 1998). Though currently, and from my own experience of witnessing the 2006 bonfire, several major safety precautions are in place to allow for safe festivities for Dartmouth Night. In fact, that year saw nearly every Dartmouth Safety and Security officer on the Green during the bonfire with about thirty additional police officers from Hanover and the surrounding area, plus other hired guards from a nearby Vermont security firm (Duray 2006).

In other areas of safety, the bonfire pyre itself is handled much more cautiously and professionally than in the Dartmouth bonfires of the past (Figure 59). Currently, Dartmouth's Thayer School of Engineering formulates the design of the bonfire, which is now designed to only collapse inward on itself after it has burned (Santo 2006b). The wood is also custom ordered by the College "to fit non-treated, square-cut specifications so that no longer do freshmen builders wander around campus to find scrap wood" (Santo 2006b). The freshmen who build the bonfire are supervised by a professional construction crew and are provided with hard hats, gloves, and a lull to lift the timber (Debelina 2006; Santo 2006b; Figure 60). Today, the pyre follows a detailed plan, "designed to contain 33 tiers in the star-shaped base of the



**Figure 59:** Students chopping wood on the Green for the Dartmouth Night bonfire, 1983(?). Photo by Nancy Wasserman. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.



**Figure 60:** The 2006 bonfire structure, shortly before it was ignited for Dartmouth Night. Photo by author.

structure, 22 tiers in the next level, a hexagon shape and seven tiers in the square at the top” (Debelina 2006).

This focus on safety differs from the bonfires of the past, which attempted to have a number of tiers representing the freshmen class’s graduation year. Conway (1979) claims that the Class of 1977 constructed the highest pyre with 87 tiers, but today there are strict safety restrictions regarding the limits of its height and it is now capped at 62 tiers. The graduation year of the freshman class is affixed to the top of the structure. As soon as the structure is completed, Safety and Security officers stand guard around it (Debelina 2006). Much of the concern for the bonfire safety created new policies and precautions following an accident at a similar bonfire event in November 1999 at Texas A&M University in which twelve students died when the bonfire structure collapsed during its construction. I return to the Texas A&M bonfire and its parallels to Dartmouth’s bonfire later on.

Despite the controversy and pros and cons surrounding the bonfire and Dartmouth Night, I realized that it was still a critical piece of Dartmouth culture and, as many would agree, an integral part of “the Dartmouth Experience.” But I also found that researching the fascinating history and traditions behind the bonfire did not compare to actually being there and seeing it all unfold up close.

### **Dartmouth Night, 2006**

It was October 13, 2006 and the 111th Dartmouth Night had finally arrived. I was eager to check out the spectacle and the buzz of activity on campus culminated as the evening’s festivities approached. That day’s edition of *The Dartmouth* was full of information on the history and tradition surrounding the bonfire and the other events of Dartmouth’s Homecoming weekend, which I found both entertaining and highly informative.

One aspect of Dartmouth Night that is important to point out is that it is not closed to the Dartmouth community. Over an uncertain span of time, the event has drawn a crowd reaching at least a few thousand. This crowd includes not only Dartmouth students, but College faculty and staff, hundreds of alumni, as well as townspeople from Hanover and several other towns of the Upper Valley.

I was impressed with the bonfire pyre itself (refer back to Figure 60), and I had watched a bit of its construction over the last few days. It must have been about 60 feet high, and it went up in, what seemed to me, a surprisingly short amount of time. Painted on the wood itself, at the base of the structure, was a variety of “graffiti” depicting Dartmouth graduating classes and student organizations.

I remember being a bit unsure as to when everything began, exactly, but I walked back toward campus fairly early in the evening, grabbed something quick to eat, and sort of hovered around the Green until I could get an inkling about when things would “start happening.” Security looked fairly tight that evening. It was finally dark, and I had spent much of my time up to that point either sitting on a corner of the Green watching things from a distance or meandering through the large crowd that had progressively assembled around the pyre, taking in the reactions of the mass of bonfire enthusiasts. It was clear that some of the events of the evening were to take place in front of Dartmouth Hall, as a podium, chairs, risers, and a College banner had been set up in front of the storied College landmark which has evidently always played a critical role in the Dartmouth Night celebration (Figure 61).

At about seven-thirty, things did “start happening” as the parade began. I was standing at the southwest corner of the Green at this time, among a crowd of mostly families at the corner of Main and Wheelock, and I did not see exactly where the cavalcade began. But in the diverse

procession were the Dartmouth Marching Band, various Dartmouth sports teams, some high school marching bands, and many classes of alumni with each class marching individually. The range was from Dartmouth's Classes of 1942 to 2006 (Figure 62). I stayed in the same spot for the duration of the parade and noted the high level of participation of Dartmouth alumni and non-alumni. Many of the earlier classes brought along wives, children, grandchildren, and even pets. Some of the graduating classes before 1976 marched with women; I was unsure how to interpret that. Was this a sign of the breaking down of a tradition? Were Dartmouth wives and daughters now accepted? Or were they simply "tolerated" and included for the purposes of the parade? Or, on a festive occasion such as Dartmouth Night, was everyone welcome? Although I did not dwell on these questions for too long, the mood seemed light during the parade, as some of the classes threw out things like candy to the crowd and there was a variety of festive decorations



**Figure 61:** Dartmouth Hall is prepared for the evening festivities. Photo by author.



**Figure 62:** The beginnings of the Dartmouth Night parade. Photo by author.

from glow necklaces to costumes to class sweaters as well as some creative forms of transportation from the different parade groups.

As the Class of 2006 passed by, I could tell that the center of activity would soon shift, and I headed back to stand on the knoll in front of Dartmouth Hall. By this time, the Glee Club had assembled on the risers in front of Dartmouth Hall and sang several Dartmouth songs in what I found to be an incredibly pompous performance (Figure 63). Nearing the end of the singing, the 10's then made their entrance, marching on the west and then north sides of the Green, rushing in to surround the wood pile. This was accompanied by much screaming, and many of the 10's wore their signature green long-sleeved t-shirts with their class year on it. I found it curious that not *all* of the 10's wore their shirts; some had dressed for the occasion by wearing jogging outfits, some had glow necklaces and painted bodies, some wore normal fall



**Figure 63:** The Glee Club performs in front of Dartmouth Hall. Photo by author.

clothes, and some wore next to nothing. After they had assembled, however, they sang the alma mater in unison.

Apparently the sentimental part of the evening was about to begin as several alumni and President Wright gave short speeches from the podium in front of Dartmouth Hall, which was broadcast on loudspeakers positioned throughout the quad area. At about eight, the chimes of the clock tower rang strange and somewhat ominous, summoning tones. I remember having a somewhat disturbed look on my face as this happened, scanning the crowd around me as if I was silently asking the people near me to explain what was going on. Most of the other people, perhaps unsurprisingly, seemed much more “in tune” with things.

The Glee Club sang again, and then the Dartmouth team coaches and captains were introduced, followed by cheers and applause. Among the thousands of people in attendance ranging in age and affiliations with Dartmouth, the whole spectacle up until that point seemed to be what I would describe as a highly ritualized and organized pep rally of grandiose proportions.

The ceremony closed with the entire crowd (except maybe for me) singing the alma mater and the marching band headed toward the Green. It was clear at that point that the evening's *real* entertainment was about to begin.

The fire was ignited at about eight-forty, and the 10's then began their laps around the fire (Figure 64). As per the tradition, the freshman class is supposed to run around the Dartmouth Night bonfire for a number of laps equal to 100 plus the freshmen class's year. Therefore, the freshmen at the 2006 Dartmouth Night were "expected" to run 110 laps around the fire. Other activities accompany this ritual, as the upperclassmen facetiously taunt the freshmen by yelling at them as they scurry around the fire with jeers such as "Worst class ever!" and "Touch the fire!" Though the event is now closely monitored by security, shenanigans abound as some people change directions in mid-lap and spectators (Dartmouth students or



**Figure 64:** The 10's begin their laps around the bonfire. Photo by author.



locals) have joined in. In the past, people have been spotted roasting hot dogs and marshmallows against the blaze.

It was difficult to not be taken in by the bonfire. It was fully ablaze within minutes of its ignition and provided a hypnotic spectacle, as I had seen nothing like it before. To gauge the crowd's reaction, I roved through the assemblage of spectators (Figure 65). I mostly had to rely on facial expressions, as it was difficult to pick up on what people were saying with the roar of the fire drowning out much of the ambient sound. I was particularly charmed by the reactions of small children, as I specifically remember one girl about three years old, sitting on her father's shoulders, mouth agape, with her entire face transfixed by the towering flames of the bonfire.



**Figure 65:** The crowd assembled, admiring the bonfire. Photo by author.

But I also vividly remember seeing one man, approximately in his late fifties and obviously a Dartmouth alumnus, standing by himself a ways back from the sprinting freshmen. From the flicker of the fire that lit up his face, I could make out his slight but sentimental smile. Without asking him or even needing to be able to read his mind, it was obvious that he was fondly recalling his days at the College.

The crowd began to die down by about nine, however, and many of the 10's had prematurely bailed out from their laps. Some appeared quite determined, though, and kept up the pace. (It is understandably a bragging right for someone to have completed their laps around the Dartmouth bonfire.) Those individuals seemed more serious however, as some were dressed simply in a t-shirt and running shorts; I wondered if maybe they had been on their high school's cross-country team. The pyre imploded at around nine-forty and was reduced to a much smaller pile of burning wood. As the fire died, so did interest in the fire. Most of the alumni and their families appeared to retire for that evening, though the campus was still active, as various parties and activities began to accommodate the still-energized Dartmouth undergraduate crowd.

Because I was not invited to any "after hours" events, I decided to call it a night. To my surprise, the main festivities seemed to end fairly early; I got home that night at around ten-thirty, though the campus was undoubtedly lively into the wee hours after I had left. As I turned back in the direction of home, the Green was sparsely filled with the thousands who had occupied it just hours earlier. It was also noticeable how warm the fire was from standing near it, as I took in the sudden drop in temperature on a rather cool walk home that night. From my experiences of taking in Dartmouth Night and from the preceding weeks of observing some of the practices of the Dartmouth Outing Club, it was evident to me that these events and cultural

rites at Dartmouth are among the principal characteristics of defining Dartmouth as a place and understanding the proactive role that Dartmouth plays in creating its own sense of place.

### **The Outing Club and Dartmouth Night as Conduits for the Construction of Place at Dartmouth College**

Place is an important concept to utilize in my study of Dartmouth not only because of its integral role as a major theme and as an analytical tool in cultural geography, but also because Dartmouth appears to be quite preoccupied with the idea of place in its seemingly endless quest to define and differentiate itself from other places. Obviously, not everyone at Dartmouth is a geographer. But “place” and “sense of place” are phrases that appear to have entered Dartmouth’s daily lexicon. Considering this point, it is appropriate to examine Dartmouth as a place, how it is created to be a distinctive place, as well as the implications of the active construction of Dartmouth as a place.

Why is the notion of place so important to Dartmouth? Based on my reading of hundreds of pages about the Outing Club, Dartmouth Night, and various academic theories of place, in addition to seeing people at Dartmouth actively create their place up close, I have concluded that, much like the prominence of Dartmouth Hall in the College’s landscape and the legends of the Old Pine, major Dartmouth traditions such as Dartmouth Night and the Outing Club are key components to creating a certain type of place – an exclusive and exclusionary place. They are clearly a part of helping to define Dartmouth as a place, but I argue that they also serve a purpose of helping to indoctrinate new initiates (i.e. the annual class of incoming freshmen) to Dartmouth’s distinct culture. While the notion of indoctrination may be obvious to a degree, one must also consider that these major features of Dartmouth culture help to advertise the “uniqueness” of Dartmouth and function as a means to reinforce the fact that the freshman class

of any given year are now a part of the institution and, perhaps more importantly but more subtly, that they are among the company of an elite. The degree to which the Dartmouth community is conscious of its elite attributes and their significance is unclear. But from my position as an outsider, who had never seen anything like this before, it proved to be quite an eye-opening experience.

As stated above, my first exposure to place-making at Dartmouth in a more formalized and controlled environment was watching H-Croo welcome new students to Dartmouth at the beginning of their departure for the Freshman Trips. But what initially looked like a fun introduction for the '10s proved to be a rude awakening for me, the casual observer at the Safety Talk. It was clear that to some people that night, this part of Dartmouth was off limits to the uninitiated and they sought to exclude me. As I mentioned above, I had even explained myself beforehand and was granted what I thought was an approval to passively watch the activities. After all, I was not the only non-student there that evening. Although I cannot speak for the others there, I have a difficult time seeing how I came off as threatening in any way. I explicitly remember wearing a t-shirt, jeans, and sandals, quietly sitting there with my pen and notebook, my backpack on the floor beside me. If anyone had any questions, all they had to do was ask me.

Perhaps I was unwittingly, as Tim Cresswell terms, a transgressor, or one who crosses a boundary (1996: 21). "To have *transgressed*," he explains, "... means to have been judged to have crossed some line that was not meant to have been crossed. The crossing of the line may or may not have been intended. Transgression is judged by those who react to it, while resistance rests on the intentions of the actor(s)" (Cresswell 1996: 23). While I did purposefully attend the Safety Talk, I had no intention of being intrusive, and I was initially led to believe that my

presence would not be viewed as such. But “[t]ransgression, in distinction to resistance, does not, by definition, rest on the intentions of actors but on the *results* – on the ‘being noticed’ of a particular action” (Cresswell 1996: 23). Clearly, I *was* noticed, and I was deemed to be “out of place.” While the freshmen had just arrived at Dartmouth, their new “home,” I was seen as not belonging based, as far as I can tell, solely on my appearance as evident from the reactions from both H-Croo and Dartmouth security. The sign hanging in front of Collis for the weeks during the Freshman Trips, clearly visible to the public, announced that “We’re Glad You’re Here,” though I can see now that it was directed toward a very specific group of people. Sometimes it is necessary to experience a geographical or social transgression before one can realize that a boundary even exists (Cresswell 1996: 22). My realization of these boundaries is why, after being accosted by Dartmouth security twice in the same week, my experience from that point onward had a great impact on my perception of Dartmouth, and it helped set a strong tone and framework for the remainder of my research that year.

Still, I marched on and continued with my work the next week with a visit to Mt. Moosilauke and the Ravine Lodge. Although my experience with the Lodbj Croo was noticeably different than my encounters with H-Croo, similar themes emerged upon my visit to the Lodge as well as from my examination of the Trips, and from the subsequent research that I conducted.

One of the first things that I noticed upon reaching the Ravine Lodge was that, obviously, I was no longer situated on the campus of Dartmouth College. Conceptually, however, I found this to be a profound realization because, as many sources purport, the Lodge is an integral feature of Dartmouth and the “Dartmouth Experience.” And, along with the other property that Dartmouth owns, it occurred to me that there must be multiple geographies of Dartmouth. Mt. Moosilauke, the Lodge, and the property owned and operated by the DOC suggest that

Dartmouth and the “Dartmouth Experience” are not confined to the campus or to Hanover. At a smaller scale, the influence of Dartmouth in Hanover became clear to me early on in my study because, as one leaves the campus and walks into town, many features of the Hanover landscape cater directly to the College. Along the sidewalks in Hanover are benches that are dedicated to famous Dartmouth alumni or employees, some shops sell Dartmouth paraphernalia, restaurants like Lou’s and Molly’s are decorated with nostalgic photographs of the College’s campus and historic Dartmouth sports figures. Given these seemingly minor circumstances from the streets of Hanover but considering the tens of thousands of acres of land owned by the College and the sentiment that the Dartmouth community feels toward it, it became clear to me that the visibility of Dartmouth and its control over so much land and space signified the great amount of power the College must have. But how does this correspond to the strong sentiments toward and attachments to Dartmouth, both on and off of the actual campus?

The growth of the College over time and the people’s use of the extra-campus Dartmouth property inevitably helped to expand the College and its sense of place beyond Hanover and into the greater region of the Connecticut Valley and White Mountains (Tuan 1977: 182-83). Factoring in the “home” quality, its residential atmosphere, and its location atop the Hanover Plain overlooking the Connecticut Valley, Tuan (1977: 38) points out that “[r]esidential locations show a . . . hierarchy of values. . . . The rich and powerful not only own more real estate than the less privileged, they also command more visual space. Their status is made evident to outsiders by the superior location of their residence; and from their residence the rich are reassured of their position in life each time they look out their window and see the world at their feet.” Considering the high visibility and presence of Dartmouth in its respective region and beyond its campus proper, its ownership of vast amounts of land (much of which is closed to outsiders) –

with Emerson (1935) referring to it as “Dartmouth’s out-of-doors empire” – and its utilization of these resources mostly for its own purposes, it is clear that these assets serve a greater purpose than providing a means for the Dartmouth community’s own outdoor recreation. Even if “Dartmouth utilizes the White Mountains almost as a private skiing preserve (Birmingham 1961: 19)” the bigger picture points to the vast amount of space owned and controlled by the College. Simply put, “Space is a resource that yields wealth and power when properly exploited. It is worldwide a symbol of prestige” (Tuan 1977: 58). Indeed, “power is expressed in the monopolization of space” (Sibley 1995: ix). And many people in New Hampshire and the Connecticut Valley perceive Dartmouth as a monopolistic entity, as I address in the next chapter.

Looking at all of this from the inside skews the perception of Dartmouth as a domineering force in northern New England, however. From my observation of the Lodj Croo, I, as a visitor at the Lodge, gained a fairly rare insight into the functions of the Outing Club that are not always open to non-members of the Dartmouth community. It is important to point out that the Lodge is technically closed during the time that it hosts the trippees. During the summer, the Lodge is open to visitors, campers, and the public traveling through the White Mountains region, though they evidently are not treated to the sort of welcome that is reserved for the incoming freshmen each year. The Freshman Trips present a different side to the DOC properties. Special programming is put on only for the initiated; the public does not get a complete view of the DOC or some of the critical parts of the “Dartmouth Experience,” and thus most of the unique and exclusive qualities of the Outing Club are not available to outsiders.

Perhaps this restriction is understandable, as the “dinner theater” that the Lodj Croo provides for the trippees would not necessarily appeal to random groups of tourists traveling through the region that might stop by the Lodge for a quick meal. But when one takes into

account the grand orchestration of DOC trips, I interpreted it all as a way of expressing to the new students each year, almost as a sort of boasting, about all of the amazing things that Dartmouth owns that are open to *you*, the new student at the College. And because the new students have been accepted into the elite company of others at Dartmouth they have now earned the privilege to enjoy it. The elaborate singing and dancing are a way of ritualistically celebrating and reaffirming the fact that there are now new initiates to the (Outing) Club and a new generation is there to bequeath the exclusive and sacred possessions of the College. The tradition has been passed on.

I do not feel that my interpretation of the DOC's rationale could be too overly exaggerated. Investigating some of the mystique behind the Freshman Trips to Mt. Moosilauke and the Ravine Lodge, James Dodson (1999: 371) describes the emphasis on tradition during the Trips: "There, gathered around blazing bonfires, they [the trippees] learn the school's rough-and-tumble history, hear ghost stories and Indian legends. They are taught sacred school anthems such as 'Dartmouth Undying' and 'Men of Dartmouth.'" In the same piece, a trip leader is quoted, "The trip is pure indoctrination . . . but it amounts to the making of a solemn covenant. You feel [as a tripee that] you've been selected, you are part of a historical continuum. Those who aren't hopelessly alienated by the experience – and few seem to be – fall helplessly in love with the place for life. They aren't just bonded to Dartmouth. They *are* Dartmouth" (Dodson 1999: 372). Manning (2000) describes a similar situation at Mount Holyoke through an event known as Junior Show, which satirized that college and provided a fun, non-academic evening, much like what I saw from H-Croo and Lodj Croo. These events help to reassure students that they made the right choice in selecting a college (Manning 2000: 96) and also serve "to



counterbalance the isolation of the rural environment, lack of a diverse social life, and intensity of the academic rigor” (93).

I got a similar impression of this from observing the activities on campus with H-Croo and from my visit to the Lodge, though the message of such events may differ from their meaning (Manning 2000). One thing I noticed in regard to the interactions of Dartmouth students in this context was that the events and activities were *not* a type of hazing as I initially suspected. But from my estimation, there was clearly a bonding element to it all. Although there is a degree of playfulness from the upperclassmen toward the freshmen (such as the attempt to fool them with the “Safety Talk” and the type of humor used to teasingly taunt them on Dartmouth Night), I noticed during my entire time at Dartmouth that there did not seem to be any serious rivalries between the classes of students, at least not to the degree of some of the descriptions I had read about how freshmen were treated at Dartmouth years ago. In fact, the classes all seemed to speak pretty favorably of one another. While some people are evidently “all right” once they are officially part of the “Dartmouth community,” it left me to wonder just how those who are not “in the club” are perceived and treated, as I explore in much greater detail in the next two chapters.

But this complex relationship between inclusion and exclusion is a case in point of how “places . . . [can] evoke some sense of belonging to a special group and provide a sense of group identity” (Godkin 1980: 73). The connections formed on the Freshman Trips not only allow people to make new friends, they seem to serve as a way to not only introduce, but to groom and condition freshmen into the Dartmouth culture and lifestyle. They learn what is (ostensibly) important through outdoor recreation and College history and folklore, all of which contributes

to what they argue is important to understanding and appreciating Dartmouth as a place. Relph (1976: 141) explains,

Experience of place can range in scale from part of a room to an entire continent, but at all scales places are whole entities, syntheses of natural and man-made objects, activities and functions, and meanings given by intentions. Out of these components the identity of a particular place is moulded, but they do not define this identity – it is the special quality of insideness and the experience of being inside that sets places apart in space.

Insideness may relate to and be reflected in a physical form . . . or it may be expressed in rituals and repeated activities that maintain the peculiar properties of a place. But above all it is related to the intensity of experience of a place.

My experience at the Lodge was not what I would describe as particularly intense, though I cannot claim to have been completely on the “inside” of the experience, either. I certainly did not “become” a part of Dartmouth through it. Tuan reminds us, “Sense of self, whether individual or collective, grows out of the exercise of power” (1977: 175). By visiting the Lodge, it became evident to the trippees and to me by physically seeing and experiencing the Dartmouth properties at Mt. Moosilauke that these events were part of an exercise to demonstrate Dartmouth’s power.

But I also wondered, “How much of a connection could the trippees have made given the time they spend out in the woods and at the Lodge?” Other contradictions emerged upon my examination of this question. One in particular was the idea behind the Freshman Trips. While it sounded like an interesting and appealing idea for incoming students to go on a trip together and meet some people before the school year officially started, seeing part of it in person provided a different perspective for me. Building on a theme from the last chapter regarding the idea of “playing Indian” at Dartmouth, though this mentality was technically condemned by the College following the controversy of Class Day, seems to be a prominent theme for the Freshman Trips, albeit in a slightly different form.

The sources that highlight the excursions of the Outing Club into the wilds of northern New England did not quite match what I saw from the group of students on the last segment of their trip at the Lodge. While the Outing Club likes to brag about how rough their experiences in the woods can be, I find it curious that such a lifestyle could develop at Dartmouth. For example, it is important to note that the Trips themselves only last for a matter of days. Although the freshmen and their trip leaders “rough it” in the woods for a few days, they soon return to all the comforts of Hanover and the Dartmouth campus. I did not get even the slightest impression that anyone was doing anything remotely dangerous on the Trips. While other Outing Club excursions go for winter hikes or climb mountains, it is important to note Heinrichs’s (1990) discovery that most of the freshmen that he spoke with when he tagged along on a Freshman Trip “had never even worn hiking boots or slept out in the woods” before. I had a similar impression from watching the group of freshmen that I saw and noted how some of their name-brand “outdoor” clothing, flashing the Columbia or North Face logos, did not look all that worn or dirty. And yet, the significant number of youths who have attended Dartmouth over the years who have hailed from some of the largest cities in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic (and their suburbs) love to boast of their outdoorsy life in the North Woods. It is also curious how some of them claim to have become experienced woodsmen in only four years while attending the Ivy League college. I noticed that the name-brand “outdoor” clothing was popular at Dartmouth year-round, though the students that I saw wearing the clothes always seemed clean and well-groomed. Obviously, they had not been out sleeping in a cave or underneath a tree in the woods the night before. In fact, I would venture to say that many Dartmouth students look more like the people one might see in an Eddie Bauer or L.L. Bean catalog than actual “outdoor” people.

Perhaps this comes from a consumptive attitude toward nature at Dartmouth. While the Outing Club may profess its dedication to the natural environment around Hanover, Bunce (1994: 128) warns that there is a subtle difference between consumptive and appreciative recreational use of rural environments. In reference to the appeal of interaction with nature, Bunce (1994: 129) explains, “For some, in fact, the true experience of wilderness and nature can be achieved only through the direct contact which comes with the [outdoor] activities themselves. The attraction is in the challenge of survival and the motivation is the escape from civilisation, communion with nature, even perhaps a hint of transcendentalism.” Therefore, it would be fitting to classify the Freshman Trips and the activities of the Outing Club as a type of tourism. Dartmouth students go out into the wilderness for only a relatively short time and promptly return to the cushy accommodations of the College. Such behavior is not in line with the life of the burly and wild woodsmen purported to make up the DOC, at least from the Club’s early years (though I find that characterization also to be questionable).

Bunce (1994: 134) also mentions that this type of consumptive practice of “enjoying the wilderness” caters to the more affluent members of society. Tuan (1974: 103) states simply that “At the back of the romantic appreciation of nature is the privilege and wealth of the city.” Also, “Young Americans from well-to-do families are often strong partisans of nature and of the wilderness experience” (Tuan 1977: 63). Is this to say that the Outing Club and the Freshman Trips could be characteristic of a form of elite recreation despite their attempts at appearing humble and yet wild and grueling? When one considers the historical context surrounding the founding of the Dartmouth Outing Club, it appears that the concept behind the organization falls in line precisely with an environmental movement occurring in the United States perpetuated by elites during the early twentieth century.

Aesthetic attitudes toward the forest are based in the romantic ideals of English attitudes toward nature in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that were absorbed shortly after by the Americans, particularly the east coast elites (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 40). Celebrating the wilderness, at least since the nineteenth century, had been an activity reserved mostly for urban elites (Cronon 1995: 42). “English romanticism’s appreciation of the wilderness made its way into American culture first through an intellectual elite and later with members of a business elite who had the means to build summer camps and weekend houses in the woods” (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 41).

Interestingly, as the Duncans (2004: 42) point out, the elites of this time period believed that children should “be exposed to the physical and moral benefits of nature. By 1915, summer camps where children could become morally and physically healthy had become common.” Ninety percent of these camps were in New England, which was the closest source of wilderness along the eastern seaboard (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 42; Schmitt 1969: 96). The camp comparison is a key point considering the summer camp-like quality I observed at the Lodge. It is also notable that a Dartmouth student by the name of Ernest Balch founded Camp Chocorua in New Hampshire in 1881, one of the earliest summer camps ever created, that “functioned as a ‘Boys’ Republic’ where wealthy campers traded indolence at a summer hotel for an island ‘work camp’ to learn the skills of business management” (Schmitt 1969: 99). Schmitt (1969: 99) adds that in “concession to roughing it, the boys did their own camp chores, but youthful construction companies also bid for carpentry work, the ‘Goodwill Contract Company’ handled camp laundry, and the ‘Soda-Water Trust’ provided for refreshments.” Thus, the idea of “roughing it” in the wild was a bit of an exaggeration. Perhaps the tradition of camping and spending time in

the wilderness continues to be a feature of life in the Northeast that is ingrained in and familiar to the young people of that region well before they go off to college.

“Early in the twentieth century,” right around the time Fred Harris founded the Dartmouth Outing Club, “members of an American upper class and educated elite decided that they had a duty to help assimilate children, especially those from immigrant families and city backgrounds, into an appreciation of nature and the old, rural, republican way of life” (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 131). As established in Chapter 4, this climate was present at Dartmouth as well in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries at a time when marked change and a great sense of nostalgia was sweeping the campus (Meacham 1998; Wright 1987). “Forests [at this time] were seen as a fragile inheritance that Americans had a patriotic duty to protect from the devastating effects of modern civilization. This nature movement played a role in the production of a class-based, anti-modern aesthetic” (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 131). T.J. Jackson Lears (1981) discusses in great detail the sentiment of antimodernism in the late nineteenth century, which was especially pervasive in the upper classes of the Northeast. The elites who initiated the antimodern movement were actually the beneficiaries of the country’s growth and its modernizing culture (Lears 1981). But antimodernism was not merely a form of escapism for the elites; it was coexistent with material progress (Lears 1981). Thus, these sentiments correspond to the origins of the Outing Club and match some of the rationale for the organization’s founding based on what early published materials report. The dichotomy of students at an Ivy League college hiking around the forests for no clear, rational purpose only became apparent to me (in a way that I could articulate) after researching some of the history of outdoor recreation and relating it to the historical background of the Outing Club and academic literature on elites.

It is also possible to explore these concepts further by looking at the Lodge and its physical characteristics. While the Lodge looks like what I would have envisioned a typical New England mountain lodge to look like on the outside (and somewhat on the inside as well), one thing that caught my attention upon seeing the inside was the mix of kitsch and “outdoorsy” decorations (refer back to Figures 54 and 55). While deer and moose heads adorn the walls (wearing various headwear and capes or Hawaiian leis, of course) along with trail signs and maps, the interior design of the Ravine Lodge offers the visitor (casual or otherwise) a certain gaudiness that might be best described as a sort of calculated rusticity. In a way, it reminded me of the 1980s fad of buying designer jeans with the holes already ripped into them.

I do not believe that this is an oversight on behalf of the DOC, however. Reporting on the original planning of the Lodge, the *Manchester Union* (1939) stated, “Both of these architects [Butterfield and Goddard] have made full use of the material at hand and have created buildings that fit into the mountain view with a complete naturalness.” This passage suggests the deliberate attempt to make the Lodge appear a certain way, to make it “blend in” despite the fact that it was clearly a human creation. Similarly, after a DOC cabin burned down, *The Dartmouth* (1947) described it as “a replica of the old roadside inns of pre-revolutionary times.” Instead of simply creating a cabin in the woods, the DOC evidently felt it was necessary to construct a cabin reminiscent of something much older, supposedly to make it look older, more bucolic, or more weathered instead of just having it serve its simple and practical purpose. Why might the DOC do this? Acknowledging this paradox, Tuan (1974: 51) observes,

A preference for the stark environment, bare as the desert or the monk’s cell, is contrary to the normal human desire for ease and abundance. Yet people are known to have sought, repeatedly, the wilderness, to escape from not only the corruption but the voluptuous luxury of city life. The yearning for simplicity, when it transcends social norms and requires the sacrifice of worldly goods, is a symptom of deep-seated bias; the behavior that it conduces cannot be explained solely by the cultural values of the time.

What can be the positive appeal of asceticism? Asceticism is denial but denial is not only a means to an end but may in itself be a type of affirmation.

The key word from the preceding paragraph is *denial*. Taking into account that many of the characteristics I have investigated so far correspond to the lifestyles and culture of elite society, I found that looking at the attitudes and activities of the Outing Club within this context pointed to understanding their actions as a sort of purposeful self-denial or self-deprivation.

Sibley (1995: 26-28) notes that nature is the opposite of civilization; by equating people with nature, it dehumanizes them: “Nature has a long historical association with the other” (26). Thus, my reading of a large part of the DOC and its activities is that it is a retreat from civilization and a return to a type of controlled and temporary primitivism. Although the DOC might even agree with me to an extent, I must call attention to the ephemeral quality of it all. Though some of the Lobj Croo work at the Lodge for an entire summer, even they are only “retreating from civilization” for a relatively short time. The simple and bland food that was served the night that I was there and the deliberately rustic decoration call into question the authenticity and sincerity of the outdoor image and lifestyle that Dartmouth students have actively promoted for so many years. The Trips are undoubtedly a form of fun and socialization, but the continued participation of Dartmouth students in the DOC suggests a sustained practice of “playing Indian” or mountaineer or pioneer, or any number of other pursuits to play down the elite image of the College. This is an attempt create a landscape and sense of place that assumes “a seedy look of elegant decay . . . [that is valued by people who want] an understated, casual lifestyle” (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 20).

And yet, I argue that it is only partially successful in doing so. The purposeful creation of a rustic atmosphere adds prestige to a place, as the Duncans (2004: 81) explain from their case study in Bedford, which amounts to, as one of their informants put it, a type of “reverse



snobbishness.” Joseph Epstein (2002: 10) illustrates this concept by explaining that the prime objective in reverse snobbery is to find out what snobs do and then do the exact opposite.

“Reverse snobbery . . . may be more difficult to shuck off than actual snobbery, for it proceeds in part from a distaste for snobs and snobbishness, but also in part from a wish to assert one’s superiority to snobbery generally, which itself can seem suspiciously like a snobbish act” (Epstein 2002: 10-11).

The basic food, rustic decorations, and self-service outdoor experiences of the Freshman Trips become a sort of game where Dartmouth students playfully shun (and indirectly reaffirm) their privileged backgrounds and pretend to be humble country folk who live off of the land and with only the basic necessities. (Back in Hanover, however, this unassuming demeanor seems to fade fast, as I describe in the next two chapters.) While the trippees actually cook and prepare their own food on the trips and stay in cabins with no heat or air conditioning, their attempts at “roughing it” appear to me to be little more than a game in which they pretend to be poor, simple, “outdoor” people, almost like a backwoods version of “going slumming.” This is not uncommon among the upper classes, as Fussell (1983: 172) refers to it as “class sinking” where the wealthy, “motivated by guilt over the advantages their classy educations have given them” consciously try to contradict their image and upbringing, with the specific example of “Ivy students who wear housepainters’ overalls or join communes.” Frank (2007: 225-26) notes that the children of the newly wealthy go as far as to purposefully create “adversity” by unnecessarily taking working-class jobs to gain a sort of credibility among their peers and to offer the illusion that they have not always had it so easy in life. Sociologists and anthropologists might classify such actions and attitudes as cultural appropriation.

Evidence for this at Dartmouth comes in the form of the specific culture associated with the Freshman Trips and Mt. Moosilauke. Describing human settlement and the concomitant creation of place out of nature, Tuan (1977: 166) explains that because the constant humanization of landscape, wilderness has vague boundaries, and the integrity of places must be ritually maintained. Although the Ravine Lodge is in a semi-wilderness and clearly not a developed, urbanized area, I believe that it qualifies as a “humanized” landscape given that it was deliberately designed for a specific purpose and displays a clear human influence despite its “natural” look and feel. But as I mentioned above from Dodson’s (1999) quote, to keep the traditions of the Lodge and Mt. Moosilauke sacred and specific to Dartmouth culture, the trippers learn Dartmouth songs, legends, and folktales.

Case fittingly describes this Dartmouth custom: “Maybe it was the Indian lore in its traditions that developed this great out-of-door feature at Dartmouth. The legends fit perfectly into a country of high elevations and magnificent panoramas” (1914: 389). Similarly, Emerson (1935: 7) declares, “All of Dartmouth’s early history and its subsequent traditions are centered around the rivers and the hills and valleys of this North Country.” These quotes imply the convenience of the legends and their appropriateness to the natural surroundings of the White Mountains region, almost as if the natural environment was created *for* Dartmouth. But they also suggest that the legends are specifically what give the DOC its character, as if it is perhaps more dependent on legends than it is on its patrons. Thus the legends, rituals, and cabins that are designed to look a certain way, or evoke a certain likeness, result in a conglomerate image created by the Outing Club that is perhaps more important to the persistence of the DOC than its actual outings. Without these major contributing factors to the construction of a sense of place at

Dartmouth (on and off campus), the Outing Club becomes nothing more than a group for the outdoor excursions of wealthy young people, romantically pursuing the rural ideal.

Similarly, Dartmouth Night plays a parallel role in creating place at Dartmouth. It is necessary to reiterate that the Outing Club does not sponsor or have a formal association with Dartmouth Night, though many at the College would agree that Dartmouth Night is a critical College tradition and that it is principal to constructing and creating a sense of place at Dartmouth. I also felt from my own experience of witnessing Dartmouth Night in 2006 that it was an important experience for Dartmouth freshmen and continued to be a major event for upperclassmen as well as returning alumni. Providing a succinct description of this major Dartmouth tradition, Tillman (2003) discusses the annual bonfire not only as a tradition, but a rite of passage for freshmen, a source of nostalgia for the visiting alumni, and as a source of amusement for the locals and other gawkers who come by to partake in the event every year.

Jonathan Smith (2007) provides both a scholarly and geographical perspective on bonfires, as well as a source of comparison for his study of the bonfire tradition at Texas A&M University. First, it is worth noting the several similarities between not only the bonfires, but the institutions of Dartmouth and Texas A&M. The first Texas A&M bonfire was in 1909, slightly after that of Dartmouth. Texas A&M's bonfire has legends and traditions associated with it such as the legend of the 12th Man and the inexplicable ritual of Yell Practice (J. Smith 2007), which might be analogous the unusual custom of freshmen running laps around Dartmouth's bonfire. Texas A&M is in a rural, socially introverted area and was an exclusively male institution until 1965 (J. Smith 2007), as is Dartmouth, which did not fully admit women until 1972, all within recent memory. At Texas A&M the bonfire grew over the years until regulations were put into place for safety reasons (J. Smith 2007). Smith argues that the bonfire at Texas A&M showed

that the University was more than just an educational institution and that it helped to create, affirm, and justify a sense of belonging and meaning to resist outside intrusions on their way of life (2007: 189, 191). As such, the Texas A&M bonfire became a critical aspect of both the University's institutional culture and the greater regional culture (J. Smith 2007: 183). At Texas A&M, the bonfire embodied solidarity, community, tradition, authority, and piety (J. Smith 2007: 184). Much of this applies also to Dartmouth.

Although written some time ago, the *Claremont Eagle* (1953, emphasis added) aptly described the sentiment surrounding that year's event, reporting, "Chapel bells will ring tonight over Dartmouth . . . and young men from all over the country who are registered as freshmen at the college this year will gain *that much-desired sense of belonging* as they touch off their first rally bonfire sometime between 8 and 9 o'clock." Belonging is one thing that can be surmised from watching the events of Dartmouth Night, though who belongs to Dartmouth? Unlike many of the activities of the DOC, Dartmouth Night is a public event; the College is not closed off for this particular important Dartmouth tradition. Although bonfires were seemingly random, disorganized, and amateurish in their early days, Dartmouth Night is now a meticulously planned and expensive annual spectacle (Figure 66). But does it really include everyone?

To answer this, we must refer back to some of the controversy and dissent surrounding Dartmouth Night. While the attacks by the women's groups call attention to certain issues, the less intrusive and more eloquent argument against Dartmouth Night came from Phi Sigma Psi's advertisement (*The Dartmouth* 1989) attacking the outright wastefulness and ostentation of Dartmouth Night. I found the scolding tone of the fraternity's attack on the tradition to be a bit ironic, as both it and the women's groups who criticized Dartmouth Night are still beneficiaries of all the resources and opportunities of the College despite how they



**Figure 66:** Dartmouth Night bonfire, 1983. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

perceive or interpret the meanings behind the event. They may object to Dartmouth Night or choose not to participate, but the fact that the event goes on without them might point to who remains in control at the College.

Texas A&M also faced some dissent for its bonfire over the years. Smith (2007: 193) notes that as the University changed and grew over time and eventually took on a more diversified student body, the bonfire's meaning became less clear to the University community as a whole. Though I did not personally see that specific observation tied directly to Dartmouth from my experience, it is clear that some of the major demographic changes at the College also brought more diverse perspectives as evidenced in part through the dissent mentioned earlier. New groups at the College, however, were not excluded from participating in the event. But did that mean that they necessarily "belonged" at Dartmouth? Does it mean that by simply running around a bonfire today that one is a part of the Dartmouth community?

Besides providing a simple “yes” or “no” answer to these questions, I argue that it is perhaps more important to point out that such an answer may even be irrelevant. Looking at the big picture, it becomes more evident to me that rather than merely serving as a means to include or exclude people at Dartmouth, Dartmouth Night and the Outing Club are more about *appearing* as if they are “introductions” to the College or ways of “indoctrinating” new students. I do not dispute the claims that this is part of the purpose of these principal College traditions. But based on the contradictions present in analyzing both the DOC and Dartmouth Night as I did above, it is apparent that there is more to see than what is immediately visible.

The Dartmouth Outing Club, in my view, partially functions as a denial about the immense wealth and resources of the College. The emphasis on the remote and rugged activities superficially presents a rustic and Arcadian image for the organization, but from my observations up close it appears to be just that – an image and, largely, an act put on by the members of the DOC. While Dartmouth is in a rural area and is located near rivers, mountains, and forests, it is hardly what I would classify as a “backwoods” kind of place. By following such an image, the DOC serves as a reminder to what the majority of Dartmouth students have and where they come from and that, by participating in a glorified type of summer camp, they casually pretend to live a wild, outdoor life at their leisure. To me, it seems like a desperate attempt for Dartmouth students to come off as down-to-earth, outdoorsy people that, through their actions and the images emitted from the DOC, they are insisting that by camping out in the woods, preparing their own food, and hiking on rugged mountains, they could not possibly be spoiled, sheltered suburbanites.

Dartmouth Night, while exhibiting a somewhat wild element to it with students frantically circling the bonfire, provides somewhat of a contrast to the Outing Club. While it is a

“public” event, it is clearly a celebratory ritual and spectacle immodestly displaying the wealth and power of the College under the pretense of tradition. While the bonfire was at one time a wild occasion at Dartmouth, its contemporary professionalism belies such an image, perhaps to its own dismay.

This presents another notable difference between the bonfires at Dartmouth and Texas A&M. In November 1999, the pile that students were constructing for the bonfire at Texas A&M before the annual football game against the University of Texas collapsed and killed 12 students and injured at least a few dozen others. Reacting to this catastrophe, Dartmouth instituted greater safety precautions to avoid a similar accident at its bonfire (Coleman 2000). Still, Dartmouth claimed that its bonfire is smaller, safer, and more stable than Texas A&M’s and that, historically, it is “relatively free of accidents” (Hanson 1999). My reading of this passage implies a degree of elitism on behalf of Dartmouth, suggesting that there is no reason to fear an accident on Dartmouth Night, almost as if they are saying, “Because this is Dartmouth, we know what we are doing. And because we don’t act like those barbaric Texans, there is nothing to worry about for our festive events.” Dartmouth’s self-perceived professionalism and sophistication in constructing its bonfire therefore distances itself from other places.

Whereas the Outing Club evokes minimalism and denial, Dartmouth Night reflects abundance, extravagance, and power. I do not feel that these traditions, though somewhat contradictory to one another, are mutually exclusive. Rather, the DOC and Dartmouth Night, two major place-defining qualities at Dartmouth, are two sides of the same coin. While the DOC seeks to discourage materialism and (temporarily) shun civilization, Dartmouth Night shows cohesion and a sense of community through an ostentatious display. Reading into this incongruity, I gather this contradiction to mean that the Dartmouth community is seeking to find

a balance between the College's contrasting images. They seek to create a community (or place) that is simultaneously wild and refined, much as Kemp (2002) described in regard to her interpretations of Class Day. They want to appear earthy and humble without discarding their elite status and prestige.

But what might this all have to say about place? Although they are major components of creating a sense of place at Dartmouth, the traditions of the Outing Club and Dartmouth Night point toward the exclusive nature of the College. The Outing Club played a major role in the College becoming an exclusive institution following the publication of Fred Harris's article on the DOC in *National Geographic*. Dartmouth capitalized on this because the Outing Club, originally seen as an anomaly, quickly became a staple of undergraduate life and helped to propel the College to a certain degree of fame. By appearing a certain way, more people took an interest in Dartmouth, which necessitated the beginning of greater selectivity for admissions at the College. Dartmouth then gained greater control over who could or could not attend the College. Furthermore, the use of the word *Club* in the organization's name evokes selectivity and privilege because not just anyone can join; gatekeepers are involved. Additionally, some of the DOC property is reserved only for members of the "Dartmouth community." The Second Grant, for example, is off limits to the public, and many at Dartmouth like to talk about its wonderful qualities and how special it is (S. Smith 2007a), which comes off as a sort of boastfulness, as it is evidently intended and reserved for only those directly affiliated with the College.

Dartmouth Night reminds those at Dartmouth that, through their participation in an event representing the culture of the majority, they help to create the place that includes only a select group of people each year. While not everyone at Dartmouth is involved in the DOC or



Dartmouth Night, these traditions have persisted despite opposition. Reporting on the strength of the homecoming tradition at the College, Coleman (2000) mentioned that Dartmouth officials assured him that “there is no risk of the homecoming tradition ending anytime soon.”

The element of place constructed through these traditions reflects the fact that while most anyone can see what Dartmouth has, its availability is exclusive. While the DOC looks earthy and rustic and Dartmouth Night can be seen by anyone who attends, these features that define place only define it for a specific group – those who actually have access to it. Furthermore, their visibility and influence on Dartmouth and its culture suggest that they reflect the values of the wealthy, white, dominant proportion of the Dartmouth community. Perhaps not coincidentally, this is the group that, historically, created much of the tradition that contributed to the creation of a sense of place at the College and is also the group that still overwhelmingly controls the place-making qualities at Dartmouth. But “sense of place . . . is the veneer that obscures practices of social homogenization and ‘spatial purification’” (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 30; Sibley 1995).

While these may be key “traditions” at Dartmouth and are chief components of creating Dartmouth’s “inexplicable” and “indescribable” sense of place, one less ambiguous quality that they offer upon closer scrutiny is how the College uses these traditions to exercise power and control. In one sense, Dartmouth’s reach extends far beyond Hanover with the thousands of acres of land it owns and the money it makes from these holdings. In another, the College blatantly asserts its wealth and power by literally burning it up in a grand spectacle in the midst of a festive atmosphere. These traditions illustrate, either brazenly on the Green or quietly in the backwoods of New Hampshire, that Dartmouth is a special place and those privileged enough to be a part of it can boast, publicly or privately, of their admission to and inclusion in an exclusive,

elite culture. Dartmouth is their new “home.” Since the College has the resources to create such traditions, members of the Dartmouth community are a part of something special.

Upon realizing this “special” feeling after studying the DOC and Dartmouth Night in depth, I believe there is strong evidence for the great level of affection for Dartmouth that I had heard so much about before I began my study. As a place, Dartmouth demonstrates an unusually high degree of what geographers refer to as topophilia.

A term coined by geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, “*Topophilia* is the affective bond between people and place or setting” (1974: 4). Tuan describes further the sometimes profound emotions that are elicited from people’s attachments to places. Providing a similar description, Relph (1976: 37) observes, “In both our communal and our personal experience of places there is often a close attachment, a familiarity that is part of knowing and being known *here*, in this particular place. It is this attachment that constitutes our roots in places; and the familiarity that this involves is not just a detailed knowledge, but a sense of deep care and concern for that place.”

Dartmouth undoubtedly exhibits a high level of topophilia and strong place attachment that is evident through its famously strong alumni connections, its great care in preserving the campus and its concomitant sense of place, and by simply reading the vast amounts of writing dedicated to expressing affection toward the College. It is not uncommon to come across, as I have many times, entire pieces of writing, letters to the editor, or random passages in *The Dartmouth* or the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* expressing a strong affinity for the College. One need only consult the various memoirs of past College presidents or alumni or anthologies for numerous devotional essays about Dartmouth. While other colleges have their share of loyal alumni, nostalgic memorabilia, and hallowed traditions, I believe that (and many at the College would support me) that Dartmouth is a slightly different and unusual case in regard to the level

of topophilia its students and alumni feel toward it. This cannot be succinctly described or quantified, but the sentiment is there. Although I build on this concept more in the remainder of this dissertation, it became clear to me that the Outing Club and Dartmouth Night are two key agents of expressing Dartmouth's topophilia.

Discussing the features of place attachment, Setha M. Low and Irwin Altman (1992: 4-5) state that place attachment is often exemplified through a combination of cognition (thought or belief) and practice (actions or behaviors). A central component to creating place attachment is social relations (Low and Altman 1992). "Places are, therefore, repositories and contexts within which interpersonal, community, and cultural relationships occur, and it is to those social relationships, not just place qua place, to which people are attached" (Low and Altman 1992: 7). Low and Altman (1992: 10) argue that place serves as a medium to creating place attachment and it is social interactions that create such strong sentiments for places. "Extending this idea, one can infer . . . that place attachment may contribute to the formation, maintenance, and preservation of the identity of a person, group, or culture. And, it may also be that place attachment plays a role in fostering individual, group, and cultural self-esteem, self-worth, and self-pride" (Low and Altman 1992: 10).

Considering Low and Altman's points, much of the social interaction at Dartmouth and its role in creating place has already been established in this chapter. But what sort of specific emotion and type of place attachment is evident from these findings and what does it mean? In an almost homesick column recounting his appreciation for the outdoors that he gained from attending Dartmouth, Jack Noon (1968: 34, 36, emphasis added) writes,

the undergraduate [at Dartmouth] can't forget the views from Moosilauke, Cube, or Smarts [mountains], the way the snow clings to the spruces by a ski-touring trail, the view from Holt's Cabin on a moonlit night, or the way the sunset ends an afternoon's canoeing on the Connecticut in the warming days of spring. He remembers, too, the

hours spent hunting woodcock in an alder swamp, the sudden explosion of a startled partridge, and the wonderful, tired feeling after a day's skiing. He recalls the smell of Woodsmen's Fly Dope, of ski wax and pine tar in the basement of Robinson Hall, or of birch logs burning in the fireplace of a DOC cabin. All of these build in him a genuine love for the outdoors and for Dartmouth. . . .

The Outing Club gives undergraduates the chance to learn skills and develop outdoor interests that will last them all their lives. *Bonds of friendship* that develop around a fire in a DOC cabin after a day's hunting or skiing *are strong and help cement a feeling of fellowship and love for Dartmouth. DOC members show their fellowship and Dartmouth spirit in their activities.* They spend vacations pursuing Outing Club interests because that is what they enjoy doing most. That is why some undergraduates spend a summer climbing McKinley or two weeks hiking the 260 miles of the Long Trail in Vermont. That is why DOC men canoe down the Allagash at the end of the summer and spend spring vacations working in the spruce-fir and hardwood forests of the College Grant or skiing with DOC friends in the Rockies.

*The DOC, traditionally the College's most distinctive activity and over the years the teacher and inspiration for thousands of Dartmouth men, still fulfills its unique role in student life.* It still keeps alive one of Dartmouth's most important traditions – a genuine love of the outdoors.

“Homesick” may indeed be an apt description as, over the years, the DOC has received numerous letters from Dartmouth alumni expressing how much they miss the Outing Club. As Hatch (1934) put it some time ago, many of the letters explain that the jobs and city life have detached the alumni from the outdoor life they came to love at Dartmouth. Some alumni groups even formed chapters of the DOC to emulate the activities of the DOC back in Hanover (Hatch 1934), some of which are still around today.

Touching on the significance of alumni to preserving tradition and a sense of place to Dartmouth, one particularly perspicacious undergraduate wrote in regard to the 2006 Dartmouth Night,

at Dartmouth we have a . . . saying: “Touch the fire, freshmen.” Although we may not really know why we tell the freshmen to touch the fire or why we even have a fire every year, the bonfire [tradition] is more than a century old and just as popular as ever. *A keystone in the Dartmouth experience, the bonfire embodies many of the values that we share as a community, whether or not we're proud of these ethics. . . .*

First and foremost, the bonfire means Homecoming. Homecoming means alumni. And alumni means dollar signs. Bringing Dartmouth students of old back to Hanover under the auspices of tradition makes alumni sentimental. Aside from warming their

hearts, this sentimentality lightens their pockets. Money from alumni keeps Dartmouth alive, which is worth the expense of the bonfire's threat. However, all the money that the bonfire and Homecoming festivities as a whole bring in is just a distraction from *the harsh truth about the bonfire and it's [sic] purpose – hazing a new class of freshmen into dear old Dartmouth. . . .*

*In the case of the bonfire, our first-years are proving they deserve membership to Dartmouth's largest organization, the student body. . . .*

[A] certain amount of harassing and haranguing is necessary to tune freshmen up for four years in Hanover. . . .

[T]he bonfire is only hours away and then unfounded senior-in-high-school egos will be trampled underfoot with the freshmen who can't run fast enough, and surplus self-confidence will burn with the pine and kerosene. (Turner 2006b, emphasis added)

Above, Turner clearly provides an excellent description of how Dartmouth Night brings people together (even in a faux-competitive sense) to create a definitive Dartmouth characteristic and experience. However, he truly hits the nail on the head in his closing paragraph:

Aside from the fundraising and the hazing, Homecoming is really about one moment. As the freshmen run around the fire, thousands of Dartmouth students, past and present, crowd around to watch. Breath steaming in the night, the heat of the fire on the faces of countless alumni and students brings everyone back to their freshman year when they circled the flame. Whether their laps around the fire ended two or twenty years earlier, they remember it as if it were yesterday. "Worst class ever," the sons and daughters of Dartmouth will scream, wishing secretly that they could get close enough to touch the fire. (Turner 2006b)

While Noon (1968) and Turner (2006b) superbly explain the place-making elements and sense of place sentiments that they derive, the theme running through both of these Dartmouth traditions is the shared experiences that they create for the students, particularly the freshmen, but even those in which alumni can clearly recall years after their time at the College. Although not everyone (either inside or outside of the Dartmouth community) necessarily interprets the Outing Club or Dartmouth Night the same way, it is clear that for the Dartmouth community a sense of place and community is created through these traditions.

My observations and subsequent research point to the paradoxical nature of place at Dartmouth (Adams, Hoelscher, and Till 2001: xxii). For some, such as the young girl sitting on

her father's shoulders on Dartmouth Night, the College inspired a sense of awe. Others at the event who were not members of the Dartmouth community seemed confused by the bonfire's seemingly bizarre ritual and the College's arrogance. But perhaps more importantly, for those at Dartmouth both in the past and the present, the bonfire and the DOC evoke a sense of pride and nostalgia that only they can feel, as they are two place-defining qualities of Dartmouth that are meant specifically for them. These traditions and place-defining qualities are what make the College "special" because they are purposefully created *to be* special. Furthermore, there is an interesting dichotomy between what Dartmouth likes to openly reveal about what makes the College so special and what it does not.

Building on the support, personal experiences, and observations I include above, why is this sentiment of preserving these traditions and a sense of place at Dartmouth so strong? I feel that perhaps it signifies a desire to create, or return to, an idyllic environment away from places that are clearly *not* Dartmouth; places that do not share what those at the College feel is rightfully theirs and only theirs. Dartmouth is a type of hideaway for people, albeit for only a select group of people. For those who have the privilege of hiking on privately owned trails in the mountains of New Hampshire or running around an enormous bonfire as methods of entry and inclusion into this special place called Dartmouth, they construct an elite place and culture that is created and maintained for them and unavailable anywhere else. Although all of this is significant to the College, it is important to remember from my analysis that Dartmouth is still only creating an image, albeit one that they can create and manipulate for their own purposes. These images are closely tied to these prominent College traditions which, through close examination, reveal the active role that those at the College play to use these images and traditions in the definition of their place.

While the DOC and Dartmouth Night clearly and indisputably play a major role in place-making at Dartmouth, I argue that they are eclipsed by their own images in seeking to define Dartmouth as a place. In one sense the traditions are created for a certain purpose, but the greater overall image they are trying to project overshadows and acts as a diversion from those purposes. Whereas Dartmouth wishes to superficially appear one way through its traditions, closer examination of the images associated with these traditions uncovers realities that the College is actively and simultaneously trying to deny and affirm. Though understanding the concept of place is important for a deeper understanding of Dartmouth, gaining an insight into the unusual strand of topophilia that is found at the College allows for a stronger grasp of how place is constructed at Dartmouth. Much like the contradictions associated with Dartmouth Hall and the Old Pine, a paradox is evident between the College's construction and the author's deconstruction of Dartmouth as a place.

## CHAPTER 7 INSIDE THE “DARTMOUTH BUBBLE”

### **Introduction**

The two following chapters serve as an extension of Chapter 6 through my intention to explore further and attempt to understand the creation of place at Dartmouth. However, the focus and tone of this chapter and the next differs from the previous chapters. Instead of centering it around more theoretical constructs such as landscape, ritual and memory, or place, I aim to address some issues and qualities of Dartmouth that I actually saw or experienced up close while I was at the College. These are also recurring themes that I noticed or came across when examining both historic and contemporary Dartmouth. In other words, this chapter and the next focus on Dartmouth’s internal culture as I saw it “on the ground.”

At Dartmouth, I heard and read about a metaphor for the exclusive and isolated nature of the College and its campus that students colloquially refer to as “the Dartmouth Bubble.” The “Bubble” refers to Dartmouth’s perceived isolation from the region and, for that matter, the rest of the world. It amplifies the notion that Dartmouth is “its own world” and the unique and special place that I touched on in previous chapters. Much of what occurs inside the Dartmouth Bubble evidently stays inside the Bubble or, at the very least, is intended to be an issue reserved for members of the Dartmouth community.

Upon reaching Hanover, however, I quickly discovered that much of what I witnessed and experienced at Dartmouth was too informative to *not* include in my study to complement the more traditional scholarly portion of my research. More importantly, and perhaps more bluntly, I found this information and my typical, daily experiences at Dartmouth to offer what I believe to be a more realistic, accurate, sober, concrete, and unrelenting portrayal of the College’s culture. These findings also sometimes greatly contrast the images that Dartmouth uses to represent itself



to the public and, as a researcher, I felt it my duty to attempt to uncover these important but less openly discussed features and realities of Dartmouth and analyze what the College may not openly reveal, but nevertheless play important roles in understanding Dartmouth and elite culture.

Thus, in this chapter and the next, I take a look inside the Dartmouth Bubble, recount my time there, and examine issues such as coeducation and multiculturalism, socioeconomic class issues at Dartmouth, admissions and financial aid, student activism and service, where I rely largely on the words of students and alumni, as voiced in various Dartmouth publications. I also include a summary of my own daily experiences as a visitor at the College. I do not mean to criticize the College's policies or make any claims to suggest improvement since that is not my place to do so. Rather, I wish to simply draw distinctions between how Dartmouth represents itself publicly and how I found it to be from my own personal experience and research. I believe that my findings add another dimension to my study in trying to gain a deeper understanding of Dartmouth as a place from everyday issues at the College and my take on them.

If there is an invisible, metaphorical bubble encapsulating Dartmouth College, I feel that it is important to look into why people feel that it is there and why it needs to "exist" in the first place. Furthermore, what makes life "inside" the Bubble so different? There must be a different quality to life *at* Dartmouth; otherwise the students would not have a need to create an inside/outside dichotomy of life at the College. Dartmouth claims that it is a tolerant and welcoming institution. But is that the reality?

### **Coeducation**

One of the most controversial events in the recent history of Dartmouth College was its decision in 1972 to admit and enroll women to pursue undergraduate degrees. Although female

students and faculty members are a common sight on the campus today, the decision for Dartmouth to become a coeducational institution was a landmark event, and its consequences are still evident today.

Before proceeding with the nuances and intricacies of Dartmouth's move to coeducation, some clarification regarding the status of women at the College is necessary. Though Dartmouth had been an expressly male college since its founding, it would be inaccurate to state that there was absolutely no feminine presence at the College or in Hanover prior to 1972. In fact, it was between 1874 through 1917 when the first female graduate students were admitted and earned degrees at Dartmouth (Sternick 1973: 23). Before the early 1960s, seven women had earned advanced degrees from Dartmouth (*Valley News* 1963). But before World War I, women, often school teachers or master's degree students, attended the College during the summer term to take courses that could be applied to degrees at their home institutions (*Hanover Gazette* 1962). Women worked at the College during World War II while it was a training station for the U.S. Navy, though there was a scarcity of jobs in Hanover for student and faculty wives (Sternick 1973: 26).

The first female faculty members appeared on campus in the 1960s, and they reportedly faced blatant discrimination (Cowgill 2006; *The Dartmouth* 1970). As of 1970, there were twenty-three women faculty members at Dartmouth, fifteen of whom were lecturers (*The Dartmouth* 1970). Most of them were faculty wives, and although many of them had doctorates, they worked on a term-by-term basis with low salaries, received pay according to the number of courses they taught, acquired no benefits or raises with experience, and had no part in departmental decision making (*The Dartmouth* 1970). In summary, women were at Dartmouth at some level before 1972, though they evidently played a minor role in the life and functioning

of the College. The sight of college-aged females in Hanover appears to have been reserved mostly for times when young women from other colleges in the region came to Dartmouth for weekend visits or major events like Winter Carnival or Dartmouth Night.

The idea of coeducation at Dartmouth goes back into the College's history with a fairly strong show of support by students and alumni, though this support was coupled with a strong and more vocal opposition to the suggestion. Serious plans for coeducation began in the 1950s as evidenced by many petitions and surveys from that era. College administrators in particular were not pleased with the potential costs involved in providing services and facilities for women. Some people proposed, as an alternative, to build an all-female campus near Dartmouth, possibly in the neighboring town of Norwich, Vermont.

Changes at the College became evident when Dartmouth announced that it would add a fourth term to the academic calendar beginning in 1963, as opposed to the three-term system which had begun in 1958. The most notable aspect of this change was that women would be admitted for the extra term. With this new policy in place, women (including faculty and student wives and female staff members) could enroll in summer courses at Dartmouth and earn credits, though they were ineligible to earn an actual degree from Dartmouth (*Rutland Herald* 1969). Credits were usually transferred back to the visiting student's home institution.

To gauge opinions elicited by these changes at the College, *The Dartmouth* conducted polls of students, faculty, and alumni in 1965 on the issue of Dartmouth possibly becoming coeducational. As far as the students polled at that time, they seemed to feel that the pros and cons for coeducation were evenly split, with fraternity members mostly opposed and non-members largely in favor (*The Dartmouth* 1965a). The students reported that the fear of a loss of tradition and a strong disapproval from alumni were the main barriers to coeducation with some

of the respondents preferring an all-male environment (*The Dartmouth* 1965a). Those in favor appeared to support coeducation for mostly social reasons, claiming that an exclusively male environment created an unrealistic and unnatural atmosphere at the College (*The Dartmouth* 1965a).

The other poll reported that while most alumni opposed coeducation, faculty largely favored it (*The Dartmouth* 1965b). While faculty viewed the advantages as more social than intellectual, they saw exposure to females as “desirable” because the “present Dartmouth experience was unnatural and unhealthy” due to “the absence of normal relations with women and the prevalence of attitudes which overemphasize masculinity” (*The Dartmouth* 1965b). The alumni were divided on the issue; some saw the presence of women as a distraction and others sought to preserve the “good old days” due to a fear of losing “the camaraderie and mystical ‘school spirit’ that characterizes the all-male Dartmouth would disappear when the first co-ed shrieked out her class numerals” (*The Dartmouth* 1965b). One professor commented, “Dartmouth students would [then] be able to see women as persons rather than as weekend toys” (*The Dartmouth* 1965b). Faculty felt that women would add a “civilizing” element to the rural and remote location of the College to relegate the “animal-like” character of Dartmouth and its students as well as “reduce the risks of homosexuality” among the all-male student body (*The Dartmouth* 1965b; Balgley 1965). Both the faculty and alumni felt that Dartmouth tradition was the largest barrier to initiating coeducation at the College, followed by the alumni themselves, as many threatened to withdraw donations or not donate for new facilities (*The Dartmouth* 1965b).

Support for coeducation gradually increased, though certain concerns remained among the students, faculty, administration, and alumni. Admissions director and alumnus Edward T. Chamberlain rhetorically asked how the admissions policies would change, by possibly

admitting equal numbers of male and female students or by simply adding a certain number of females to the typical number for incoming classes of male students (Wilson 1965).

Chamberlain noted that faculty saw the addition of females to the College would help to “weed out” the lower academic half of male students and replace them with bright young women (Wilson 1965). Alumni were began to report having problems interesting prospective students in Dartmouth because of the lack of females at the College (Wilson 1965).

Within a few years, however, the College began to seriously research the possibility of coeducation by actively allowing for limited female presence. Specifically, events known as “co-ed weeks” were held in the 1960s where Dartmouth invited female college students to Hanover to participate in various programs and interact with Dartmouth students. After one such week in 1969 in which over one thousand women visited the College, *The Dartmouth* conducted yet another poll and reported on the coeds’ impressions of Dartmouth (Jeffe 1969). According to the poll results, most of the female visitors had a favorable impression of the College and found the male students likeable and about a third of the respondents felt that, if women were admitted to Dartmouth, it would make the College “more normal and realistic” (Jeffe 1969). Controversy then shifted to what *type* of woman should be admitted to Dartmouth. The answers came soon enough. In the fall of 1969, Dartmouth admitted seventy females, mostly juniors at other colleges, as visiting students; the visitors could not apply their credits toward a Dartmouth degree, but were allowed to transfer credits to their home institutions (*Rutland Herald* 1969).

After much thought and debate, the answer came and was broadcast to the world as the headline of the November 22, 1971 issue of *The Dartmouth* exclaiming, **DARTMOUTH TO ADMIT WOMEN**. This announcement may or may not have been related to a threat from the United States House of Representatives to deny federal funding to Dartmouth if it did not admit

women and put them “on an equal footing with men within seven years” (McClendon 1971). Nonetheless, women from 1972 onward were admitted and eligible to earn undergraduate degrees, though there was a policy that prohibited a decrease in the number of slots for men or for the increase of total student enrollment (Cowgill 2006). Soon after the announcement, the Dartmouth admissions office was flooded with inquiries from prospective female students and alumni with daughters (*Peterborough Ledger* 1971). But the reactions were not as positive in all quarters.

The *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* in particular showed a wide variety of opinions on the matter. It appears that many of those opposed to coeducation were, in general, much older alumni. As a sample of some of the reactions, Henry O. Lowell (1971: 5) wrote, “It has been suggested that the College should not deny women the benefits of the ‘Dartmouth experience.’ I submit the proposition that as soon as women become members of the Dartmouth undergraduate body, the ‘Dartmouth experience’ will no longer exist.” In an interesting use of Daniel Webster as a means to justify contemporary issues at the College, an angry Whitney Cushing (1971: 2) wrote,

Had a talk with Daniel Webster the other day. I told him the College was going coeducational because it needed the money and besides Harvard, Yale, and Princeton were going that way [toward coeducation?]. Webster was furious.

“Be damned to Harvard, Yale and Princeton!” he said. “Dartmouth’s a small college for men in the hills of New Hampshire and no females should clutter up the best damned college in the land!”

Daniel’s black eyes flashed with anger and he spat out one more word, “Damn!”

I find myself and possibly thousands more who once trod the Hanover campus echoing that sentiment. Damn!

Frank Katz, in a letter supporting coeducation, wrote about the criticism of coeducation and the recurring use of the word “tradition”: “I have always suspected that the word tradition is used not as the symbol for continuing all that is good from the past, but as justification for continued

discrimination against those members of our society who have not previously been endowed with the privileges of the upper classes” (1971: 4). In fact, there was a good deal of protest against coeducation on campus as well (Figure 67), which may have been manifested most clearly once the first class of undergraduate women who would spend a full four years at Dartmouth arrived on campus in the fall of 1972.



**Figure 67:** Banners protesting coeducation at Dartmouth on a dormitory, early 1970s. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

I have uncovered some discrepancies regarding the demographic make-up and exact numbers composing Dartmouth’s Class of 1976 (see Barber 2006; Kimball and Newman 1973; *Rutland Herald* 1972). Despite slight incongruities in the exact numbers, a strict ratio of one female student to every three male students was employed and retained by the administration until 1984 due to the strong opposition to coeducation of many alumni and current male students (Bennett 2006; Murphy 2007). And contrary to what many sources claim, Dartmouth was *not*

the last Ivy League institution to admit women. The last Ivy to admit women was, in fact, Columbia, which did not do so until 1983. Columbia reports, however, that it did not encounter nearly as much trouble and controversy with its decision to admit new female undergraduates as Dartmouth (McCaughey 2003: 540).

While Kimball and Newman (1973: 22) claim that Dartmouth had a more “mellow” atmosphere with women on campus during the 1972-73 school year, numerous other sources contradict this assertion, particularly those from the perspective of the women who directly experienced that time period at the College. This historic time marked several landmark “firsts” in the College’s history such as the introduction of women’s sports, the formation of coed fraternities (sororities were not officially established until 1977), and the first women to serve on the boards of the Outing Club and *The Dartmouth* (Barber 2006). Many of the new female students at Dartmouth were daughters of alumni. These new female students, however, had a less-than-hospitable welcome once they arrived in Hanover (Figures 68 and 69).

Some of the more notorious incidents affecting the women as an entire group include the new pejorative nickname for Dartmouth women – “cohogs.” The term was a combination of *coeducational* and *hog*. In fact, a ditty was created in 1975 to the “Greek Hums” competition, as sung to the song “This Old Man” that went:

Our cohogs they play four  
They are all a bunch of whores  
With a Knick Knack, paddy whack  
Send the bitches home  
Our cohogs go to bed alone.

Perhaps even more surprising is that this tune was selected by the Dean of the College as the winning song for that competition (Cowgill 2006). (The song is longer, but the sample above is perhaps the best-known verse.) Another infamous event was “sink night” in which male students





**Figure 68:** Female students walking on campus, 1972. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.



**Figure 69:** Women in class. Photo by Chris Williams. From Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

slipped anonymous letters under the doors of the all-female Woodward Hall dormitory demanding that “the upper part of your body must remain naked before our eyes when you eat in Thayer [Dining Hall]” (Barber 2006: 40). Other forms of harassment occurred, from dorm raids, to bricks thrown through windows, to more serious instances including assault and even rape (Barber 2006; Cohen 2007). Many of the victims of rape or physical abuse never reported the crimes, however, because they were afraid of potential (and perhaps likely) repercussions if they reported it, and many of the perpetrators went unpunished (Cohen 2007; Cowgill 2006). Despite the negative treatment, women often simply tolerated how they were regarded at Dartmouth, often by laughing it off (Cohen 2007).

In retrospect, Dartmouth alumnae have been more open about their experiences during the early days of coeducation at the College. Perhaps the most in-depth personal experience available on the subject comes from Gina Barreca’s (2005) memoir *Babes in Boyland*. But in 2006, celebrating the thirty-year anniversary of coeducation, the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* published an article by Bonnie Barber (2006) offering a mixed take on some specific, personal experiences of many female graduates of the class of 1976. Some alumnae report that it was not so much that men were opposed to coeducation as much as the notion that coeducation at Dartmouth was initially extremely unpopular (Cohen 2007) and much of these frustrations were taken out on the new female undergraduates, and many Dartmouth men simply went along with the sentiment.

It was during my time at Dartmouth, in fact, that the number of female students in the Class of 2010 outnumbered the male student population at 51.6 percent, which was up till then the highest percentage of women in any class in the College’s history (Cohen 2006a). This statistic, however, does not automatically mean that Dartmouth has somehow advanced

completely beyond its more openly intolerant attitude toward women in the early 1970s. Both in the past and present, some female Dartmouth students reported that while applying to colleges in high school, their guidance counselors were discouraging of their interest in Dartmouth due to the College's reputation as an anti-female "guy's school" (Cohen 2007). Sexual assault remains an issue at the College (see Duray 2007; Gundling 2007d). Much of the blame for the assaults and the gender imbalance more broadly is directed at fraternities and the prevalence of alcohol on the campus. Many faculty members and administrators claim that they have heard at least one female student report feeling uncomfortable on campus because of either verbal harassment or sexual assault (Bennett 2006). Faculty and administrators, however, adopt a seemingly laissez-faire attitude by maintaining "that any tangible change in gender dynamics must be student-initiated" (Bennett 2006).

But putting this sort of power in the hands of students may only have a limited effect. In the summer of 2007, members of Dartmouth's chapter of the sorority Kappa Kappa Gamma faced some difficulty on their way to a social event that was going to be held at the College's chapter of Theta Delta Chi (O'Donnell 2007b). The sorority arrived at the fraternity's house to be met by certain men at the back of the house who greeted the sorority members by throwing things at them and yelling derogatory names such as "bitch" and "whore" among other obscenities and then proceeded to trash the basement of their own house (O'Donnell 2007b). After the event, the president of the fraternity offered a seemingly perfunctory apology, blaming the actions of his fraternity members on the "Dartmouth Man" mentality (O'Donnell 2007b), being that of a misogynistic outdoorsman, which many at Dartmouth insist is an anachronistic view of Dartmouth culture.

The incident at the Theta Delta Chi house continued to receive attention in the pages of *The Dartmouth* for the next few weeks but, from my assessment, the uproar surrounding the episode eventually died down. It did not appear to be an isolated incident, however; my research found more instances of blatantly sexist incidents at Dartmouth directed at women, often related to the College's Greek system. In fact, these sorts of occurrences happen with some regularity. In an article examining gender equality at the College, an alumna and professor is quoted, "[A]ll the buildings [at Dartmouth] are named after men. The history of Dartmouth is all about men. It's about Eleazar Wheelock. It's about the presidents of Dartmouth. The portraits that hang around campus are overwhelmingly of dead white men, so I think there's a kind of maleness to the history that still permeates the [campus] space" (Bennett 2006). Although today there may be a much more equal numerical presence of women on campus and they do not face the same degree of social challenges as they may have in the 1970s, it is clear that the "Dartmouth man" did not automatically leave the campus as soon as coeds, from older classes and newer ones, arrived.

### **Class**

In a piece on class, columnist Lense Gebre-Mariam (2007a) observed, "'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' might as well be the motto that embodies most discussions of class and its significance at Dartmouth." She continues to say that "you'd have to live in a bubble within a bubble (perhaps within another bubble) not to notice some class issues at Dartmouth" (Gebre-Mariam 2007a), and I fully agree as class, despite its strong undertones at Dartmouth, seems to be a topic that is largely swept under the rug, and some columns from various student publications noted that it was often an uncomfortable and understated issue at the College. Another column by Asafu Suzuki (2007) notes, "Even within the comfortable boundaries of our

Hanover Bubble, real world problems manifest themselves from time to time. . . . [W]e have witnessed a surge in diversity discourse [at Dartmouth], but the issue of class has gone largely unidentified.”

In this section, I will adhere to what many Dartmouth students define class as being the perception of a family’s income and wealth (Suzuki 2007). In her article, Suzuki quotes one interviewee who says, “Dartmouth is a place where money and elitism get thrown around a lot . . . in general” (2007). Suzuki (2007) explains further, “Money is an uncomfortable topic to discuss, and the lack of discourse leads to a general lack of awareness about class.” Though this observation could be applicable most anywhere, Suzuki is apparently referring to Dartmouth in this specific context. Of course, the elite educational institutions of the United States are often associated with being wealthy schools, with wealthy alumni, and oftentimes wealthy students. But it did not become clear to me just how much the issue of class is related to Dartmouth’s status as a highly regarded American college until I took the time to carefully examine the ways that high socioeconomic standing is so tightly intertwined with the College.

In what I would term a conservative and generous evaluation describing the impact of class at Dartmouth, Suzuki (2007) claims, “Since middle- to upper-middle class culture pervades our campus, class manifests itself in very subtle manners.” More descriptively, she cites how “[t]he simplest conversations could contain markers of class. For example, talking about what someone did on an off-term reveals whether that person had the resources to go on a vacation to a distant location or had to stay home and work or had to remain on campus for their job.” Suzuki (2007) quotes one student explaining that “classism [at Dartmouth is experienced] . . . through the assumption that everybody is from the upper-middle class” and that many Dartmouth students simply assume their classmates can afford expensive activities or can spend time

studying in foreign countries. But this is not the case as “[s]ome students struggle to have the promised ‘Dartmouth Experience’ due to financial constraints” (Suzuki 2007).

One shocking instance that I read about came from a front-page article in *The Dartmouth* which reported the experiences of several Dartmouth “ski bums” who took entire terms off to ski in Utah, Colorado, or Wyoming, often working at resorts for a minimal income (Patterson 2007b). One anonymous ski bum recounts part of his experiences from his term off: “My landlord was basically the drug dealer for the entire mountain so we had pounds of weed and drugs at the house. Twice a week or so I would get up in the morning and there would be naked girls running around the house coked out of their minds” (Patterson 2007b).

Other Dartmouth students, however, are not as fortunate to have the time or money to partake in such productive activities during their off term. Suzuki (2007) notes how such sharp class divides are visible in Dartmouth’s Greek organizations because “[p]articipants [in the Greek system] assumedly have the ability to pay expensive dues [to participate and belong to such organizations].” Some Greek houses offer “financial aid” for less wealthy students who wish to join their organizations which can be custodial work or baking to help offset the cost of dues (Gebre-Mariam 2007a; Suzuki 2007). One African-American student wishing to join a Greek organization, “questioned whether that form of aid could place her in the symbolic role of the house’s cleaner, wearing a cleaning rag on her head just so she could be a member” (Suzuki 2007).

Many Greeks and non-Greeks believe that the Greek system creates and perpetuates a class divide both through a student’s socioeconomic status and a student’s social status at the College (Suzuki 2007). Greek organizations at Dartmouth cost varying amounts of money which often ends up segregating prospective members because some houses reputedly cater to the more

affluent students (Suzuki 2007). Therefore, “[t]he reputation and stereotype of each house can situate affiliated individuals on the campus social ladder. There are times, one affiliated student said, ‘when you meet someone who’s in a sorority and you say you are part of [a certain house], and it’s like, brick wall (Suzuki 2007).’” In fact, some themed parties at Greek houses go as far making a mockery of social classes (Suzuki 2007). As one way to remedy awkward moments between class divisions, some students go as far as to “dress middle-class” to come off as wealthier, which, in the Dartmouth lexicon, is known as “passing” which aims “to be on a level playing ground on the surface, mitigating divide and discomfort in social situations” (Suzuki 2007). Perhaps *on the surface* is the key point in many instances regarding Dartmouth’s culture and social atmosphere.

One aspect of affording Dartmouth or its social life in general, however, involves students working on campus. I have read and seen many releases and publications by the College that discuss, even brag, about how generous Dartmouth is with financial aid and the lengths that it will take to help a less economically advantaged student through college. I examine this in greater detail in my section on admissions and financial aid. But such ostensible generosity does not negate Gebre-Mariam’s (2007a) point that “Even with so many Dartmouth students receiving financial aid, over half of the student body can still shell out over \$45,000 a year without help – suggesting a culture of wealth unmatched at many other institutions.”

Despite Dartmouth’s ostensible generosity to its students and the greater community, perceptions of Dartmouth as a socioeconomically diverse school outside of the Dartmouth Bubble are not widespread. In an article offering a glimpse of poverty in the Upper Valley region, Zachary Gottlieb (2007a) provides a brief but sobering account of the stark socioeconomic contrasts between Hanover and many of its neighbors, even going as far as

labeling it a “geographical anomaly” and “a different world” in the region and that “Outside of the community, Dartmouth is seen by many to be an isolated entity in an affluent pocket of the state.” Gottlieb (2007a) mentions that while the surrounding communities outside Hanover are “alien to many students, Dartmouth reflects this attitude in its local public reputation [as well].” Putting this into perspective, Gottlieb (2007a) offers some harder data to provide a comparison between Hanover and some neighboring New Hampshire towns:

According to the New Hampshire Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, Hanover's average weekly wage in 2004 was \$1,003, and the 2000 U.S. census bureau found that only 0.6 percent of its families lived below the poverty line. Compare that to Lebanon's \$828 weekly wage and 6.3 percent of families living below the poverty level. Enfield's weekly wage is a significantly lower \$534, almost half that of Hanover's. According to the Students Fighting Hunger group at Dartmouth, 15 to 20 percent of Upper Valley residents live below the poverty line – \$20,000 a year for a family of four, according to U.S. Health and Human Services standards. One undergraduate's cost of education here is nearly two-and-a-half times this figure every year.

Gottlieb (2007a) continues with his bleak depiction of life outside the Dartmouth Bubble by mentioning that many of the college-age residents of the poorer towns in the Upper Valley are not in college and must work as opposed to having the luxury of choosing from the wide array of activities and social events offered at Dartmouth. Now that a degree of guilt has undoubtedly set in for the readers of his article, Gottlieb (2007a) proceeds to list and describe several organizations at Dartmouth that help residents of impoverished nearby towns and the work that they do, apparently to not only raise awareness of the issue but to solicit more volunteers as well.

Though Hanover and Dartmouth may be inaccessible for many people in the Upper Valley, life inside the Dartmouth Bubble is often beyond the financial reach of those even in higher socioeconomic classes. When I first moved to Hanover, I took immediate notice of the jump in the cost of living, which would be high by most standards, let alone that of a graduate student. I also saw, both walking and driving around Hanover, some rather extravagant – even



palatial – homes in this small, Upper Valley town. Deciding to investigate this further, I noticed that the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* regularly publishes advertisements for real estate in Hanover and other nearby towns, presumably to alumni who may wish to move back to the area or buy a second home there, which is popular among them. The ads often feature homes for sale that are quite large and some which are upwards of \$1 million and some which are multimillion dollar homes. Gottlieb (2007a) observes, “Large increases in real estate prices around Hanover have proven Dartmouth's attractiveness to increasingly wealthy homeowners. Surrounding areas have accommodated those who cannot afford expensive Hanover property, including many Dartmouth professors and other faculty.” In a piece covering the growing appeal of Hanover and the Upper Valley region for *The New York Times*, Hughes (2008) reports that the median price for a home in Hanover is \$500,000 even though properties can go to up to \$2 million. The people buying homes in the area are often wealthy professionals from the Northeast (Hughes 2008). Hughes (2008) also mentions that as recently as about twenty years ago, “a Dartmouth diploma was almost a prerequisite for buying a second home in the region” which seems curious until one discovers that Dartmouth actually owns a significant amount of residential property in Hanover and other towns in the region.

As I mentioned above, it is not only homes that are expensive in Hanover, but the general cost of living, including food (which I return to later), and other goods in town. The high costs are evidently not just in my head, either, as I learned that the shops in Hanover often cater to higher end customers, such as a women’s shoe store that appeals to women who, according to quotes from the owner and customers, are “mature and sophisticated,” and “well traveled” (Swanson 2007a) . The store was originally located in Norwich, Vermont, but relocated to Hanover because it “[had] more potential shoppers” (Swanson 2007a). A farmers’ market in

Norwich that targets customers from the Dartmouth community credits wealthy buyers for the market's success and one vendor, describing the market's clientele, said, "It's affluent, down to earth and aware kind of people. . . . They can afford the hand-crafted cheese and the organic vegetables. They really care about the style and quality of life" (Wu 2007). Apparently residents of, say, nearby West Lebanon do not care about the quality of their lives, but those from Hanover and Norwich do. Indeed, many people associated with Dartmouth "consider the Gap [to be a] low-end shopping destination" (Gottlieb 2007a).

I find it unusual that a college such as Dartmouth, which prides itself on being so socioeconomically diverse, would seem to try so hard to isolate itself and seemingly attempt to control so much of its surrounding community. Surely such an attitude could not be on the actual campus with the amazingly diverse student, staff, and faculty population at Dartmouth. And it is the topic of diversity and multiculturalism at Dartmouth that I turn to next.

### **Diversity, Inclusivity, Multiculturalism, and Political Correctness**

"Diversity" is a growing preoccupation in American institutions, and it is one that I have seen receive a growing amount of attention firsthand from spending many years in a university setting. As a college, Dartmouth is no exception to propagating the seemingly endless discourse and intricacies of the contemporary buzzwords of *diversity*, *inclusivity*, *pluralism*, *multiculturalism*, among others. "Diversity" is a word that appears constantly in student and official Dartmouth publications. And yet, despite Dartmouth's mission to promote and embrace a diverse learning and working environment, I could not help but notice some of the rather counterproductive actions that both the College and individuals at the College took that greatly contradicted the image that Dartmouth is such a welcome and tolerant environment, either

historically or from my experience. Because I have already covered coeducation, I devote this section on diversity to focus primarily on ethnic and cultural diversity at Dartmouth.

First of all, despite the frequency of the word “diversity” in public discourse, it is not an entirely new concept and it has not been just a recent concern for colleges and universities. In Dartmouth’s archives, I found some papers indicating public outcries against racism, mainly from Dartmouth faculty, as early as the 1940s. Aside from women, Dartmouth has also had some controversial policies regarding the presence and admission of other groups of individuals in the past such as Catholics, blacks, and Jews. One brief article examining the history of religious tolerance at Dartmouth pointed out the difficulties that non-Protestant groups faced at the College in the past, as Dartmouth was dominated for a long time by white, Protestant students and staff (Swain 1994). But in his article, Swain reports that Dartmouth now goes out of its way to accommodate religious minorities by providing special dietary needs, spiritual advisors, and places to meet and worship, explaining, “The college has intentionally set out to make the student body more diverse” (Swain 1994).

The intentionality of this movement by the College contrasts earlier discriminatory policies that were employed to prevent or control the number of students affiliated with a certain faith who could enroll at the College. This discriminatory policy may have been especially true for prospective Jewish students. In the 1930s and 1940s, President Ernest Hopkins instituted quotas on the number of Jewish students who could enroll at Dartmouth. Hopkins claimed his policy to limit Jewish enrollment was to prevent prejudice against Jews at the College (Frommer 1997). President James Freedman brought more of the historic prejudice against Jews at Dartmouth to light in the late 1990s and he revealed materials from Dartmouth’s archives disclosing past alumni and administrators concerned by the number of Jews at Dartmouth and

what they termed “the Jewish problem” (Honan 1997). Freedman used this evidence as part of his platform to enhance diversity at Dartmouth during his presidency. But one Dartmouth student, writing to the editor of *The New York Times*, questions the logic behind criticizing quotas and admissions procedures of the past, asking, “How can one condemn the use of race, religion and gender as criteria for denying students admission while at the same time using these same criteria to artificially enhance diversity?” (Siegel 1997).

The issue of race in Dartmouth admissions has largely focused on the number of African-American students who enroll at the College. In 2006, Dartmouth ranked forty-seventh on *Black Enterprise* magazine’s list of the Top 50 Colleges for African Americans (Bradley 2006). One reason for Dartmouth’s ranking on the list is its high graduation rate for African-American students, and one College staff member noted that Dartmouth has such a high graduation rate for black students because it admits “self-selected high achievers” (Bradley 2006). Commenting further on the matter, the staff member said, “The students that come to Dartmouth are not admitted just because they are black. [Dartmouth admissions officers] only admit students that they know will come to the college and succeed. . . . If you didn’t have the skills to make it, you would have never been admitted” (Bradley 2006). But not all black students at Dartmouth have felt that way.

Investigating the continuing challenge of seeking a diverse community at Dartmouth, a local reporter wrote, “Making ‘diversity’ mean something continues to be a tough challenge at Dartmouth College, where students often self-segregate along racial lines and administrators expect students of color to be resident experts on all racial issues” (Tillman 2002). Dartmouth held a “town meeting” in 2002 under the title “Race Matters in the University of the 21st Century” and featured talks by several professors as well as noted social critic Cornel West

(Tillman 2002). The meeting addressed the concern that some regarded “ethnic” events on campus as “very token and superficial” (Tillman 2002). In regard to “special places” such as houses or meeting places for minority students, one student attendee asked, “How is there any hope to integrate people [at Dartmouth] with this continuing notion that there has to be a structure around this or that?” (Tillman 2002). Another black student stated how “she was exhausted from what she believes are the college’s expectations of her to reveal African-American culture to white students” and is quoted, “When they [administrators?] bring us here, we’re not a student first . . . It’s like we’re an experiment of some sort” (Tillman 2002). Cornel West also pointed out that most African-American students at Dartmouth come from prep schools and integrated high schools and not from inner cities (Tillman 2002), which relates back to the socioeconomic elements of diversity at Dartmouth.

Certain events in the fairly recent past have likely contributed to how African Americans perceive Dartmouth and also affect the College’s success of recruiting black students. In the fall of 1998, the Chi Gamma Epsilon fraternity held a now-infamous “ghetto party.” *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (1999: 40) explains, “Students invited to the party were expected to dress in the manner of residents of the inner city. While there are conflicting reports as to what actually went on at the party, news reports at the time said that students dressed as gangsta rap artists, wore Afro wigs, and carried toy guns. The ghetto party capped a series of racial incidents including a ‘slave auction’ fundraiser promoted by a Dartmouth sorority.” In my research I have uncovered conflicting reports about the party as well, particularly regarding various media’s exaggerations of the event, though it goes without saying that any sort of attention that such an event would garner would not bode well for the College.

Building on events that occurred when I was actually at Dartmouth, however, I now turn to controversies involving Native American students, a group with whom the College has ostensibly shared a long history. But a closer examination of extant evidence shows such a “relationship” to be overstated. Simply put, “Dartmouth has had a dark and complex history of associations with Native Americans since its founding” (del Nido 2006). As mentioned earlier, Dartmouth College was ostensibly founded by Eleazar Wheelock to aid in the education of Native Americans. And for years, the unofficial mascot for Dartmouth sports teams was the Indian – and some Dartmouth alumni and students still refer to the teams as “the Dartmouth Indians.” Del Nido argues that by maintaining this sentiment, the College denies how it has marginalized Natives in the past and that “[m]ost people are unaware that for the first 200 years of Dartmouth’s history, fewer than 20 Native Americans graduated from the College” (2006).

Although Dartmouth no longer endorses the Indian mascot or representations of the Indian, the Indian symbol has not (completely) faded from public view at the College. The use of the symbol is perhaps perpetuated mostly through *The Dartmouth Review*, which sells items through its website depicting the Indian symbol such as t-shirts, baseball caps, coffee mugs, bottle openers, and other College memorabilia (Reid 2007). In fact, each fall the paper e-mails the entire incoming freshman class offering free Indian symbol T-shirts (Faurot 2007: 44). I even remember seeing a few students wearing them around campus. Faurot (2007: 44) provides some reasons to some of the controversy regarding the persistence of the Indian symbol by explaining that while some see such gestures from *The Dartmouth Review* as a “harmless homage to a discontinued tradition,” others see it as a racist symbol or as a reminder of genocide. Some Native students even come from schools that used Indian symbols as mascots, but “the image takes on a different meaning at a school with Dartmouth’s history than it does at a school

where the overwhelming majority of students are Native American. Rather than images of cultural pride, Indian symbols become images of cultural domination” (Faurot 2007: 44).

It was perhaps this sense of “cultural domination” that prompted Dartmouth to reverse its thinking of its treatment toward Native Americans beginning in the early 1970s. Confronted with the fact that so few Natives had graduated from Dartmouth, President John Kemeny actively recruited fifteen Native American students for the Class of 1974, even though this initiative was met with objection from some alumni and students (Reid 2007). The organization Native Americans at Dartmouth formed shortly thereafter and dealt with its share of hate mail and harassment (Reid 2007). Within approximately the last thirty-five years, six hundred Native American students from more than two hundred tribes have graduated from the College (Faurot 2007: 109). About 3 percent of Dartmouth’s current student body is Native American (higher than that of any other Ivy), and Dartmouth also offers the only B.A. in Native American Studies in the Ivy League (Faurot 2007: 42). Despite the increasing presence and visibility of Native Americans on campus, tensions have not disappeared. These tensions were especially noticeable during my visit in the fall term of 2006.

The friction began in October that term, during one evening when around thirty Native American students were on the Green holding their annual Columbus Day drum circle. The ceremony is intended “to remind the public of centuries of genocide following Christopher Columbus’s arrival and commemorate the death of Native Americans in the distant and recent past” (Reid 2007). The group included students wearing traditional blankets encircling a smaller group of singers and drummers beating a large drum (Reid 2007). Two students, allegedly drunk fraternity pledges, then approached the circle and “interrupted” and “violated” the ceremony by breaking through the ring to head to the center of the circle (considered a sacred space) and

began to mimic the ceremonial dance (Faurot 2007: 44-45; Reid 2007). Although the Native students were understandably offended, they continued with the ceremony and initially made no formal response or statement about the incident (Faurot 2007: 45; Reid 2007). Another seemingly minor incident occurred that term when Native American alumni took issue with a photo that appeared in the 2007 alumni calendar that showed an old Indian-head cane that was popular with older alumni (still sold by *The Dartmouth Review*). “Although [the Native American alumni] understood the image represent[ed] a symbolic connection between past and present, both Native American alumni and students saw it as a tacit administrative approval of the image” (Faurot 2007: 45).

Shortly after this occurrence, during the week of Dartmouth’s Homecoming game against Holy Cross, another controversy developed in which the Gamma Delta Chi fraternity sold t-shirts reading “Holy Cross Sucks” and depicting a Holy Cross Crusader fellating a Dartmouth Indian (Linsalata 2006b). I vividly remember seeing the shirts being sold at a large table inside Thayer Dining Hall one evening and, after a double take, I shook my head at the notion, wondering if this would be the next incident to come to a head and, surely enough, it was. Along with Linsalata (2006b), I found the shirts to be more “lewd and sophomoric” than “racist,” but Linsalata claims the Native Americans at Dartmouth (NADs) were more perturbed that the shirt had an Indian on it more than anything else. Alas, more metaphorical fuel was added to the bonfire that weekend. Although Linsalata (2006b) does not defend the shirts, he points out that “[t]he Indian, in this case, was merely a proxy for Dartmouth as a whole, in the absence of another symbol which could evoke comparable school and athletic pride. Somehow, a Crusader on his knees in front of a large, amorphous blob of green lacks the same punch.”



The next incident, which *did* get the attention of the administration, involved a party for Dartmouth's Crew teams in early November. While the teams hold an annual formal to celebrate the first race of the season and the first home race on the Connecticut River, the now infamous 2006 party especially stood out during that term's charged campus climate (Ghods-Esfahani 2006). The formal was held in the basement of the Collis Center, while another event ("Noche Dorada") for the Latino fraternity Lambda Upsilon Lambda, also attended by many Native American students (Stewart 2006), was held upstairs. The party downstairs, however, was variously known (or referred to) as things ranging from "Crew Formal" to "Cowboys and Indians" or "Cowboys, Farm Animals and Indigenous Cultures" (Ghods-Esfahani 2006). While *The Dartmouth* claimed that the theme of the party was "Cowboys and Indians" (Mitchell 2006), *The Dartmouth Review* reported that "there was no real plan for a 'theme'" and the event was not registered as having any sort of theme, nor was it sanctioned by the Dartmouth administration as one Native student alleged in *The Dartmouth* (Ghods-Esfahani 2006; see Stewart 2006).

In fact, most attendees dressed in accordance with the event, with men wearing suits or tuxedos and women wearing dresses (Ghods-Esfahani 2006). But three upperclassmen rowers appear to be the source of controversy as they decided to dress as Indians for the event and several others dressed as cowboys (Ghods-Esfahani 2006). Some attendees of the fraternity party upstairs noticed two girls walking through the Collis Center dressed as Indians and decided to follow them to see where they were going and why they were dressed in such a way (Mitchell 2006). They then went downstairs and were met with "a significant amount of resistance" at the door leading to the formal (Mitchell 2006). The fraternity members then returned upstairs to speak with a dean who was attending that particular party "to come down[stairs] . . . with them to further examine the situation" (Mitchell 2006). The dean then spoke with some of the students at

the formal and, after seeing some students who “seemed to be intoxicated” and underage, called Safety and Security (Mitchell 2006). A co-captain apologized to the dean and the offended students, both parties resumed, and the attendees in costume either changed or left the party (Mitchell 2006). Shortly after the dean left, Safety & Security arrived, responding to what one report described as “offensive costumes and underage alcohol consumption,” but left shortly thereafter “seeing no alcohol-related problem that warranted ending the party” (Ghods-Esfahani 2006).

Though the rest of that evening appeared to proceed without further ado, the controversy surrounding it did not. Although one co-captain wrote a letter of apology to *The Dartmouth* (see Clayman 2006), a series of “condemnatory op-eds” appeared in that paper within days and a two-page spread in *The Dartmouth* taken out by the Native American Council outlined the recent event as part of “A Chronology of Racism” (Ghods-Esfahani 2006). The same evening that the paper printed the ad, letters from both the Dean of the College and President Wright were distributed “to the entire campus that emphasized the seriousness of [the] racial issues, sympathized with the Native American community and affirmed administrative support for offended minorities” (Wool 2007a). The dean who showed up at the party also contributed an editorial to *The Dartmouth* (see Hernandez-Siegel 2006), though Ghods-Esfahani (2006) acutely points out the tone of the dean’s piece because, unlike the dean’s original concerns about underage drinking at the party, “the statement written by Dean Siegel reveals his motivations for his stealth call to [Safety & Security] the night of the crew formal as not the reputed safety of the rowers, but the potential hurt ‘feelings’ of Native Americans not actually attending the formal.” Indeed, upon examination of Hernandez-Siegel’s (2006) editorial, it focuses on the “insensitive

depiction of Native Americans” and the need to “empower” minority students at the College, and there is not even a mention of alleged alcohol abuse at the crew formal.

Echoing the sentiments of the other administrators, another controversy erupted when Dartmouth Athletic Director Josie Harper (2006) wrote a letter on November 21 to *The Dartmouth* apologizing for inviting the Fighting Sioux men’s hockey team of the University of North Dakota to compete in a hockey tournament hosted at Dartmouth that December. In the letter, Harper (2006) worried that the matchup would “offend and hurt people in the community” and cause “pain” among Native American students (Rose 2007; Wool 2007a). Arguing that North Dakota’s willingness and its fight to retain the Fighting Sioux as their mascot against the NCAA’s attempted ban on the nickname and mascot (Faurot 2007), Harper added that “UND’s position is offensive and wrong” and that she “regretted that [Dartmouth’s] athletic department did not consider ‘the team’s [North Dakota] nickname and symbol’ when UND was scheduled two years prior to the tournament” (Rose 2007).

Weighing in on Harper’s action, *Dartmouth Review* editor Daniel Linsalata (2006b) expressed disbelief that Dartmouth’s Athletic Director had apologized for another school’s mascot. Clarifying, he wrote,

That’s right: Dartmouth had to apologize for inviting the University of North Dakota, and its Fighting Sioux hockey team, to a tournament next month. Never mind that the tournament was booked two years ago, and the state of North Dakota has actively been fighting in court to keep its team name. Or that last year, the president of UND was made an honorary member of a Sioux tribe. Or that Dartmouth invited UND to the tournament because the school has one of the premier hockey programs in the country. None of that. Instead, Harper had to apologize for not foreseeing “the pain it will cause.” In an interview with the *Manchester Union-Leader*, a UND spokesman stated that he had never heard of another school apologizing for the Fighting Sioux team. And as numerous bloggers and reporters have pointed out, who is Dartmouth to criticize or dictate another school’s traditions and decisions? (Linsalata 2006b)

Debate exploded on the Dartmouth campus regarding the appropriateness of Harper's actions and the policy regarding Dartmouth's own lack of a fitting mascot since the demise of the Dartmouth Indian.

There was some support for Harper. One critical letter from an angry alumnus opined that he was "embarrassed and angry" at the controversy since the College is "paying her to act as an athletic director, not a civil rights advocate. She should not be so arrogant as to think that people care about her 'politically correct' opinions. Instead, she should stick to financing, recruiting and scheduling and be thankful that a team with such a strong program as UND would accept an invite to our tourney" (Thurlow 2007).

But still more problems were to emerge. The November 29 issue of *The Dartmouth Review* featured, on its front page, an image of a nearly naked Native American holding a freshly-cut scalp underneath the headline "The Natives are Getting Restless!" along with "editorial content . . . widely viewed as offensive toward Native Americans" (Wool 2007a). Faurot (2007: 109) claims that "[o]ther articles [in that issue] mocked the Native American students as overly sensitive and humorless." Interestingly, Wool (2007a) reports, "Even before print copies of the edition circulated, waves of angry e-mails regarding the cover image filled students' inboxes. The issue both enraged the vocal group of minority activists and angered students who had previously been indifferent about the term's racial tensions."

I remember feeling some initial shock when I first saw the cover of the issue, though my response did not compare to that of a large portion of the Dartmouth community. The day after the issue was distributed, a "Solidarity Against Hatred: A Rally for Civil Discourse" rally was organized to be held that afternoon in front of Dartmouth Hall (which, if you recall, the original building was presumably built by Wheelock's slaves). An estimated five hundred students,

faculty, and administrators gathered at the rally, featuring President Wright and some other speakers; the event even got some national media attention (Faurot 2007: 109; Wool 2007a).

Shortly afterward, *Review* editor Dan Linsalata issued an apology for the “feelings of offense within Dartmouth” caused by the cover (Wool 2007a). Some people saw the cover as a direct attack on Native American students as a whole, though *The Review* denied this (Wool 2007a). A few days later, some other editors at *The Review* “issued an outright apology for the cover” and mentioned that some of the paper’s staff members expressed reservations about its appropriateness (Glickman 2007; Wool 2007a). The president of *The Dartmouth Review* resigned over the incident. As for the actual hockey game, some people protested outside the arena, though North Dakota soundly defeated Dartmouth 4-1 (Sloan 2007).

Amidst the reaction to Harper’s infamous apology and the cover of *The Dartmouth Review*, an issue that had hovered in the background for so long once again returned to the forefront: What should Dartmouth do about a mascot? It seemed that in light of all the confusion, the issue needed to be resolved. In one editorial, Nathan Bruschi (2006) pokes fun at some of the other mascots of the Ivy League before moving to the question of what Dartmouth should do. He states how the Indian is a logical choice given the history of the College but he also asks why Dartmouth does not honor the popular choice, especially when alumni, who largely favor the Indian, contribute so much to the school. Other seemingly benign mascots have been proposed and unofficially implemented such as the Dartmoose and the “anthropomorphic beer keg” Keggy the Keg, but these have been deemed unsatisfactory by much of the student body (Bruschi 2006). Bruschi (2006) ends his column with an illustrative question plaguing Dartmouth: “How much longer are we willing to be the only Ivy League school that has no idea exactly who we are cheering?”

In another column, Jacob Baron (2007a) asks the interesting question of why a mascot needs to be “official” at all, since at least he roots for the team and the school and not the mascot itself. On that note, he proposes Hamlet due to the College’s indecisiveness and throws out some others such as “The Jew” and “the Old Rich White Man” that have floated around as suggestions (Baron 2007a). Speaking out against the Indian mascot, a Native American student wrote,

As a Native American student at Dartmouth, I have felt extremely unwelcome by people who support the Indian mascot. I, along with most other Native students, feel that the mascot is a sick joke made at our expense. . . . Now that we have an established Native American program at Dartmouth, those who support the mascot seek to use it to perpetuate their own feelings of racial superiority. (Stewart 2006)

Rangel and Wells (2006) argue that the Indian was never an actual tradition in the best sense of the word, as they mention how Dartmouth was never truly committed to educating Indians in its institutional beginnings and that it utilized caricatures of Native Americans to represent the school.

Echoing *The Dartmouth Review*’s continuing use of “Indian” to refer to Dartmouth sports teams and against some of the rhetoric opposed to the Dartmouth Indian, Daniel Linsalata (2006b) argues,

No logical person believes that [the Indian] will ever return as part of the official or prominent iconography of the College. Yet in the absence of a suitable replacement for more than three decades now, the Indian remains a tangible symbol of Dartmouth for generations of students. It is the ingrained image of school spirit at Dartmouth, and an image which people are still eager to embrace. I am skeptical that the hundreds of students who buy and wear Dartmouth Indian apparel every year do so of out malicious intent. Likewise, should one believe that the dozens of football players and other athletes who get the Dartmouth Indian tattooed on their thigh every year are doing so precisely to offend a small minority? Wearing a logo because it looks cool (face it, it really does) and outwardly displays school spirit is a far cry from wearing it with the intention of offending everyone in sight.

But perhaps the most sober and, in my opinion, convincing editorial piece came from “pea-green freshman” Blair Sullivan (2007) who asked in regard to the opposition against the Indian mascot, “But how far should this opposition reach, and how much influence should one opinion have? Is it the place of colleges and universities to speak out and take action against other institutions who do not share similar mindsets?” Building on this question, she argues that it is illogical to refuse to compete against other schools if some people are offended by a mascot and that such a rationale creates a slippery slope of refusing competition with other schools based on petty political discrepancies or any other arbitrary sources of difference: “If we accommodate the objections of all who feel aggrieved, no school would be acceptable to compete against. . . . No matter how one may feel about any issue, each side must demonstrate a mutual respect for the other. We cannot refuse to associate with anyone who disagrees with us” (Sullivan 2007).

Nevertheless, in the following winter term, a committee formed with the purpose to examine past and present decisions comparing policies of Native American mascots and logos between Dartmouth and other schools (Rose 2007). Among the first meetings of the committee, they aimed to draft a policy on “how to handle scheduling athletic competitions against teams with Indian mascots” (Wool 2007b). Some people spoke out against this idea, arguing that it would politicize Dartmouth athletics; some who supported that proposal argued that allowing competition between the College and such teams would infer that Dartmouth “tolerates racist symbols, and would engender an uncomfortable environment for some students” (Wool 2007b). Again, students who opposed such a policy said that by implementing such a guideline, “then by the same logic [Dartmouth] should also consider refusing to accept visiting professors from schools with such mascots” (Wool 2007b).

Although the committee occasionally made an appearance in the Dartmouth student newspapers after the abovementioned reports, as of the time of this dissertation, the issue remains unresolved. Though some greatly support it, others are strongly opposed, and others still remain indifferent, the Dartmoose appears to have a growing visibility on the Dartmouth campus (Badami 2007). Though the administration needs to approve it before it can become an official mascot, they are apparently remaining neutral on the issue because of “fears of potential alumni tensions” (Badami 2007). One Native American participant in the committee meetings on the mascot issue “referred to Dartmouth as an elite institution and said that in the long run, refusing to host teams with Indian mascots would reflect the College’s educational goals” (Wool 2007b). Though I do not know which side of the issue you might take, this preceding phrase made me pause to wonder what specific “educational goals” the College might wish to implement surrounding the decision of a sports team’s mascot. For students, alumni, staff, faculty, and the administration, this issue is clearly about more than a simple mascot, and it is apparent to me that there is more than a single agenda at work here.

As Dartmouth has made strides to become an increasingly diverse institution within the last several decades, it appears more evident that the notion to create such a multicultural institution where diversity was once rather limited has come with some profound consequences. While Dartmouth seeks to maintain its continuing sense of “tradition” as it gains an increasingly multicultural community, it is also apparent that, moreover, diversity can create conflict on multiple levels. Though Dartmouth rightly searches for the proper steps to take to quell the rhetorical storms surrounding acceptance and tolerance both in the sense of actual people or crude symbols of certain peoples, the strident initiatives to diversify Dartmouth may have created greater troubles than the College initially bargained for.



## Activism, Charity, and Philanthropy

I must admit that I was a bit surprised to see the amount of philanthropy and activism that I saw at Dartmouth. Of course, I expected to see some since it is an Ivy League college, but the amount and intensity of these things certainly caught my attention. Alex Dibranco (2006), writing a column on the potential impact of more student activism at Dartmouth, observed, “People talk about the Dartmouth Bubble as though the College is encased in a snow globe, utterly isolated in its own little picturesque world. Upon coming to Dartmouth however, I met opinionated, aware, active students; students who were discontented with the state of the world; students who prove that there is no plastic dome enveloping the College that keeps us from engaging with global problems.” The students that she mentions must be the ones that I noticed as well from either their actions or reputations around campus. For example, Dartmouth sends the highest percentage of students to work in the Peace Corps in the Ivy League, and for the last several years it is the only institution to send undergraduate interns to work in that organization (Gonzalez 2006; Gottlieb 2007a). In the fall of 2006, Dartmouth received official recognition for sending more alumni into the Peace Corps than any other liberal arts college in the country, with nearly six hundred workers representing Dartmouth since the Corps’s founding in 1961 (Gonzalez 2006). Coming across these interesting facts, along with seeing banners advertising meetings for activist and charity groups, overhearing talk about service activities, and seeing t-shirts depicting various Dartmouth service organizations all over campus piqued my curiosity, especially since they were virtually unavoidable as I saw, read, or heard about them *constantly*. In fact, this feature of Dartmouth was so ubiquitous that it aroused my suspicion.

One of the first major activities that sought to “raise awareness” that I encountered was the Big Green Bus (Figure 70). Its name is fairly explanatory, though its concept is less obvious.



**Figure 70:** The Big Green Bus parked at the center of the Green. Photo by author.

The Bus looks like an ordinary school bus, though it is green, and it runs entirely on vegetable oil (Fox 2006). It is designed and operated entirely by Dartmouth students, and, for the last several years, the Bus and its crew have embarked on tours across the United States at the end of the spring term “to raise national awareness about environmentally-sustainable fuel” (Fox 2006). On the tour, the students (representing a range of majors and classes) visit environmental fairs, music festivals, schools, local businesses, and (curiously) a national ultimate Frisbee tournament to dispense information about alternative fuels and fuel sources (Fox 2006). The idea for the Big Green Bus began during Dartmouth’s 2004-05 school year, initially “as part of a recreational cross-country road trip for a group of students” (Fox 2006).

Explaining the premise behind the Bus, one participant said that the project started with some students “who were looking for a way to goof off one spring. They wanted to rent a bus to travel across the country, but decided that just a normal bus would be too environmentally

harmful” (Fox 2006). So some students who were “into engineering got together and designed a bus that runs on vegetable oil. The whole environmental education aspect of the project just kind of grew out of that” (Fox 2006). The selection process for who can participate on the Big Green Bus’s summer tours has raised some questions, particularly due to what some students see “as its insular nature” (Cohen 2006b). Most of the people selected to participate for the 2007 summer tour were in some way involved with the Dartmouth Outing Club (Cohen 2006b). One student who was selected to participate admitted that she was not too surprised that her application was accepted because she “know[s] a lot of people” (Cohen 2006b).

But not everyone is buying the “environmental education” angle of the Bus’s trips. *The Dartmouth Review* (2006a) took a swipe at the project:

the BGB . . . [an] old school bus outfitted to run entirely on self-seriousness, errr, vegetable oil. Dartmouth students, many of whom are affiliated with the Ultimate Frisbee Team, have participated in a cross-country tour to “raise awareness” of alternative energy. To cite just one example of awareness-raising, the bus is decorated with rousing slogans, including “Powered by Vegetable Oil” and “Change the world.” Good luck with that.

Despite a fair amount of media exposure, from national television and newspapers to local outlets (Fox 2006), the effectiveness of the Big Green Bus does not appear to have been fully established.

Another interesting sustainability movement at Dartmouth involves food. During the summer of 2006, I came across an article which featured moves among some Dartmouth students to begin a program to reduce the amount of food waste from the College’s dining facilities (Kylstra 2006). The program involved the promotion of new, reusable “kits” for students to reduce waste and save money for the College (Kylstra 2006). Part of the move behind this idea

generated from the fact that, in 2005, “each person in the Dartmouth community created an average of 796 pounds of waste” (Kylstra 2006).

Taking note of this staggering statistic, it stands to reason that the College would want to pursue more sustainable and cost-effective approaches to managing the eating and waste-producing habits of the Dartmouth community. Furthermore, some students groups on campus organized to educate people at the College about ethical eating habits, such as Dining Services switching to use only chickens that were raised in a cage-free environment and trying to establish accounts with meat companies that do not exploit workers or have “inhumane” policies of raising or killing livestock (Gaudette 2007b). During the previous school year, Dartmouth switched to using only eggs from chickens raised in a cage-free environment, even though it costs the College an additional \$12,000 a year to do so, a 40 percent increase from the previous year’s cost, plus a 50 to 100 percent increase in costs from buying local meat (Gaudette 2007b; Tian 2007).

Dartmouth also likes to publicize that it increasingly relies on food sources from farms in the Upper Valley. “In 2006, the College purchased more than \$260,000 worth of food from New Hampshire and Vermont farms, up from \$231,000 in 2004. Ten years ago, the amount of food (other than milk) that Dartmouth purchased from area farms was close to zero” (S. Smith 2007b). Dartmouth has expanded its operation to conduct business with more local farms in recent years (S. Smith 2007b).

In light of all of Dartmouth’s efforts to engage more with its regional neighbors, I found it worthwhile to acknowledge the tone of some of these sustainability efforts. A few phrases in particular that caught my attention came from Gaudette’s (2007b) column where she refers to movements at Dartmouth to create “socially conscious food” and “socially responsible food

options.” She explains, “Students who choose to eat in a socially responsible manner eat only foods that are prepared in a manner that is humane for both employers who work in the food production industry, and for the animals themselves. A socially responsible diet is dominated by large amounts of organic grains, vegetables and fruit since meat is so difficult to raise sustainably” (Gaudette 2007b). Although the College wants “to embrace a more socially responsible menu,” it must deal with the “[h]igher costs . . . [which] remain a barrier” (Gaudette 2007b).

I have to admit that after reading some of the articles on Dartmouth’s “sustainability efforts,” I had to laugh at their implicit condescension. I am not a vegetarian but I have nothing against vegetarians per se, though the thought that I do not meet certain criteria due to my eating habits made me wonder if I were somehow socially *irresponsible* for not eating sassafras and granola with every meal. I had this image of myself, quietly eating alone in Thayer (as always), minding my own business, and someone coming up and yelling at me for being so “socially irresponsible” as to eat something like a BLT with a side of chips. Though that never happened I was always on guard for such an instance.

Another thing I learned about was composting, as the College made efforts to step up composting in its dining facilities that year (Gaudette 2007b). Before I moved to Hanover, I had never even heard of composting and, to this day, the concept is still a bit difficult for me to fully grasp. I suppose that comes from being an unsophisticated and socially irresponsible consumer. But I probably should not feel that guilty, because there was some criticism directed at the sustainability efforts. Though no reasonable person would condemn the College for making efforts to reduce waste or act more consciously toward the environment, Christine Tian (2007) aptly captured my own sentiments by observing,

Casual support for the nebulous goal of sustainability is quite *en vogue* among large swathes of the [Dartmouth] population, from crunchy Collis [Center] rats to sorority girls searching for a feel-good cause to champion.

The aim of heroically “saving the environment” seems harmless, noble, and extremely useful for generating warm fuzzy self-satisfaction – unfortunately, such fuzziness also characterizes the rigor (or lack thereof) with which passive supporters consider the value of the Sustainability project.

The fuzziness did not end with the College’s waste, either. And, perhaps sadly, I feel that in some cases, the “fuzziness” is a one-way sentiment. One activity that caught my attention was the North Country Weekend (NCW). For this program, Dartmouth students have volunteered for over twenty years to host “underprivileged” students “who show academic potential” from Charlestown High School in Boston to come to Dartmouth for a weekend to participate in “a program that exposes urban youth to the outdoors and a rural environment” (Hecht 2006). Over the weekend, the high school students, many of whom have never been outside of Boston, eat on campus, attend Dartmouth classes, visit a campus museum, go to an a capella and dance performance, and participate in a scavenger hunt (Hecht 2006). An organizer of the event explains, “The main mission of the program is to inspire and encourage the students to look into higher education, even though Dartmouth is not necessarily a reality for them” (Hecht 2006).

One student volunteer remarked, “For me, NCW is an amazing way to still *feel* that I am making an impact and giving back to the grater community” (Hecht 2006, emphasis added). And judging from the tone of the article about the event, it seems that this Dartmouth service activity is more about feelings than actual results. Though many of the high school kids who participate may be academically promising, it is unclear from the organizer’s quote above if he realizes that the North Country Weekend could be interpreted as a form of taunting these clearly disadvantaged youths or perhaps as exploiting a charitable cause as a way to show off the immense resources of the College and gain positive publicity.

Dartmouth seems to be charitable and service-oriented largely on its own terms or when it controls who receives the needed service. Though the College went out of its way to help the Boston high school students, it is unusual that Dartmouth did not step up to fight the problem of homelessness right in the Upper Valley. The recent problem centered around a homeless shelter located in White River Junction, Vermont, slightly downriver from Hanover. For a time, the center housed only homeless families but, in recent years, it reported to having to turn away nearly six hundred single homeless adults (Swanson 2007b). Seeking to accommodate the growing demand, the center consulted its local planning board to build an extension to its current facility but was met with much opposition from the town's residents citing the undesirable qualities of the homeless, a potential increase in crime and drug activity, and the fear of the center lowering property values in the town (Paxton 2008; Swanson 2007b, 2008). The center then considered building a new property in another town in the Upper Valley but after nearly twenty proposals to construct a new center in other towns of the region, all were rejected (Paxton 2008). One White River Junction man greatly opposing the construction of a new shelter rhetorically asked and subsequently answered, "Would Hanover accept a shelter for [homeless] adults? . . . I can guarantee you that Norwich [Vermont] wouldn't either" (Swanson 2007b). This is an interesting point because in none of the articles I came across on the matter did Hanover, with ample room and finances to cover such a noble cause, offer to serve as the site for the new homeless shelter, and it was noticeably silent on the matter. Fortunately, after three years of struggling for approval, the center's plans to build another shelter next to the current one received approval (Swanson 2008).

Lastly, one case of Dartmouth's humanitarian efforts especially got to me. This involved the popular service trips where members of the Dartmouth community go to the Gulf Coast to

help rebuild the hurricane-ravaged areas inflicted by 2005's Hurricane Katrina. Within the past few years, hundreds of volunteers from Dartmouth went to work in either Biloxi or New Orleans (Bennett 2007a; Gaudette 2007a). Although students are responsible for getting to their volunteer site, they are housed, fed, and directed on certain work assignments (Gaudette 2007a). Evidently, not all students who wish to volunteer are selected to do so (Swiss 2007). Students must fill out an application, be interviewed by leaders of the service trips, and raise \$1,000 before their trip (Swiss 2007).

Though on the surface this appears to be a noble cause, there are other factors to examine. One thing in particular that shocked me upon reading about the Katrina trips was some of the language and tones used in their coverage, which bordered on insulting and paternalistic toward residents of the Gulf Coast. One student volunteer recounted her experiences: "After my first trip [to Biloxi] and seeing the devastation and meeting all the people who are absolutely amazing, but [who] can't help themselves, I couldn't get it out of my mind that they were down here needing help while I was taking classes" (Gaudette 2007a). Another article describing some volunteers' reactions upon reaching the Gulf Coast reported, "Many students said they were unprepared for the level of devastation they encountered and that their experiences changed their perspective on social issues" with one student commenting that "it showed the widening gap between rich and poor" and how shocking it was to think that there might be people in the United States without running water (Bennett 2007a). Clearly, one of the trips' goals to be "an educational experience" was fulfilled (Bennett 2007a). One student, writing about the greater need for student activism, took it a step further, and wrote,

Last fall, when Katrina Help was first formed, they had a huge turnout for their first meeting, filling the Top of the Hop[kins Center]. Why? *It was close to home*; it was prominent in the media; students were aware of the tragedy in New Orleans.



Unfortunately, membership dropped off quickly, as often happens, due in part to the difficulty of organizing such a group. . . .

However, the example of Katrina Help is heartening to the activist movement, and as strong support of the need for awareness. *Students did not volunteer to help the victims of Katrina out of feelings of guilt; they did so out of feelings of empathy.* It is human nature to feel sympathy for sufferers; but it also appears to be in the nature of society to ignore that suffering unless directly confronted with it. (Dibranco 2006, emphasis added)

My jaw dropped the first time I read that passage. Though undoubtedly most everyone sympathized with the victims of Hurricane Katrina, I think “empathizing” with them, especially from a location as remote as Dartmouth, over one thousand miles away in Euclidian distance and incalculably further from the Gulf Coast in cognitive, cultural, and social distance, is a bit implausible. First, I attribute this to the well-documented historical antagonism and condescension toward the South from the Northeast. One minute New Englanders sneer at Southerners, but when a devastating tragedy occurs, they feel compelled to help people who “can’t help themselves,” as one student put it. Another interviewed student went as far to propose requiring students suspended from Dartmouth for disciplinary reasons to “do something charitable” like volunteer on the Gulf Coast, though many academically suspended students have come voluntarily (Gaudette 2007a).

Secondly, the volunteers, despite being at the site of the hurricane’s destruction, are kept at a distance from the reality of the catastrophe itself. While volunteering, they are taken care of with food and shelter when they arrive, and they are not there on a permanent basis meaning that, unlike the residents of these communities, they can leave whenever they like and are under no obligation to stay. I have difficulty understanding how one could “empathize” under those circumstances if one did not live through the actual experiences of the devastation or deal with any of the suffering directly.

Third, consider the procedures for becoming a Katrina service volunteer at Dartmouth. Swiss (2007) reports that Dartmouth has a “more rigorous system of choosing service trip participants,” apparently unlike other schools. This “system” suggests the competition involved with being selected to volunteer. This “rigorous” procedure seems to connote that there is a certain prestige in being selected to volunteer, as if it might be an impressive activity to add to one’s résumé in the competitive, career-minded Dartmouth student body.

And lastly, I took some personal offense to some of the attitudes I saw surrounding the Katrina volunteer work. Although I am not a native Louisianan, I lived in south Louisiana for many years and, furthermore, I was living there in August 2005 when Katrina struck. Admittedly, I fortunately lived in a rather lightly damaged area, though I did, like the other residents of Baton Rouge at the time, directly experience the ramifications of the disaster for months afterward. I recall a few informal conversations with people at Dartmouth who, after discovering I had come up there from Louisiana, asked if I was “displaced,” as if to suggest I was a victim of Hurricane Katrina only temporarily residing in the Upper Valley. Judging from their tones, it was as if they were somehow suggesting that if I was not “displaced,” then there was no other logical reason for me to be there and that I clearly did not belong there under normal circumstances. After I answered “No,” and that that was not the reason I was at Dartmouth, the conversation usually abruptly ended.

### **Resources, Power, and Control at the College**

Many Dartmouth students got there from having at least a few, often several, and possibly many accomplishments, be they for academics, athletics, extracurricular activities, or most likely a combination of the three. But one thing I picked up on was that the desire to achieve and succeed did not seem to dissipate once students arrived on campus to begin their

Dartmouth careers. Although many Dartmouth students obviously possess a motivated spirit to accomplish many things while in college, it was hard for me not to notice that the College itself seems to allow for such successes to occur. In other words, Dartmouth seems to possess the resources *to* offer many opportunities and rewards for the successes of its students and more than I thought would be available at such a competitive school.

For example, in the fall of 2006, 52 Dartmouth students applied for either a Rhodes, Marshall, Mitchell, or Fulbright Scholarship (Santo 2006a). The applicants work with a committee that “helps students through every step of the scholarship application process,” and students receive personal and direct feedback (Santo 2006a). Prospective applicants can even “get a head start” by filling out preliminary paperwork before the beginning of the school year and receive feedback in time to revise their application as many times as necessary (Santo 2006a). Similarly, I recall seeing advertisements for prestigious internships and ample funding for undergraduate research constantly posted around campus and in student newspapers. It is common to see such things at any major college, though I was under the impression that some of the ads for graduate programs and fellowships at schools like Harvard and Stanford were specifically targeted and publicized for a select group of potential applicants. It is more common to hear about a Dartmouth graduate being admitted to selective and prestigious graduate programs or receiving esteemed grants or fellowships than one finds at the non-elite institutions, and I came to realize that, most likely, this is not a coincidence.

One specific example is the Goodman Fund, which provides funding for Dartmouth students to pursue independent anthropological fieldwork, sometimes in “distant and exotic locales” (Haas 2007), for their undergraduate theses; anthropology faculty are also eligible to apply for funds. I naturally took an interest in this story because of my doctoral minor in

anthropology, which I felt allowed me to have some perspective on the fund. The fund, established in 1980, has since “grown to more than \$1 million. Students are eligible to receive up to \$3,500 to support their research” (Haas 2007). I was amazed to read this given the amount of funds available to undergraduates who likely have limited training and experience. I decided to peruse the website of Dartmouth’s Anthropology Department, which lists the students who received grants and the titles of their projects. I was quite impressed with the ambitious and fascinating topics that some of them pursued, with study sites in locations across the Americas, Asia, Africa, and Oceania.

I then wondered why I found it surprising for Dartmouth students to be so successful in their endeavors given the resources and opportunities available to them. Do they maybe have an unfair advantage? One anthropology professor was quoted, “The Goodman Fund encourages students to do something a bit more adventuresome . . . . I think those who have had the experience of doing research and getting a Goodman grant are much better prepared for graduate school” (Haas 2007). After researching the Goodman Fund a little further, I agree with this professor’s observation and I see his point. In addition to having degrees from Dartmouth, some students appear to have some significant advantages in their postgraduate pursuits.

Perhaps these advantages should not be a big surprise. Of course I knew going into my project that Dartmouth is a wealthy college. But until I looked at things more closely, I was not fully aware of the magnitude of the College’s wealth along with its ability to attract wealth. The most prominent example to illustrate the scope of Dartmouth’s wealth was in its fundraising capabilities. The “Campaign for the Dartmouth Experience” began in November 2002 following “a two-year ‘quiet phase’ that raised \$435 million” (Wool 2006). The Campaign, “a projected seven-year-long comprehensive capital campaign,” according to its publications, seeks to

“strengthen Dartmouth across academic disciplines, make critically needed improvements in residential and campus life, and preserve Dartmouth’s preeminence in providing the finest student experience in the world” (Wool 2006). Its goal is to raise \$1.3 billion by December 2009. With 5,700 total students, the sum of the Campaign’s goal would amount to raising \$228,070 per student (Santo 2007a).

As of September 2006 the Campaign had surpassed the half-way mark, raising over \$744.2 million in donations (Wool 2006). The fiscal year of 2006 was the most successful in the College’s history, receiving \$160.3 million in charitable gifts from 26,750 alumni, parents, friends, foundations and corporations with a rate of nearly 51 percent of alumni contributing to the campaign (*Vox of Dartmouth* 2006). The Campaign progressed over the course of my year at Dartmouth, and money continued to come in, with a total of \$809.6 million raised by February, over \$838.5 million by early May, and it surpassed the \$1 billion mark in late December 2007 (Bradley 2007; Coburn 2008; Santo 2007a). Accounting for the success of the Campaign, one of its directors remarked, “I think it speaks to the quality of the experience that students have in Dartmouth . . . . It has quite an impact on them while they’re in Hanover and throughout their lives. They’re grateful for that experience and want to give back to it” (Coburn 2008). Building on the “experience,” she added, “The campaign is about a highly personalized educational experience . . . . We called it the Dartmouth experience rather than the education [experience] because coming to Dartmouth is a total experience” (Coburn 2008).

Given the amount of money involved, I certainly hope that Dartmouth students have a fulfilling “experience,” though that does not always happen. In fact, some members of the Dartmouth community are dismayed with the condition of the College and how it uses its power in perpetuating the “Dartmouth Experience.” One area where this is evident is the regular battle

involved for places on Dartmouth's Board of Trustees. Due to space limitations, I will not go into the intricate (and sometimes confusing) details involved with the power struggles relating to Dartmouth's trustees, and I do not feel that it is my place to go as far as criticizing how the College should or should not govern itself. But some of these debates have reached the public through the media and, as expected, often revolve around issues of money and also clearly influence and affect the social and cultural atmosphere of the College. Perhaps this is precisely why some of the power struggles at Dartmouth have been so intense.

The controversy of Dartmouth's Board of Trustees relates back to the U.S. Supreme Court case of *Dartmouth College v. Woodward* in 1819 where the state of New Hampshire lost the case in its attempt to take control over the College's Board of Trustees. Dartmouth won the case, and the ruling maintained that the College's corporate charter was analogous to a private contract, which meant that the College essentially had complete control over its own affairs. Commenting on this landmark case in light of a recent contention over Dartmouth's trustees, *The Wall Street Journal* (2007a) observed, "Like administrators at most universities, these academic elites expect only money – not opinion and oversight – from their alumni donors." The editorial continued, "The endowments of the 25 wealthiest institutions of higher learning total \$178 billion, and a college education is one of the largest investments a person will ever make . . . . It isn't a surprise that alumni stakeholders have begun to show an interest and exert influence. The only surprise is the lengths to which academic elites will go in order to keep out of the light of day" (*The Wall Street Journal* 2007a).

But when trustee candidates do not conform to the Dartmouth administration's agenda or are not "rubber stamps," conflict ensues, with trustees being elected by alumni petition, much to the chagrin of the President and the Board, who "forced through a governance plan that . . .

allow[ed] them to run the place as they please” with virtually no input from alumni, and thus taking almost complete control of the governance of Dartmouth, with the College “declar[ing] that it will run future trustee elections on its own terms” (*The Wall Street Journal* 2007b). The trustees claimed they did this to discourage divisiveness, but *The Wall Street Journal* (2007b) interpreted this move by editorializing, “In other words, the independent trustees were willing to dissent from the insular uniformity of modern higher education, so they had to be neutered before they might actually make a difference. Elite academia loathes oversight or accountability.”

But some Dartmouth students and alumni do not passively accept the amount of control wielded by the College’s administration. Indeed, there is some resistance against it. One way is through the formation of secret societies. Kevin Hudak (2007) reports that Dartmouth’s first secret societies date back to 1783. There are currently ten senior societies at Dartmouth, with eight of them secret, that most often serve as groups for social networking and service activities, though “a few have clearly defined agendas to . . . reforming the administration” (Hudak 2007). One all-male group known as the Phrygian Society aims to “fight against the heavy hand of the administration” (Schpero 2007b). An undated letter from the Phrygian Society obtained by *The Dartmouth* explains the society’s goals to preserve College history and tradition, to combat “a Dartmouth that is being obliterated by over-zealous administrators in the name of political correctness. . . . [A]nd actively preserve the Dartmouth way of life . . . . [They] have already met with several Trustees . . . and [their] presence on campus as an acting force and a critical eye will be in the common purpose of the ‘Lone Pine Revolution’” (Schpero 2007b). Other media, such as student or alumni-created websites and blogs, take aim at the administration by accusing it of

misleading alumni about student satisfaction or using the controversies of the Native American mascot to divert attention from other issues at the College (Schpero 2007b).

One of the major understated causes that various groups fight against the Dartmouth administration is what alumnus Ben Hart (1984) referred to in his Dartmouth memoir *Poisoned Ivy* as the Dartmouth “ethos.” Although the term appears throughout his book, Hart generally describes the “ethos” as a sort of unspoken Dartmouth social code in which people are afraid to speak up, speak out, disagree, or criticize anything against a vague social and cultural dogma that hovers above the campus. Much of this ethos may be evident from this chapter’s previous sections, such as the College’s stance and actions on the Native American mascot issue, but an interesting quality I personally noticed came from reading *The Dartmouth* every day, which often and rightfully covered issues affecting the College. I noticed many occasions where the paper solicited opinions from faculty or students on a certain issue, though names were sometimes not printed, as sometimes faculty and occasionally students only agreed to say anything critical of the College on “a condition of anonymity,” despite Dartmouth’s constant advocacy for and defense of free speech.

Some students have felt the force of the ethos more directly through disciplinary action. Dartmouth’s office of Undergraduate Judicial Affairs and the Committee on Standards deals with cases ranging from failure to maintain academic standards to academic integrity to crimes. For cases overseen by the Committee on Standards, students are prohibited from bringing legal counsel to the hearings unless it is a criminal case (Patterson 2007a). Gundling (2007a) goes a bit further into examining the phenomenon known as “Parkhursting,” where students caught breaking certain rules are summoned to Parkhurst Hall for a “trial” which can result in suspension. In her column, Gundling (2007a) takes notice of the “trigger-happy policy on



suspensions” and the arbitrary sense of justice and exercising of power. The article chronicles the experiences of a few students who were “Parkhurst” and reveals some of the seemingly unfair discrepancies in who is punished and for what violations, as well as the severity of the punishments, which in some cases have been for several academic terms (Gundling 2007a).

The power of Parkhurst or the preservation of the Dartmouth ethos does not end on campus, however. In 2000, the Dartmouth College Real Estate Office bought ten properties in downtown Hanover “as part of its real estate investment” (Santo 2007b). This office owns 40,000 acres of property, mostly in New Hampshire, and it additionally rents hundreds of properties “for investment purposes” (Santo 2007b). The funds and securities from Dartmouth’s real estate holdings amount to 7.3 percent of the College’s total assets (Santo 2007b). One of the project managers for this development project and Dartmouth’s associate director of real estate explained, “We get involved in local, income-producing real estate that ties back to the mission of the school by also providing housing at off-campus locations” (Santo 2007b). Commenting on why the College purchased its new properties from the Hanover Investment Corporation, the same project director remarked, “We thought that we could do a better job to reflect the spirit of the community” (Santo 2007b). The article continued by clarifying that “When developing the downtown area, the real estate office seeks to rent its Hanover space for retail uses currently underserved in Hanover that would appeal to members of both the Hanover and Dartmouth community” (Santo 2007b).

In another column on the progress of the development project, *The Dartmouth* interviewed the same project director, this time in regard to the College hoping “to add more housing space for the Dartmouth community, further the availability of retail space downtown and give new architectural life to the area” (Schpero 2007a). Explaining the rationale behind this

expansion and justifying the College's role in Hanover's development, the project director explained, "While the downtown is not an extension of the campus, it complements the campus in that a vital downtown has the potential for enriching the college experience for students and faculty alike" (Schpero 2007a).

Some Hanover residents have objected to the College's aggressiveness, with one woman whose husband and children attended Dartmouth saying, "There were a number of decisions made that were not in the best interest of the neighborhood . . . . We are a big Dartmouth family, but we live in this town and don't want it destroyed within the College" (Schpero 2007a).

Though the College denied any excessive influence in potentially "destroying" Hanover, it received the necessary building permits and proceeded with its projects (Schpero 2007a). Again the project developer defended Dartmouth, saying "The college is a long-term stakeholder in the community – it has been here for several hundred years and it will be here for several hundred more . . . . So, perhaps unlike a private developer, [the College] has the ability to take a very long-range view and act in a way that embraces not only its own goals but community goals as well" (Schpero 2007a).

After researching and seeing some of the College's methods of utilizing its power and methods of control, it now seems that Dartmouth and its surrounding community are even more coexistent. Clearly, in judging from the College's rationale in buying up and owning so much property in Hanover and around New Hampshire, the Dartmouth ethos is no longer restricted to the Dartmouth Bubble.

### **Admissions and Financial Aid**

Many people will correctly assume that because Dartmouth is a member of the Ivy League, admission to the College is highly competitive. Additionally, admission to Dartmouth's

graduate programs in the arts and sciences, Dartmouth Medical School, and the Tuck and Thayer Schools are also strongly competitive. According to statistics from the Dartmouth College Fact Book (DCFB), compiled and published by Dartmouth's Office of Institutional Research, undergraduate admission to the College (which will be the focus of this section), admissions data to the College indicate that between the years 1997 and 2005, reflecting the graduating classes of 2001 through 2009 respectively, Dartmouth admitted freshmen at a percentage hovering between the upper teens and lower twenties (DCFB 2006). For the Class of 2010, the same class that entered the year that I was at Dartmouth, 16 percent of that class had been admitted out of a total of 13,938 applicants, with 49 percent of those admits enrolling that fall, for a total of 1,081 freshmen at the College for the 2006-07 school year (DCFB 2006). The statistics for the years between 1997 and 2006 indicate that the average freshman class usually has between 1,000 and 1,100 students each year.

Nevertheless, competition for admission to Dartmouth only appears to be growing in its ferocity. Furthermore, Dartmouth, its Ivy League counterparts, and some other prestigious American colleges have come under scrutiny in recent years regarding the fairness of their admissions procedures. Much of the controversy centers around early decision options, which notify applicants of their admission to a college earlier in their senior year of high school, often with the condition that, if admitted by early decision, a student must commit to enrolling at that particular college for the next school year. While early decision options are found at many universities across the United States, those at the Ivy League schools have recently received more attention, particularly in regard to questions regarding the fairness of the programs and the noticeable contrasts in whom a particular elite school admits early and who it admits later on for regular decision applicants.

In the fall of 2006, Harvard and Princeton made national headlines with the announcement that they would end their early decision programs in 2007. The media turned to other institutions of similar stature to ask if they would follow suit, and Dartmouth opted not to discontinue its program, and, as of the time of this dissertation, the College still allows its applicants to apply for early decision. An article on this issue from *The Dartmouth* explained that Harvard officials “argued that the early admissions program was an obstacle to low-income and working-class students” (Agapakis 2006a). Explaining the reasons behind ending this policy, the article quotes then-Interim President of Harvard Derek Bok saying, “Students from more sophisticated backgrounds and affluent high schools often apply early to increase their chances of admission, while minority students and students from rural areas, other countries, and high schools with fewer resources miss out” (Agapakis 2006a). Dartmouth’s early decision program is binding, which means that students admitted are not only expected to enroll, but they may be at a disadvantage because of the inability to compare financial aid offers from other schools (Agapakis 2006a). Thus, less advantaged prospective applicants often do not bother applying because of their perceived fear of committing to such an expensive school or because of poor guidance counseling and advising at less advantaged high schools (Agapakis 2006a).

When the actual numbers are broken down, certain disparities gain more clarity, considering that 19 percent of matriculates for the Class of 2010 admitted to Dartmouth by early decision were racial minorities as compared to minorities making up 40 percent of the applicants accepted for regular decision that year (Agapakis 2006b). Thirty-eight percent of the Class of 2010 admitted by early decision received need-based financial aid, whereas 57 percent of those who applied for regular decision received aid (Agapakis 2006b). Another interesting fact behind early admissions is that “Dartmouth . . . has a large representation of recruited athletes and

legacies, who are less likely to be from disadvantaged backgrounds” (Agapakis 2006b). In weighing the merits and pitfalls of early admission at Dartmouth and elsewhere, Gadson and Iorio (2006) conclude that it “keeps elite education out of reach for too many kids who are not wealthy. Early decision, at the end of the day, means it will be easier for applicants from well-off backgrounds to get into their first choice, while equally talented applicants who must apply regular decision for financial reasons are unlikely to be admitted simply due to lack of space in the incoming class.”

In terms of some of the raw numbers regarding early decision at Dartmouth between 1997 and 2006, well over one thousand applications were received for early decision for each year, with the percentages of those admitted tending to be in the low thirties (DCFB 2006). For those same years, early decision applicants made up between 9 to 12 percent of Dartmouth’s total applicants to make up slightly more than a third of each entering freshmen class (DCFB 2006). For the Class of 2010, Dartmouth received 1,316 applications for early decision and accepted 30 percent of those to make up 36 percent of the students in that class (DCFB 2006). Comparatively, Harvard, Princeton, and Penn admit around 50 percent of their freshmen each year through early decision (Agapakis 2006b).

As the numbers behind Dartmouth admissions become public, criticism has been launched by some of the College’s own students. In an editorial regarding the statistics from the admitted applicants for the Class of 2012, Evan Meyerson (2008) asks what is to be taken from the annual admissions statistics, what the College hopes to accomplish by publishing them, and what the underlying information from such a press release might suggest about the priorities of the admissions office. Expounding on his observations, Meyerson (2008) argues that the press

release from the admissions office “was not entirely accurate in its proclamations of [the application pool’s] achievements” and assuring the reader that

If there is one thing of which the reader can be certain, it is that there are no accidental misprints or omissions in documents released by our admissions office. Every announcement that is allowed to leave McNutt [Hall] is carefully crafted with the purpose of presenting Dartmouth in the best possible light. This is the intensely political and competitive game of Ivy League admissions we’re talking about, and there are no careless errors.

Citing specific examples to illustrate his point, Meyerson (2008) refers to the statistics relating to numbers of valedictorians and salutatorians admitted “actually correspond to fewer than half of the applicants admitted” because, after speaking with Dartmouth’s Dean of Admissions, Meyerson learned and reported that less than 50 percent of the high schools represented in the applicant pool do not rank their students or disclose what decile in which an applicant ranks in his or her class. Also, many of the applicants listed as valedictorians and salutatorians have not yet graduated, so they have not yet earned such a distinction and, furthermore, that data comes from less than 50 percent of the application pool (Meyerson 2008).

Following shortly after Meyerson’s (2008) column, an article from *The Dartmouth* explored the noteworthy fact that children of Dartmouth alumni, or legacies, are twice as likely to be admitted to the College than non-legacies (Perret 2008). For the Class of 2012, Dartmouth admitted 29.7 percent of its legacy applicants, compared to 12.7 percent of non-legacies, and within the last five years, the admission of legacy applicants has been between two and two-and-a-half times greater than non-legacies (Perret 2008). Although I could not find data on the percentages of legacies admitted to Dartmouth for the last several years, the percentage of legacies representing the incoming Classes of 2006 through 2010 comprised around 10 percent for each class (DCFB 2006). While the application pool for the Class of 2012 grew by almost 17

percent from the previous year, the proportion of legacy applications grew by 19 percent (Perret 2008). These numbers pale in comparison to Princeton, however, which regularly admits approximately 40 percent of its legacy applicants (Perret 2008). An editorial from Brian Solomon (2008) censured the statistics reporting the high acceptance rate of Dartmouth legacies. While acknowledging that some legacies may have a legitimate claim to earn admission to Dartmouth, Solomon (2008) argues,

the policy [on admitting legacies] undercuts one of our supposed “Core Values” — that the College “embraces diversity with the knowledge that it significantly enhances the quality of a Dartmouth education.” Considering the make-up of Dartmouth students of previous generations, legacy applicants are much more likely to be white and wealthy. Despite all of the diversity talk, we still admit these advantaged individuals over those with equal or possibly better résumés. The Admissions Office might as well send the marginalized students we turn down a special attachment in their envelopes saying, “if only you were born with a Big Green silver spoon in your mouth.” [...] With all that money being thrown around on the expectation of legacy admissions, Dartmouth implicitly condones bribery by accepting such a high percentage of legacies.

Solomon (2008) concludes his column with the compelling point that Dartmouth’s virtuous mission statement concerning the College educating the most promising, academically-minded students with the most dedicated faculty, but “[b]y admitting the ‘best connected’ or ‘most likely to donate’ over the ‘most promising students,’ the College fails to honor the integrity of its past and spits on the only legacy that truly matters.”

Negative attitudes and criticism are also sometimes directed at Dartmouth’s financial aid programs and policies. Despite the professed “need-blind” admissions policy at Dartmouth and other elite schools, it became clear to me after some research that admissions and financial aid are not entirely separate animals. While the costs of higher education are major sacrifices for many students at most any college in America, the elite schools have come under some fire for how they handle their financial aid programs and Dartmouth is no exception. Alumnus Alfred Valrie, Jr. (2007) wrote an editorial in *The Dartmouth* criticizing what he characterized as unfair

and corrupt methods by the College in attracting minority students and burdening them with debt. He argues how the College essentially exploits minorities to use them as statistics and enhance diversity, but cripples them with insurmountable debt in the end (Valrie 2007). Valrie (2007) even goes as far to suggest that “the Dartmouth Financial Aid Office [should] be audited for any ethical violations of kickbacks between loan officers and loan companies.”

Although Valrie himself may not have been the sole catalyst for financial aid reforms, in 2008 the College announced some sweeping changes in its financial aid policies. Following similar cues from Harvard, Yale, and Penn, Dartmouth moved to allow free tuition for admitted students whose family income falls below \$75,000 in addition to providing more grants and scholarships instead of loans for other qualified students for the 2008-09 school year (Grudzien 2008). These changes were attributed to high endowment returns and a high giving rate from alumni and allowing an increase in the withdrawal from Dartmouth’s \$3.76 billion endowment from 4.6 percent to 6 percent (Grudzien 2008). Grudzien (2008) reports from his interviews with high-level administrators that they did not enact such broad financial aid changes due to pressure or to compete with other Ivy League schools, though much of the remainder of the column focuses on Dartmouth strengthening its standing in college rankings and assessments. For example, Grudzien (2008) addresses the College’s drop in rankings in the influential *U.S. News & World Report’s* college rankings, largely attributed to a low peer assessment, based on how Dartmouth is perceived by administrators at other colleges. The Chairman of Dartmouth’s Board of Trustees denied that the changes in the financial aid policy were due to Dartmouth’s peer assessment, though he believes that the new plan will attract positive media attention and is quoted, “I’m sure that Dartmouth’s image in the media will quickly be repaired” (Grudzien 2008).



A shrewd editorial from Tina Prapotnik (2008) commended the changes in the financial aid policy, though it offered another sobering look at the reality behind the new policy by arguing that it will make a Dartmouth degree even more elusive with a larger and thus more competitive application pool. Prapotnik (2008) challenges the idea that setting \$75,000 as a cut-off point for what is considered “low [annual family] income” by stating that that amount “is only a low household income in Dartmouth’s terms.” To illustrate this point, Prapotnik (2008) points out that while 46 percent of the Class of 2011 receives financial aid, this means that the other 54 percent of that class can afford the \$204,745 tuition for four years at Dartmouth. And given the rising numbers of applications, the size of each class remains relatively consistent, which further underscores the exclusivity of the College (Prapotnik 2008). “The College’s limited capacity and opaque admissions process continue to buttress the insurmountable walls of our ivory tower” (Prapotnik 2008). This last sentence is not one likely to be encountered in any of Dartmouth’s promotional literature.

It is not uncommon to come across commentaries and columns on the arbitrary nature of Dartmouth admissions, as students seem to be quite cognizant of the fact that they are at the College almost by chance, referring to the process as “the Dartmouth admissions roulette” (Prapotnik 2008) or the “sweepstakes culture” of elite college admissions (Selznick 2007). “In this culture,” writes Benjamin Selznick (2007), “a Dartmouth admissions letter is equivalent to winning the lottery; an acceptance to other schools is no more than winning \$5 from a scratch-off ticket.” Selznick (2007) continues by exploring an ugly side to this sweepstakes culture, observing that “[t]he current culture only leads to dashed hopes, unrealized expectations, and mounds of debt for the many who win the college lottery and, in their excitement, jump into the open arms of a lender willing to spot them the \$160,000 – with 8-10 percent interest of course.”

Discussing the inherent unfairness of admissions policies at Dartmouth and other elite schools, Jacob Baron (2006a) calls attention to

A less talked about reason that the admissions process is unfair to students is that the process is not really about students. If it were, each university would accept every academically qualified applicant. The fact is that universities have their own interests in admissions policy. In Dartmouth's case, a few of these interests are expressed in the College's statement of "Mission," found on its website. According to the "Mission," "Dartmouth has a special character" that is "rooted in" certain "essential elements." Among these are "a faculty dedicated to outstanding teaching and scholarship;" "providing students with close contact with faculty;" and "encouraging regular interaction among members of a diverse community." That Dartmouth calls these goals its "Mission" (capital M) implies that the objective of the admissions office is to admit those students it deems most likely to further the College's goals to the greatest degree.

In other words, it appears that admissions at Dartmouth is largely related to Ben Hart's (1984) contention about preserving the Dartmouth "ethos," a contention which I can wholly believe.

### **Self-Perception at Dartmouth**

In a chapter devoted to examining life and culture within the Dartmouth Bubble, it is fitting to include at least some information on how those within the Bubble perceive themselves and their College. I found some of these assessments to be quite revealing, so much so that they warranted a section in this chapter. Given the multitude of people and their perspectives at Dartmouth, it would not be feasible to include every noteworthy observation that I have come across in the long history of the College. But some topics (such the general quality of life at the College, student stereotypes, the public image and stereotype of Dartmouth) received considerable attention, and I believe they help to capture some of the interesting qualities of Dartmouth life from my time there as well as helping to corroborate my view of the College along with students' views on several aspects of Dartmouth culture.

*The Dartmouth Mirror* is a supplement found inside *The Dartmouth* every Friday during the school year and, as the title suggests, it includes reflexive articles and commentaries on

myriad aspects of Dartmouth life and culture. This sort of information was published in other forums as well, but based on reading this publication and others, Dartmouth students seem to have a fairly high cognizance of themselves and their special College on the Hill, notwithstanding some of the striking contradictions that both they and I have noted.

To begin, there should be an acknowledgement of the generally high satisfaction that Dartmouth students seem to have with the College, especially with the availability of faculty, with extracurricular activities, the College's course offerings, the quality of instruction, and the overall quality of undergraduate education (Stavis 2006). About 85 percent of the respondents to that survey also said that they "probably or definitely would encourage talented high school seniors to choose Dartmouth" (Stavis 2006). These figures allow for some affirmation of the acclaim that Dartmouth students, graduates, and employees feel toward the College, as well as some justification for Dartmouth's high place in college rankings. Examining some of the grittier details of Dartmouth life, based on students' opinions and my observations, divulge some of the distinctions between how Dartmouth publicly presents itself and how it is when not viewed from the veil of raw statistics.

One of Dartmouth's best-known images, much to the chagrin of some people today, was derived from popular culture in the form of the 1978 classic comedy film *Animal House*. Chris Miller, who graduated from Dartmouth in 1963, was a member of the Alpha Delta Phi fraternity (now simply Alpha Delta) and drew upon his experiences to co-write the film's screenplay, which was loosely based on his fraternity experiences (Patterson 2006). In 2006, Miller published a memoir titled *The Real Animal House*, which recounted his experiences in greater detail, many of which were omitted from the film (Patterson 2006). The Dartmouth administration was displeased with Miller after the film was released (Patterson 2006), claiming

it created a negative image and reputation for the College that “nearly three decades later, a lot of administrators, professors and alumni are still trying to erase” (Kelly 2006: 30).

Nevertheless, some of these stereotypes credited to *Animal House* still pervade Dartmouth’s social atmosphere, according to some students. Daniel Belkin (2007) reports that, working as a campus tour guide, “one of the most common questions I receive . . . [is] ‘How much is Dartmouth really like ‘Animal House’?’” Belkin (2007) refers to the College as “the conservative party school,” referring to what he describes as the general conservative air around the campus mixed with pervasive and readily available alcohol and a “‘Camp Dartmouth’ atmosphere,” which he felt, to some degree, is the impression of Dartmouth around the Ivy League, and Belkin feels is a negative image for the College. Belkin (2007) disputes these images as caricatures and stereotypes, along with the contention of Dartmouth being overly conservative by calling it “a solid ‘blue state.’” Based on my reading of the campus’s political climate, I would deem Dartmouth to be maybe somewhat left of center, though the liberal and progressive image that it tries to promote does not always add up, as I discuss in the next chapter.

Some of the other more established Dartmouth stereotypes are that it is, as Alice Mathias (2006b) bluntly claims, a “jock school.” Mathias (2006b) alludes to Dartmouth’s swim test graduation requirement and also claims, “Everything they say about our jock school rep[utation] is true. Dartmouth students are all united by sports. Whether you are a football player, a karate kid, a pong queen or a mathlete, all of us need three P.E. [physical education] credits to graduate and athletics are therefore inescapable.” Another major Dartmouth stereotype is the large number of graduates who go on to work in corporate finance or law, which is not denied by many students (Sheldon 2006). Daniel O’Brien (2006), mentioning some popular Dartmouth majors, notes that English and history, “often seem to be pursued as interesting but,

as acknowledged tacitly between fellow majors, ultimately frivolous paths leading to law school or banking.”

One of the most shocking descriptions (to me) of Dartmouth students was the assertion that I came across several times decrying both intellectualism and what some saw as a lack of intellectualism at the College. Attempting to explain the apparent disdain for showing off intellectual ability at the College, O’Brien (2006) writes,

Other than beer and a general amiability, the Dartmouth student tends to define himself by what he isn’t. To begin with, most Dartmouth students aren’t pretentious. We go to school in Hanover. The greater communities of Providence [Rhode Island] and Cambridge [Massachusetts] may have small colonies of intellectuals and clusters of trendy shops; we have cows. It is difficult to wear chic, trendy clothes that stand out in any way when it’s 40 degrees below zero outside. . . . When he needlessly speaks out in class, the overanxious freshman draws slightly bemused but nonetheless reproachful looks from upperclassmen. The environment at Dartmouth discourages overt attempts to stand out intellectually as much as it discourages dressing flamboyantly.

Though I cannot speak for the classroom venues at Dartmouth, I found, from my own experiences and observations, several of O’Brien’s (2006) points to be inaccurate. Although some feel that intellectualism is lacking at Dartmouth, the claim of unpretentiousness, either among students or the College in general, is certainly amiss, as I explain in greater detail in the following chapters.

Tom Atwood (2007a), in a column expressing concern and disappointment for what he views as the regrettable level of intellectual conversation among Dartmouth students, writes, “I suppose it’s possible that since I came to Dartmouth I’ve managed to find the least intellectual peers here . . . . I’ve begun to form the opinion that the intellectual climate at Dartmouth is as bleak as four inches of snow in April.” After discussions with other students, Atwood (2007a) cites three main reasons for the lack of intellectualism he finds at Dartmouth: He reports that “there seems to be a general consensus that intellectual conversation outside the classroom is

lacking;” the dominance of “excessive drinking, loud music, and pong in crowded, dirty fraternity basements;” and the fast pace of Dartmouth’s three-term academic calendar “that discourages people from incorporating academic and intellectual conversations into their social lives.” Adding his own assessment of the reason behind the less-than-satisfactory intellectual atmosphere of Dartmouth, Atwood (2007a) argues,

While I agree with all three of the above points, I think the problem stems to a certain extent from a more fundamental source: students on campus don’t have a lot to talk about. . . . The truth is, I don’t think Dartmouth students are particularly creative or innovative with their thinking, and, as a result, conversations become stale and intellectual apathy ensues. It’s not that Dartmouth students aren’t capable of thinking creatively — it’s that there is an overwhelming culture of conformity.

Along with this “culture of conformity,” the small campus population creates an intimate environment disallowing for anonymity, and students “learn quickly not to take chances with our thinking; we learn to fall in line and be smart but not different, and the result is a culture where students have no new ideas to get excited about and nothing to talk about. The result is a climate where intellectualism is dead” (Atwood 2007a). Similarly lamenting his lack of success in finding or sustaining intellectual conversation while at Dartmouth, Brian May (2007b) asks, “How could it be that, after so many years of hardly any intelligent discussion in high school, I now attend a college with some of the smartest students in the world, only to find it a social taboo to actively engage in intelligent conversations?”

Delving further into this Dartmouth student psyche, I was shocked to read Niral Shah’s (2007) elaboration of Dartmouth students and their apparent lack of intellectual curiosity and adventure by taking easy classes and getting nothing out of them and showing no courage or ambition to expand their minds. Before encouraging his fellow students to take more risks during their time in college, Shah (2007) reaches what I find to be a sad and disappointing

disconnect between Dartmouth's reputation and resources and its students' attitudes regarding how they get such prestigious degrees and effectively pick mundane, unadventurous careers.

And yet, despite the humbleness that many of the students claim characterizes Dartmouth students, I found some interesting cases where students were evidently not afraid to let it be known what they thought of themselves and how they viewed themselves compared to others. For one example, in a less-than-modest article on Dartmouth's ski team – arguably the strongest sport at the College, and a genuine powerhouse in college skiing – Ritger (2007) examines the difficulty the coaches have finding and recruiting students with both the athletic ability to compete in college skiing and the academic credentials to be admitted to (and stay in) the College:

Due to the rigorous admissions standards at the College, recruiting these world-class athletes is not always easy. . . . [A]ny athlete choosing Dartmouth over a possible scholarship at another Division I school obviously has academics as a top priority. . . . Coach Dodge also pointed out that often his recruits don't need any help at all with academics or admissions. . . . [A]chieving this level of near-professional racing while still carrying the course load of two Ivy League classes is no small feat. While skiers all over the East and the country may grow up dreaming of Dartmouth, the marriage of truly excellent academics and intense athletic competition narrows the field of recruits immensely. The student athlete willing to be so dedicated to his studies as well as his skiing is a much more rare breed of racer. . . . Coaches and athletes mentioned the intangible aura around the Dartmouth ski team. The parallel excellence of academics and athletics seems to imbue the Big Green skiing program with a widely recognized allure.

Another column by Claire Murray (2007) questioned the allure of a prestigious Dartmouth degree when its value in terms of a graduate's income years after leaving Hanover does not imply or guarantee success. She writes, "We, as Dartmouth students, are among the nation's best, brightest, and most likely to succeed" (Murray 2007). Compared to students who "were smart enough to have been admitted to top-tier schools, their choice of school had no effect on their income 20 years later. This conclusion implies that a degree from Dartmouth has no inherent value" (Murray 2007). Attempting to justify the cost of Dartmouth's tuition, Murray

(2007) and some of her floormates involved in this conversation agreed that “Dartmouth’s sense of community, location, study-abroad programs and professors” were all part of their reason for selecting Dartmouth, along with one student who “expects her Dartmouth education to open doors that may have been closed to her had she attended the state school that offered her a significant scholarship. I agree with her point that no matter one’s socioeconomic class, a steep Ivy League tuition stipulates some sort of financial reward in one’s future career.”

The issue of money and large potential future incomes versus meaningful work and helping others then enters the column, and Murray (2007) begins to wonder “just how much comfort in my future life I actually would give up in order to pursue personal fulfillment” and while many Dartmouth students pursue lucrative jobs after graduation, many “have a nagging feeling that making a lot of money is somehow wrong.” But without dwelling on this implied guilt for too long, Murray (2007) seems to reassure herself and her classmates,

We [Dartmouth students] have an advantage in finding great careers over students at schools with fewer resources, and there is no reason not to use that to its full advantage. As long as we create a meaning for our Dartmouth degree beyond a six-digit salary and bring that meaning to everything we do as alumni, it is wrong not to use that degree to be as successful as we can possibly be. I’m not saying that we should go on to establish charity foundations with our multi-billion dollar estates (that’s for Harvard dropouts), but instead that we can each make our own mark on the world without worrying about whether or not our salaries are fair. It’s not the money that matters but what you do with the money. It’s not the Dartmouth diploma that matters but what you do with it.

Other students have also echoed the idea that Dartmouth students, even while enrolled in the College, have always had a handle on things, clearly know what is best for themselves, and have certain ideas as to what they deserve and how they should be treated. Philip Kenol (2007b) argues that students, opposed to the Dartmouth administration, should have control over what student organizations can and should exist and that students should even manage the funding of these groups. Kenol (2007b) claims that the administration “is often overly trusting of its



students” and asks why it cannot “place that same faith in the students and give them complete authority over which student organizations should be recognized?” After all, “We, as students, have an inherent right to decide which organizations should be an official part of our College, since it is part of what our money pays for and it enhances our experience here.” Similarly, Shaun Stewart (2007) expresses disapproval of the fact that the Collis Center, the student center on campus, is not really a student center because it is controlled by the Dartmouth administration:

I propose that Collis be given over to the student body. We have already shown ourselves capable of successfully running our own programs, such as DOC Trips, numerous affinity houses, and yes, even our excellent Greek system. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that Dartmouth students could effectively run our own student center.

We should keep the Cafe and Lone Pine run by Dining Services, but allow students to govern everything at Collis, including scheduling space, bringing in entertainment and events, apportioning office space to various bodies of student government and clubs, and making improvements to Collis that students want. More than anything, it will empower students to create a space that is entirely our own, without having administrative baby-sitters watching over everything we do.

He concludes with the interesting logic, “Not to self-call, but we are Dartmouth students, and we will be running the country one day; I think we can be trusted with running our own student center” (Stewart 2007).

In another column, Philip Kenol (2007a) provides an example that may support Stewart’s (2007) call for more student control of campus. A perturbed Kenol (2007a) recounts his experience attempting to attend a public speaking event at Dartmouth only to find that there were no more seats available. Even though he was forty minutes early for the event, he explains that it was not students who were filling up the seats (Kenol 2007a). Describing the scene, Kenol (2007a) writes,

Once again, The [sic] Vermont and New Hampshire public saw fit to crash one of Dartmouth's events that was organized for students, and consequently took away our opportunity to learn from or even attend the event.

This is not the first time that something like this has happened. I have been to many events where students have had to compete with townies for seats. With our busy schedules, we are unable to show up hours in advance to reserve seating. Don't get me wrong — Dartmouth needs the New Hampshire community. We need them to fill the ticketed seats for events that are less popular for students, and our athletic events would have few spectators if only students showed up. But I still believe that students should not be shut out of events. After all, what is the point of holding events at our College if not enough students are able to attend them?

Supporting his claim with the fact that most U.S. presidential candidates come to speak at Dartmouth while campaigning, Kenol (2007a) argues

While I am excited by the opportunity to be up close to some political heavyweights, I fear that if the trend of townies taking over our events continues, some students might not benefit from these politicians' presence on campus.

We have an inherent entitlement as Dartmouth students to have greater access to these events. After all, our tuition does not only go towards academics, but also to help fund campus events . . . . This exposure to nationally significant personalities is a big part of our so-called "Dartmouth experience." Our College should have students' backs, and facilitate student access to these events. . . . We need to have more control over how many townies can gate-crash our events.

Evidently, Dartmouth students are entitled to priority seating and greater influence and know what is best for the surrounding community and others when it comes to matters of public policy. Remember that they will be running the country one day, after all (Stewart 2007).

Another interesting instance that showed the plane on which some Dartmouth students, faculty, and alumni apparently place themselves involved an advertisement that I saw regularly in the back pages of the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*. This advertisement was for a company called Good Genes for "Grads and faculty of schools such as Dartmouth, Tufts, MIT, Wellesley, Brandeis, Harvard, Columbia, Clark U. (Worc. MA), UC Berkeley, NYU, Wesleyan, Brown, Stanford, accredited medical & law schools. Meet alumni & academics." The ad was that simple and only additionally provided a website and phone number. I had to check it out to see

if it was real and, indeed, it is. More information is available at the website, but I was intrigued with the requirement for one to prove his or her status before becoming a member. I feel that it is unlikely that Dartmouth or any of these other schools actually endorses this company, but after seeing the ad more than once it signaled to me the attitudes that some students and graduates of these schools have in regard to choosing their social company and apparent proclivity they may have for playing what amounts to the eugenics dating game.

One (or possibly more than one) anonymous, disgruntled student, also picking up on a disconnect between Dartmouth's image and its reality, penned a song entitled "Big Green Blues" in 1990 that I came across at Rauner's Special Collections with all spelling and grammatical errors left intact:

#### BIG GREEN BLUES

Up here in the woods,  
the sell a false bill of goods.  
Space and facilitated guaranteed  
succumbs to trustees greed.

#### *Chorus:*

I Should have never come to dartmouth  
where i caught the big green blues.  
How many years will i lose to these  
big green blues?

Rich little brats  
all members of frats.  
think for myself,  
why, i can't do that!

#### *Chorus*

Right wing alumni  
come back to this sty.  
School throws them a bash  
in trade for millions in cash!

*Chorus*

Macho men of Fartmouth  
never feel any pain.  
As expected from people  
with granite in their brains!

*Chorus*

Uncalled for pretension,  
in wilderness isolation.  
Survive the cold and boredom,  
you'll make it to graduation.

*Chorus*

My reading of the song is that that the writer(s) of “Big Green Blues” (1990) was not being entirely tongue-in-cheek, and he or she or they have some valid points that I continue to explore in the coming pages. As I mentioned above, I found that Dartmouth students seem to have a high degree of self-awareness in regard to who they are and the roles they play in the life of the College. The topics and quotes I presented in this section represent only a fraction of what I uncovered from reading so much about how those at Dartmouth see themselves and compare themselves to others and I think many of the quotes speak for themselves. But it was not until I actually came to Hanover and stepped inside the Dartmouth Bubble for a year that I got a grip on the contradictions between what I expected to find and experience at Dartmouth and what actually happened to me while I was there.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **REFLECTIONS ON THE DARTMOUTH BUBBLE**

#### **My Experience inside the Dartmouth Bubble**

I arrived in Hanover to begin work on my study in full force on July 1, 2006. By that time, it was already a few weeks into the summer term, and the campus was occupied mostly by sophomores for what I later learned was referred to as “sophomore summer.” I was surprised by how warm it was at that time and even more so by the humidity, which was not quite as humid as south Louisiana, but noticeable nonetheless.

The campus landscape was clean and well manicured (and was throughout the school year) and there were a good number of students on campus that term. There seemed to be a lot of tourists that came to Hanover in the summer, which may be partially due to the fact that Dartmouth hosts several conferences during the summer term as well as the popularity of tourism in New England in general. Hanover has considerable traffic problems for such a small, rural town. I remember that, within the first few days that I had moved and set myself up, I felt very safe both in town and at the College, as serious crime in Hanover is a rarity.

One memory from the summer term is that I recall the general atmosphere on campus and in town to be incredibly laid back – almost comatose. The “outdoorsy” reputation of Dartmouth was evident early on as students would head down to the river to swim, canoe, or just hang out, and some students even walked around in bathing suits or with bathing suits underneath their already loose, sporty, informal clothing, ready to soak up the late-setting, summer New Hampshire sun. Among the first general traits of Dartmouth students that I picked up on was a high level of environmental consciousness (remember how I stated above that this was my first introduction to composting) judging from the many recycling bins, signs, and posters promoting environmental awareness. This “social consciousness” was advertised probably at least as often

as various service groups and organizations for students to join. I sensed something off about the popularity of these organizations almost right away, which I explain in the next section.

Greek life was also clearly very popular, as I noticed from all the fraternity and sorority t-shirts, its coverage in *The Dartmouth*, and from my casual strolls along Webster Avenue. It did not take me long to understand the importance of Greek life at Dartmouth because it was soon clear that there simply was not a lot to do in Hanover. Another early memory soon after my arrival was on the Fourth of July. I set out for a relaxing walk around the campus and town in the late, warm, sunny afternoon that day, and I remember walking down Webster Avenue. Music was *blasting* from the Phi Delta Alpha fraternity house, and, right as I passed, I caught part of Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Fortunate Son" dominating the otherwise quiet street at that moment. The irony of that song coming from that house at that college created an odor in the air even more pungent than the smells emanating from their holiday barbeque.

I did feel a bit of a sense of isolation and disconnection from the world once I arrived, as I had never settled (even temporarily, besides maybe for a few days) in a place as rural as Hanover before, but Dartmouth's wide array of technological resources helped to ease my apprehension of being stuck in the woods for a year. I was intrigued by Dartmouth's seemingly high technological capabilities as the prevalence of computers and wireless access at the College seemed a little contradictory to the outdoorsy image of the school and its rural location. Eleazar Wheelock and Daniel Webster certainly did not have it like those at Dartmouth do today. I saw it as a way to not only serve as an attractive amenity for the College, but also to accommodate its people, many of whom come from urbane backgrounds, perhaps to make the Upper Valley a little more "livable" and for them to feel less trapped inside, say, an isolated bubble.

Just like any other college, there were lots of trendy fashions on campus, and unlike most colleges I have visited, there was *a lot* of obvious school pride (even the couches in Collis had green stuffing protruding from their tears). I spent a good amount of time at the library during the summer (it was one of the few public air-conditioned buildings on campus) and observed that the students seemed to be studious in general, as it was not uncommon to see a decent crowd of students studying late at night or on the weekends. It was certainly better utilized than any other college library I have personally visited or used. I was a bit surprised to walk around and see the number of science courses the students seemed to be taking. Of course I realize that the sciences are popular majors most everywhere, but I was expecting to see less biology, physics, and organic chemistry at a liberal arts school. (I then remembered that I was a geography major, which helped explain to me why there seemed to be fewer visible or noticeable liberal arts students in the library.)

The students generally appeared to be rather athletic, and it was clear that many of them were Dartmouth athletes or at least had been athletes in high school (which was often evident from the logos on their clothing). Spring time looked as if it was the most active time for sports, as people walked around more in gym clothes, athletic uniforms, and with sporting equipment. Unlike any school I have attended or others that I was more familiar with, the athletes seemed to be much more integral to wider College life at Dartmouth and not their own social entities. They did not appear to be elevated like (or in the same way as) other college athletes I have seen. I suspect that this may be because of the Ivy League's emphasis on "scholar athletes" and not the elevated status of athletes at many other Division I schools. One point that reminded me that I was in different surroundings was the popularity of sports such as crew, lacrosse, tennis, cycling,

and soccer in addition to more popular sports that one typically associates with collegiate athletics.

There was a strong health consciousness as well, as I mentioned earlier that Dartmouth provides many organic products for the food served on campus and students did not seem (at least not openly) to overindulge in junk food, as water and healthier-looking snacks seemed to be more popular. I saw very few smokers. Most people looked thin and healthy, if not built and athletic. Some girls, however, were almost disturbingly thin, and I noticed that many female students did not have a lot on their plates when they were in Thayer Dining Hall. An appreciable number of guys seemed rather effeminate, which I thought was unusual given Dartmouth's rough, masculine stereotype.

Another highly noticeable quality was the friendliness and acquaintance among Dartmouth's students, especially during the summer. There was a great variety of people at Dartmouth (at least superficially) and more ethnic diversity than I expected (at least superficially), especially for rural New Hampshire. I wondered if this assortment of individuals was a natural corollary with an institution of Dartmouth's stature or if it was forced to attempt to create a more cosmopolitan milieu. But different kinds of people did seem to interact with ease and I saw a general congeniality between people of different backgrounds.

After a few weeks of watching such interactions, I discerned that everyone seemed to pretty much know everyone else, and I wondered if there was any degree of anonymity at Dartmouth. This sentiment set a certain tone for the remainder of my time at the College. At first I felt a bit intrusive, almost as if I was trespassing, even though I had clearance to conduct my study by the administration. I had even checked in upon my arrival, though no one seemed all that interested or concerned. I also felt a sense of inferiority just from being there, and later I



began to wonder if these feelings were not just in my head, but actually from cues that I was picking up from the campus itself and the people there. These feelings were much more subtle over the summer and did not begin to intensify until the time right around the beginning of the fall term. And these feelings did not dissipate even after spending a year there.

During Dartmouth's summer term I had more or less appeared out of nowhere. Although I picked up on the fact that people took notice of my presence, there was little direct acknowledgement of the fact that I was there (at least toward me). Initially, I did not think all that much of it. After all, I had designed my study to take place on a college campus, and I knew that there would be students there, wrapped up in their studies and lives. But one thing I had clearly underestimated and was certainly unprepared for was the level of insularity that I found at Dartmouth. Dartmouth is a small school in terms of student population, but the raw numbers did not capture how small I actually found Dartmouth to be. I arrived with the intention of focusing on the College's supposedly unique traditions and student culture, which were the initial qualities that attracted me to conduct a study about Dartmouth in the first place. But after I got there and noted the things that I took in from my first few weeks there, my attitudes and preconceptions began to change quickly and sharply.

It was obvious to me that I was a visitor there and that I had a new social world to adapt to, as is the case for many social scientists that conduct field studies. But I realized that much of what I encountered at Dartmouth in terms of its particular brand of culture or "ethos" (Hart 1984) was found in my daily observations and interactions (if one could call them that) at the College than in the loftier topics I had set out to investigate. I then realized that by including my own personal observations and experiences I would perhaps find a more accurate insight into Dartmouth's culture and the vague and mysterious "Dartmouth Experience." It was the

accumulation of my own daily experiences that allowed me to contrast the romantic and idealistic image of Dartmouth that I saw from far away with how I saw it up close. And, as a researcher, I felt it crucial to include my own findings from a personal perspective to gain a stronger grasp of Dartmouth and the “Dartmouth Experience.”

Much of what I learned was based on initial observations of campus norms. One thing that blew my mind near the beginning of my study was the trusting (maybe even overly trusting) environment on the campus. I was shocked to see students leave their backpacks, computers, purses, bikes, or any other kind of personal items lying around on campus. Sometimes they would leave their things for *hours* at a time. I remember working in the library more than once and watching groups of girls get up from the table where they were studying together and just leave their laptops and purses for maybe two hours. What was even *more* shocking to me was that no one touched anything that was just lying around that did not belong to them (though I learned that there is some theft at Dartmouth). Witnessing this phenomenon was one of my first observations of attitudes among elites and, in retrospect, I do not believe that it is fully a question of etiquette or respect for other people’s property. Rather, I took it to represent an attitude from students more along the lines of “Who would *dare* take *my* stuff?!” The fact that they did not seem to think anything of leaving their own things around when other people might need that spot or that table seemed to suggest that they regarded Dartmouth to be their home and they were free to leave their things where they pleased and no one did a thing about it. Perhaps with so many wealthy people around there is little need to feel protective of one’s possessions.

The “home” quality (perhaps instilled in Dartmouth students since their Freshman Trips) carried over into other areas as the students certainly seemed to make themselves at home. On several occasions I remember seeing people sprawled out and sleeping at the library or on the

couches at the Collis Center. Some people would literally take naps at these places like it was their own room or as if they owned the place. No one (but me) seemed to think anything of it. Another revelation was the amount of garbage the students would leave behind; they never seemed to pick up after themselves! It was not uncommon to see large amounts of garbage lying around in high traffic and social areas. Though such disregard may not be unusual at a college, I was taken aback to think that students at an Ivy League school would not even properly dispose of their own trash, especially since they claim to be so environmentally conscious. I remember walking through Collis one day in the mid-afternoon and coming to an abrupt halt with my jaw opened from the shock of seeing the eating area to be *trashed*. Newspapers, napkins, unfinished food, plastic containers, paper cups, and silverware were strewn all over the tables and floors from one end of the room to the other. Unfortunately, I did not have my camera with me at that moment to document the obscene amount of garbage the students left behind, but I did happen to get a much tamer shot of some littered tables at the Novack Café in the library to provide a sense of this common sight at Dartmouth (Figure 71).



**Figure 71:** Student garbage at the Novack Café. Photo by author.

Other types of disregard were common as well. Although I saw many diligent students in the library, I was also occasionally annoyed by others who did not think anything of yakking loudly on cell phones while other people were around or groups of students noisily goofing off when others were trying to work or study. There was another memorable occurrence when I was standing at the crosswalk of Main and Wheelock Streets across from Collis, waiting with others for the signal to change so we could safely cross the street. One student, however, decided to cross the street into oncoming traffic, all the while chatting on her cell phone, not even acknowledging that she was blocking cars trying to turn onto West Wheelock. She was clearly not in a hurry, either. Other sources of revealing information came from reading about the antics from the prior week in Hanover, often concerning Dartmouth students, in the “Police Blotter” printed in *The Dartmouth* once a week. Even the Ivy League is not immune to underage public drunkenness, assaults, or credit card theft, among numerous other (sometimes amusing) arrests and anecdotes. *The Dartmouth Mirror* also has a section titled “Overheard” which lists some asinine things that Dartmouth students say. After reading this every week, I found myself to be more shocked than entertained, and I can sympathize with the students I mentioned in the previous chapter begging for more intellectualism at the College.

Perhaps these observations relate to another trait I noticed regarding the impression I received that many students at Dartmouth seem to take their situation for granted. Just from watching the demeanor of some students, I got the impression that many have never had to worry about a thing in their lives. Many have probably never had a job, done their own laundry, shopped for their own groceries, or picked up after themselves (which may be obvious from the point I made in Figure 71). I also picked up on this demeanor after noticing how some College employees (especially food service workers at Thayer) occasionally reacted if a student said or

did something obnoxious. I saw a fair amount of eye rolling and tongue biting on the part of the staff members along with some looks of disbelief at how some students acted when they were expecting or demanding service, though the employees also seemed careful not to let the students notice their reactions. I sensed some resentment toward students and faculty.

There was also an occasion I remember from close to the end of the fall term when I was sitting down at the library and three male friends walking together passed me. One asked another if he had finished his applications for graduate school and where he decided to apply, and his friend nonchalantly responded, “Oh, Harvard, Brown, Stanford...” His voice trailed off as they continued to walk, but his tone seemed to suggest an unusual confidence, as if his academic future was a foregone conclusion and there was no reason to fear rejection from these highly selective schools. He must aim high and never stop to think that anything less would be unavailable or acceptable to him. Like so many other students I overheard or read about, he expressed a strong confidence that his Dartmouth degree would get him to the places where he wanted to go. And he was probably right.

I suppose that these instances help to show how lives and attitudes are different from what one might expect when one is inside the Dartmouth Bubble. Being that I only had to go on what little I knew of Dartmouth beforehand (amounting to what I had heard, read about, and a brief visit to the College the year before), it was only a matter of time before I recognized how different Dartmouth truly was (and not in the way that they like to brag about) and how I had deeply misjudged the place from my previous standpoint outside of the Bubble.

As I mentioned above, my presence was not generally acknowledged during the summer term, which did not bother me too much. Since everything was so laid back at that time, I figured that I would go with the flow, work on my research, and things would eventually pick up.

Aside from the vast amount of reading and research that I did in the libraries, I dove right into ethnographic observation as well, usually at Baker and Berry libraries, the Green, several areas of the Collis Center, and Thayer Dining Hall. I made it a point to spend at least an hour or so a day (though often more) just sitting and watching students, their interactions, and politely eavesdrop a bit. I overheard a lot of melodrama in student conversations. Girls especially seemed to complain about “relationship problems” constantly. It made me wonder if there was some sort of Dartmouth soap opera going on behind the scenes with all the interweaving subplots. I thought some good potential titles for it could be *As the Baker Bells Chime*, *Across the Green*, or *Webster Avenue*.

While people knew that I was there (since I am not invisible), nobody seemed to be bothered by the fact that I was there or objected to my just sitting and watching other people interact, as ethnographers tend to do. But no one talked to me, either. Again, I did not think that was too strange at first since no one knew me. I will also be the first person to admit that I am not exactly outgoing, either. I tend to be more introverted, and my style for doing this type of research is to watch things from a slight distance, yet still be engaged with what captures my attention. I also never expected anyone to roll out a red carpet or offer a grandiose welcoming committee, but after a few weeks of consistent aloofness from any students, faculty, or administrators that I had spoken (or attempted to speak) with, I was growing dismayed with the lack of warmth and friendliness that the College promised to visitors from its website and promotional literature. Although I never intended to interview anyone, friendly conversation was nonexistent. Lots of times, faculty and administrators that I spoke with would speak slowly and use noticeably patronizing tones after they learned where I came from and which university I attended as if I couldn’t understand . . . how . . . people speak . . . at an Ivy League . . . school.

By the time of my run-ins with Safety and Security that I recounted in Chapter 6 and the beginning the fall term, I realized people were not overly exaggerating about Dartmouth being surrounded by a “bubble” of some kind, though it is not the kind that one can easily pop from either side. And, contrary to what those at Dartmouth may tell you or what you may think about the College before you visit it, getting inside the Bubble does not infer that one belongs inside the Bubble.

This was more apparent to me after I noticed that, much more often than not, people seemed to completely ignore me and treat me as if I literally did not exist. This was shocking to me because I did not want to believe the popular stereotypes concerning Northeasterners and those at the Ivy League schools. I honestly thought that the snooty, preppy stereotype was a caricature, and, perhaps due to my education and training beforehand, I felt it was important to not have too much prejudice before I arrived at Dartmouth. But it was only a short matter of time before I realized where such stereotypes came from. It was probably not until late September that I conceded to myself that I was in the company of elites at an elite institution and before I understood what “elite college” actually meant. Although some stereotypes may still be exaggerations, I learned the hard way that because I did not fit a specific mold, it was enough to allow me to be disregarded for much of the time that I spent at Dartmouth.

I could not understand why people would often be so selective with whom they would act friendly toward. How would they make new friends if they did not talk to strangers? Weren’t most of them all strangers at one time? But I chose not to force the issue because, as a researcher, I felt it important to stick with the convention to never force oneself upon the society that he studies, though that would not be something I would normally do anyway, given my personality. Still, I was stunned at how few people would even bother to *look* at me. People

would often refuse to make eye contact with me, let alone say “hello” or smile. (I also noticed after a while that lots of people at Dartmouth would not even make eye contact with each other!) On the contrary, if people did look at me, I was often subjected to condescending and also sometimes suspicious looks. Clearly, I was not seen as an equal. It was a daily thing for me to walk past people and either be ignored, have them look right through me like I wasn’t there, or hold their nose up as they walked past me.

Even when a situation would call for recognizing that another human being was present, I was often still ignored. I picked up on this from simple acts like holding doors. It was common for me to be walking behind someone when exiting a building and even though I may have been directly behind them, I would often have the door slammed right in my face. I made it a point to hold the door if someone was behind me, though most people just walked by or cut in front of me, as if I was their personal doorman, never uttering a “thank you.” There was one occasion when I was leaving Collis and I held the door for a girl right behind me and she bellowed a heartfelt “Thank you!” with a big smile as if I had just committed some major, chivalrous act. I just nodded and continued on my way, attributing it to common courtesy, evidently a rarity at Dartmouth College.

Other seemingly desperate attempts to discount my existence involved sitting down for dinner at Thayer. People routinely ignored me while I was there, though they did not think anything of taking salt shakers sitting right in front of me that I was planning to use without saying anything (or bother to return them for that matter). Or I would sit at a small table by myself and, without even bothering to ask, sometimes people would take the remaining empty chairs (this was much more common at Collis). One time at Thayer I sat down at one of the long tables and started to eat my dinner and a group of four students came and sat down only one



chair or so over from me (people usually went to greater lengths to avoid sitting too close to me). It did not bother me in the least that they sat down near me, and I had no intention of interrupting their dinner, bothering them, or butting in on their conversation, but I still offered a friendly nod and smile. All four of them conscientiously interacted only with each other and would not even *look* in my direction. My “favorite” act of insolence, though, which usually happened at least two or three times every day I was on campus, was when I would open a door in an attempt to enter a building and someone would be exiting at the same time, only to blaze right through me or cut in front of me, disregarding the fact that I was even there, once again like I was the doorman. I almost never heard anyone say “excuse me” the entire time I was there, either to me or anyone else.

Then there were the times when people did acknowledge me, either because they had to, because they wanted something, or because I was somehow cramping their style. I remember two incidents during the winter term: In the Collis Center, there were two large, two-or-three-seater chairs facing each other in front of the fireplace. It was early in the evening, and I was there reading the newspaper before I decided to head home. I was the only person on my chair and one girl was sitting directly across from me. After a few minutes, she looked annoyed, picked up her things, and got up. I thought nothing of this and figured she probably went to the buffet/salad bar to get something to eat. I soon decided it was time to go, gathered my things, and when I stood up, I noticed the same girl sitting at a table just a few feet away. This struck me as a little strange, and I sat back down on the chair where she was a minute ago. I did not stare, though I watched her a bit to try to figure out why she may have so suddenly switched seats. She looked up again at me, scowled as if to say “How *dare* you look at me!” got up, and *moved again* to another seat on the other side of the room!

Another time that winter, I was sitting on a couch by myself where all the tables and other seats in the room are, during an active afternoon. There were both small and larger couches available, but each kind could easily and comfortably sit more than one person. I was sitting alone on a smaller one. I remember standing up and grabbing my backpack when a girl approached me and asked if I was leaving. I was, though I was confused by her question, as she could have easily just sat down slightly to my right and neither one of us would have imposed on each other's "personal space." The underlying subtext, I later realized, was that she apparently did not want to be seen sitting near me for whatever uncertain reason.

I also remember one incident in the spring where I was walking on the sidewalk lining the Green along Main Street headed toward Wheelock Street when a girl was standing on the corner maybe fifteen feet in front of me. She was waving and smiling enthusiastically, obviously trying to get someone's attention, though clearly not mine. I was still headed directly toward her, as I would have to walk around her to turn the corner. It was clear she was not waving to me, but when I got closer I still smiled as I walked around her and, upon seeing this, her facial expression instantly turned into an annoyed frown, telling me "Not *you!*" These are just a few examples of the attitudes and behaviors that those at Dartmouth expressed toward me. I wondered if it would be unfair of me to call the students rude, snobbish, cold, or self-centered, but I experienced these vibes many times each day that I was on campus, so I do not feel that I was overly paranoid or delusional.

There is another noteworthy case where I would occasionally eat at Murphy's, a restaurant off campus, and a hostess there, a Dartmouth student, would greet me and treat me like a regular customer. I would also see her on campus at least a few times a week, and she ignored me like everyone else. But if I were to return to the restaurant a few weeks later, I was

given the service one would expect at a pricey establishment. The logic appeared to be that it was okay to acknowledge me outside or on the fringes of the Dartmouth Bubble, but when I was inside the Bubble or on Dartmouth's "turf," so to speak, I was subject to their social classification system and norms, and I was usually treated like a reject or a freak.

But it would be unfair of me to characterize *all* people at Dartmouth to be like that, because that is certainly not the case. There was an occasional friendly interaction, albeit they were few and far between. But it did get to the point where I was suspicious anytime someone *was* nice to me. I even have in my field notes that February 7, 2007 was "an anomalous day" where I remember several instances of people holding the door for me, some saying "excuse me" if they walked in front of me, a few guys giving me a "what's up" nod, and five or six girls looking right at me and either smiling or saying "hello." I couldn't believe it. But it turned out to be an anomalous day after all.

It became increasingly clear to me that, somehow, I did not "fit in" at Dartmouth. But why? And why not? A few weeks into the fall term, I realized that I was caught in a sharp inside/outside dichotomy. Despite what you may hear or think about the place from a distance, there were those who somehow "fit in" when inside the Dartmouth Bubble and for reasons that are still not completely apparent to me, I stood out somehow and just about everyone there knew that. Keep in mind that I never tried to pass myself off as a student or someone who "officially" belonged there. There were a few occasions where people, normally faculty or administrators in informal conversation, asked who I was and I introduced myself and explained what I was doing, though I was usually given a nod and a half-smile, and that was the end of the conversation. I also never went out of my way to try and "fit in" as best as I could figure out what that meant, since I would not, for ethical or personal reasons, pretend to be something that I was not.

After a short while I became increasingly convinced that what allowed me to stand out was my clothing. I always came to campus shaved and showered and with clean clothes every day, and I do not think that I smelled bad or looked disheveled, but I admit that I dressed rather casual and informally, which is just my style. Some students (and faculty) dressed more formally than others, and the preppy stereotypes were definitely there in some quantity, but from what I would describe, I saw plenty of casual dressers. Still, I remember a few occasions where I would catch students snickering at me for no discernible reason and although I cannot read minds, I am almost certain that they were making fun of my clothes or the way I was dressed. It was as if they were thinking, “I can’t believe someone would walk around at Dartmouth looking like *that!*” Much to my surprise, I underestimated how important fashion was at Dartmouth. As Karen Iorio (2007) explains, “Despite our isolation [in Hanover] from fashionable cities like New York and Los Angeles and a lack of a wide array of nearby shopping options, fashion and appearance are definite concerns for most [Dartmouth] students. . . . Regardless of whether we attire ourselves in the latest styles from the runways of Milan or mass-produced basics from Wal-Mart, there is always a message being sent through our clothing.”

This revelation was deeply distressing to me. Why would people with the intellect, talent, abilities, and opportunity to come to a school like Dartmouth be preoccupied with what they or other people *wore*? The fact that *The Dartmouth Mirror* has a section where its editors highlight what they find to be notable styles and fashionable students only drove the point home harder for me. Julie Plevin (2006) went as far as stereotyping fashion by majors at Dartmouth, asserting that environmental science majors tend to “leave the preppy side of outdoorsy wear to the geography majors who grew up in rich suburbs attending expensive summer touresque adventure programs. . . . [G]eography majors yield to the less organic, more widely accepted

North Face fleeces, Mountain Hardwear hard shells, and Birkenstock clogs.” This description does not come close to describing me or even most geographers that I know personally, so perhaps I didn’t fit in at Dartmouth after all, even within the fashion confines of my own academic discipline. But fashion at Dartmouth is apparently a big deal. I noticed that it was often used as a subtle way to “show off.” This could mean wearing expensive designer clothing or t-shirts and sweatshirts with the names of places such as Nantucket; Newport, Rhode Island; or Vail, Colorado, as well as numerous international locations, as if the students were trying to subtly brag about the more expensive and exclusive locales they visit.

Perhaps more accurately, I seemed to be lacking what Gina Barreca (2005: 69) referred to as “the look.” In her memoir *Babes in Boyland*, Barreca (2005) recalls her experiences coming from a working class Italian family from Brooklyn to what she describes as a WASPy Dartmouth of the 1970s and in the early days of coeducation. Her book explains many instances in which she felt like an outsider and had great difficulties adapting to life at Dartmouth, but in one passage in particular, Barreca (2005: 69) laments,

I didn’t have “the look,” and so literally *couldn’t* look at things from the same perspective [as most others at Dartmouth]. I had good grades and the stuff it took to get good grades. I had a bravado that often got mistaken for strength and a big mouth that was sometimes interpreted as self-confidence. And while I substituted swagger for poise and unashamedly used my sense of humor as a way to camouflage my almost perpetual discomfort, I couldn’t fool myself or anyone else into thinking that Dartmouth was the kind of place that would have welcomed me.

I did not have “the look,” either, and the people at Dartmouth knew it. I was at Dartmouth thirty years after Barreca and though I did not come from a similar background as she, it was unmistakable that I was not “one of the gang,” and Dartmouth let me know it. I realize that I was not enrolled at the College, but I was there for a scholarly endeavor and

thought that in itself would make sense to the people at an Ivy League college if they took the time to get to know me. Apparently they were more concerned with other people's appearances.

Despite not physically looking like I belonged at Dartmouth (to them), there were several other factors that heightened my status as an outsider. One was the use of Dartmouth-specific slang. It took some getting used to for me to understand certain terms like *blitz* (e-mail, both noun and verb), "*The D*" (*The Dartmouth*), *FoCo* (Food Court), and several others that I had to learn on my own. To this day, particularly when I read about the College in its several student publications, I still come across some words where I am unsure of the meaning.

One of the most crucial aspects of Dartmouth culture, and also clear indicators demarcating insiders and outsiders, is BlitzMail. Superficially, BlitzMail is an extremely fast e-mail program with large amounts of storage capacity (and that is about the limit of my technological comprehension behind it). A column from *The New York Times* investigating this phenomenon at Dartmouth explained, "The Dartmouth e-mail system has become such a vital part of campus life that many cannot imagine a day without it. Not only is BlitzMail the centerpiece of campus logistics, but it is the warp and weft of the student body's social fabric" (Hafner 2003). Hafner (2003) reports that over 300,000 messages are sent over the system each day at Dartmouth with an average of 23 messages sent per user. The need to adapt to this facet of Dartmouth life is evident early on as "[n]ew users take to the program immediately as they grasp that *to live the Dartmouth life, constant use of Blitzmail [sic] is expected*" (Hafner 2003, emphasis added). I saw that this is no exaggeration as I arrived at Dartmouth and soon noticed students constantly and obsessively checking their e-mail. Computers (excuse me, "blitz terminals") are located all over the campus and at peak times, it was not uncommon to see

students line up to use them. I also remember on some occasions seeing people open their account only to have what looked like scores of new messages at one time.

I had an account but it went underutilized. I only “blitzed” people when there was something important to ask or pass along (such as to librarians I knew or the department that hosted me). I learned quickly that having that account with my name and a “@dartmouth.edu” after it gave me that much more credibility and otherwise helped me gain access to people or resources that otherwise would have been unavailable to me.

But I could not get over the *constant* use of computers. I think the emphasis on electronic communication is one reason why Dartmouth seemed so *quiet*. At places where lots of people gather, such as Collis or Thayer, it never seemed to get all that loud. I think that a large part of the reason behind that is because many people were communicating via blitz at either the terminals or their laptops as opposed to actually *speaking to each other*. They actually seemed to prefer communicating that way as opposed to talking to each other. Hafner (2003) writes, “[F]or the most part, Blitzmail [sic] remains the glue that holds Dartmouth together, socially and academically.” This sort of dependency on computers would likely appear odd to a short-term visitor to the College. I was also taken aback by how much dependency there was on the system. Referring to some potential problems I had heard about blitz (such as winter storms bringing the system down), Hafner (2003) also mentions, “On the rare occasions that Blitzmail [sic] has failed, the campus has been plunged into a communications blackout. Tests are postponed. Logistics take a chaotic turn. Phones start to ring.”

I never had to deal with such a catastrophe at Dartmouth, and if I had, it would have unlikely phased me, since I simply did not use blitz all that much. I did, however, miss out on

the more social uses of blitz. Providing a student's take on the integral role of blitz to life inside the Dartmouth Bubble, Karima Hamamsy (2006, emphasis added) writes,

Blitz has taken control over the Dartmouth network. I will admit that it is a good foundation for communication between students and professors. It is also a fun distraction and stimulation, as blitz notifications are instant gratification. . . . The cellphone is useless and even mocked on the Dartmouth campus. Instead, blitz terminals infuse the campus, so that, when walking from frat row to Wheelock Street, one can stop in Novack café for some quick, drunken blitz satisfaction.

Blitz has eliminated the necessity of face-to-face interactions and semi-personal phone calls. . . . BlitzMail may seem ideal because *people are able to avoid awkward and vulnerable encounters that may otherwise occur*. . . . One question that I often ask myself is: What will happen when we graduate, when we will have to function in the real world of face-to-face communication, when a guy cannot just blitz a girl to tell her to come to his frat basement to watch him play pong?

I asked myself the same question. Though having an account helped me a great deal, it did not entitle me to much at Dartmouth and, as a consequence, I often missed out on some worthwhile occurrences on campus that could have been beneficial to include a first person account of in my research. Because I was not on many "blitz lists," I often did not hear about occurrences until after the fact, thus furthering my outsider status.

Another example conveying my outside status was my inability to obtain a Dartmouth ID. Not having an ID was not much of a concern for me at first, but after being accosted by security, I decided that I would feel a lot better about getting one. I received mixed responses as to whether or not I actually needed one (security said I did; administration said I didn't), but when after I made maybe three attempts to get one, even after asking for help from some people in the administration, my request was denied. I never saw what the big deal was because it was only a little piece of plastic, and it would have given me some piece of mind so I wouldn't feel like some sort of intruder every time I set foot on campus. But I never got one. After a while I just became resigned to the fact and carried about my business. As an alternative, I carried a



copy of my letter designating me as a Visiting Scholar just in case anyone wanted me to flash some “proof” again that I “belonged” there. It almost felt like I was at some exclusive country club and because I didn’t look like I should be there and I didn’t have a “membership card,” I was always under the threat of being kicked out. I began to wonder if this might be one reason for the small and intimate atmosphere at Dartmouth where so many people know each other. Is this perhaps some sort of mechanism or symbolic quality to spot insiders and outsiders? It is certainly a consequence of this trait. Still, I never lied about who I was or what I was doing or tried to be something or somebody different than who I was. If anyone asked me who I was or what I was doing I would tell them, but it was usually met with an “Oh, okay,” and that ended the conversation.

Not having an ID also barred me from certain events and activities, which further excluded me from getting a closer look inside the Dartmouth Bubble or even finding some distractions to amuse myself while I was there. This persistent exclusion left me with a *potent* feeling of social isolation. As I admitted above, I am not extroverted, nor did I ever try to force myself into any conversation or social situation at Dartmouth. But after months of being treated like I didn’t exist I was overcome with a loneliness that I had never felt before. I pressed ahead and continued with my work, but I was so disappointed that so few people offered anything more than a cursory sign of friendliness. I tried to stay optimistic. I remember getting up every day thinking that something good might happen in terms of making a new friend, finding someone to eat with, not being looked down upon, or receiving just a little bit of respect. It never happened.

The worst time for it all was in the late fall term in the middle of all the tension on campus regarding the controversies with the Indian students and the mascot and other “racial incidents.” I remember near the end of the term that there was one particularly bad day, and I

felt so insecure, self-conscious, and even paranoid after a series of appallingly rude behavior toward me. I sat down in the basement hallway of Berry library all by myself, feeling helpless and alone. I was probably within a minute or two of just wanting to sit there and cry and then – almost miraculously – my cell phone rang and it was a friend of mine just calling to chat. We talked for maybe only ten minutes, but it was enough to turn my attitude around, and I was sure to convey how I was feeling and how grateful I was that he called at such an opportune time. After we ended our conversation, the rare occasion of a student offering a faint but friendly smile as she passed by made me get back up, walk to Thayer for some dinner, and then head home for the evening to face whatever challenges were awaiting me the next day. My paranoia came and went throughout the year, as well as the feeling that I was being watched, and I began to realize that that feeling was not completely unfounded given the ubiquity of security cameras around the campus.

The winter was difficult as well, as I had never experienced a coldness of that magnitude, and I was disheartened to see the sun set so early, with it usually being pitch-black outside by about five in the afternoon. It certainly did not help my mood of feeling so alone and isolated. During the winter weekends, I would usually get home by Friday evening and often not even bother to go outside until Monday because it was just too cold to do anything. I had this thought that if I were on campus and if I had slipped on an ice patch and broken my ankle, I had doubts that a single person would have stopped to check on me or even ask if I were okay. But despite the bleakness of the New Hampshire at that time, I would still have to say that Dartmouth and the Upper Valley were at their most beautiful during the winter (Figure 72).

The spring was a welcome change for me, and certainly so for many others. During my entire stay, I found it to be the most comfortable time of year. I noticed the people on campus to



**Figure 72:** The bleakness and beauty of Dartmouth Hall in the winter. Photo by author.

be generally more cheerful, as the warmer weather undoubtedly helped the collective mood at the College. The first “real” spring day did not come until late April, however, when temperatures were finally consistently in the upper sixties and the skies were mostly clear.

By the middle of the spring term my attitude had changed as well and, contrary to my demeanor during the summer and fall, I started acting less passive and more assertive around the students. (The faculty, I found, were not really any better.) I got *really* tired of all the rudeness and condescension aimed at me, directly or indirectly. For example, if someone brusquely cut in front of me without excusing him or herself, I didn’t hesitate to yell at them. I suppose this was a break of decorum for me trying to be a professional researcher and act within the norms of the society that I was studying. But I was quickly getting fed up with being ignored and disregarded. If anything, I felt that even my academic duties did not negate the fact that I was a human being and, rightly or wrongly, I was going to let the Dartmouth community know that.

I recall one instance from an early afternoon in the spring when I was entering the Collis Center from the front porch, and a guy significantly taller and more built than I almost pushed me out of the way and stomped past me as I opened the door and attempted to enter. Infuriated, I turned around, ready to launch one of the harshest verbal assaults of my life, when he stopped and looked back and said “Sorry! I’m sorry!” He then had a regretful look on his face, almost as if he was saying to himself, “I can’t believe I just did that.” I took that as a sign that he was sincerely sorry and just went on my way. Over the course of the year, it was more frequent to notice people acting friendlier toward me and things improved – *generally*. I imagine they just got used to seeing me around and accepted the fact that even though I wasn’t one of them, I was there. Though the bad days outnumbered the good days for me, the good days gained a slightly greater frequency for me over the course of the school year.

Still, by mid-spring, I was getting anxious to get out of there. I honestly believe that had I not had such a strong determination to see my research through, the desire to finish my degree, and my fascination with Dartmouth, I would have packed my bags and left by the end of the fall term. Being that I am generally an impatient person with a short fuse, I was impressed with myself that I stayed as cool and collected for as long as I did. Although I did not like feeling so isolated and distinct from the group, I wonder in retrospect if it may have been necessary for the project, as it may have helped me to get a more accurate picture of the culture of the College by not interfering with Dartmouth’s daily life. Being an outsider made it difficult, though not impossible, I believe, to get a reasonable understanding of Dartmouth and its distinct culture. I was greatly amused by how there was so much talk about diversity, acceptance, and tolerance at Dartmouth. But when someone such as myself, who may have looked or behaved a little differently from what one “normally” sees at the College and went to their school for a legitimate

reason, I was still treated in some capacity everyday like I did not belong there and like I was not welcome. And this was on the occasion when I received any attention at all. Apparently these values are only applicable to those “in the club” and with the proper clearance to live, work, and study within the Dartmouth Bubble.

It became evident to me that in attempting to understand Dartmouth as a place through the many contradictions I have observed and discussed so far in this chapter and the previous one, along with relating my personal experiences at the College, that such contradictions add a crucial element to helping to define Dartmouth’s character and sense of place. These contradictions help to feed the social creation of a bubble encapsulating Dartmouth to make it such a unique and special place in the eyes of those at the College, and yet they cannot be swept under the rug. The consequences of the constant pursuit by the College to reaffirm what it views as its special status in the world of American higher education and its inimitable sense of place in turn reveal a certain persona when examined from both outside and inside the Dartmouth Bubble – a persona of place. This Dartmouth Bubble, I came to realize, *does* exist; it exists in the minds of the Dartmouth community. Dartmouth is not so much isolated as much as it isolates itself or, as Andrew Seal (2006) argued, “Loads of people talk about ‘The Dartmouth Bubble,’ but it’s mostly a self-reinforcing idea.” After a while there, I began to see what he meant. I left Hanover and the Dartmouth Bubble on May 31, 2007 and my departure went just as unnoticed as when I first arrived.

### **Dartmouth College and the Persona of Place**

Scholars that study place as an abstract concept often refer to the phenomenon of *sense of place* to describe the qualities of one particular place that make it distinct from other places

(Relph 1976). Some go as far as describing the *personalities* of places to help illustrate the sense of place that they wish to describe.

Briefly, the identity of a place consists of three interrelated components, “each irreducible to the other – physical features or appearance, observable activities and functions, and meanings or symbols” (Relph 1976: 61). I considered each of these factors in my study. “There is an infinite range of content within each of these [components] and numberless ways in which they can combine. Hence there is no discernable limit to the diversity of identities of places, and every identifiable place has unique content and patterns of relationship that are expressed and endure in the spirit of that place” (Relph 1976: 61). I agree with Relph, but his point made me wonder about the accuracy behind assessing an individual sense of place.

Relph (1976: 57) acknowledges that a place’s identity can vary depending on the intentions, personalities, and circumstances of those who experience it. Although there may be myriad attitudes and interpretations of a place, there is generally a consensus and some common agreement about its identity (Relph 1976: 58). Naturally, part of what I set out to research was to understand Dartmouth’s sense of place not just through my own interpretations, but from those more intimately connected with the College. Despite being an outsider, I found that my views of Dartmouth were often congruent with members of the Dartmouth community, as evidenced by the support of the many quotes that I use to back up my findings. And I discovered that there is a dualism to Dartmouth’s sense of place – while it presents one amplified image to the outside world, another major part of its place identity lingers in the background. Relph (1976: 63) writes, “Sense of place may be authentic and genuine, or it can be inauthentic and contrived or artificial.” This is not to suggest duplicity on the part of Dartmouth, but it appears that the more authentic identity of the College is mostly seen, acknowledged, and understood by those on the

inside of the Dartmouth Bubble, or by those who take the time to look at the College more analytically and notice that Dartmouth has a dual place identity.

Following the logic that places can adopt personalities, I wish to expand this concept further by arguing that a place can also take on a persona, where it consciously appears one way to the greater public but it is quite different when examined in person and out of the spotlight. This persona of place is similar to the personas adopted by celebrities and politicians who act and appear one way on camera or in public, but are noticeably different off camera or in more private surroundings. Before exploring this idea more closely at Dartmouth, another quick example of a place with a certain persona is Disney World. Disney World has a clear persona in that it exudes an impossibly cheerful and fun atmosphere, but its highly commercial nature and mercantile motives are rather thinly disguised. And yet, both of these attributes come together to construct Disney World's place identity. Scrutinizing this persona, as I do to conclude this chapter on studying Dartmouth from inside its "Bubble," will help further the understanding of how elite places and institutions only provide a glimpse of their cultures to wider society and withhold the more intimate details and realities of their exclusive cultures from the uncouth.

The notion of Dartmouth adopting a certain persona and isolating itself inside an imaginary bubble may make some sense, after all. Describing the isolationist approaches certain communities take to maintain their perceived special status, Tuan (1974: 31-32) explains, "The illusion of superiority and centrality is probably necessary to the sustenance of culture. When rude encounters with reality shatter that illusion the culture itself is liable to decline. In the modern world of rapid communications, it is difficult for small communities to believe that they are in any literal sense at the center of things, and yet some such faith is necessary if they are to prosper."

How else would Dartmouth perpetuate its image as the small, humble, idyllic New England liberal arts college that it likes to cast, though perhaps never was? Certainly the elements of this illusion are all there, but from studying Dartmouth both inside and outside its Bubble, I realized that to create this coy and misleading image, Dartmouth assumes a certain persona; to maintain this image, it excludes in a variety of ways. And therein lays the distinction between how *I* saw and experienced Dartmouth and how *others* experience it, either collectively or individually. Driving such a point home in differentiating images and place identities, Relph (1976: 56) explains,

Images are not just selective abstractions of an objective reality but are intentional interpretations of what is or what is believed to be. The image of a place consists of all the elements associated with the experiences of individuals and groups and their intentions toward that place. Insofar as these intentions are focused and are specific, such images may be considered by others to be narrow and biased, but for those who hold them they are complete and constitute the reality of that place.

So does the Dartmouth community actually believe that the images it uses to market itself are factual and accurate? Based on much of what people have said about the College from the preceding chapter, it is difficult to find a correlation between the idyllic appearance of Dartmouth and when one spends some time studying the College with a critical eye from the inside of its “Bubble.”

I realized that there was a disconnect at Dartmouth within the first few weeks of when I arrived and that was what led me to decide to include the several topics I discussed in Chapter 7 to help untangle its persona. To further analyze this persona, I condense those findings into more manageable topics for analysis into the overlapping themes of diversity and activism; College power and control; and class. The endless discourses on diversity (including gender and cultural diversity) and the barrage of student activism and service were among the first things that caught



my attention at Dartmouth. Perhaps this is because it all seemed so forced. Though not everyone at Dartmouth would agree with my impression of “diversity” at the College, it has not gone unchecked by others.

One example involves a poster available there titled “One Dartmouth” which featured a collage of people at Dartmouth exhibiting a sort of cornucopia of ethnicities and types of people at the College. Commenting on this poster, Zeke Turner (2006a) wrote, “As students, our stomachs turn when we see types of pictures that grace the covers of scores of admissions catalogues across the country; we think we are so clever when we notice a picture of the traditional, idyllic college scene that has been injected with faces of different colors creating an impossible display of diversity. We laugh at the thought that a picture like this wasn’t staged.” In a column advocating diversity at Dartmouth, but arguing for the programs to be more constructive, Dan Chiu (2006b) conceded,

I admit that at times, it can seem like we are constantly being “beaten over the head” with diversity [at Dartmouth]. From the moment we step on campus as freshmen, we are inundated with countless presentations and speeches about the value of having students from a multiplicity of backgrounds. . . . Indeed, pictures of students of different ethnic backgrounds sitting happily together on the Green can sometimes seem awfully contrived. Even the most optimistic among us begin to wonder whether the College is being a bit disingenuous in promoting what many, cynically or not, deem to be an illusion of diversity.

Questioning why Dartmouth goes to such lengths to inform everyone how diverse it is, Jacob Baron (2006b) comments on Dartmouth’s “obsession” with diversity in terms of trying to become more diverse by recruiting and favoring women and minorities in admissions and by constantly trying to convince itself and everyone else that it is diverse for no clear reason.

I am curious about this obsession myself. Other students have questioned the effectiveness of student protests on various causes that intend to emit an image of liberalism and

tolerance at Dartmouth, often in conjunction with diversity. Brian May (2007a) questions the motives behind Dartmouth protestors:

Look no further than to Dartmouth's campus to notice that students invite more concern for issues that have an immediate impact on them—issues that threaten the stability of their four year surroundings in even the most trivial of ways—than for even the most fucked up of global issues. . . .

Maybe it's just a product of the insular Dartmouth bubble: our complete isolation from any outside civilization precludes our desire to gossip about anything pertaining to the outer world, generating a complacent student liberalism that represses any progressive action. In other words, we don't care about and refuse to act upon shit we don't immediately see or experience.

I certainly found a missing link between Dartmouth's attitude and action toward diversity and the College's level of involvement in external affairs, whether through protest, service, or volunteer work. I saw banners on campus all the time calling for volunteers for service work. Students often wore t-shirts advertising to others the volunteer programs in which they participated. *The Dartmouth* frequently published self-congratulatory articles on all that people at Dartmouth do for those less fortunate. If those at Dartmouth are so dedicated to their causes, why do they feel the need to broadcast what they do? It was as if they were not content with the simple satisfaction of doing good deeds; they had to constantly reaffirm to themselves and anyone that might be watching that Dartmouth is a kind and generous place.

But to anyone who may be watching (such as me), the College does not provide a convincing case. The Big Green Bus may promote "awareness" of alternative fuels, but it seems to me, just from reading about it, to be a social activity and an excuse for a select group of students to take a fully funded, cross-country road trip every summer. And how can the Dartmouth community possibly "empathize" (DiBranco 2006) with victims of Hurricane Katrina and literally go out of their way to the Gulf Coast to help people who "can't help themselves" (Gaudette 2007a), but look the other way when there is a growing homeless problem in their own

backyard? I imagine that the advantage is that more people would notice Dartmouth's participation if there was a larger-scale involvement with a cause of a greater magnitude like that of Hurricane Katrina.

Several students have even questioned Dartmouth's commitment to such causes. Michael Belinsky (2007) questions if student protestors sometimes even understand what they are protesting. Jacob Baron (2007c) comments, "The demeanor by which student activists conduct their activities is often headstrong and self-righteous. This style not only undermines the activists' efforts to foster discussion and debate, but also erodes the credibility of political liberalism in general." Daniel O'Brien (2006) observes, "The typical [Dartmouth] student has a fervent yet short-lived commitment to good causes. . . . Social justice and political activism, rallying issues for many campuses, both seem to be faddish in Hanover." These descriptions are consistent with some of the Duncans' (2004) observations of elites' attitudes toward activism. In their study, the Duncans (2004) found that environmental causes were sometimes a "fashionable concern" to curtail development (93), possibly a "self-serving radicalism of the elite" (96), and "when not wearing their anti-development hats, [Bedford residents] appear somewhat less interested" (99).

A similar issue involves Dartmouth's relentless quest for diversity and the creation of a campus community where "everyone is welcome." Though this is a noble endeavor, it has proven, based on what I saw during the fall of 2006 alone, to be almost futile. Dartmouth can promote diversity as much as it pleases, but did this discourage the several "incidents" that occurred during that term? I find it suspect that undergraduate women can be admitted to Dartmouth as recently as 1972 and, given all of the challenges they encountered and the way the College and its constituents treated them for many years afterward, that they are suddenly greatly

valued and embraced. That, along with the near absence of Native Americans from Dartmouth for two hundred years despite their role in the early history of the College, prompts me to wonder if we are supposed to believe that, in this short period of time since the 1970s, Dartmouth has suddenly turned around and changed its ways and is a completely new place?

It is well documented that, for centuries, the University has been one of the most exclusionary institutions in history. In the United States, the Ivy League schools held out for decades before they allowed for greater access to students who weren't wealthy, white, well-connected young men from the Northeast. So are we supposed to believe that now these institutions are the leaders of this cause and serve as examples for the rest of the world? I remember walking in town one day and seeing an African-American student who passed me along the sidewalk wearing what some would describe as more "urban" attire, very much uncharacteristic of what I typically saw other Dartmouth students wear. I couldn't help but think that he would not have been walking around in Hanover, New Hampshire, dressed like that if it were the 1960s or 70s. Rather, he would not be walking around like that for long, at least not if he was trying to avoid any "trouble."

The backlash from this obsession with diversity, tolerance, and inclusion is Dartmouth's near-reactionary responses to anything it deems as intolerant or "racist." It is understandable that minority students would want to feel welcome in college, but there are distinctions between racism, cultural insensitivity, and outright foolishness. Even though some Native students at Dartmouth feel uncomfortable with an Indian symbol for the school mascot, I have to agree with Linsalata (2006b) that I find it difficult to believe that people who don an Indian logo are doing it out of malevolence. The tantrums that ensued certainly did not help the situation. The moves by Dartmouth's administration, bordering on militant, have only turned the controversies to issues

of tolerance on the opposite side of the spectrum by labeling “insensitive” students as “bullies,” and even issues regarding free speech have been raised at the College (O’Donnell 2007a) on many occasions. After all, despite Dartmouth’s constant efforts to address “uncomfortable environments,” I was incredibly uncomfortable when I was at Dartmouth, and no one came to my aid, nor did I ask for anyone’s help. Even some minority students have found the administration’s attitudes toward them to be questionable (Tillman 2002), and Hart (1984) goes as far as describing the administration’s efforts as a sort of draconian appeasement, as it goes out of its way to quash anything that could be even remotely construed as racist.

My suspicion surrounding these attitudes is simply that I do not see how they make sense given the context of Dartmouth as an elite school, physically, socially, and cognitively isolated from the rest of the world in Hanover, New Hampshire, and in its own “Bubble.” Frankly, judging from my observations, I find it extremely difficult to believe that there is any real sincerity behind Dartmouth’s move for “diversity” and its desire to “give back” through its myriad outreach programs. My interpretation of this ubiquitous mentality at the College points to what Shelby Steele (2006) has termed *white guilt*. Far from a concept related exclusively to race relations, white guilt extends to new attitudes by society regarding the dominance of whites in issues ranging from gender relations to environmental policies (Steele 2006).

In his book *White Guilt*, Steele (2006: 27) explains it as an institutionalized phenomenon in America after the victories of the civil rights movements:

The great power of white guilt comes from the fact that it functions by stigma, like racism itself. Whites and American institutions are stigmatized as racist until they prove otherwise. . . . American institutions, from political parties and corporations to art museums and private schools, not only declare their devotion to diversity but also use racial preferences to increase the visibility of minorities so as to refute the racist stigma. Surely genuine goodwill may also be a part of such efforts. But the larger reality is that white guilt leaves no room for moral choice; it does not depend on the goodwill or the

genuine decency of people. It depends on their fear of stigmatization, their fear of being called a racist. Thus, white guilt is nothing less than a social imperative that all whites, from far-left socialists to Republican presidents, are accountable to.

According to Steele (2006: 116, 140), institutions seek to gain legitimacy by dissociating themselves from racism and some major ways to do so are to promote diversity, use politically correct language, and espouse a generally liberal political atmosphere, with all of these characteristics abundantly found at Dartmouth. Steele (2006) argues that “‘Diversity’ is no more than code for white dissociation” (144) and that it is a “‘progressive’ idea conceived of by an elite. It did not spring naturally from the American soil, as it were. And to embrace it is, at the very least, to have pretensions toward that elite” (146). Furthermore,

Dissociation is inherently elitist. Automatically, it creates a new kind of American, one who is *better* than most Americans because he has conspicuously dissociated from the litany of American sins. Thus, elitism, in itself, became a form of dissociation, a way to become a “new man,” to show oneself better than most Americans and, thus, worthy of moral authority. And, of course, one *wanted* to be better than most Americans had been in racial matters. One wanted a moral elitism in relation to the nation’s bigotries and bigots. But over time, as elitism became more entrenched as dissociation, a new American archetype emerged: the unreconstructed white American, the white who has failed to dissociate from the country’s racist past. Such whites may or may not actually be racist, but their failure to dissociate in this age of white guilt means they carry no moral authority, and add nothing to the legitimacy of the institutions they are a part of. (Steele 2006: 150-51)

This is not an unusual trait for either colleges or college towns. Commenting on his observations of similar attitudes found in the political culture of Davis, California, Gumprecht (2008: 181) remarks that “support for liberal causes in Davis has been unreliable, selective, and motivated more by selfishness than concern for a larger public good.” Criticizing the stridence and intolerance of “progressives” in college towns more generally, Gumprecht (2008: 182, 188) contends, “They may join the ACLU and affix anti-war bumper stickers to their cars, but the issues over which they are most willing to fight are those that impact them personally. . . . They talk like liberals, support liberal causes, and vote for liberal candidates, but when their own

well-being is endangered they behave remarkably like conservatives. They become reactionary, intransigent, and hostile.” Despite being roughly 3,000 miles apart, I detect some strong similarities between Davis and Hanover.

Echoing Steele and Gumprecht in regard to campus activism specifically at Dartmouth, Travis Mushett (2007, emphasis added) regretfully remarks,

College activism has an unfortunate tendency to manifest as exhibitions of distaste rather than efforts to construct a better future. At the Solidarity Against Hatred rally in the fall, hundreds of students made it clear that they don’t like hatred and they disapproved of *The Dartmouth Review’s* use of racist imagery. And then what? Have we reached across color lines to establish warmer relations between ethnic groups? Has the lot of Native American students objectively improved in any way? Or, after a feel-good display of our tolerance, did we return to our daily routines unchanged? I’m not suggesting that the NADs didn’t have valid grievances or are not marginalized on campus—they do and they are—but campus-wide displays of offense as a primary means of response are worse than ineffective. The marginalized group fails to fully articulate its grievances, protesting the offense rather than using it as a window into deeper issues. Furthermore, *such an approach lets the community off the hook and allows the members of white majority to feel that they’ve done enough just by declaring, “I’m not a racist.”*

In this way, *political correctness serves as a pressure valve for white guilt rather than as an effective protection for marginalized groups.* By speaking in a vocabulary that eschews any phrase that may hurt someone’s feelings or run contrary to prevailing opinion, we fail to address real systemic problems. Even if we keep up with the vogue terminology, calling a given minority group blacks or African Americans as the winds of jargon shift, this does little or nothing to address the material condition of that group. But of course, it’s easier to decry someone’s lack of sensitivity than to actually deal with socioeconomic inequality between races.

Based on all of my findings and observations, Dartmouth appears to be, from my estimation, severely preoccupied with its own case of white guilt. Dartmouth claims to have an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse student body which, to an extent, it may. But regardless of how much diversity is promoted by Dartmouth to the world outside of its Bubble, it is quite clear which ethnicity and socioeconomic stratum dominates and sets the tone of the campus ethos. And it is this ethnicity which, by obligation of white guilt, must face up to its own past and its present reality. Rather than tokens of goodwill toward welcoming underrepresented

groups or helping those less fortunate, I see these actions as more akin to Dartmouth wishing to appear compassionate and unselfish and perhaps as attempts to counterbalance its stereotype as a white, elite, masculine, and conservative school or, in Steele's (2006) words, to dissociate itself from this reputation – a classic case of noblesse oblige.

Marcus (1983e: 51, emphasis added) explains, “When faced with public exposure . . . elites must *adopt a pose* that justifies the privilege and power that they clearly manifest, or regardless, are suspected by their ambivalent constituencies of possessing.” Elaborating on this point, Marcus (1983e: 52) notes how elites have trouble “legitimizing themselves” to the public and, consequently, “[i]t is no wonder then that the owners of great wealth, who appear as passive elites without redeeming social functions, cultivate privacy and, when exposed, play upon their philanthropy, and that the more routinely exposed managers of great wealth and power can only offer expertise and professionalism as a legitimation for their positions.” By either pacifying minorities or seeking positive publicity and self-satisfaction through campus outreach, these qualities help to actively construct Dartmouth's place persona.

It is especially hard to believe Dartmouth's sincerity behind helping either the poor or minorities given some of Dartmouth's questionable business practices and investments that have, even if indirectly, adversely affected minorities or otherwise marginalized populations. Niral Shah (2005a) bluntly stated, “The student body is largely unaware of where their tuition money is invested, and it never occurs to us that when we sit in expensive engraved wooden chairs in Dartmouth Hall the funding for these small expenditures may involve tacit support of near-slave labor conditions halfway around the world.” One case involved Dartmouth's investments in apartheid South Africa. During the mid-1980s, 15.3 percent of the College's \$414 million endowment at that time was invested in South Africa and, after pressures from student activist



groups and growing tensions at the College, Dartmouth divested, or sold off its shares in those dealings, by 1989 (Shah 2005a).

Controversy came again in 1993 when the College, proud of its established Native American Studies program and its historic associations with Native Americans, came under fire for its investments in the Canadian company Hydro-Québec (Shah 2005a). Hydro-Québec had met some opposition concerning a dam-building project in northern Québec on the Great Whale River that would have flooded an area about the size of New Jersey inhabited by members of the Cree First Nation (Shah 2005a, 2005c). After some pressure, Dartmouth ultimately divested and the dam project was abandoned (Shah 2005c).

More recently, Dartmouth found itself in another ethical dilemma due to its connections to companies conducting business in Sudan that had some indirect involvement in the genocide in that country's Darfur region (Shah 2005c; Swiss 2005). Student activists at Dartmouth discovered that the College did not conduct business with any oil companies operating in Sudan that are largely blamed for much of that country's violence in its civil war, though as of May 2005, Dartmouth held investments in the telecommunications companies Alcatel and Siemens, both of which have ventures in Sudan (Shah 2005c; Swiss 2005).

Though there are student activist and watchdog groups that monitor Dartmouth's investments for potential ethical issues, their success and involvement in College policies on investments are limited (Shah 2005a). Some problems with this scenario are that Dartmouth only discloses its holdings in publicly-traded companies (and not private companies like Hydro-Québec), it does not reveal how much it invests in companies, and often only lists official company names and not what they are commonly known as, which often disguise what the company actually does (Shah 2005a). Some other controversial corporations that have come

under scrutiny in which Dartmouth has invested in are tobacco giants Altria (parent company of Phillip Morris) and Japan Tobacco, Halliburton, Tyco, Royal Dutch Petroleum, and Unocal (Shah 2005b).

Closer to Hanover, Dartmouth wields its power in other ways. I remember glossing over literature from a few different Ivy League schools and reading in their sections on admissions about how competitive each school is for applicants seeking to gain entrée into this exclusive group of institutions. But few specifics were provided. There was little guidance in the way of the curriculum that each school looks for from its applicants, and they all seem to allude to wanting the “best and brightest,” people with “leadership qualities,” and, the trait that especially caught my attention, people “who love to learn and be challenged.” The preceding quotes are all paraphrases, but based on other academic literature that studies the Ivy League, others have taken note of these vague qualities that the elite college admissions offices profess to look for in their applicants. Taking in all of this terminology, it may lead one (like myself) to believe that there is a meritocratic process behind admissions and financial aid at the Ivy League schools and that they do indeed look for the “best and brightest.” But after about a year inside the Dartmouth Bubble, I realized that although Dartmouth may have many of the “best and brightest,” they are the best and brightest that follow Dartmouth’s own conception of what that means.

The selective admissions game is certainly not unique to Dartmouth. Rather, the elite colleges of the United States have come under some fire regarding their processes and policies concerning who gets to spend any time within their ivory towers, and on some occasions their vague admissions policies have resulted in some serious accusations levied at these schools. One such case involves that of the Ivy Overlap Group. Beginning in the 1950s, twenty-three of the most prestigious colleges in the United States convened at Wellesley College for what they

called “overlap” meetings to discuss the status of students who had applied for admission and financial aid at several of the schools in the group (Chira 1991; Flint 1991; Soares 2007).

The colleges themselves claimed that they compared information to ensure that each school had the latest and most accurate measurement of applicants’ financial needs to help the students choose the best college for them based on academic and financial reasons, but critics claim that the schools were engaged in price fixing which would enable “colleges to reduce competition by setting similar tuitions and offering similar financial aid packages” (Chira 1991). The schools agreed to offer the same amount of financial aid and mix of loans, grants, and work-study contracts to common applicants (Flint 1991). Over the years, the Ivy League met with other elite schools. The financial aid officers at each of the schools claimed that the purpose for the meetings was to avoid “bidding wars” for applicants between the schools so the students would not receive too much or too little aid (Chira 1991).

Nevertheless, the meetings caught the attention of antitrust investigators of the U.S. Justice Department, and an investigation began in 1989 to determine if the colleges violated antitrust laws for setting the financial aid packages, and also to investigate whether the colleges were also setting tuition and employee salaries (Chira 1991; Flint 1991). “The suspicion,” wrote journalist Anthony Flint (1991), “is that [these] colleges that exchange financial aid information may also be swapping pricing plans, thus colluding to keep tuition uniformly high in a kind of informed cartel.” A spokesperson for the Justice Department working on the investigation commented that “[i]t was a conspiracy to fix the amount of money that families pay to attend a school. . . . So basically the cartel denied the family's right to compare prices among the schools” (Zoller 1991).

The colleges denied the allegations throughout the probe and defended their meetings by claiming that “prices for similar services are often uniform in a free market, and that consultation on financial aid offerings often actually keep costs down” (Flint 1991). Dartmouth received a “civil investigative demand” from the U.S. Justice Department in 1989 seeking information on the setting of salaries, fees, tuition, and a request for the College’s correspondence with other schools (Billin 1989). During the summer of 1991, all of the Ivy League schools reached a settlement with the government to avoid litigation and signed a decree to not meet to share financial aid information on applicants for ten years, though the decree did not concede any wrongdoing on behalf of the colleges (Calvert 1992).

Overlap member MIT, however, took the case to court. The result was a \$1 million, “highly visible” trial where it attempted to convince the court that the financial aid practices of select universities were not covered by the Sherman Antitrust Act and that it did not profit from its involvement with the Overlap Group, that its financial aid packages for needy students were a form of charity, and that the social benefit of determining financial aid for needy students resulted in greater diversity at the Institute (DePalma 1992). The judge in the case rejected MIT’s argument, but the Institute and the Justice Department eventually reached a settlement which allowed the Overlap schools to compare limited amounts of applicants’ financial aid information under certain conditions, such as the provision that the schools follow a need-blind admissions policy (Grey 1994). The Justice Department, however, maintained that the Overlap schools had violated antitrust laws (Grey 1994). I have neither seen nor heard anything more about the Ivy Overlap group since.

The outcome of the Overlap controversy raises several issues of access to the elite colleges, from those who can clearly afford to pay tuition and those who may get preferences in

admission. Around the time that the Group first formed, it created standardized tests (such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test or “SAT”), and it introduced the terms “need-based” financial aid and “needs-blind admissions” (Soares 2007). While these new policies made it appear that the elite schools were basing their admissions decisions more on meritocracy, the colleges knew that admitting those with the most impressive academic records “would keep the social composition of undergraduates overwhelmingly upper class” (Soares 2007: 65-66). While financial aid was available, the process screened the family income of applicants, and aid was offered to families who could contribute to tuition costs without having to fully bankroll “needy” students, with the result creating classes of predominantly high-income students and a smattering of low-income students (Soares 2007: 64-66). Thus, what the elite schools define as “low” or “high” income does not necessarily (or likely) correspond to a more popular conception of “low” or “high” income (Golden 2006). Given the correlation between high socioeconomic status and high grades and test scores, the SAT became the perfect tool for the elite colleges to claim that they were admitting students based on merit and that they have a diverse student body by admitting some poorer students who mustered high test scores (Soares 2007: 68-69).

And still today this is a strategy utilized by the admissions offices of elite colleges. Daniel Golden (2006: 9) asserts that socioeconomic diversity is the least important factor that admissions offices look for in applicants. In producing a “diverse” class every year, “[elite] colleges routinely sacrifice the interests of low-income families. They achieve the gender diversity required by Title IX largely by recruiting affluent female athletes, racial diversity by admitting middle-class blacks and Hispanics, and international diversity by pursuing jet-setters from Europe and the Middle East” (Golden 2006: 9). To build a wealthy applicant pool, elite schools specifically target and recruit prospective students through “promotional mailings to

families in the wealthiest zip codes, or send admissions staff to stir up interest at elite private and suburban high schools” (Golden 2006: 58). Though these colleges may be need-blind, they are not wealth-blind and thus they avoid recruiting less wealthy students to avoid a poorer future alumni base (Golden 2006: 5).

Also key in admissions is preference for legacy applicants, as is the case for many of the elite colleges. Golden (2006: 118) explains how

legacy preference provides affluent families with a form of insurance against a decline in educational status from one generation to the next, which might in turn lead to a decline in wealth and power. Just as English peers hold hereditary seats in the House of Lords, so the American nobility reserves slots at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and other august universities. Based on pedigree rather than merit, legacy preference strikes at the heart of American notions of equal opportunity and upward mobility.

Furthermore, legacy applicants are frequently wealthier; can afford private schools, tutors, and test preparatory courses; they have higher acceptance rates; they are subject to lower admission standards (Golden 2006: 121-22); and they receive special treatment in the admissions process from “expert advice from college liaison offices, special tours and briefings from college administrators, reviews of applications by admissions directors, and, in the event that they’re rejected, personal phone calls from university officials to ease the blow or recommend another school” (123). Alumni also frequently work in admissions offices or volunteer to interview applicants (Golden 2006: 123). As noted earlier, Dartmouth has a strong preference for children of alumni, and alumni are actively involved in all aspects of the College, including influencing admissions.

According to the Dartmouth Common Data Set (2006) for the 2006-07 school year compiled by Dartmouth’s Office of Institutional Research, Dartmouth does list more “objective” characteristics of the Class of 2010 such as standardized test score percentiles and class rank,

though only 44 percent of those students reported a class rank and no information is listed to give an indication of the students' high school grade-point averages. And unlike grade-point averages, which vary according to students and their schools, success with standardized testing can be coached, especially for students who can afford tutors and preparation classes (Golden 2006).

All of this information (or lack thereof) made me incredibly curious about the academic rigor that the Ivy League schools claim to impose on their students. Remember how I was so intrigued by the schools wanting students who liked to learn and be challenged? Evidently, academic challenges are not really high on the priority lists of many students at the elite colleges. From his experience at Harvard, Ross Douthat (2005) describes his astonishment at “the overall ease and lack of [academic] seriousness in Harvard’s undergraduate culture” (118) and the rampant grade inflation, with professors practically giving away high grades to students (114), likening the elite schools to be more like factories to train students for high-paying, high-profile jobs than actual universities (138). Columns from the previous chapter bemoaned the unsatisfying level of intellectualism that the columnists found (or did not find) at Dartmouth, and Gahl Rinat (2007) addresses the ridiculous level of grade inflation at Dartmouth and the entitlement that students feel for getting high grades. Chris Talamo complains of the amount of reading required in many of Dartmouth’s courses and argues that this creates an environment where students merely skim their required reading and end up “feigning intelligence in class” (2008b).

Unfortunately, I did not have the experience of sitting in on any of Dartmouth’s classes, though I did overhear quite a bit about “rewriting” papers, “open book” and “take home” exams, which were rarities at any of the public schools I ever attended throughout my life, and

consequently raised my suspicion regarding the high levels of intelligence and scholarly aptitude of Dartmouth students so vigorously promoted from outside the Bubble. And this may not be a blatant misjudgment on my part, as several sources describe in historical terms the less-than-intellectual climate and sometimes outright scorn for anything cerebral at the Ivy League schools going back to their founding (Baltzell 1958, 1964; Karabel 2005; Lopez 1979; Story 1980; Thelin 1976, 2004).

Zach Gottlieb (2008b) points out that in some Dartmouth classes, professors allow their students to use their laptops in class and on quizzes and exams, which Gottlieb faults for a “lack of academic zeal” among students at the College. This was utterly shocking to me. Of course, this is not to say that Dartmouth or any other elite schools do not have genuinely intelligent or talented students – certainly they do – but to portray the institutions as meritocratic colleges wholly dedicated to scholarly endeavors and the earnest pursuit of knowledge is inaccurate. Take-home and open-book tests, after all, do not discount intelligence on behalf of the students, though they may partially explain the suspicious level of high grades and sense of entitlement described by Rinat (2007) and Douthat (2005).

I had to wonder, if Dartmouth students generalize themselves to not be intellectual or overly intellectual, as O’Brien (2006) suggested, what are they doing at a college that ostensibly aspires and claims to be an intellectual leader? Why are they even there if that is not what they seek to gain from the college experience? How does this attitude coincide with Dartmouth’s quest to attract and retain the “best and brightest?” Clearly, there are other forces at work behind the scenes of the academic façade. I conceded that this mindset must be another important element of Dartmouth’s persona and, perhaps more than anything else, it has to do with class.



First, I address class on a slightly larger scale by looking at Dartmouth-Hanover as a whole, and I then reflect on some more of my own experiences and observations. As I discussed above, it was not long before I noticed the stark differences between Hanover and other neighboring towns in the Upper Valley, particularly in regard to the costs of living, either through real estate or basic services like groceries. Other geographers have commented on the noticeable disparities between colleges, college towns, and regional neighbors, and their sometimes contentious relationships (Gumprecht 2008; Jakle 1983; Lewis 1972). But judging from the prices and sizes of many homes in Hanover and some of the “gentlemen farms” in some outlying towns and comparing them to the obvious poverty of rural New Hampshire in general suggests an almost polarized difference. Wright (1987: 13) alludes to an historical antagonism between the Connecticut Valley and other parts of New Hampshire, which, as I saw in small doses, persists to this day. For example, in other rural New Hampshire towns, when Hanover comes up in conversation, it is not unusual for people to make an abhorrent facial expression.

I do not credit this disparity solely to the fact that Dartmouth happens to be in Hanover. Rather, I suspect that from the high costs of mortgages, more expensive services compared to most other neighboring towns, and limited amount of rental property in Hanover, that these qualities help to enhance and extend the Dartmouth Bubble from beyond the College proper to actually create a specific atmosphere and preserve a particular ethos. The cost of living in Hanover is prohibitively expensive and appeals to wealthier people, which helps the College and the town maintain such an ethos and an exclusive environment. After all, some members of the Dartmouth faculty cannot even afford to live in Hanover (Gottlieb 2007a).

This is typical of elite communities, as Wyckoff (1990: 338) observes of elites banding together to distance themselves from the lower classes: “Indeed, the rich are an enclave-creating

class and their desire for privacy and security often encourages them to congregate in private clubs, schools, resorts, and communities. Because the upper crust often do live near one another, they frequently concentrate their impact on the landscape in well-defined neighborhoods and exclusive districts.” The Duncans (2004: 25) also mention, “Members of certain types of small, affluent, relatively homogeneous communities are able to mobilize enough economic and cultural capital to create landscapes that have the power to incorporate and assimilate some identities while excluding or erasing others. These landscapes serve as scarce positional goods charged with an aura of the particularity of place.” And in the case of Westchester County, the Duncans cite examples of resistance of the wealthy community residents to allow for affordable housing due to a “combination of aesthetic and economic concerns, including preserving open land, keeping out inexpensive-looking housing, sustaining property values, and holding down school enrollments. . . . [to preserve a certain] ‘quality of life’” (2004: 117-18). This assessment corresponds well to Hanover.

As for class issues on campus and finding my place within an elite locality, I was left with an eye-opening experience at Dartmouth. Wealth among both Dartmouth faculty and students was apparent early on in my study, though I did not want to jump to conclusions about that right away. Sure, I saw students wearing expensive-looking clothes and flashing trendy new gadgets, but I did not initially see that as particularly unusual for a college campus. One experience that pounded the reality into my head that I was indeed in a different world came from casually walking through various parking lots; I had not seen so many students with BMWs, Lexuses, or Mercedes. It was not an uncommon sight to see luxury cars parked in Hanover’s parking spaces along Main Street and I remember walking through a faculty parking lot one time, noting the cars there, some fancy but others less fancy, with decals in the windows

advertising alumni from Yale, Cornell, Brown, Harvard, MIT, or Stanford (and sometimes a combination of these schools) with a regularity I had not seen at any universities where I have spent any time before.

But after researching elite culture in their own environment, I realized that it was the *little* things that reinforced the fact that I was in alien surroundings. And it was my unfamiliarity with these little things that were likely the cues that gave me away and led to the treatment I received as an outsider. Domhoff (1970: 91-98) mentions that there is evidence that members of the upper class are able to recognize each other and that minor details are important indicators that define and differentiate the social classes. These things and my unfamiliarity with many of them were likely what made me stand out at Dartmouth whether I tried to or not. Specifically, things such as posture and movement; layered clothing; physical fitness and thinness; visibility of brand names and logos on clothing; archaism (especially in the landscape); Anglophilia; bland food; eating dinner at a later hour; specific sporting preferences; a mind-your-own-business attitude; and the unusual levels of quiet I found at Dartmouth (Fussell 1983). All of these traits, according to Paul Fussell, are indicative of the upper classes and things that I actually observed. This is not to say that I was wholly unaware of the some of the traits of the upper classes or the differences between different classes. But I was genuinely surprised to see so many of them manifested so openly at Dartmouth. I simply did not want to believe that there was that clear of a connection between an Ivy League school and visible indicators of wealth. Looking from outside the Dartmouth Bubble, however, at least for the naïve observer, presents a distinctly different image of the College. It is all there if one knows what to look for.

At first, I only had a limited idea of what traits I needed to account for in studying an elite culture. Tim Cresswell (1996: 25-26), aptly describing my situation at Dartmouth, explains,

“*Outsider* is commonly the term used to describe people new to a place or people who do not know the ways of a place. The use of the term *outsider* indicates that a person does not properly understand the behavior expected of people in a town, region, or nation. Outsiders are often despised and suspected of being trouble-makers. They are people ‘out of place.’” The fact that I always felt out of place at Dartmouth is perhaps most likely reflected in my awareness that I was an outsider and the nagging feeling that I did not belong, which was either internal or because of signals I was receiving from the people there. And the fact that I am not from the upper classes only exacerbated this feeling. My intention to examine Dartmouth from a critical stance also partially excluded me because of my inability to “go with the flow,” so to speak, as I was always alert to anything I need to note for my study (Brannen 1987: 180). Relph (1976: 65) writes, “An authentic sense of place is above all that of being inside and belonging to *your* place both as an individual and as a member of a community, and to know this without reflecting upon it.”

I suspect that the main reason for my status at Dartmouth was due to a socioeconomic schism between myself and the majority of people at the College. Higley (1995: 18) notes, “The American upper class has a large number of institutions and associated arrangements that have made it possible for members to pass through life with very little significant contact with other social classes.” This disparity is likely one reason for my perpetual discomfort at Dartmouth, being that “Outsiders or non-upper-class researchers might be intimidated by a subculture that is of the highest social status. The intimidation is generally self-imposed and it is reinforced by the importance Americans put on personal privacy” (Higley 1995: 2). But how can this be so at a school like Dartmouth that espouses diversity and inclusion? Evidently these pursuits do not apply to those from outside the Bubble.

Aside from mere observations about class, class attitudes were also surprising to me. Considering Dartmouth's "diverse" community, there seemed to be some lack of class consciousness. Lense Gebre-Mariam (2007c) claims that "life is very cheap in Hanover" and in her column she interviews some Dartmouth graduates who have gone out into the "real world," and even with high-paying jobs, are unprepared for the costs of living on their own in cities like Boston or New York. I was also astounded to read Katherine Gorman's (2007) chronicle of her exploits in New York looking for an apartment and lamenting the expenses and difficulties of doing so in Manhattan. I found it revealing that she did not mention even considering looking for a cheaper place in Queens or Brooklyn and commuting into Manhattan every day like thousands of other New Yorkers.

In summary, I believe that all of my observations and experiences that contradicted my preconceptions about Dartmouth are all part and parcel of the College's persona. Dartmouth champions itself as a diverse institution, tolerant of all, and yet class, gender, and ethnic tensions persist on its campus. While all are purported to be welcome, after a year there I had never once felt accepted for reasons that are still unclear. I look back and consider that I may have looked or acted somewhat different from the majority of people there. And it was likely strange to see me in the Collis Center every afternoon, reading the campus paper(s), underlining things with my red pen and tearing articles out to stuff in my backpack to archive and later incorporate in my study at a later date. I never had a Dartmouth ID, so unlike everyone else, if I ever wanted food or something on campus I paid in cash, which sometimes received quizzical looks from anyone who happened to see that. Because I was never given a formal introduction to the College, I stumbled around the campus until I learned where the buildings were and where to find things worthy of investigation. People who picked up on this likely saw that as a bit bizarre. But why

should that matter? Doesn't Dartmouth welcome everyone and accept people for who they are? Judging from my experience, I emphatically answer "no."

Tom Mandel (2008) commented, "On this campus [Dartmouth], people get stereotyped for the tiniest, most insignificant decisions they make." I found from my experience that this obviously includes paying for things in cash or using a cell phone on the campus, but "the list of stereotypes around campus goes on, and it becomes clear just how shallow we are in our assumptions about others" (Mandel 2008). Mandel (2008) writes that students are regularly stereotyped based on their major, what sports they play, what year they are, where they study on campus, where they eat, and how and where they exercise. While Dartmouth claims to be tolerant and inclusive, the fact that it uses these words implies that there is something negative that needs to be tolerated by a dominant group (Duncan and Duncan 2004: 208) and that this professed attitude on campus is a relatively new development, in vogue with other colleges' pursuits for brand development and dissociation from their exclusionary pasts (Steele 2006).

Control is an important force at Dartmouth, especially in deciding who it includes and how it gains and utilizes its resources. The notion that Dartmouth is a welcoming school and that it claims that it will consider an application from anyone who is "qualified" for admission is undermined by its own students and alumni who accuse the College of corrupt policies with admissions and financial aid. While Dartmouth is worldly and sophisticated and has far-reaching connections around the globe, we must pause to consider that it sometimes profits, even if indirectly, from oppressive forces in business and government in several marginal parts of the world. Dartmouth students may be among the "best and brightest" on paper, but from watching their interactions, reading about their ambitions, and listening to some conversations, it became clear to me that, like Douthat's (2005) Harvard, Dartmouth is largely a culture of wealth and

privilege, social competition, social climbers, and résumé builders, more concerned with careerism than intellectual development. While students often point to their intelligence and accomplishments in campus publications, oftentimes in the same or neighboring columns, they seem to be on an endless quest for “face time,” gaining or using their “social capital” and other myriad terms that I often saw thrown around, which were basically Dartmouth euphemisms for self-promotion.

And this is perfectly acceptable from within the Dartmouth Bubble, though one may not assume that from the outside. I was amazed to see how sheltered the students seemed to be despite the resources they have had available to them (perhaps throughout their lives) and how well read and well traveled they were. But, as the Duncans (2004: 9) remarked, elites like to create an illusion of disconnection from the world and its social problems. Sibley (1995: 32) similarly argues, “Boundaries . . . provide security and comfort.” But boundaries, either real or imaginary, did not entirely shield Dartmouth from wider problems, as some have addressed issues regarding problems at Dartmouth ranging from student abuse of drugs and alcohol (Gundling 2007b; Gebre-Mariam 2007b; Hayes 2007) or problems with depression or mental illness (O’Brien 2006) and crime on campus and in Hanover. To preserve the ethos of the College’s culture and maintain the sanctity of the Dartmouth Bubble, exclusion of outsiders is necessary. This might explain the reaction to a Midwestern corn cob like myself trying to get a peek at the sophisticated world of the upper classes at an Ivy League school.

I will not go as far as accusing Dartmouth of actually being *deceitful* in how it represents itself, because that is too harsh of a claim, it is counterproductive to the point I wish to convey, and, I feel, it is not an entirely accurate description, either. But I will say that there is a significant degree of spin occurring from within the Dartmouth Bubble to paint a very particular

and oftentimes very calculated image of the College. This is likely key to Dartmouth maintaining its ethos by projecting a certain persona to the outside world to avoid any unwanted scrutiny.

Evidently, this is not an unusual cultural trait of elites. Winkler (1987: 130) notes how a researcher is likely to see “the private self behind the public presentation of the elite self.” Similarly, Marcus (1983e: 55-56) alludes to a duality between the internal realities of an elite culture and its “public face” and mentions how “sustaining different public and private faces” is an inherent trait of elite culture and identity. Woods (1998: 2107) suggests that Erving Goffman’s (1959) concept of front and back regions, “where the front region is a space in which a controlled performance is given, and the back region a space in which the performance is knowingly contradicted” could be applied to studying elite space and place in geography where “the public image of the elite and the discourses peddled to the private may be contradicted.”

I was pleased to come across this scholarship to support my contention that elites do adopt personas. And I take this point a step further than Winkler, Marcus, and Woods to contend that these personas can be extended to encompass not just individuals, groups, or more abstract notions of elite space and place, but that places can adopt a wider place identity – a place persona – that simultaneously represents and misrepresents a specific place. While Dartmouth’s persona may be subconscious in some cases, it is my feeling that it is often carefully, thoughtfully, and purposefully constructed and presented. Due to the many contradictions I uncovered in researching Dartmouth’s place identity either through various specific topics or based on my own firsthand experiences, I am convinced from the evidence in this chapter and the preceding ones that Dartmouth adopts at least one persona and that it might not be immediately apparent to an observer until he or she spends some time within the Dartmouth Bubble.



In conclusion, drawing a reference from popular culture, I think an interesting example to illustrate this persona comes from comedic actress Rachel Dratch, a Dartmouth alumna perhaps best known for her work on the famous sketch comedy show *Saturday Night Live*. One of her more popular skits involved Dratch and her fellow cast member Will Ferrell as two annoyingly pretentious and libidinous married professors, constantly referring to each other as “love-ahs,” with several skits ending to show that their characters are indeed just that – characters. And these characters do not hesitate to yell and fight like any other couple when not in the company of others who might be disappointed by their break in demeanor, revealing that they are indeed not the cool, collected, and established academics that they otherwise attempt to convince the world that they are. When I was at Dartmouth, Dratch came to campus and hosted a Celebration of the Arts Ceremony one spring afternoon. An article interviewing Dratch during her visit reveals that the characters she created for that skit were actually inspired by a former (and now retired) English professor of hers while at the College in the 1980s (Fraser 2007). While Rachel Dratch is a comedic actress and performer who takes on the roles of many characters for her occupation, it is clear that she understands the concept of persona well. And I wonder if, even through the obvious hyperbole of a comedy sketch, Dratch’s (presumably Dartmouth) professorial character, adopting a persona of her own, might have some subconscious, revealing insight and commentary into the persona of Dartmouth College.

## CHAPTER 9 ANALYSIS

### **The American Obsession with the Ivy League**

I do not think that it would be too much of an overstatement to posit that we in American society are obsessed with the Ivy League. Daniel Golden (2006: 3), observing the extreme competition to get into the elite schools and the public's flawed notion of the meritocracy of these institutions, writes about the many books and thousands of articles in periodicals and their coverage of the mysterious admissions processes at the elite schools and the arbitrary results of who was admitted or rejected. He continues by citing the "image of a fair but fickle process [that] also pumps up the applicant pool" and, how every year, hundreds of thousands of high school seniors apply to these extremely competitive schools and face slim chances of acceptance, while their parents spend millions of dollars on tutors, test-prep courses, extracurricular activities, and private schools, all in the hopes of gaining an edge for their children to "get in" (Golden 2006: 3). The thousands of newspaper and magazine articles that Golden mentions frequently appear in a variety of popular publications, and it would be excessive and unnecessary to address them all. But over the course of my research, I discovered a few that especially caught my attention.

One article in *Business Week* particularly piqued my interest with its brazen title, "I Can Get Your Kid into an Ivy" (Berfield and Tergesen 2007). The article profiles a consultant by the name of Michele Hernandez, a Dartmouth graduate, who is hired by parents to consult with their children (often before their senior year) and the parents about college choices and guide them through applications and admissions processes (Berfield and Tergesen 2007). While this is not a new line of work, Hernandez boasts a 95 percent success rate for getting students into their first-choice college (Berfield and Tergesen 2007). Her clients, often the children of CEOs, financiers,

and billionaires, aim for the elite schools and Hernandez's services can cost upwards of \$40,000 per student to get into an elite school, with Hernandez making nearly \$1 million in 2006 (Berfield and Tergesen 2007: 70). College admissions officers criticize her for "selling advantage to people who least need it," but her business has only expanded and demand has only grown (Berfield and Tergesen 2007: 70). But Hernandez is just one example, as the article reports that 22 percent of first-year students at private colleges have worked with some kind of consultant (Berfield and Tergesen 2007: 70).

After working in the Dartmouth admissions office and becoming concerned that "the Ivy League schools weren't being truthful about how they reviewed students' applications" and the secret operations of admissions processes, Hernandez wrote a successful book and then launched her career as a full-time consultant (Berfield and Tergesen 2007: 10). For her fees, Hernandez essentially commandeers all aspects of the student's application and academic life, from proofreading essays to checking a student's homework, telling parents when to hire tutors, advising students what to do for extracurricular activities and in their free time, and even planning the family's summers and vacation time, among other components (Berfield and Tergesen 2007: 72). Despite the numerous success stories, what are some of the consequences of the seemingly extreme costs and levels of involvement? The article mentions that "the intense pressure to succeed is a big reason the incidence of anxiety, depression, and drug use is as high among children of the affluent as it is among children of the inner city," and this pressure builds up to an all-or-nothing attitude regarding people's idea of what constitutes success in life in terms of whether or not they are accepted to these schools (Berfield and Tergesen 2007: 74).

The questions I draw from this are: Do people *really* spend *this much money* to get coached on how to get into an elite school? Why do they do it? And is it really worth it? Over

thirty years ago, John Thelin (1976: 78) remarked, “The attractiveness and appeal of an Ivy League education simply runs far ahead of student’s ability to pay.” It appears that in the time since Thelin’s words, the competition for admission and the allure of the Ivy League has only intensified. The volume of applications for a seat at one of the Ancient Eight keeps increasing. Experts from the Ivy League are seen and cited constantly in the media, taken as authorities on most everything. Other universities look toward the elite schools of the Northeast to gauge the tempo and direction of American higher education. We see, read, and hear about the Ivy League all the time. And yet, it is still somewhat mysterious. There is little question that American society is obsessed with the Ivy League.

But is this obsession well founded? And has it gone too far? Not only are people preoccupied with getting into the Ivy League, there are also those that try to emulate it. One clear example of this comes from Richard Moll’s (1985) book *The Public Ivies*, in which eight schools, though public and therefore less expensive, are cited by Moll as being comparable to the Ivies in quality. This relates back to my section on the Ivy League in Chapter 2 in which I mentioned other “leagues,” such as the Southern Ivies, Catholic Ivies, etc., where various colleges have taken it upon themselves to create their own exclusive circles. While I was in Hanover doing my research, I happened to see a copy of the August 28, 2006 edition of *Newsweek*, where the cover advertised that issue as the 2007 “College Guide,” tempting the reader with “25 Hot Schools (And How You Can Get In).”

The main article leading off the education section of the magazine, titled “25 New Ivies,” claims that the Ivy League label is no longer monopolized by the “elite” schools, and the article offers brief profiles of other “hot” schools, as the magazine’s cover promised, of high quality but less exclusive than the Ivies (Kantrowitz and Springen 2006). While there is no doubt that there

are many fine American universities outside of the Ivy League, I interpret the labels for the “new” and “other” Ivies to suggest that while the schools may not officially be in the Ivy League, they are trying to somehow compensate by classifying themselves as “the next best thing” and taking it upon themselves to adopt the distinct “Ivy” label and seemingly forcibly putting themselves in that company, despite being quite a ways from the status of that exclusive group. Chris Talamo (2008a) commented, “Supposedly these schools [the “New Ivies”] offer all of the Ivy education minus the WASP prudishness, but they all are still trying to emulate the structure of the large Ivy research universities.” Again, while they may all be excellent universities, this is clearly a marketing technique, and I argue that there *are* no substitutes for the Ivy League.

Why not? Many people claim that other schools have caught up to the Ivy League and that the Ivies no longer carry the prestige and standing they once did, but I think that the complete opposite is true, and their prestige and the frenzy surrounding them has only grown. Why else would the number of applications to the Ivies continue to rise and the acceptance rates get smaller? The American obsession with the Ivy League is predicated on issues of class, class anxiety, and the desire for upward social mobility. Paul Fussell (1983: 128), devoting considerable attention to the social hierarchy of the American university system explains that because of our lack of hereditary ranks and titles, or even a formal class system, “Americans have had to depend for their mechanism of snobbery far more than other peoples on their college and university hierarchy. In this country, just about all that’s finally available as a fount of honor is the institution of the higher learning. Or at least its topmost reaches.”

What is more notable is the way that this view of the university and the elite schools plays a role in a sort of “social game” in which people outside of the elite circles attempt to “break in” to those circles or somehow try to gain elite standing (Baltzell 1958: 11-12). Joseph

Epstein (2002: 115) goes as far as describing how some parents use their children basically as pawns in games of status attainment or justification. Fussell (1983: 129) explains how Americans are dependent on acquiring status by attaching themselves to certain institutions, universities or otherwise. The fact that schools are ranked only gives those ranked at the top *more* status and value (Fussell 1983: 139). “It is not enough that there be a Williams College; there must also be a University of Southern Mississippi to give it value, so that both may play their parts in the great American class system of the higher learning” (Fussell 1983: 141). Fussell (1983: 141) continues, “The psychological damage wrought by this incessant struggle for status is enormous just because of the extraordinary power of these institutions to confer prestige. The number of hopes blasted and hearts broken for class reasons is probably greater in the world of colleges and universities than anywhere else.” In the same aforementioned *Newsweek*, Robert Samuelson (2006: 92), examines the frenzy and obsession with the elite schools and writes, “It’s one-upmanship among parents. We see our kids’ college pedigrees as trophies attesting to how well – or how poorly – we’ve raised them.” Golden (2006: 124) illustrates this through a quote from an interview with a former admissions officer at Yale:

With the legacy pool [of applicants], those parents push the hardest [to get their children admitted], because it’s the best shot they have . . . . If those legacies don’t get into Yale, they aren’t getting into Harvard or Princeton. They’re going two steps down. If it isn’t Yale, it’s probably the University of Connecticut, not Wesleyan. The parent’s thinking, “I’ve got to go to the cocktail party Friday night and tell everybody my kid’s going to UConn. That may cost me a contract.”

Does this not sound extreme and excessive? Why is this so? How did this Ivy League mania develop and where did it come from? Certainly, the Ivies have a certain charisma and appeal. Thelin (1976: 5-6) explains, “The Ivy League mystique was enhanced by its seemingly *historic* character – a closed circuit of ancient institutions which had been cultivated over decades, if not centuries.” The Ivies’ reputation for elitism was garnered from photojournalism,

fashions, athletics, and their depiction in popular culture (Thelin 1976: 37, 42). Thelin (1976: 49) explains further, “The Ivy League imagery stands out because of its power to evoke strong feelings, whether it be praise, denial, or denunciation.” He continues, “The Ivy League images, because of their association with elitism and exclusion, were controversial and touched sensitive nerves in various sectors of the American public. In a country where education was coveted as a means of social mobility, the Ivy League was attributed with symbolic importance and inordinate publicity” (Thelin 1976: 49).

But how do these images from the public imagination hold up when contrasted with certain realities? While I have examined in depth some of the internal culture and occurrences at Dartmouth and their relationships to Hanover and sometimes the world outside of the Dartmouth Bubble, other Ivies have also developed some notoriety for their sometimes controversial operations, behavior, and external relations, both currently and in the past.

Consider Harvard’s occasionally contentious relationship with its neighbors in the Boston area. For years, Harvard has bought land around Boston for various expansion plans, but many Bostonians accuse Harvard of disregarding its effects on local residents (Ni 2008). One resident remonstrated that “residents have no bargaining power with Harvard and feel overwhelmed” and another said, “Harvard seeks to distract the community from taking action [against expansion plans] by engaging them with empty dialogue” (Hoadley 2008). “When Harvard comes to the table, they say, ‘This is our plan, straight and narrow. . . . No one else is going to design our campus – we’re the smartest people in the world’” (Ni 2008). Another said, “Harvard does not seem interested in a relationship with the community. . . . They just say, ‘We’ll throw some money at this neighborhood, we’ll do some drive-by charity, and throw a checkbook at them’” (Ni 2008). But Harvard always appears to get its way in Boston.

There is a similar situation involving Columbia in recent years. Columbia, located in the Morningside Heights neighborhood of Manhattan, has been buying up land north of its current campus for years for an expansion project into West Harlem. The controversy is that residents in West Harlem view the expansion as a threat to the area's vitality because of its potential to drive up property values and displace residents (Williams 2006). Though Columbia speaks under the guise of urban revitalization, job creation, and the public interest, others see it as gentrification and being priced out by any development (Eviatar 2006; Morais 2008). Though there were numerous protests, in December 2008 the Empire State Development Corporation voted to invoke eminent domain for Columbia to seize properties in Harlem and proceed with its expansion (Astor 2008). Residents of West Harlem continued to speak out. A business owner impacted by the expansion, questioned Columbia's use of eminent domain for the "public good," and remarked, "There is no good for the public. It's only good for Columbia" (Astor 2008).

Another landmark case involving lack of input in the Ivy League surrounds a major financial dispute at Princeton. In 1961, a Princeton graduate, Charles Robertson, and his wife, endowed a \$35 million gift to Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs with the intention of educating students to work in public service (Brush 2002). Over the years, the Robertsons began to question why so many Wilson School graduates eschewed working in the public sector (Brush 2002). They found that Princeton was using their money for its own purposes by investing tens of millions to advance its own assets and not the Wilson School (Brush 2002; Westmoreland 2008). The dispute resulted in a six-year lawsuit settled in December 2008 that cost each side of the legal battle over \$40 million and became the largest donor-intent law suit in U.S. history; it was settled in December 2008 (Westmoreland 2008). The agreement transferred the Robertson fund's assets to support the Wilson School's graduate



program and Princeton reimbursed \$100 million to the Robertsons for its legal fees and to start a new charitable foundation (Westmoreland 2008).

Then there are cases where elite colleges pursue specific people for specific reasons and often bend their own standards in the process. Golden (2006: 93) reports that Brown is the elite college that is, perhaps, the most notorious for pursuing the children of celebrities, politicians, and other famous personalities. Golden (2006) details Brown's "sacrific[ing of] academic standards for Hollywood luster" (85), its questionable use of "flexible admissions standards" (87), and its employment of a "behind-the scenes liaison to the rich and famous whose children . . . [seek] admission" (104). While money is always a factor, Brown pursues the children of the famous (or famous college-age young adults) for the visibility that they offer the University (Golden 2006: 88-89). Golden (2006) offers several examples of famous figures with Brown affiliations and the sometimes dubious ways that they gain admission. The fact that Brown has a "relaxed" academic environment and does not calculate grade-point averages also seems to be a draw to potential students who may have the money to attend but would otherwise be considered less competitive applicants (Golden 2006).

Evidently, despite what the elite colleges may tell you, admission *is* available to those who would not normally be competitive *if* the interested student's family has the means to persuade university officials. According to Golden's (2006: 60) research, buying admission at a top-25 university would cost around \$100,000 and for the top 10, such as those of the Ivy League, the price of admission would be "at least \$250,000 and often seven figures." I specifically remember overhearing some rumors at Dartmouth about some parents who bought their children's way into the College. Several scholars make the point quite clear that the elite schools of the Northeast have, for quite a long time, appealed to and directly targeted the wealthy

(Baltzell 1958, 1964; Karabel 2005; Story 1980; Thelin 1976, 2004). Speaking from a more personal experience, Ross Douthat (2005: 9) discusses some of the social realities of Harvard but also about elite colleges in general as he succinctly declares, “Meritocracy is the ideological veneer, but social and economic stratification is the reality.” And so goes the illusion of a meritocracy, a genuine interest and love for scholarship, or a sincere desire for intellectual development.

Throughout the course of this project, and in my extensive research on elites, I came across some notable characteristics of elite institutions that allowed me to draw some clear parallels to my related research about Dartmouth and the Ivy League. Specifically, I have noticed the frequency with which schools and universities are cited by experts as central components of the culture of elites. Though Higley (1995: 18) and Mills (1956: 62-68) both mention the private preparatory academies of the Northeast as being perhaps the most important institutions to transmit upper-class values, I am not completely convinced that this is still the case. I would argue that the elite colleges now trump the preparatory academies in importance because, if anything, they hold greater name recognition and have much more exposure in the public sphere.

Still, I believe that the extant scholarship in this area of research has some implications for my own study. While the stereotypes of snobbishness in the Ivy League often come from the colleges’ associations with the cliques of students from prep academies and boarding schools, and the criticism these private schools face due to suspicions of acting as “feeder” institutions for the Ivies, Thelin (1976: 45) contends that while there have been many historic connections between the two over the years, the prep schools and Ivies have not maintained completely harmonious relationships. Though prep schools are undoubtedly important and still play a role

in elite society, a degree from an Ivy League college, from my estimation, arguably has a greater influence on one's future and the future of one's offspring, as the value and importance of college degrees has only increased.

Not only do degrees matter, but so does the internal culture of these institutions and the “extracurricular” purposes they serve. As my research and the work of others demonstrates, these traits also play a key role in structuring and maintaining the upper classes. At one time, there was a distinct geography to the American upper classes, where they were concentrated in the northeastern United States and social interaction centered around certain wealthy families, though as of the late twentieth century, the upper class was no longer concentrated in the Northeast and a national network had been established (Domhoff 1970: 28). This concentration and the old ways of social interaction changed (and the concentrated geography of elites slowly dissolved) in the late nineteenth century because of the introduction of the *Social Register*, which “was born in an age of centralization and lists a new, associational, inter-city, aristocracy. For the first time, upper-class associations other than the family played an important role in socializing the young. The New England boarding school and the fashionable Eastern university became upper-class surrogate families on almost a national scale” (Baltzell 1958: 21).

What came from these newly-formed “families”? Higley (1995: 19) says that they enforced social distance from other classes and allowed for socialization with other elites. Ley (1993: 221-22) argues, “Schools and clubs helped to mould and exert closure around a world of status and privilege. . . . Private schools continue to consolidate socialization into privileged social networks.” Baltzell (1958: 293) spends considerable time discussing the importance of education in elite society, but he also contends that the specific *type* of school that one attends that has the most bearing on that person's life, social status, and what differentiates that person

from others. “In other words,” he explains, “in addition to their manifest and most important function, that of providing an education, these private educational institutions serve the latent function of acculturating the members of the younger generation, especially those not quite to the manor born, into an upper-class style of life” (Baltzell 1958: 293). Baltzell (1958: 294-95) affirms that “there are real differences between the privately and publicly educated subcultures in America” and that private school is the most important index of upper class standing.

These private schools are what create a “self-conscious upper class” and serve as “a selection and training place of the upper classes, both old and new, the private school is a unifying influence, a force for the nationalization of the upper classes” (Mills 1956: 64). And while the elite youths are acquainted with one another, other opportunities may arise. “On the college level,” writes Mills (1956: 68), “the exclusive schools become components of a broadened marriage market, which brings into dating relation the children of the upper social classes of the nation.” Christine Paquin (2009) observes that “a lot of Dartmouth people freakishly tend to marry other Dartmouth people” and Victoria Boggiano (2008) cites the statistic of Dartmouth alumni marrying one another at an almost suspiciously high 40 percent. Rationalizing the cohesion of elites and their control over their own society, Ley (1993: 224) argues that segregate social areas are the result of social distancing between groups, and, over time, space consolidates the social structure by limiting contact with other groups. Selective friendship and marriage partners are regulated by distance and are reinforced by sets of social institutions, where “[t]he common conspiracy of society and space serves to sustain a dynasty and its landscape of privilege” (Ley 1993: 224).

A point that Golden (2006) makes repeatedly throughout his book through a variety of case studies is that one’s chances of gaining admission to an elite school depends on certain

qualifying criteria such as: you are a legacy; you are a gifted athlete with the skills to play sports favored by upper-class whites; your family has made generous donations to your college of choice; you have some amazing, unusual, or desirable talent; you have some connection to an elite college and they want you for a specific reason; or you have the right GPA, test scores, and means to afford the tuition and other fees. Otherwise, the chance that you will be admitted to one of the elite schools is basically miniscule. This may be especially discouraging when one realizes that many of the slots for the incoming freshman class at the elite schools each year have largely been predetermined by the universities (Golden 2006). From this information, considering the extreme but calculated selectivity and the social and cultural processes that occur at our elite educational institutions, I have to ask how this could not be seen as a form of social engineering?

Baltzell (1958: 11-12) clarifies that “private schools, neighborhoods, and social clubs are not necessarily frivolous aspects of the [elites’] ‘social game’ but, rather, an important means of consolidating a continuity of particular and partial power in the serious world of affairs.” Referring specifically to Harvard when discussing the changing roles and values of elite institutions, Baltzell (1964: 340) also argues, “Rather than educating a privileged elite to better perform their duties, [Harvard] is now training an ambitious elite to accept the responsibilities which will go with the privileges and power they will eventually acquire.” This may be supported by Lopez’s (1979) observation of Harvard’s numerous connections (both overt and covert) to Washington, D.C. in areas such as government, law, lobbying, public affairs, the media, or the CIA. And Dartmouth and the other Ivies share many of these traits.

Birmingham (1961: 7) mentions that, for quite a while, suspicion has surrounded the Ivies as to whether their intentions were to breed a sort of American aristocracy. Other sources

suggest this as well, and opinions seem split, but questions arise when critics and observers point out other alleged motives at the Ivies. My purpose is not to further any conspiracy theories (such as the “real” purposes behind Yale’s secret societies, Princeton’s eating clubs, or Harvard’s finals clubs) because that is not really what I am trying to do, and I am not entirely sure how valid any of these “conspiracies” are, despite some highly suggestive “evidence.” Nonetheless, there is plenty of evidence to affirm that the Ivies are powerful and influential institutions and it is difficult to fully comprehend this from “the outside.” While they are certainly educational institutions, it is clear that there is something more than typical classes, lectures, and seminars happening at the Ivy League colleges.

Considering these facts, I am intrigued by how so many people want to be a part of these institutions in light of their sometimes dubious and questionable behavior. Although I had a certain reverence and admiration for Dartmouth, there were many times when I hypothetically asked myself if I would have ever really fit in there or why I or anyone else would even want to be a part of a school like that. Elites maintain and live by their own set of values, distinct from other classes (Baltzell 1958, 1964; Mills 1956), which is something I discovered from my time at Dartmouth, but something I could never fully grasp and I am not sure that I ever will.

But how do these values correspond with the millions of American high school seniors (or younger) and their families who rush to get their applications in to the elite colleges every year? Why do so many people fervently vie to become a part of it? Thelin (1976: 63) mentions that “The popular fascination with the Ivy League has been characterized by a stubborn tendency to associate the old colleges with a Power Elite.” Furthermore, “The Ivy League ethos was an anomaly in American society: an island of ‘sponsored mobility’ and selective recruitment of elites in a sea of mass, open education” (Thelin 1976: 58). Is this perception what creates the

large draw of people to these institutions? Is it worth being a part of this academic plutocracy to gain access to a sort of exclusive club? Do people think that attending an Ivy League college is some sort of ticket to high society? Or is it a question of, going on Berfield and Tergesen's (2007) article about college consulting, whether or not people really do get what they pay for? As we have seen in the examples above, it leaves one to ask how and why these schools exert dominance, arrogance, and control when education (their ostensible purpose) often takes a backseat. And although they may technically be "non-profit" institutions, I guarantee that *someone* in this circle is making money. Acknowledging this, it causes one to wonder what these schools are really setting out to accomplish.

Bianco and Rupani (2007) report on the increasing and disproportionate wealth found at the elite schools and the growing distance (financially, socially, academically, and more) between the elite and public universities, and the lavish spending at the top schools often has little or nothing to do with offering a better education to their students. "More than before," they write, "impressionable students and ambitious parents have come to view college as a form of conspicuous consumption" (Bianco and Rupani 2007: 40). Graduation rates remain high and their graduates "continue to ascend to leadership positions in business, science, the arts, and politics" (Bianco and Rupani 2007: 40). Bianco and Rupani (2007: 40) subtly question the ethics of the elite schools' extravagance when they educate less than 1 percent of American college students and public universities confront increasing pressures and demands. "For better or worse," they conclude, "the infusion of riches at the [elite] schools has dramatically extended their lead over everyone else, especially the public colleges and universities that collectively serve the vast majority of American students. This dominance – and the inequities that it fosters – are likely only to grow" (Bianco and Rupani 2007: 44).

The examples and anecdotes I provide above are just a small sampling of the ways in which the Ivy League wields its power. Explaining the persistent allure and unifying quality of the Ivy League schools, Henry Morton Robinson (1955: 36) wrote:

What then, *is* the tie that binds these colleges in common cause against the barbarian? Personal observation leads me to believe that they all suffer from an identical form of paranoia. They imagine, each and severally, that they are the special custodians of a sweet, sharp, salty, priceless and quite generally neglected tradition of human learning . . . . In these tiny colonial seedbeds a few scholars starved and struggled to keep alive a corpus of learning that might otherwise have perished. . . . All we know is that when a young man wants a superlative education, he usually comes East to get it.

There is much truth to Robinson's point. "Each and every year we're bombarded by more and more statistics that tell us of Dartmouth's increasing prestige," explains Chris Talamo (2008a) in his column titled "The Ivy League Pissing Match." Talamo (2008a) laments how the Ivy League colleges are in a constant battle to outdo one another, which often amounts to no more than a frivolous status game. "No, this sort of competition is not the sort that brings out the best in us, forcing us to strive to some higher ideal; this type of competition is detrimental to every party involved" (Talamo 2008a). And yet, these colleges in particular remain far out of reach for most everyone, and their elusiveness is not likely to change, as "their inaccessibility [only] enhances their prestige" (Golden 2006: 289). Furthermore, the higher the cost of the school, the greater its allure the higher the demand, and stiffer the competition to get in (Twitchell 2004: 138).

Referring to Dartmouth and elucidating how "The Dream School Is Dead," Alex Howe (2007) opined that the Ivies and a handful of other elite schools are not only highly competitive but completely out of most everyone's reach. While serious, talented, and promising students stood a chance of admission at one time, "[t]oday, it doesn't matter how brilliant the student or how immaculate the resume; admission to any given top tier school will still be riven with



uncertainty, a lottery, a number picked from a hat full of equally exceptional numbers” (Howe 2007). Still, “[n]o matter what careers seniors end up choosing, they can rest assured that a Dartmouth education will be a powerful bullet point on their resumes,” confirms Linzi Sheldon (2006).

Clearly, the Ivy League schools are very powerful and have the ability to attract tens of thousands prospective new members every year who seek the opportunity at a chance for entry into their exclusive and mysterious worlds, even if only a handful actually get that chance. From this we can deduce that educational institutions, especially colleges, play an indispensable role in maintaining and perpetuating elite culture and society. Mills (1956: 64-65, emphasis added) claims, “*The school – rather than the upper-class family – is the most important agency for transmitting the traditions of the upper social classes, and regulating the admission of new wealth and talent. It is the characterizing point in the upper-class experience.*” Once again, we encounter the word *tradition*. But what does it really mean in this context? And how do Dartmouth’s traditions play a role in the culture and identity of the College and, more broadly, in the culture and identity of the Ivy League?

### **The Persistence of Tradition at Dartmouth**

Throughout this study we have encountered numerous references to “tradition” and how Dartmouth traditions are so important, if not essential, to the College. This sentiment has prevailed at Dartmouth for decades and, as a major theme in my research, I was only too aware of it during my time there. I think what intrigues me so much about Dartmouth tradition is the pride surrounding it and how fervently it seems to be guarded. Many major universities, in the United States and around the world, have their host of traditions, though these traditions do not tend to remain intact over the time that they are practiced and observed. And from what I have

shown in the preceding chapters, Dartmouth's traditions have changed and evolved over the years and, yes, one could argue that some have even failed.

Still, I feel that there is something unusual about Dartmouth's traditions and that Dartmouth might even be a special case in the realm of higher education. I feel this way largely because of Sykes's (1990) observant claim of Dartmouth seeming once to represent a certain ideal in American higher education. But within about the last forty years, there has been a widening chasm between those who want to maintain the College's "old traditions" and those who want to discard them. Many cite institutional pride and loyalty and a necessity for retaining Dartmouth's traditions, whereas others view them as antiquated and rooted in classism, sexism, and racism.

In spite of this controversy, how have Dartmouth's traditions persisted? What are the reasons for their tenacity? Deborah Klenotic (2007) writes, "There's scarcely a building or patch of turf at Dartmouth that isn't memorialized by legend, history, or tradition." Daniel Linsalata (2007) claims that "traditions at Dartmouth shift with the ease of an eighteen-wheeler turning about a dime." This deep-rooted quality of Dartmouth apparently cannot be taken too lightly, as conscious efforts are made to perpetuate the College's traditions with each incoming class. Thomas Atwood (2007b) astutely summarizes what may be the underlying concern about preserving the College's traditions:

From day one, when we, as freshmen, still nurture unformed values in the tentative refuge of our impressionable minds, we gather as a group in an impressive auditorium [for convocation] and sing the alma mater. We rise in unison and sing in unison, and when we reach the second stanza we belt out in unison, "Dear old Dartmouth, set a watch/Lest the old traditions fail!" From that point on our faith in tradition begins to grow.

When we enter the Dartmouth community we immediately feel proud to be a part of something so old and so large, something bigger than ourselves and older than the nation we live in. We begin to believe in the overwhelming importance of tradition.

Subconsciously, we think to ourselves: God forbid the old traditions should fail; God forbid my class, preceded by hundreds of others, should be the first to betray those values.

Despite the importance of tradition to Dartmouth's identity, not everyone is as supportive about its "cult of traditionalism." Smith (2001) contends that some traditionalists often mindlessly defend tradition without considering how they may be harmful to other people, and they often reject compromise and openly oppose any idea of dismantling any part of Dartmouth's identity. Some "who consider themselves defenders of Dartmouth and its traditions are loud and strident. They portray themselves as loyal patriots who fly the school banner high and proud, defending the institution from attack by outsiders and traitors who want to change it" (Smith 2001). But Smith (2007) points out what he sees as the irony in this because it is those people who should be feared more due to their intransigence and backward-looking mentality, which he sees to be as much of a drag on the College as its antiquated traditions.

Earlier I addressed several instances of perceived threats to the Dartmouth community, its culture or, more specifically, its many traditions. And although many of these traditions have evolved or are somehow altered, many persist in some form. "In some cases," explains David Gross (1992: 120-21), "survival [of a tradition] has been due to pure inertia; a tradition may build up enough force or persistence to continue on even after it has outlived the conditions that once sustained it. More often, however, a tradition survives because it fulfills some need which would not otherwise be satisfied." This "need" may partially explain why some Dartmouth traditions have endured despite the arguments that they are outmoded, especially given the many changes that the College has undergone just within about the last forty years. But what needs could such traditions bring to the Dartmouth community?

To answer this question, we must revisit some of the theory surrounding tradition and rituals in a collegiate context. Manning (2000: 116) contends that a commonality of shared purposes and beliefs assures a community that what they do has meaning and, through ritual, these beliefs and purposes are brought into the open, which reaffirms to the participants that their lives have meaning. This makes sense in a university context, where rituals accompany the abstract and cerebral environment of classes and scholarship and personal meaning can sometimes be difficult to grasp (Manning 2000: 116). But rituals, “particularly [when] coupled with the assurances of a rich, established history, secure the perpetuation of the community and the individual” (Manning 2000: 116). This sense of continuity allows participants to play an active role in the college’s legacy and can serve as “a potent survival strategy” (Manning 2000: 116). Furthermore, “[t]he maintenance of the spirit of the place is essential to preserving a distinctive, high quality sense of self among the participants” (Manning 2000: 116). Thus, there is a dual action that occurs through people and place actively constructing each other at a university through rituals and traditions, which gives both the people and the place a sense of purpose and meaning (Manning 2000). And, as Manning (2000: 116) found at Mount Holyoke and I found at Dartmouth, large numbers of students and alumni feel that there is a great importance to ritual and tradition and that these play a key role in maintaining the colleges’ ideals, and she advocates continuing extant rituals and creating new ones as they are “an essential human activity” (123).

But maybe there are other messages or subtexts to be interpreted from this idealistic approach to preserving traditions and ideals. Manning (2000: 123) argues,

In an institution with a firm center, students receive the ritual message that their involvement in the perpetuation of the institution’s legacy is essential. Students have an active role in perpetuating the legacy through ritual involvement, conversations about

founding beliefs, and honoring the beliefs through their actions and achievements. . . . Their lives are to be conducted in a way that meets or exceeds the lofty expectations of the institution's legacy.

We have seen this sense of obligation at Dartmouth, when people maintain traditions by passing them on to the incoming classes each year; participating in the many big events like Dartmouth Night or Winter Carnival; pursuing careers as leaders in business, government, or any other number of fields; making (sometimes large) contributions and donations to the College after graduation; sending their children to Dartmouth; and actively participating in the affairs of the College as alumni. In short, people at Dartmouth and long gone from it seem to feel the need to continue and maintain its many traditions, perhaps out of some kind of fear that the "old traditions" might fail.

But if Dartmouth has such a rich history and embedded traditions, what drives this unease about the traditions potentially failing? Scholars and non-scholars alike accept that traditions evolve, change, disappear, reappear, or cease over time. So why is it that at Dartmouth many of the traditions continue, are vocally and actively guarded, and adapt to circumstances, under the perceived threat that they may somehow fail? Gross (1992: 62-63) suggests that

Without tradition . . . people are denied a meaningful context in which to function. They lose the sense of continuity and place that one only comes with attachments to long-standing collective memories and meanings. Furthermore, without tradition the texture of social life is disrupted, leaving people with nothing but an impoverished feeling of immediacy. Under such conditions, what is called experience lacks foundation and becomes little more than an unintegrated succession of fleeting sensations, none of them linked together through a continuous temporal dimension.

Gross thus implies that sometimes can people feel lost without tradition, which is notable because there seems to be, much like Manning (2000: 123) found, an expectation at Dartmouth that people uphold its traditions. The fact that Dartmouth has been quite successful in maintaining its major traditions may be attributed to the point that traditions often survive

“because they satisfy some internal, psychological, even visceral ‘need for tradition’” (Gross 1992: 64) or what Smith (2001) termed Dartmouth’s “cult of traditionalism.” What this “need” may be points to the context in which the traditions that I examined in this study came about.

As to satisfying such needs, Gross (1992: 65) submits that “a good case can be made that all human beings need to feel secure and protected; they need to be anchored in something dependable and repeatable; they need to feel a part of some meaningful temporal continuum; they need to be connected with their forebears; and they need to have plausible explanations of existence which can dispel fears about the unknown.” I came across all of these fears and concerns at varying levels when researching specific Dartmouth traditions. But when in the College’s history did people feel that they or the values of Dartmouth were threatened?

Consider the major traditions that I have covered in this study. Dartmouth Hall burned in 1904 and again in 1935 and was promptly rebuilt. Dartmouth Night has its origins in the 1880s, but it became an official College ceremony in 1895. Winter Carnival began in 1911, shortly after the 1909 founding of its sponsoring organization, the Dartmouth Outing Club. The first-year trips began in 1935. The erection of Bartlett Tower occurred between 1885 and 1895 to take the place of the storied Old Pine, which was finally lost in 1895. Furthermore, several of these traditions were eventually somehow modified after the early 1970s with the new female presence on the campus and the increasing diversification of the student body. Even today the stability of Dartmouth’s traditions are questioned. But historically speaking, the commonality among these now-cherished Dartmouth traditions is that they generally came about in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. And when they are examined in a greater historical context beyond what the College’s archives reveal, other occurrences in American society at that time offer some indication of the motivation behind the establishment of these traditions.

New Hampshire underwent some dramatic changes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a consequence of both national and international events (Wright 1987: 1-16). Major events and their effects that undoubtedly found their way to Hanover in some form include increasing immigration and the development a more pluralistic society, the Panics of 1873 and 1893 (coinciding with the Long Depression), the aftermath of the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction, and other general political, economic, and social problems that resulted from a period of general instability in the United States at that time. Baltzell (1964: 345-46) cites a growing level of elitism and exclusionary mentalities that grew at the prestigious colleges between about 1880 and 1929 that were derived from perceived threats to an old, established, Anglo-Saxon lifestyle. This time period also saw a spike in an interest among elites to research their ancestry and historical roots and many clubs and institutions with patriotic and ethnic affiliations were formed in the 1880s and 1890s, often geared toward WASPs (Baltzell 1964).

From these changes we can gather that a sense of nostalgia and longing for stability and security was in the air amidst the wider social problems of the time. Concurrently, the WASP elites, which had long dominated the prestigious colleges of the Northeast, knew that they would have a difficult time sustaining their lifestyles and institutions in the face of rapid changes at their schools, among other parts of their lives. Whether they liked it or not, the elites realized that they would have to assimilate people from other social, ethnic, and racial extractions to remain at the top of the American class system. By the 1920s, the elite colleges “became all important as upper-class-ascribing institutions” (Baltzell 1964: 209).

Baltzell (1964: x) argues, “The stability of authority in any community depends to a very great extent on the maintenance of a continuity of cultural traditions.” Baltzell (1964: x) continues his point by observing that there is a “crisis in moral authority” due to the

“unwillingness, or inability” of the WASP establishment “to share and improve its upper-class traditions by continuously absorbing talented and distinguished members of minority groups into its privileged ranks.” Baltzell’s (1964: xi) main thesis in *The Protestant Establishment* is “that in order for an upper class to maintain a continuity of power and authority, especially in an opportunistic and mobile society such as ours, its membership must, in the long run, be representative of the composition of society as a whole.”

This argument corresponds to my own concerning the role that diversity played – and continues to play – for Dartmouth on several levels. While Dartmouth may have felt compelled to accommodate noticeable changes in the demographic composition of its student body during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era (Meacham 1998), it has now become a point of pride and even a priority to admit a class each year that is “more diverse” than the one before it. For example, in one article from *The Dartmouth*, Jaeger (2008) details the ethnic, racial, and geographic diversity of the Class of 2012 to suggest that the class is demographically representative of the United States and is a cosmopolitan class.

Baltzell (1964: xii) states “that an authoritative leadership structure will evolve in this country only when and if a new and representative upper class and establishment are created, whose members will then be able to *discriminate* on the basis of distinguished accomplishments of individuals rather than *classifying* men categorically on the basis of their ethnic or racial origins.” This philosophy sounds to be in accordance with Dartmouth’s current stated goal of building a “diverse and talented” class each year. But my feeling is that the move to diversify is more of a reaction to the changes that have occurred in American society in the face of the decline of the old WASP establishment which was once essentially in complete control of the elite Northeastern institutions. But might it *still* be in control, even when surrounded by all of



this new “diversity”? I suspect that it might, and the sentiment behind it is manifested in the form and spirit of the College’s traditions.

Manning (2000: 31-32) proposes, “The fact that ritual occurs in the first place means that certain behaviors, based on past history and cultural practice, are encouraged. The prescribed behaviors and expected action can promote social control by presenting the participant with a limited number of possible models. In other words, while everything from black to white on the continuum is theoretically possible, only certain roles are culturally sanctioned.” When applied to my case study, I take Manning’s observation to mean that rituals in the context of universities may appear to be inclusive, but they ultimately reflect the ideology and values of the institution in question. At universities, rituals and traditions take on mostly local as opposed to universal themes and “reinforce values specific to the college in which the ceremony is enacted” (Manning 2000: 46).

When examined more deeply, the traditions now institutionalized at Dartmouth, represent, I believe, a way of subtly reminding Dartmouth’s more blue-blooded cohort that they are still in control and that Dartmouth is still effectively *their* College. While they may now admit and accommodate groups less like themselves or that stand for values that are different from what they represent, these “old traditions,” founded in that lost past, serve as reminders of the stability they once knew and reinforce a sense of stability now in the face of conspicuous changes at the College.

Several observers of elites (Baltzell 1958, 1964; Fussell 1983; Higley 1995; Mills 1956) have warned that the old WASP culture was in danger because of its insularity and reluctance to welcome “outsiders” into its ranks. Brooks (2000) and Frank (2006) have argued that this has already happened and that the upper-class society of the Gilded Age, at least as it was once

known, is no more. There is still some disagreement as to whether or not the old-guard WASPs are even a culture anymore in the United States. While I do not have enough evidence to weigh in on this academic disagreement, I do think it is safe to say that the old WASP culture and lifestyle may not be extinct, but it is not what it once was. Furthermore, the older and popular perception of Northeastern WASPs no longer dominates the concept of what it means to be elite today in the U.S., as my study and others show. Today there is a robust, more diversified, and more visible elite, though it is still largely a product of the elite American universities (Brooks 2000; Frank 2006).

Referring back to the collegiate context, Manning (2000: 46) explains that campus rituals “convince us of truths that are doubtful. Secular ceremony can present imperceptible values more objectively in such a way that they become more believable, less questioned, and more resistant to modification. Because synchronized, unified ritual action is out of the ordinary, its messages convey meanings beyond the ordinary. In this way, secular ceremonies stabilize culture. This stabilization can often occur most aptly through creation of new beliefs.” This helps to “stabilize [the] culture,” through the “creation of new beliefs” (Manning 2000: 46). This new belief is the realization that the WASP elites had to incorporate those different from themselves to maintain their status. Baltzell (1964: 69-70) alludes to a constant pressure in the upper classes to assimilate new talent into their ranks regardless of their backgrounds.

“As American society was becoming more diverse and fragmented,” writes Manning (2000: 63), “planners used ceremonial forms to restate the message of community in the face of an overwhelming diversity. Disparate segments of the campus community struggled to join together in a united, coherent effort. Old ritual structures re-stated a modern imperative.” Thus, the status quo may have shifted, but the root mentality lingered in the background. Formal

institutions are known as a way to assimilate new members into the upper class, yet also shield established members from the greater population (Baltzell 1964: 61-62). The separation of the highest social classes from the “others” is well documented in histories of elites and of the Ivy League schools. In the case of Dartmouth, I suspect that the shakeup of old mores and the subsequent solidification of the “old traditions” may have been the origin of the Dartmouth persona.

Some authors mention a sense of insecurity, fragility, and paranoia in the upper classes, due to constant pressures to retain their status and remain on par with their peers (Baltzell 1958; Epstein 2002; Fussell 1983). After about three months in Hanover, and when I acknowledged that I was, in fact, in an elite setting among elites, I could *sense* a tenseness in Dartmouth’s atmosphere. The best example from my experience to illustrate this collective anxiety at its peak comes from the several “racial incidents” of the fall term surrounding the Native American students and the controversy over “inclusion” at Dartmouth. The drama that unfolded from these many events is an excellent example of the sometimes draconian moves to quash bad publicity or otherwise divert negative attention. Golden (2006: 15) speaks of the fear that elite schools have of offending donors, alumni, and especially the media, and Sykes (1990: xi) mentions a plan by Dartmouth’s trustees to “cut the ground out” from him when they heard about the plan for his book, and he reports that pressure from Dartmouth’s trustees was put on his source of funding. The hypersensitivity of the Ivy League is clear when one considers how cautious they are about doing whatever they have to do to maintain their elite status.

Thus, it is to its traditions which Dartmouth turns to for a sense of security when faced with internal or external pressures and problems. In his editorial challenging the notion of Dartmouth as a politically liberal campus, Atwood (2007b) asserts that “tradition becomes a

source of comfort for us, and we become invested in preserving it. Slowly, we become entrenched in our established views and unwilling to challenge them. Slowly, in our blind acceptance of tradition and in our resistance to change we have become fundamentally conservative.” Dartmouth’s persona is at work again.

Some other evidence suggests that this is also the case elsewhere in the Ivy League. Douthat (2005) provides some detail on how Harvard forces diversity onto people, ultimately resulting in failure because of the ongoing, wide social gaps at that university. Also referring to Harvard, Lopez (1979) suggests that Harvard’s cosmopolitan air is less about diversity than it is about Harvard finding new channels to spread its influence and power across the U.S. and the world. The questionability of this movement for diversity is why I (and many others) believe that “diversity” at Dartmouth is just for show; though the College accommodates superficial changes in the interest of public relations to avoid negative publicity or public controversy, it does not do anything to risk stability in its community or possibly harm its status in the many sectors of society where it maintains influence. While Dartmouth might be increasingly more “diverse,” we can be sure that those admitted to the College are carefully screened to ensure that they will not threaten the status quo and especially not the “old traditions.” Shils (1981: 184) mentions that “universities can work only if their traditions are effectively observed and this cannot be achieved except by persons who have assimilated the traditions and are at ease in them.” I imagine that this is a major reason why Dartmouth’s hoary traditions have persisted. Now that we see the concept and purpose behind these traditions, it is important to understand that they did not come about organically. Rather, these traditions were *invented* to correspond to Dartmouth’s persona and fit under the guise of what became known as the Dartmouth Experience.

## The “Dartmouth Experience” and Brand Development

Perhaps the most mysterious of all Dartmouth traditions is what they call the “Dartmouth Experience” or sometimes the “Dartmouth spirit.” The mystique is likely attributed to the fact that no one ever seems to be able to offer a clear explanation as to what this Dartmouth phenomenon *is*. While one may find some listed attributes or vague descriptions, I have never come across a precise, unambiguous definition. Hill (1964b: 21) writes, “A seasoned observer of the College once remarked to President Ernest Martin Hopkins that no one can understand Dartmouth unless he recognizes that it is a religion. The word ‘spirit’ suggests as much and explains as little, yet this intangible has always been the impelling element in the Dartmouth organism.” He continues by claiming that “Hanover, the Place, has been made much of by President John Sloan Dickey as the dwelling ‘of the spirits of the men who over the years built the College.’ Time and again in the long history of the Hanover Plain anything unaccounted for has been attributed to the ‘Dartmouth spirit’” (Hill 1964b: 21). Unfortunately this does not explain very much, but this may be because “the ‘Dartmouth spirit’ . . . [is] more clearly felt than described” (Quint 1914: 275-76).

One thing we *can* be sure about is that references to the Dartmouth “sprit” go back at least to the early twentieth century under the presidency of William Jewett Tucker, when he headed Dartmouth from 1893 to 1909. During his tenure, enrollment grew and diversified, the academic departments became increasingly more specialized, the physical plant of the College grew, and it became known as the “New Dartmouth,” as “the College [was set] on the course towards its present status as an elite academic institution” (Rago 2004).

At the expense of this growth, Tucker became concerned that the College was beginning to lose its identity and he “recognized that loyalty and affection for his institution were contingent on tradition, custom, and history, and he self-consciously set out to strengthen and

deepen what he called the Dartmouth Spirit. For graduates, Dartmouth was to be the center of their lives” (Rago 2004). It was Tucker who made earnest efforts to preserve the history and heritage of the College, through actions such as establishing the College’s archives and attempting to preserve the Old Pine (Rago 2004). Tucker defined the Dartmouth Spirit “in terms of [a] visceral connection to custom and history” (Rago 2004).

Moreover, Tucker “invented new traditions to emphasize spirited institutional loyalty and the free mixing of students from all social classes” (Meacham 2008: 18). Dartmouth traditions developed further with the subsequent presidency of Ernest Fox Nichols and Ernest Martin Hopkins after him (Sayigh and Vabson 2006). Addressing the capricious nature of tradition at Dartmouth, Mushett and Shah (2007) argue,

as we tend to forget, tradition has its roots in the arbitrary. This place is altered from what it was ten years ago, different from what it was twenty years ago, and absolutely unrecognizable from what it was forty years ago. As engrained as things seem, they are transformable. Dartmouth, like the world at large, is ever-changing, and many “traditions” here are actually recent developments. . . . But when the institutional memory of the student body is a mere four years, it takes only that long for a tradition to establish itself. The age of everyone’s favorite drinking game is insignificant, but it goes to show how quickly something can embed itself in campus folklore.

I agree with Mushett and Shah that Dartmouth traditions may be arbitrary, but only to the extent to when they are examined in their most rudimentary forms. Bonfires and adventures in the New Hampshire wilderness may have originated with impromptu student activity or out of a response to boredom, but they were soon institutionalized at the College and, over time, became trademark Dartmouth traditions. Or, perhaps more accurately, these traditions were *invented* to become Dartmouth trademarks.

“Invented tradition,” writes historian Eric Hobsbawm (1983: 1), “is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which

automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.” The continuity with invented traditions is “largely factitious. In short, they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition” (Hobsbawm 1983: 2). The process of inventing traditions “is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition” (Hobsbawm 1983: 4). People can thus expect traditions to be invented during rapid social transformation that weaken or destroy a social pattern or when such patterns no longer fit current conditions (Hobsbawm 1983: 4-5). People create traditions to shape or alter their surroundings, creating a society and culture in which to survive and insulate themselves to create stability (Gehlen 1988; Gross 1992: 66). Connecting this concept with the previous section, it becomes clearer that Tucker and the Dartmouth students invented traditions as a means to preserve their institutional identity amidst marked changes and to preserve a certain ethos at the College. As change inevitably occurs, at colleges or elsewhere, traditions evolve and accommodate such changes; while a tradition never remains constant, new meanings develop and are adopted while old meaning is lost (Manning 2000: 47-48). When a college’s identity is threatened, it has the option of continuing on the same course or adapting to accommodate change; rituals and traditions are a way “to express their common beliefs, commit to those values, and buttress their shared purpose” (Manning 2000: 116).

Since the Industrial Revolution, Hobsbawm (1983: 9) identifies three overlapping types of invented traditions: a) those that establish or symbolize social cohesion or group membership; b) those that establish or legitimize institutions, status, or relations of authority; and c) those with the main purpose of socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems, or behavioral

conventions. Following this classification, it appears that the Dartmouth traditions that I covered in this study fit all three characteristics. Hobsbawm (1983: 10) further distinguishes between old and invented traditions by clarifying that invented traditions can often be unspecific or vague about the “values, rights and obligations of the group membership they inculcate” but these values at Dartmouth, at least as I interpret them, only became somewhat clearer after I took the time to research them and theorize about what I interpret them to mean.

While this information gives us a bit of a more analytical framework to work with, it does not help us to understand Dartmouth tradition better unless we can experience it for ourselves. But fully understanding collegiate traditions are difficult, since “colleges and universities abound in historical complexities, follies, and irrationalities” (Thelin 1976: 1). In the case of traditions at Texas A&M, Jonathan Smith (2007: 185) similarly observes that communal knowledge is experienced and not explained. Such inexplicability is typical of traditional knowledge, which “is learned by immersion in a way of life that results in unreflecting adoption of unself-conscious habits” (J. Smith 2007: 185-86). Furthermore, people “find it difficult to explain, defend, or intentionally modify these habits” (J. Smith 2007: 186). Though he offers solid descriptions of his examples through some Texas A&M traditions, Smith (2007: 188) acknowledges the difficulty an outsider would have in understanding them.

This “outsider” strategy, though never a substitute for insider knowledge, is one that I employed throughout this dissertation. Though I could have only been an outsider at Dartmouth with a limited comprehension of what I observed, it is clear that this experience gave me a different perspective on things and, when coupled with my additional research, it provides me with a distinct insight. But from my experience, I think that I can opine a bit about what



Dartmouth's "old traditions" signify in their relation to the "Dartmouth Experience," and what I theorize the "Dartmouth Experience" to be.

The Dartmouth "traditions" that I have spent so much time investigating in this study clearly follow Hobsbawm's (1983) description of invented traditions. It is my contention that these traditions – the invented ones – are not really the "old traditions" that are frequently referenced throughout Dartmouth culture. While they may be traditions in an invented sense, it is my impression that they are first and foremost major components of the Dartmouth brand, with the use of *brand* meaning the same as the brand name of a product. James Twitchell (2004: 116) mentions that intellectual activity, research, and discovery still happens in academia, but "the *experience* of higher education – the accessories, the amenities, the aura – has been commercialized, outsourced, franchised, *branded*." Exclusivity is the brand of the top schools in general and Harvard is the brand leader in all of higher education (Twitchell 2004: 117). At the premier schools, "You buy a sense of place, literally *a* place, and the value of the place is determined by who is in the place next to you. . . . The elite school is protected by staying small and hard to enter. The diamond at Costco is the same diamond as the one at Tiffany. The baby blue box is different. You can give the rock away, but you protect the box" (Twitchell 2004: 125). "Premier schools," writes Twitchell (2004: 127), "have to separate their students by generating a story about how special they are." Such differentiation is likely accomplished through all of the publicity each year about how diverse their student bodies are and who is enrolled in a particular class.

Branding is particularly relevant in Dartmouth's case because Twitchell (2004: 130) observes that non-elite schools have trouble competing with elite schools because they sell a product instead of an *experience*. What is important about a college is the "idea" behind it,

which is a large part of its brand (Twitchell 2004: 177) and is best represented at Dartmouth through its invented traditions. It is these traditions that, I believe, best exemplify the “idea” of Dartmouth College and what contribute to its allure and success. Instead of just providing an education, there is an experience that goes along with it that one is less likely to find at a generic state school or community college. For example, Dartmouth is famous for its Winter Carnival and it is that major tradition that compelled the College to initiate selective admissions because of the surge in interest in the College due to its perceived traditional atmosphere. People wanted to attend Dartmouth because it wasn’t *just* a college; things *happened* there. This feature is important because the quality of a college and its brand development is dependent on who is admitted and who attends the school (Twitchell 2004: 157). Branding is about name and symbolic recognition and Dartmouth serves as a good example of a “brand name” school because it is recognized for its name alone and it is associated with embedded traditions (Twitchell 2004: 132-33). But perhaps most importantly in the case of college branding is the fact that branding is about differentiation (Twitchell 2004: 165).

It is notable that Dartmouth always tries to differentiate itself from the other Ivies and assert that it is independent and that it does not want to follow the others. But from closely reading Dartmouth publications, it is clear that the College constantly compares itself to the other Ivies, from everything to sports scores and statistics, to academic standards and policies (Bennett 2007b), to the number of tenured and tenure-track women faculty (Memmi 2009), to the amount of earnings for Dartmouth graduates (*Dartmouth Life* 2008), to the quality of its student fitness center (Wood 2006), to the way it obtains eggs for its dining facilities (Haas 2006a). Dartmouth often bills itself as “the first in the Ivy League” or “the only school in the Ivy League” or “the

best in the Ivy League” when boasting about a certain distinction. Dartmouth may insist that it is different and it has its own brand, but I argue that it also follows an Ivy League brand.

Dartmouth, however, does not get nearly as much attention as some other Ivies, especially the Big Three. Perhaps this lack of attention, or maybe even a perceived lack of respect, might be to blame for what Daniel Linsalata refers to as “the Harvard inferiority complex . . . [that is] ingrained in our institutional mentality” (2006a). Indeed, Dartmouth’s unusual status among the Ivies as the only “college” (despite being a small university) has proven controversial over the years with tradition-minded alumni who wish for Dartmouth to remain a liberal arts college and those who seek to expand it into a full-fledged research university. Its intermediary status only seems to augment the confusion and disagreement. Jacob Baron (2007b) picked up on the paradoxical nature of the idea of Dartmouth as a research university in its rural surroundings and argues for concentrating on some of the College’s more qualitative strengths when compared to its (perhaps mismatched) company by focusing on its teaching strengths and liberal arts curriculum.

Nonetheless, Dartmouth seems to want to expand (sometimes surreptitiously) and not everyone sees this as a negative. Andrew Seal (2007) argues for the positives of Dartmouth’s graduate programs and attests to the many contributions of the Dartmouth Medical School, Tuck, and Thayer in helping to build the College and complement its undergraduate program. Seal (2007), greatly exemplifying a Dartmouth attitude, does not view an expanded Dartmouth as any sort of threat to the identity of the College: “Dartmouth isn’t Dartmouth because it tries to forget it has grad programs; it’s Dartmouth because it’s in Hanover and has a street full of assholes who treat pong like a fourth (and favorite) class. Dartmouth couldn’t have an identity crisis if it tried, as long as there is snow falling on the Green and nothing to do but drink.”

While many at Dartmouth continue to question the College's identity and its related brand, I can attest that regardless of which direction the College chooses, either to remain a college or become a larger research university, it is not willing and not going to sacrifice its status as an Ivy League school. Doing so would clearly damage its brand. Dartmouth may try to differentiate itself from its peers, but it cannot escape the fact that it is part of an elite cohort. And why would it want to? Therein lies the quandary of the College's continuing brand development.

I think that Dartmouth focuses on building its brand by capitalizing on one major quality: its rural, forested location and its several traditions associated with this environment. This key attribute is part and parcel of the Dartmouth brand and it is not something that other Ivies or many other colleges offer, at least to the same extent. Dartmouth compensates for the lesser amount of attention it receives within the Ivy League through its rich traditions. While some dismiss the idea of Dartmouth being a wealthy, conservative, male-oriented, alcohol-fueled, outdoorsy college fixated on antiquated traditions and athletics (as it was once proudly self-identified), there is little denying that this description is at least partly accurate and this is how some at Dartmouth still want others to see the school and they actively attempt to maintain these traits. I found that this element of the College is still there, even if it is in the background. When put together, these attributes form an experience that cannot be found elsewhere – a Dartmouth Experience. And I think I have a decent idea of what this “Dartmouth Experience” is about.

One gathers that the Dartmouth Experience consists of a mix of College traditions, a liberal education, and strong fellowship among students and alumni. While these factors are all undeniably a major *part* of the Dartmouth Experience, I argue that there is a deeper, underlying meaning behind them and that the Dartmouth Experience is essentially a socialization process.

This socialization is a way of conditioning elites and new elites into the upper echelons of society. At Dartmouth they learn (or reinforce) values attributed to this sector of American society and they gain preparation to assume prominent roles in this society in the coming years.

Mills (1956: 70) wrote, “The exclusive schools and clubs and resorts of the upper social classes are not exclusive merely because their members are snobs. Such locales and associations have a real part in building the upper-class character, and more than that, the connections to which they naturally lead help to link one higher circle with another.” Or, as Michael Ellis (2005) put it, “Over the past fifty years, the College has gone from a training ground to prepare the scions of the wealthy northeastern establishment for careers in national leadership to the finishing school for scions of wealthy suburbanites to prepare themselves for a few years of community service to ease their noblesse oblige-inspired guilt before they head off to their ‘real’ career.” Dartmouth’s invented traditions therefore contribute to creating a brand for the College while simultaneously acting as a buffer to insulate it, creating a culture and a particular sense of place that in turn forms an experience – a Dartmouth Experience – to socialize people into the upper crust. Though the invented traditions may represent the values of an older, more WASPish Dartmouth, today they include anyone admitted to the College and thus, as traditions adapting in order to survive, they act as a way to both enculturate people to the College and socialize them into the elite ranks. Rituals in higher education symbolize the passage from one status to another, though they can simultaneously serve as rites of passage, which constitute the actual change that an individual experiences; these rites of passage occur at the college and serve as the context for where the actual change takes place (Manning 2000: 28). Gross (1992: 63) observes, “Wherever there is enculturation or socialization there is some element of tradition,

and wherever there is a store of background information that people draw upon as tacit knowledge, some amount of tradition is present.”

I also propose that this enculturation and socialization may help to explain the “cultish” qualities of Dartmouth: the strong connections between students and alumni, the numerous shared experiences among classes, the obvious topophilia directed toward the College, and the extreme loyalty toward the school and the active interest people have and maintain in it. Some are already a part the elite classes before they arrive at Dartmouth and some may choose not to take full advantage of this potential ticket to power and success. For example, some Dartmouth graduates may work in public service as, for instance, a pro bono attorney or others may become homemakers who ultimately do not pursue the kinds of paths and careers of their fellow alumni. Still, this does not negate the fact that they have a Dartmouth diploma which supplies them more capital than those who do not have the distinction of attending an elite college and their ability to utilize that credential oftentimes gives them more and better options than those who lack it. From this perspective, it is easier to understand that the opportunities presented at Dartmouth and the lives it can create for its graduates may be a major reason for such fervent loyalty.

College rituals, traditions, ceremonies, and events “mark significant events in the life of a college and community. The meaning created around these events persists in the memory of alumni, colors the nature of college community for undergraduates, and provides a vehicle to express the founding beliefs and values of the institution” (Manning 2000: 10). Furthermore, “rituals enacted on college campuses are the fabric out of which community is formed. Without overstating their importance, one must recognize that the people who make up college communities create rituals and ceremonies in an attempt to give meaning to their lives” (Manning 2000: 10). While addressing important aspects to both the college and humanity in

general, (such as identity, community, purpose, growth, or achievement) these qualities are too important to be treated casually (Manning 2000: 52). Therefore, the “formality, stylization, and evocative emotions of ceremonies signal their importance as well as creating a time and place to reflect upon them” (Manning 2000: 52). While Manning’s observation is general, it relates to some profound truths about the culture of Dartmouth College.

As an outsider it was difficult to discern many of the cultural features of the College or understand the intricacies of how they contributed to a type of socialization. But an article from former Dartmouth News Director George O’Connell (1983), a University of Montana graduate who worked at the College from 1957 to 1967, offers a great, concise summary of how Dartmouth both creates loyalty and indoctrinates when recalling his experiences at a Boston alumni dinner in the late 1950s. The piece, titled “The Dartmouth Disease,” is a play on the idea of the “Dartmouth spirit,” and O’Connell illustrates the ethos by describing how he was received at the dinner as a non-alumnus when, while introducing people at the event, the emcee gets to his name:

“...and next to him, George O’Connell, Class of ’45, University of Montana???”  
The question marks indicate the rising inflection at the end. Removing his reading glasses and raising his eyebrows, he seemed to glare my way. “Who goofed? What’s this turkey doing here?” A hush fell over that vast dining room and I swear that 500 pairs of eyes focused on me as I did quick up-and-down. Whether they were curious or hostile I couldn’t tell. But Yassir Arafat couldn’t have felt more out of place at a banquet of the American Jewish Committee.

Patently, I was an intruder, an outsider. I sensed that a faculty member from H-Y-P or other highly respected schools might be tolerated, if not embraced, but I was a keeper of the flame as a director of the News Service...

Over the years, O’Connell (1983: 34) struggled to understand this unusual Dartmouth behavior.

He even recalls a time when he asked the provost why Dartmouth alumni behave as they do, and the provost cryptically responded, “Because it’s expected of them” (O’Connell 1983: 34).

O'Connell (1983: 35) continues to describe other times that he went to a Dartmouth event and the reception he received:

Often when I was introduced at some functions or other, the introducee's eyes would dart to my name tag and he would ask quizzically, "What class were you?" The trouble was there were no numbers after my name and he would assume that this was an oversight. "I'm not Dartmouth." Usually that was enough to send the questioner off to seek more compatible company. But a few hardy souls persisted. "Don't tell me you're a Yalie." "No." "Not a Harvard," in mock horror. "No, University of Montana." That was enough to send them back to the bar for a refill.

When I first read this, I was under the impression that the article was meant to be tongue-in-cheek and its intension was to provide a somewhat comical take on this peculiar Dartmouth attitude. But having experienced this same, curt reception myself on more than one occasion, I have to say that I do not find it to be the least bit funny. Even if O'Connell's (1983) piece is satirical, I think it provides a fitting example of the ways in which Dartmouth includes and excludes and even offers a slight indication of how the Dartmouth Experience molds and conditions people.

This ethos points toward other factors of the Dartmouth Experience that are not discussed as openly, but everyone at the College seems to have an awareness of them. In a column titled "Dartmouth, Inc.," Daniel Chiu (2006a), hits on the other, less-openly discussed components of the Dartmouth Experience by commenting on Dartmouth and other elite colleges' preoccupation with status, prestige, rankings, and creating brands and experiences. In turn, this creates a business-customer relationship between colleges and students and dilutes the meaning behind providing or pursuing an education (Chiu 2006a). As an answer to Chiu (2006a), I fully believe that Dartmouth employs "marketing schemes tailored to attract applicants," and I devoted some attention to it in Chapter 7. It is with these "schemes" that Dartmouth uses its brand to "attract applicants."



While Dartmouth claims that it admits people “from diverse backgrounds” with “impressive extracurricular records and accomplishments,” many of these people have had more and better opportunities to build “impressive records” (Golden 2006). After all, at the elite colleges, Golden (2006: 9) maintains that socioeconomic diversity is the *least* important kind of diversity that these schools seek. Thus, those who appear to “fit in” with the right combination of grades, test scores, talents, accomplishments, and money are (potentially) admitted. It is these people who appear to uphold Dartmouth’s values as vaguely described with the terms “Dartmouth Experience” or “Dartmouth spirit” who come to the College and learn its ideals and maintain and continue its traditions. While elites must continuously incorporate new members into their ranks, a changing membership in that class alone does not destroy it (Mills 1956: 53). It is not the individual or families that constitute a class, but the *type* of individuals and families found within it (Mills 1956: 53). This process adds to the College’s exclusionary mechanism and through this careful screening process, its students and alumni determine if the “old traditions” will survive. To do this, Dartmouth cannot have just anybody come there; thus, a highly selective admissions process is employed.

Chiu (2006a) argues that education is, to some extent, being “sold” at Dartmouth and other elite colleges. While I partially agree, I also submit that in addition to an education, these students are buying an experience that socializes them for entrée into a more permanent upper-class lifestyle. The deliberate construction, preservation, and invention of traditions at Dartmouth is meant to help support the College and uphold its elite status, not to further knowledge, to “better” or “improve” society, or provide a nostalgic “Dartmouth Experience,” though the continuity of the Dartmouth Experience is perpetuated by its invented traditions. Several scholars (Baltzell 1958, 1964; Karabel 2005; Mills 1956; Story 1980) mention that

education, especially at the elite prep schools and Ivy League colleges, plays a principal role in propagating a cycle of elites and the elite lifestyle. I imagine that this is even more so the case in the time since such work was initially published. And it is this socialization process that I theorize the “Dartmouth Experience,” in actuality, to be. It is this cycle of socialization that allows for the preservation of Dartmouth’s *true* old traditions of money, power, and prestige.

Considering the elite traits of the Ivies and the reality behind Dartmouth’s persona, it should be clearer by this point what the true motivations of the College and its denizens are. And although Dartmouth does not get as much attention as the other Ivies (particularly the Big Three), it would be naïve to suggest that the College is somehow “different” or “innocent” from the others in their quests for extravagance and power when one considers my findings and compares them to the other elite schools. While the moves to incorporate new kinds of people have occasionally been met with some resistance, it is probably seen as a “necessary evil” to avoid bad publicity and avoid accusations of racism, classism, and sexism from the wider public. College campuses and their diverse populations, stakeholders, and interest groups, must constantly strive to unify their communities (Manning 2000: 47). One way to do this is through the creation of ceremonies and events to bring people together, to address certain truths that they can all at least partially accept, and create unity through various messages and synchronized actions (Manning 2000: 47). But at the end of the day, I’m not sure that anyone cares so much about superficial differences as long as Dartmouth and its peers maintain their powerful, influential positions in the hierarchy of American higher education, on Wall Street, and in Washington, which allow them to brandish their power and spread their influence, thus helping to preserve the old traditions.

Dartmouth began to make noticeable changes around the time the term “Dartmouth Experience” or “spirit” entered the campus lexicon. Dartmouth’s reputation changed as its invented traditions took root and became institutionalized, which aided in the creation of a brand for Dartmouth. People had these invented traditions to fall back on to reassure themselves in the face of drastic demographic changes at the College, which were necessary to further its true old traditions. Due to the complexity and uncertainty of the world outside of a college, rituals and traditions “can act as an assurance that there is order and control” (Manning 2000: 109). The Dartmouth Experience allowed the College to profit from the success and popularity of the invented traditions and the particular brand they helped to create, while simultaneously using them to socialize and indoctrinate elites and new elites.

Through an attempt to counteract old stereotypes with the admission of new, less conventional members needed to perpetuate the old traditions, a new brand centering around an “experience” was created. The invented traditions associated with this experience helped to give the College a more welcoming, unpretentious, and populist appeal than what it actually offered. This is an important point if one considers what Dartmouth College would be like and how it might be viewed *without* its famous invented traditions. I suspect that without them, Dartmouth’s real old traditions would be much more obvious and its current professed values of inclusion, diversity, and liberal education would be less convincing. There is thus a *dependence* on the invented traditions. Manning (2000: 52) insists, and I agree, that the creation of campus communities and the perpetuation of a campus culture “could not exist without the meaning-making actions of ceremonies and other cultural expressions.” And despite concerns over their demise, the old traditions appear to be alive and well.

Dartmouth's landscape, folklore, traditions, campus culture, and sense of place – all components of the Dartmouth Experience – are deliberately constructed to “live up” to the College's idyllic, quaint image. This image makes it appear to be more unassuming, welcoming, and tolerant than its own records and my personal experiences reveal. I suspect that Dartmouth's earthy invented traditions are heavily utilized to somehow obfuscate or divert attention from its abundant wealth and exclusivity, even though they are a direct benefit of that wealth and contribute to the College's exclusivity. But collegiate ceremonies and traditions do not simply reflect a campus's culture; they actively construct it (Manning 2000: 48). While Dartmouth's invented traditions have come, gone, and changed over the years and the lamentation surrounding their feared demise has been immortalized in song and landscape, I strongly doubt that Dartmouth would ever allow its *real* old traditions to fail.

## CHAPTER 10 CONCLUSION

### Why the Old Traditions Will Not Fail

One key example that demonstrates why I believe that Dartmouth's old traditions will not fail comes from the story behind the College's alma mater. The lyrics to the song "Men of Dartmouth," as it was originally known, are based on a poem initially titled "Dartmouth Song" by Richard Hovey, an 1885 Dartmouth graduate (Krieger 1999). Alumni widely accepted the poem as an appropriate template for which to create a main song for the College (Krieger 1999: 357). The accompanying music to the poem went through several variations but, in 1908, alumnus Harry Wellman reworked and finalized the melody as it is known today (Krieger 1999: 357-58). Wellman's setting to the song was sung at Dartmouth's 1910 commencement and "Men of Dartmouth" soon superseded other Dartmouth songs (including the old alma mater, "The Dartmouth Song") in importance (Krieger 1999: 358-59). After much advocacy from students and President Hopkins, it became the College's official alma mater in 1926 (Krieger 1999: 359). Hovey's lyrics, found in Zeller's (1950) *Dartmouth Song Book*, are:

### Men of Dartmouth

Men of Dartmouth, give a rouse  
For the college on the hill  
For the Lone Pine above her,  
And the loyal sons who love her.  
Give a rouse, give a rouse, with a will!  
For the sons of old Dartmouth  
The sturdy sons of Dartmouth,  
Though round the girdled earth they roam,  
Her spell on them remains;  
They have the still North in their hearts,  
The hill winds in their veins,  
And the granite of New Hampshire  
In their muscles and their brains

They were mighty men of old  
That she nurtured at her side;  
Till like Vikings they went forth  
From the lone and silent North,  
And they strove, and they wrought, and they died;  
But the sons of old Dartmouth,  
The laurelled sons of Dartmouth,  
The Mother keeps them in her heart  
And guides their altar flame;  
The still North remembers them,  
The hill-winds know their name,  
And the granite of New Hampshire  
Keeps the record of their fame;  
And the granite of New Hampshire  
Keeps the record of their fame.

Men of Dartmouth set a watch  
Lest the old traditions fail!  
Stand as brother stands by brother!  
Dare a deed for thee old Mother!  
Greet the world, from the hills, with a hail!  
For the sons of old Dartmouth,  
The loyal sons of Dartmouth,  
Around the world they keep for her  
Their old chivalric faith;  
They have the still North in their soul,  
The hill winds in their breath,  
And the granite of New Hampshire  
Is made part of them til death.

Things changed after women were admitted to the College in 1972. The longstanding alma mater clearly did not reflect the new presence of women at the College and at convocation that year, “Dartmouth Undying” was sung in place of “Men of Dartmouth,” though not everyone was pleased with that decision (Krieger 1999: 360). *The Dartmouth* conducted a poll on the matter and found that the majority of women polled favored retaining Hovey’s original lyrics (Krieger 1999: 360).

Controversy over the alma mater persisted for several years when in 1986, the Council on Diversity suggested modifying the original lyrics, substituting another Dartmouth song that was

not “sex-specific,” or creating an entirely new song (Krieger 1999: 360). That year was also the last appearance of the song’s original lyrics in the commencement program, and protests ensued at convocation the following fall (Krieger 1999: 361). In response to the controversy, President David McLaughlin created a committee to investigate the matter and, despite their finding that 61 percent of students supported retaining the original lyrics, the committee recommended changes to the song (Krieger 1999: 361).

The song was still known as “Men of Dartmouth” until 1988 when a group of professors, alumni, and administrators reworked the lyrics with eight changes to the original poem (Krieger 1999: 361), omitting anything that could be construed as sexist or exclusionary. The second verse was omitted altogether, as it had been rarely sung before anyway, and only “in time of war or at memorial services” (Krieger 1999: 360). In May 1988, President James Freedman announced the changes and the new song, re-titled “Alma Mater,” became the College’s official song as it is known today (Krieger 1999: 361). Its lyrics are:

### **Alma Mater**

Dear old Dartmouth, give a rouse  
For the College on the hill,  
For the Lone Pine above her,  
And the loyal ones who love her.  
Give a rouse, give a rouse, with a will!  
For the sons of old Dartmouth,  
For the daughters of Dartmouth.  
Though 'round the girdled Earth they roam,  
Her spell on them remains.  
They have the still North in their hearts,  
The hill winds in their veins,  
And the granite of New Hampshire  
In their muscles and their brains.  
And the granite of New Hampshire  
In their muscles and their brains.

Dear old Dartmouth, set a watch,  
Lest the old traditions fail.  
Stand as sister stands by brother.  
Dare a deed for the old mother.  
Greet the world from the hills with a hail!  
For the sons of old Dartmouth,  
For the daughters of Dartmouth.  
Around the world they keep for her  
Their old undying faith.  
They have the still North in their soul,  
The hill winds in their breath,  
And the granite of New Hampshire  
Is made part of them 'til death.  
And the granite of New Hampshire  
Is made part of them 'til death.

This change was not insignificant. While it is understandable that the College wanted to acknowledge and reflect the dramatic changes that had occurred within the last decade or so (with the admission of women perhaps being the most notable), there is a great irony in that this song, with its famous line “Lest the old traditions fail,” implies the importance of tradition to Dartmouth and bemoans the idea that its traditions will fail. When a major Dartmouth tradition (e.g. being an all-male institution for over two hundred years) changed – or some may say it failed – the College was unusually quick to change yet another tradition by drastically amending its own beloved alma mater. But did the tradition actually *fail*, or was it modified with a new tradition subsequently invented in its place?

“Men of Dartmouth” was not the only renowned Dartmouth song that fell by the wayside. Dozens of other songs about the College composed by alumni seem to be swept under the rug in today’s climate. Zeller’s (1950) book includes many of them, and *The Dartmouth Review* in recent years has published some of them, usually in the paper’s first issue of the school year. The issue that I picked up during my research titled a page “Lost Songs of Old Dartmouth” and included an editor’s note explaining, “Presented here for your consideration and enjoyment is a



selection [sic] of the songs of which the present administration does not approve but which were sung by generations of Dartmouth students. Many of these songs were prohibited or altered because they were deemed offensive, tawdry, or insensitive. Still, these songs recall a different time and a different caliber of College spirit” (*The Dartmouth Review* 2006b). Maybe some Dartmouth traditions *appear* to fail, at least in the public spotlight, but remain more active on the fringes. *The Dartmouth Review* is just one force at the College that actively works toward preserving many of the older traditions (such as advocating the Indian for the College mascot). But despite the *Review*’s best efforts or the support of students and alumni, the Dartmouth administration seems bent on moving away from those sorts of traditions.

I find it highly ironic to see a college with its official song extolling tradition and lamenting its failure to suddenly cave in and make such noticeable, drastic changes to its own alma mater. Some undoubtedly saw this action as a “failure” of tradition. The changes at the College throughout its history, particularly within about the last forty years, are symptomatic of the familiar paradox of the clash between tradition and progress (J. Smith 2007: 197-98). But the truth as I see it is that while a major tradition may have changed, none of Dartmouth’s real “old traditions” actually failed. What the modification of the alma mater signifies is that Dartmouth’s “traditions” are less of a part of the Dartmouth Experience than what the College would have you believe. While the invented traditions evolve with the College and progress somewhat with the times, the fact that they are malleable attests to the point that minor changes in the traditions are not what pose a threat to their survival. The *invented* traditions, as mere components of the overall Dartmouth Experience, are a diversion from Dartmouth’s *true* old traditions of money, power, and prestige. Manning (2000: 9) writes that power, when expressed through ritualistic

acts like those found at elite colleges, is especially effective when indirect claims to power are made, such as through a reference to the divine or a “spirit” of some kind.

When examined in the context of the elite American colleges, none of the changes in the invented traditions seemed to affect Dartmouth’s real old traditions. The invented traditions are a form of indoctrination and socialization into the upper classes and act as a base to support the College and its fragile status as a member of an elite cohort. Had Dartmouth not changed its alma mater under pressure, it would have risked damaging its reputation and elite status and thus subjected its actual traditions to potential failure. This is yet another example of Dartmouth adopting a certain persona. Further evidence of the persona comes from the fact that despite changes to the alma mater, the conflict, and some might argue the original tradition, did not dissipate, as some male athletic teams continue to sing the original “Men of Dartmouth” (Buntz 2007b). But just because the new, “official” song is different, does that make Dartmouth any more inclusive or less discriminatory? My research – and my own personal experience – tells me no.

This discovery highlights the contradiction between Dartmouth as an educational institution and Dartmouth as a place. Over the course of my study I came to realize that Dartmouth College is more than *just* a college. Though I am very much captivated by the idea of Dartmouth and its public image (perhaps more accurately its persona), I found the reality of the College to be quite different from how it appears from outside the Dartmouth Bubble.

One thing that stuck out to me when reviewing all of the data that I collected is that while elite schools may be described as such because of their prestige, resources, and the people who make the schools what they are, I found that in my case at Dartmouth that “elite” is not just an abstraction, but that it is actually manifested outside of the College’s institutional statistics.

Things that we often take as mere ideas, such as social class, exclusion, and elitism are not just ideas and attitudes perpetuated at Dartmouth, but are literally a *part* of the College; they are built into its landscape, passed down in its folklore, present in its rituals and cultural events, and found in student attitudes and behavior. Dartmouth itself identifies these very qualities as central parts of its tradition, integral to its identity as a place and institution and thus, part of the Dartmouth Experience. Therefore, the concept of class, specifically the upper class, is literally *embodied* into Dartmouth, which *literally* makes Dartmouth an elite school.

Given this point I do not believe that class can be taken as a reification. The aspect of elitism seems to be neither open nor obfuscated, but it is something one must learn or already know to look for in the landscape and in the local culture. Within the Dartmouth community there is an awareness that it is there, but I was never sure of how conscious or complete that awareness was. Mills (1956: 30, 283) claims that, in the United States, the upper classes possess the greatest amount of class consciousness. In their study of Bedford, the Duncans (2004) make references to “codes” of class standing in that town, many of which compare well to my observations at Dartmouth. Likewise, Tuan (1974: 210-13) mentions a certain cognizance that elites have of their own geography. At Dartmouth, they were certainly aware enough to determine that I didn’t “belong” there. What I think this means as it applies to Dartmouth is that the idea of Dartmouth as an elite institution is not simply a product of its age, accomplishments, or stature. Rather, these are elements of the College that serve as mechanisms to justify and affirm that the College functions as a selective and exclusionary school not because being an elite school is simply a consequence of its historical reputation, but because it *wants* to be elite and it has the means to make that a reality as well as the ability to retain that status. Dartmouth

is capitalizing on its elite status and designation so it can maintain and continue its position as a place to condition and socialize the upper classes.

This more recent stance marks a drastic shift from the early days of the Ivy League colleges when they once prided themselves on offering a non-professional, liberal arts education (Thelin 1976). While this option is still available at these schools, it appears that there has been a noticeable swing toward working in the financial industry. Christian Kiely (2008) writes, “I can recount many stories about older friends who came to Dartmouth with diverse aspirations only to wind up on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.” Responding to the heavy emphasis on corporate recruiting as opposed to offering more options for liberal arts majors, Kiely (2008) complains that there is a bias toward economics majors and that finance and consulting are basically the two main choices for internship opportunities and post-graduation jobs at Dartmouth career fairs, despite the fact that these positions are advertised to be open to all majors. “The nature of Dartmouth’s finance-heavy corporate recruiting process starkly contrasts the College’s self-proclaimed identity as the top liberal arts school in the country,” Kiely (2008) argues. After interviewing some Dartmouth graduates on their post-graduation lives and careers, Sheldon (2006) quotes one who claims that her career path has been “not [typical] Dartmouth,” which she clarifies to mean anything that is not in finance or law.

Furthermore, class and its luxuries are evident in the social atmosphere at Dartmouth. I did not get to see too much of this up close, but Nina Bergmar (2009) addresses some of the pitfalls in Dartmouth’s “‘work hard, party hard’ mentality”:

In particular for upperclassmen, pledge term proves how students arrange their schedules according to their social life. Many choose to take two classes instead of three in order to have more free time to drink and perform pledge duties. Others pick “easy classes” to save their GPA while focusing their attention on their social life, rather than

their intellectual advancement. Instead of learning, these “students” become party animals.

I often hear my Greek-affiliated friends say that they find the social aspect of Dartmouth more important to them than their academic success, as long as they are doing “decent.” In fact, I have been scolded by some of my friends for “caring too much about school” as they worried that I “wasn’t hanging out enough.”

To be chastised for focusing on academics is to me just ridiculous and ignorant. Dartmouth is one of the most prominent academic institutions in the country. We worked hard to get here, so why give it all up for some Keystone and a large network of superficial party friends?

In short, paying \$50,000 a year simply to party is an absurd luxury.

Moreover, I have been told by these same friends that although their grades may suffer now, their intense social life and networking will pay off with important contacts for a future career.

I don’t know whether to cry or to laugh when I hear such statements.

Just like Bergmar, I am not sure whether to laugh or cry when I read her take on Dartmouth’s party culture, either. To repeat a question I asked earlier, I have to ask why students go to Dartmouth if an education is not what they really want from their time there? Is such a lifestyle representative of what getting an education means to these people? Is it seen as just a stepping stone? A mere rung on the ladder of the endless quest for status and social mobility? Batzell (1958: 331-32) mentions that going back for many decades, the elite schools have often been valued more for their social activities over their educational purposes and Douthat (2005) and Golden (2006) echo this sentiment in current times as well. Fussell (1983: 133) observes that the desire to attend college is built on “the perpetual American quest not for intellect but for respectability and status.”

And it is this realization that might upset me the most when I look back at my experience at Dartmouth. There are probably at least several hundred other people, in addition to myself, who would have given most anything just to have an *opportunity* to attend a school of that stature and pursue a world-class liberal arts education, as these colleges are intended to provide. And I find it so sad and disturbing that so many bright and promising students who work so hard

and spend so much time and money to get there only turn around and squander it by taking a job on Wall Street to make a quick buck.

Considering these realities, I believe that my study helps to illustrate the fact that educational inequality is not only an economic and social issue, but a cultural one as well. Instead of relying entirely on outside statistics and secondary sources when studying an elite college, I actually went to see Dartmouth up close and examine and observe the College on several levels. Through the example of the socializing process of the Dartmouth Experience, we can see that there is an entire *culture* behind socioeconomic stratification through the example of higher education. Because “elite” universities are ranked so highly in terms of quality and prestige, even though they are inaccessible to so many, could this perhaps reflect the importance of money and prestige in American society and imply that “elite” is less a term of quality than of exclusion?

While I believe that Dartmouth and the Ivies are clearly in the business of power and prestige, I am skeptical that this automatically or even necessarily suggests some sort of nefarious plot amongst the elite schools. Golden (2006) charges that despite their nonprofit, tax-exempt status, the elite universities are “shirking their mission to unearth and nurture diamonds in the rough” to help “enshrine an American aristocracy” (10) and, through legacy preference at these schools, they create family dynasties (122). Despite some evidence of this, I am not willing to go quite as far to further Golden’s argument. It would be both inaccurate and unfair for me to characterize Dartmouth as a type of playground or extended summer camp for the children of the wealthy or a secret “club” for the rich members of the Northeastern establishment, even though many people seem to treat it as such. Besides, I find that Dartmouth has several commendable qualities.

First, Dartmouth has an attractive campus, and, against the backdrop of rural New Hampshire, I found it to create an inspiring ambience. Secondly, unlike so many other colleges, Dartmouth appears to have a strong familial element (though some describe it as a “cult”), and it is not an impersonal place. Alice Zhao (2008) effectively captured this sentiment by describing how her freshman DOC trip was the beginning of a small but growing second family for her at Dartmouth. The small size of the school, the remoteness of Hanover, and the residential quality of the campus greatly add to the tendency to describe Dartmouth as special through the intimacy and camaraderie that is created at the College through these attributes. Dartmouth is indeed a community. It may not be entirely cohesive at all times, but there is a generally strong sense of community.

I am also attracted to its liberal arts atmosphere, and the humanities and social sciences do not seem to be looked down upon intellectually, even though it is debatable how serious the students are. I at least got the impression that no one would have made fun of me just for being a geography major. Despite its flaws, I still think that Dartmouth, in many ways, does or at least tries to uphold a certain ideal in education through its embracement of the liberal arts. And I do not doubt that the students are receiving a quality education (or at least have to opportunity to receive one).

The strong loyalty toward the College, unparalleled compared to most places I am aware of, is a superlative example of topophilia. Though topophilia means “love of place,” even Tuan (1974) concedes that such a love cannot always be clearly articulated and much of Dartmouth’s topophilia is often only vaguely described. Birmingham (1961: 162) wrote that “the college has a way of touching very deeply the hearts of young boys and holding this affection for the rest of their lives.” Looking at the phenomenon as an outsider, much like me, George O’Connell (1983:

34) asked, “Why would otherwise rational, unemotional achievers get weepy at the sight of Dartmouth Row and spend countless hours and considerable energy serving as fund-raisers, student recruiters, club organizers, and writers of letters to the *Alumni Magazine*?” Andrew Seal (2006) similarly touched on this by acknowledging,

Old-timers like to talk about the Hanover Plain bringing forth Dartmouth Men in some sort of bizarre four-year process that was half debauchery and half monasticism, but the truth is that Dartmouth really does go a long way toward shaping your ideas and your character. Some people react strongly against the dominant Dartmouth culture, but they absorb many other aspects and elements of Dartmouth that they find here and live in large part on that foundation. Others buy in equally as passionately to the whole package, and work a lot of their lives toward recreating a sense of their Dartmouth past wherever they go.

In fact, many of the “old-timers” end up coming back, as Gumprecht (2008: 342) reports that between 1990 and 2000 the senior citizen population (65-plus) in Hanover grew 60 percent, largely due to Dartmouth alumni returning to the area for retirement. Based on what I read compared to what I witnessed ethnographically, it seems that the strongest feelings toward Dartmouth are felt away from the campus or from a return after a long absence; while alumni highly value the College, current students seem much more to take their experience for granted.

Also worth noting is how technology affects how affection and loyalty for the College is shared, remembered, or memorialized. Gundling (2007c) reports how Dartmouth students and alumni use the Internet to post an array of Dartmouth-related topics from College politics to memories of how things used to be. Relating to the large storage capacity of BlitzMail accounts, Hafner (2003) reports how students and more recent alumni have (and often take advantage) of that program’s capability to save thousands of e-mail messages that forever serve as electronic records of their entire college experience. These developments demonstrate an interesting shift that shows the way in which time-honored Dartmouth traditions are understood, remembered, and perpetuated.



Dartmouth is the kind of school where students and alumni actually know and remember the alma mater. There is much to be said for such loyalty and pride for a small college. Daniel Webster was clearly onto something. I believe that part of the appeal and “magic” to the place that is Dartmouth is directly related to its geography and many have referred to a certain Dartmouth “place” quality. Its setting, its people, its culture, its traditions, and the design and physical appearance of the College, when combined, undoubtedly help to create an aura of special qualities that defy precise description from my fairly short experience there. And I agree with the Dartmouth community that there is indeed “something special” about Dartmouth; a certain intangible quality about the place is in the air even though an accurate, decisive, wholly adequate or even satisfactory explanation has proven elusive for over two hundred years. Maybe there really is a Dartmouth spirit.

If so, I believe that it is best exemplified and understood through Dartmouth’s strongest and most notable quality, its many traditions. Though I have been quite critical of the traditions throughout this study, I still think that, when taken at face value, Dartmouth’s traditions are wonderful. They foster a strong sense of unity, camaraderie, and community which, in turn, greatly help to create a strong institutional and place identity for the College. They are unquestionably a major reason for the success of the College. Like Manning (2000), I see a strong necessity for college traditions and I support the idea of maintaining them, and Shils (1981: 183) believes that a main reason universities have persisted is due to the many kinds of traditions that they harbor. Dartmouth does an especially good job of exemplifying meaningful collegiate traditions and has much to be proud of in this sense.

I feel that Dartmouth may be a standout example of the importance of traditions and why they play such a key role in defining and understanding a place because its traditions also help to

create feelings of both continuity and permanence, perhaps to convey a sense of timelessness or immortality at the College. The traditions act as constants around the changing institution (J. Smith 2007). It is almost as if the Dartmouth Experience is planned to be some sort of fairy tale: Young people leave home and come to an old, storied, and remote college in an idyllic wilderness setting, a world unto itself. There they build a strong community of scholarship and fellowship and cement it through rustic traditions that they create and pass down to each entering class. The “fairy tale” that is Dartmouth is further supported by its legendary figures and the lore that surrounds them, such as the heroic Eleazar Wheelock who conquered the wilderness to tame and civilize the Indian; the steadfast statesman Daniel Webster, passionately and tearfully defending his beloved College from dissolution; and Fred Harris, who bravely explored the mountains and forests of New Hampshire and founded the Dartmouth Outing Club as a way for Dartmouth men to appreciate, respect, and protect the fragile environment that surrounds them. It almost amounts to a form of institutional ancestor worship by the way that such Dartmouth figures are elevated and remembered. Jonathan Smith (2007: 197) reminds us that “humans are place-making creatures who make a location into a place by both building and storytelling.” It appears that with all the talk of a Dartmouth “experience” or “spirit,” that the seemingly inexplicable love for the College and Hanover, when as a fairy tale experience, becomes an example of a consciously-constructed mystical place (Chamberlain 2001).

While I have already discussed in some detail why tradition is so important at Dartmouth, and there are hundreds more sources that I could cite on the matter, there are two more that I uncovered that help speak for why I believe that Dartmouth tradition is an especially positive quality of the College. Chris Curran (2001) wrote a zealous column titled “The Essence of Dartmouth,” arguing for the defense of Dartmouth tradition, as he feels that the “Dartmouth

spirit [is] under attack by persons attempting to change the essence of our College” (namely the administration) and that “[s]omeone will need to stand up to these paternalistic influences, to preserve the uniqueness of Dartmouth.” Curran (2001) specifically cites DOC trips and the annual bonfire as community-building traditions and, by participating in these traditions, students feel the power of the Dartmouth “spirit.”

In a similar column, focusing on the example of Homecoming as a central Dartmouth tradition, Zachary Gottlieb (2007b), attacks “the administrative emasculation of tradition,” and argues that “Homecoming, and homecoming alone, may be what makes us all Dartmouth students, and what makes Yale and Harvard and Princeton all beacons of heartlessness and sterility. We are the last Ivy College; the only one that cares for undergraduates so warmly, with professors that reject higher incomes for lower student faculty ratios.” “As our Board of Trustees grows ever more powerful,” writes Gottlieb (2007b), “as some administrators and students continue to contest free speech in the name of political correctness, as summer term may face an undeniable castration, and as we change the ways we see Dartmouth in the future, we may lose what She represents: ‘It is, sir, as I have said a small college, —and yet there are those who love it.’” Gottlieb (2007b) then advances that “we are obliged to maintain the traditions of dear Dartmouth for ourselves and posterity.” In an impassioned finale to his column, Gottlieb (2007a) concludes,

The pressure of *World and News Report* weighs heavily on the minds of James Wright and the Board. If we don’t have a well funded research program, how will we make the list? If we don’t have the brightest students, how can we compete with the other Ivies? Appearance to the outside world should not truly concern those who have become Dartmouth insiders. . . .

This is our time at an institution much greater than we, and as we take part in changing Her persona, we must evaluate the effects on the future. Before we jump to make any changes in the name of liberalism and progressive ideology, we must remember that the “we” includes all students, current, past and future.

Before we change our mascot, our Board, our alumni involvement, our sports programs, our homecoming traditions, and our love of tradition, let us remember that the most revered things are often the longest lived.

May homecoming be a reminder of our common identity and our common promise to uphold the many traditions which are not ours to pervert in the name of progress.

I am intrigued by Gottlieb's use of the word "persona" in his column. And I am also not the only outsider who admires Dartmouth's traditions. Anish Mitra (2009), a student at Brown, wrote a column on what he perceives as the unfortunate lack of traditions at Brown, claiming that "Brown offers very few opportunities for individuals looking to form official group bonds that will last a lifetime." Mitra (2009) specifically mentions Harvard's finals clubs, Princeton's eating clubs, and the secret societies at Dartmouth and Yale as points of comparison and comes off as almost despondent that Brown's student culture does not offer or support anything comparable to the other Ivies he names.

But we cannot forget that the Dartmouth traditions that its community loves and upholds, and that I and some others envy, are invented traditions. While Hobsbawm (1983) may have some compelling points about invented traditions, I do not completely agree with his more restrictive concept of tradition because I see traditions that have been reasonably established as genuine, regardless of whether or not they are "invented." I suppose that I subscribe to a more flexible concept of tradition, following Shils (1981), and I do not see inventing traditions as inherently negative. There is much to be said for the clear affinity for this aspect of the College's culture and the pride associated with it. Though these traditions today may be used primarily as a component of Dartmouth's brand development, it is still the case that not many other colleges can boast as loudly of such loyal and dedicated students and alumni. I would never suggest that Dartmouth abandon these traditions or let them fail and I, and I suspect that many at Dartmouth would agree with Gross's (1992: 3-4) argument that

Without tradition, it is said, we are thrown into spiritual and moral decay. Life becomes increasingly empty and vacuous, as entire populations become unable to discern what is valuable from what is valueless. Furthermore, without tradition people are said to lose touch with whole realms of experience and meaning which had been nourished for generations, but which are now slipping out of reach. In light of this, a new task is proclaimed for the contemporary age, namely to hold onto, recover, or restore tradition as much as is humanly possible, since ultimately the alternative to preservation or restoration is nihilism.

Tradition is important not only at Dartmouth, but I feel that it holds important implications in higher education and in wider society; it should be protected and maintained. Dartmouth is a shining example of the role and importance of traditions. I think that I have some understanding of the feeling of continuity and timelessness that tradition brings to the College, the perseverance of Dartmouth tradition, and the Dartmouth spirit. Or, at least, it is easy for me to see where such great pride comes from.

Returning to Mitra (2009), one can detect what his motivations for such traditions are. While his column shows a superficial preference for the invented traditions that he envies, it is clear that Mitra (2009) understands the role that such traditions play in supporting the more surreptitious traditions that I referred to earlier. In his column, Mitra (2009) suggests that through the establishment of traditions akin to those of its Ivy peers, “Brown would benefit from a having a culture of respect for natural aristocracies, elites and individuals dedicated to secretly preserving the University's age-old ideals.” He goes on to propose that “Brown might enhance its elitist culture” through moves such as lowering its acceptance rate or reducing the size of its undergraduate population to “increase the value of every seat at Brown and [to] also enhance the University's international image” (Mitra 2009). Mitra (2009) rationalizes, “By fostering a culture of elitism on campus, Brown would undoubtedly attract more wealthy and powerful applicants. This might dramatically increase donations and the size of the endowment. As the endowment continues to shrink, being part of an exclusive society with access to its own

financing is more important than ever.” He also mentions that “[e]litism is a fundamental Ivy League value” (Mitra 2009).

Though on the surface, many may shun Mitra’s (2009) suggestions, I think we all have an understanding of where he’s coming from and why “tradition” seems to be so important in the Ivy League. Dartmouth’s traditions and the example that they set helps to fill a hollowness in both higher education and in wider society. This hollowness and how it has been reflected in society has been already been addressed by figures such as Charles Sykes (1990) and Allan Bloom (1987), and I fear that it has only grown since their discussion on the matter.

Invented or not, Dartmouth’s traditions are wonderful, but they offer a misleading image of what the College *really* seems to be about and do not accurately represent the true Dartmouth. Despite their magnificence, they merely add to the public persona of the College and effectively conceal its identity and its true “old traditions.” Furthermore, the reality behind the “old traditions” calls into question the values of those not just at Dartmouth or in the Ivy League, but also the rest of us in American society.

Referring back to the section on why American society places such a high value on institutions such as the Ivy League, I ask, “What does this say about us with regard to the esteem we hold for these institutions?” From the outside, these schools presumably embody forward-thinking, cutting edge, rigorous institutions of high standards. But when one examines them more closely, one finds in fact that they are exclusionary, classist, socially distant, and inaccessible places. Golden (2006: 297-98), who seems especially perturbed by this contradiction, argues, “All American schoolchildren are taught that if they work hard enough, they can fulfill their ambitions, even become president. The elite colleges that unlock the door to success in our society contradict that promise, and sow anger and disillusion, by compromising

standards to admit children of the rich, famous, and powerful.” He even goes as far as to suggest that the elite schools are undermining the functionality of the United States: “The casualties aren’t just individual students but America itself. To stifle talent and exalt mediocrity is to weaken the country’s economic competitiveness and political leadership” (Golden 2006: 11).

What happened to equality and opportunity for all? How can it be that seven of the eight Ivies are Colonial colleges, founded on certain American ideals before our country was even formally established, and yet they seem to so greatly refute basic American principles such as meritocracy and a fair shake at the American Dream? How can these schools promote and claim “liberal” agendas and social justice when they have complete control over who can attend? Given the extreme competition to get into these schools, what is going through the minds of students wanting to go there? Why do they want to be a part of that? Are the costs of elite schools justified or are they just a prohibitive mechanism to appeal to the wealthy and exclude the uncouth? Are people *really* getting what they pay for? Twitchell (2004) strongly implies that, in the industry of higher education, people not only get what they pay for, but they are also what they buy. He argues that the quality of an education is based on the quality of its students (Twitchell 2004: 156-57), but I see that as flawed logic in the case of the elite colleges.

Elites are fascinating because so many people envy and attempt to emulate them, often without direct knowledge of this sector of society. Consider their “tradition,” as Birmingham (1961: 6-7) put it, of famous and visible alumni working in all sectors of society, perpetuating a cycle of wealth and influence that has only grown in prosperity and power. If one looks at politics, law, entertainment, the media, education, business, medicine, science and technology, it is hard not to notice a preponderance of Ivy League graduates working in prominent positions in these fields, perhaps even disproportionately so. I feel that this cannot be a mere coincidence.

Those of us who are not a part of that clique are often permanently excluded and are only left to wonder what makes the anointed ones so special.

I have always been fascinated with how a diploma from an elite school is often greeted with “oohs” and “aahs” if it is listed on a résumé or bragged about at a social event. Why do people feel so impressed and feel the need to give these schools the reputation and image that they receive when there are some provocative questions about their validity? During his senior year of college, Hank Lopez (1979: 1-2), when consulting a professor, a Harvard alumnus, about which offer to accept for graduate studies, his professor suggested Harvard “because Harvard is the fountain of all bullshit – but you can’t say that unless you’ve been there.” Words of wisdom indeed.

I find it highly ironic that in general society people excoriate elitism and exclusion and yet the Ivy League is seemingly worshipped, adored, and fetishised by so many. In the fashionably liberal and Marxist-chic world of the elite American colleges, I can see no better example of commodity fetishism than an Ivy League diploma. Still, if one had the chance to attend or work at one of these schools can you imagine how difficult it would be to turn an opportunity like that down? It would be almost *foolish* to do so.

Topically appropriate to my research is the book *Snobbery* by essayist Joseph Epstein (2002: 29) where he pinpoints the desire to rise in status as a distinctly American trait: “The attempt to rise in American democracy may be the primary, the central, the essential American story.” Considering the ever-growing frenzy surrounding the push to get into an elite college, the Ivy League may offer an excellent example to support Epstein’s observation. Elite schools have become synonymous with and are embodiments of wealth and prestige.



Twitchell (2004) attests to the importance that *U.S. News and World Report's* annual college rankings and the highly influential role they play in higher education and greater society, which cannot be underestimated. This causes me to wonder if it is not a coincidence that *U.S. News* ranks the Ivies so highly. Are they ranked highly because of their quality, or because they reflect society's fixation with the idea that having more money and power truly means that a person or place can be "better" (Mills 1956)? Is this an underlying sentiment and guiding principle behind the rankings of colleges in the U.S. and the fury get in? Is a scholar is somehow less of a scholar if he receives a doctorate from the University of Wyoming rather than Princeton? Some seem to think so despite the fact that such a comparison, when considered objectively, is completely illogical.

But it is this overarching question that prompted me to consider studying the Ivy League. And it is this question that has both fascinated and disturbed me for many years. It is also an excellent example that prompts us to consider why, geographically, we value certain places over others. So many people seem to look up to the Ivy League with the perception that they are ideals and last refuges where discovery, knowledge, and scholarship are privileged above all else. But are we setting our expectations too high and being unrealistic or have we been let down? Baltzell (1964) expressed some puzzlement as to why the word *caste* has never been applied to understand the class system of the United States; he convincingly uses the term in the American context throughout *The Protestant Establishment*. *Caste* is both an appropriate and accurate term to use in the context of my study when describing the distance between Dartmouth and the other Ivies in the hierarchy of American higher education and, furthermore, I argue that education, especially higher education, might be the best example to illustrate the fact that there

is a caste system in the U.S. Fussell (1983) mentions that the American obsession with the hierarchy of the university system is an indicator of class and class anxiety.

This realization about the fact that the Ivy League schools are indeed elite institutions (with multiple connotations) along with my findings from my study of Dartmouth may not be all that surprising to many readers. To reinforce some stereotypes about the elite colleges may not be all that groundbreaking in itself and for me to hurl insults and accusations of snobbery or elitism would not have accomplished much. I do feel, however, that my study now provides some documentation for much of American society's long-held suspicions toward its elite universities and also establishes that the students and faculties alone are not the only components that make these schools "elite."

My initial attraction to and understanding of Dartmouth as an embodiment of a certain educational and cultural ideal was not unfounded, as this is how many perceive the place from a distance and it is one major way in which the College markets itself. Perhaps the romantic image that I had of the Ivy League came from the fact that few people where I grew up went to these institutions, so a romantic image was all I had to go on. (I seem to remember Northwestern usually being the most sought-after, high profile university where I grew up.)

To illustrate this perception, during my research I was always drawn to Thornton Hall (Figure 18), home of Dartmouth's Departments of Religion and Philosophy, which I personally found to be an inspiring building. I remember entering the building and looking in at an empty Room 10,1 and instantly I envisioned a scene in the late fall or early winter term, with a sage professor sitting at the head of the seminar table surrounded by seven or eight enthralled students, taking in the professor's teachings about the writings of Josephus or the spread of Buddhism as a light snow visible from the classroom window slowly but noticeably accumulated

outside. It is a scene that one might expect to encounter at a school like Dartmouth. But it also made me wonder, given the contradictory information I had collected, if such a scene has or would ever realistically occur there.

And it would not be unfair to point out that the Ivies often use these sorts of popular images, regardless of their accuracy, to market themselves. Viewbooks, printed at most every university for marketing purposes, are central to setting the brand for that particular university (Twitchell 2004: 144). Gumprecht (2008: 67-68) states that viewbooks noticeably put more emphasis on images than text and this observation clearly applies to Dartmouth. Before my fieldwork I examined such a viewbook and was struck with a certain expectation of what to expect during my research at Dartmouth; after my research, I can look at that same viewbook and other promotional material from the College that I collected and I find what it purports to border on the absurd.

Was I right to not prejudge Dartmouth or just being naive for not seeing what it really is? It was around the end of September during my fieldwork, just after the beginning of the fall term, when I started to understand what was going on at Dartmouth. And when I came to this realization, I was overcome with a *profound* sense of disappointment. I was in New Hampshire – by no means a foreign land – and yet I was in a completely different world. Some will say, “All right, Chuck! Just admit that you’re jealous!” And to that I respond that *of course* I am jealous. I am particularly jealous of the resources of the College and the fact that students can rest assured that their degrees will be highly valued and they will have more doors open to them. This is not to say that I am ashamed of my background, as I have attended two competitive universities, which I suppose is nothing to slouch about, but I have only gone to public schools for my entire education, and my socioeconomic background could only be most accurately

described as middle class. But given the social and cultural value placed on the elite institutions, millions of others and I will always lack the greater sense of security that holders of more prestigious degrees will have. Though I may have come from a somewhat privileged upbringing, I now see that there are definitely varying degrees of privilege.

Just as Americans view Harvard with “awe and resentment” (Lopez 1979: 235), I feel both admiration and disdain toward Dartmouth. But as critical as I have been toward the Ivies, I find it difficult not to respect them. Regardless, over the course of my study the sentiment grew and convinced me that, realistically, I probably would have never fit in as a student at Dartmouth and there are reasons why that go well beyond my own personal doubts. And as much as I hate to admit it, I think that if I were a part of Dartmouth then I, too, would likely have a higher opinion of myself and a lower one of many others. To echo Epstein (2002), wouldn’t most of us?

Though much of my research has focused on exclusion as a central theme, I feel that while I was never a member of the Dartmouth community, I did slowly develop a sense of attachment to the place. I am one of only a handful of individuals who has taken the time to read about and study Dartmouth so extensively. I have read thousands of pages about the College, spent several months digging through the archives at Rauner, and spent hundreds of hours observing the Dartmouth student body. I have probably looked at Dartmouth more critically and reflected on it more than 80 percent of those who have ever attended or worked for the College. I may even know more about Dartmouth than some of those people. And yet, I have never had more than an informal affiliation with the College. Although I was at Dartmouth for only a short while, I got what I feel to be a pretty decent look at the social and cultural life of the College. And I realized that this culture is meant and open only for certain kinds of people.

Still, Dartmouth had a profound effect on me. I may not have had the chance to partake in the “Dartmouth Experience” (which undoubtedly colored my assessment of the College), but, regardless, my time at Dartmouth became a critical chapter in my life as the site of my doctoral research. I feel safe in saying that, in its own way and through these circumstances, Dartmouth sincerely affected me. While I may not have had *the* Dartmouth Experience, I definitely had *a* Dartmouth experience. I will never again be able to read or hear about Dartmouth without recalling the time that I spent there. Even well after I had completed my fieldwork and left Hanover, I occasionally had dreams about being back at Dartmouth. I miss some things like the clean air and beautiful scenery as it changed with the seasons. I miss walking up the hill to campus every day and picking up a copy of *The Dartmouth* to read what news or opinions there may have been to add to my research. Thanks to the Internet, I am easily able to follow news and developments at the College as they impact my research or out of personal interest. And I do. I have traveled across the United States and in many countries around the world, and, speaking as a geographer, I can say without the slightest hesitation that Dartmouth College is one of the most fascinating places that I have ever visited. I may not be an alumnus who can wistfully recall my days at the College, but it undeniably affected me, albeit in a different way. Strangely, it became a small part of my life.

But while Dartmouth has the ability to captivate so many, its fanciful qualities do not match the realities behind its institutional culture. Dartmouth and its Ivy League counterparts, as understood by much of the general public, are essentially an illusion. They represent an ideal that even their own insiders and the already-initiated aspire to and attempt to create. In Dartmouth’s case, this is done through the creation of traditions and myths and through actions and stories that help to construct a distinct, even unique, culture and society. Commenting on

such an image, Zeke Turner (2007) wrote a satirical column on the idea of Dartmouth as a type of tourist attraction given the administration's focus on maintaining an image. He concludes by referencing the College motto and reminds readers that

it is important to remember that our campus was created around a fantasy. New England towns such as Hanover do not occur naturally. Our green, our Main Street and, to some extent, our student body are like props on a movie set. Our reality seems authentic to the untrained eye, but maybe our obsession with progress hints at an underlying dissatisfaction with the way things are. We are constantly trying to become better than ourselves. We are and we always have been a voice crying out in the wilderness listening to a fading echo. (Turner 2007)

People at Dartmouth, both in the past and present, know that to create such a special place it must be for those who were or are fortunate enough to gain entrance into this culture to both be a part of it and to preserve it. Wider society sees this from the outside and wants to be a part of it as well, as evidenced by the extreme and growing competition to "get in." The fact that incoming class sizes have been relatively consistent in recent years means that Dartmouth is not admitting fewer students as much as it is turning away greater numbers; the increasing desire for students to get admitted to prestigious and selective institutions mixed with stiffer competition creates a cycle driven by the market that only benefits Dartmouth and the other Ivies and further solidifies their elite status. The result creates a sense of value for these places as they are perceived to be gateways to upward social and economic mobility and to gain entrance to an elite group which, in essence, is actually more diverse and variable than it once was. Thus, to maintain an elite position, those in elite institutions (educational or otherwise) must create an image that they themselves must attempt to live up to and preserve. This is provocative when one considers the many examples from Dartmouth history that were clearly deliberately constructed or invented. This is the motivation for the creation of Dartmouth's persona and the paradox

behind it is that through its persona, Dartmouth attempts to project an image that the College itself cannot live up to.

Though I have been rather critical toward Dartmouth and the Ivy League, I want to be clear that it was never my intention to try and “get” or “expose” them. The Ivy League was never an inevitability and history indicates that there is no imperative that these schools would have ever acquired a collective identity with which they are known today (Thelin 1976: 6). In fact, if the faculty and students of the late nineteenth century could see these schools today, they would be amazed by their affluence and the prestige associated with them (Thelin 1976: 7). I think what concerns me most about the Ivy League schools is that the public image and understanding of these institutions only present a rather small piece of the picture in terms of how these institutions are represented and understood, and I suspect this merely partial view is what the Ancient Eight intend. I just wish that there was more honesty and transparency among them. As places, these schools are fascinating. But when one begins to peel away their romantic images, it becomes clear that their place personas obscure other identities. And, consequently, this only makes them *more* fascinating.

But perhaps we need to get back to such colleges serving as places to receive an education rather than as institutions that socialize and indoctrinate the wealthy and elites. While white guilt and a sense of noblesse oblige may prod the Ivies into handing out a few scholarships here and there or pressure them to speak loudly for social justice and inclusion, the truth is that these schools are only exacerbating the widening of the already-polarized American socioeconomic structure. If Dartmouth or any of the others honestly wanted to be *truly* competitive schools, they would be public institutions.

Still, I highly doubt that anything will change. Although some traditions have failed or are failing, the sentiment behind them remains and tradition, in one form or another, will always be at Dartmouth, even if it must be reinvented. And despite my and society's criticisms of the Ivy League, the old traditions will survive because we *want* them to survive. While we may balk at them and accuse them of snobbery, a small part of us secretly wishes to join them. Ruining the old traditions and bringing the Ivy League down to a level with the rest of us would only deprive us of such an opportunity. Considering that Dartmouth is constructed culturally and socially more so than the chimerical images and pseudo-historical past it draws upon to represent itself, it leaves us to wonder what kind of place Dartmouth would be or, perhaps more importantly, who it would be for, lest the old traditions fail?



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## APPENDIX

### THE WHEELOCK SUCCESSION: DARTMOUTH PRESIDENTS, 1769-PRESENT

<u>President</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Alumnus</u>
Eleazar Wheelock	1769-1779	-
John Wheelock	1779-1815	1771
Francis Brown	1815-1820	1805
Daniel Dana	1820-1821	1788
Bennet Tyler	1822-1828	-
Nathan Lord	1828-1863	-
Asa Dodge Smith	1863-1877	1830
Samuel Colcord Bartlett	1877-1892	1836
William Jewett Tucker	1893-1909	1861
Ernest Fox Nichols	1909-1916	-
Ernest Martin Hopkins	1916-1945	1901
John Sloan Dickey	1945-1970	1929
John G. Kemeny	1970-1981	-
David T. McLaughlin	1981-1987	1954, Tuck 1955
James O. Freedman	1987-1998	-
James E. Wright	1998-2009	-
Jim Yong Kim	2009-	-

## VITA

Charles H. Wade was born in 1979 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Raised in Cincinnati's banal northern suburb of West Chester, Chuck always had a fascination for how life varies from place to place and he developed a deep interest and aptitude for the social sciences at an early age. After completing high school in 1997, Chuck set out for new experiences through his attraction to large, Southern universities and he enrolled at Louisiana State University. While at LSU, he haphazardly took some geography classes and he realized that geography was the course of study for him, particularly cultural geography. Realizing that he was not satisfied with just a bachelor's degree and that there was so much more to learn, Chuck returned to Ohio to begin a master's program in geography at Miami University, where he focused mostly on urban geography. By the time he was nearing completion of his master's degree, Chuck had decided that he wanted to make a career out of his studies and he decided to pursue a doctorate. After finishing his master's in 2003, Chuck ended up back at LSU to begin work on a doctorate, where he focused on cultural, social, and historical geography. Though he is a geographer at heart and by training, Chuck considers himself to be a bit of a general social scientist with wide interests in anthropology, sociology, and history. But the concepts of place, space, landscape, and region always keep him coming back to geography. Chuck's other interests include traveling, reading, writing, walking, music, film, dogs, the sciences (in general), and culture and society in their myriad forms.