

## Fulbright Lecture 2017

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### Universities in an Age of Populism

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I wonder what Senator Fulbright would think if he were alive today. I think it fair to assume that he would find himself, as he so often did in the course of his long career, out of favour with the mainstream. His was not a philosophy of "America First." A committed multilateralist; he supported the establishment of the United Nations. He sought to break down, not erect, barriers between peoples. He promoted exposure to - rather than retreat from - foreign cultures. He once said:

*"The rapprochement of peoples is only possible when differences of culture and outlook are respected and appreciated rather than feared or condemned, when the common bond of human dignity is recognized as the essential bond for a peaceful world."*

Fulbright was a remarkable man, a Southern Democrat who lived through most of the twentieth century, from 1905 to 1995. He became President of the University of Arkansas at the age of 34, but gave it up to run for Congress, and after one term ran for Senate, where he served from 1945 to 1974. He became the longest-serving Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He is remembered for his opposition to McCarthyism. He was the only senator to vote against the appropriations for the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, chaired by Joseph McCarthy. He is also

remembered for his early and vocal opposition to the Vietnam War; he railed against the populist impulses and “angry moralism” that led to the war.

It is worth remembering, however, that not all of his views or actions would find favour today. Fulbright unseated Hattie Carraway, the first woman ever elected to the US Senate. He was a segregationist who signed the Southern Manifesto against the Supreme Court judgement in Brown vs Board of Education. This was the landmark case in which the US Supreme Court declared the practice of establishing separate public schools for blacks and whites to be unconstitutional. He filibustered the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and he voted against the 1965 Voting Rights Act. What do we make of a man who held views we admire and those we despise - do we tear down his memorials? Or do we acknowledge both, accept that the world is a complicated place, that even our heroes are fallible, and try to focus on, and build upon, the positive?

We are here today because of something else that Senator Fulbright did. In 1946 he founded the Fulbright Program which created scholarships for Americans to study abroad and foreign students to study in the US. The Program was intended as a protection against populism. He explained: *“The simple purpose of the exchange program is to erode the culturally rooted mistrust that sets our nations against one another.”* He drafted legislation that required the government to sell surplus war supplies and use the proceeds to fund the program. The US government continues to fund the program to this day. (Although the Trump Administration has proposed a 47% cut in its budget.) There have been over 370,000 recipients of Fulbright scholarships including 43 Nobel Laureates and 37 Heads of State. Students from over 160 countries participate each year.

At Oxford, we are proud of our links with Senator Fulbright. He studied in Pembroke College as a Rhodes Scholar. He was the first Rhodes Scholar to enter the US Senate. He also served as referee for William Jefferson Clinton when he applied for a Rhodes Scholarship from Arkansas. Fulbright studied at Oxford after completing a history degree at the University of Arkansas and before gaining a law degree at George Washington University. He was a member of the Founding Council of Oxford's Rothermere American Institute and today, rooms, lectures and visiting professorships bear his name.

Fulbright has been described as courtly, aloof, and patrician. He despaired of the role of public opinion in influencing foreign policy, and said of the then President, John F Kennedy: *"He alone, in his role as teacher and moral leader, can hope to overcome the excesses and inadequacies of a public opinion that is all too often ignorant of the needs, the dangers, and the opportunities in our foreign relations."* There would not be many today who see Kennedy's successor as a teacher or moral leader, but many would share the view that public opinion can be roused to have an ill-informed and deleterious influence on foreign relations.

Faced with an aroused public, Fulbright did not seek to accommodate to populism, to harness it for his own political ends, nor to retreat from it. Rather, he energetically sought to create an alternative. There is a model for us here. Fulbright believed that *"the essence of intercultural education is the acquisition of empathy, the ability to see the world as others see it, to allow for the possibility that others may see something we have failed to see."* This was his antidote to populism and I believe it remains the best antidote today.

We are here today to honour a man who is known for having - often at some considerable personal cost - stood up in the face of populist sentiment in

favour of McCarthyism and later the war in Vietnam. His response was to hold his ground and to support a liberal interconnected model of global education. I will argue this evening that we should do the same.

## Populism

The term populism has enjoyed a considerable renaissance in recent years though, as with many new phrases, people are often not entirely clear - and certainly not consistent - in what they mean by it. In short, it means a popular movement - which can be of the left or right - that opposes the establishment. In the past, universities were often at the vanguard of social movements - think of the 1960s in the US, France, Germany and Italy - but not this time. The populist movements of today draw on long traditions of anti-intellectualism in the US and the UK that consign universities to the ranks of the self-serving elite.

The term populism has been widely used since the 1890s when an agrarian movement that emerged from the Kansas Farmers Alliance used the term to describe the political views they - and other alliance groups in the West and South - were developing. At the time, both Republicans and Democrats delighted in the progress of American finance and industry, while farmers suffered a devastating drop in prices. Farm prices fell two-thirds in the Midwest and South between 1870 and 1890, at the same time as monopoly railroads raised the cost of transporting farm produce, and salaries were threatened by low wage immigrants from China, Japan and Italy. The People's Party was founded in the belief that both Democrats and Republicans were in the grip of the plutocracy, whereas they represented "the people" or "the plain people" who were being left behind. If this sounds familiar, it's probably not a coincidence.

While Jacksonian Democrats wanted to restore popular democracy by eliminating the role of government in the economy, the populists wanted the government to intervene to counter economic injustice. In the 1892 election the People's Party, notwithstanding their relative lack of resources, received 8% of the vote and carried 5 states. Two years later they won 10% of the vote electing 4 Congressmen and 4 Senators, 21 state executives and 465 state legislators. The major parties took notice and contrived to steal their clothes by incorporating some of their platform, so that in the 1896 election the populist vote migrated to the two major parties. (Mainstream parties incorporating the platform of a smaller and more extreme populist party in order to remove them as an electoral threat, again, this does sound familiar, doesn't it?)

John Judis has traced populist movements in the US since then, such as Huey Long's "share our wealth" campaign in the early 1930s which pressured Roosevelt to address economic concerns. The term enjoyed a renaissance in the 1950s as it was applied broadly to describe both fascist and communist movements in Europe as well as right wing, anti-communist McCarthyites and Argentinian Peronistas. Academics in the sixties had various explanations for the phenomenon. Some saw it as caused by anger at declining social status, others attributed it to nationalist nostalgia, and others to authoritarian politicians seeking support for their desire to undermine democratic institutions. In the US, George Wallace's populist campaign in favour of segregation was designed to preserve working-class neighbourhoods and was followed on the right by Pat Buchanan's Reform Party and more recently the Tea Party. On the left we have seen the Occupy Wall Street movement and, in the last election, the unanticipated popularity of Bernie Sanders.

Cas Mudde wrote in a 2002 book in the Oxford University Press Very Short Introduction Series that populism is a “thin ideology” which is to say that it is simply a framework rather than a world view, a framework that sets up “pure people” on the one hand against a “corrupt elite” on the other (as compared with pluralism which accepts the legitimacy of many different groups.) He argues that this “thin ideology” can be attached to all kinds of “thick ideologies” such as socialism, nationalism or imperialism, and so on, in order to explain the world and justify a specific agenda.

This explains how the term populism can be ascribed to such diverse political operatives as the Dutch Geert Wilders, a secular nationalist who demands a crackdown on Islam in defence of gay rights, as well as Jaroslaw Kaczynski, a religious nationalist who pushed for a Catholic takeover of Poland’s institutions from the elite secular liberals, and the anarcho-socialists in Spain’s Podemos who demand the takeover of vacant buildings owned by “la casta” (the elite caste) and their distribution to the “gente” the pure people.

Populists hold that only one group is legitimate, the people, however defined. Mudde argues that the populist view of their mission is essentially moral. The distinction between the people and the elite is not your wealth, but rather your values. They therefore maintain that they alone represent the people. They may not win all their votes, but believe they win all the votes of decent hardworking people who have been exploited by the establishment.

Princeton academic Jan Werner Muller argues in What is Populism that populists only lose when the “silent majority” also known as the “real people” have not had a chance to speak, hence the popularity of conspiracy theories among these groups. If the people’s politician doesn’t win, they have been

cheated. In the recent US election candidate Trump repeatedly claimed that the election was being rigged by his opponent. (It turns out, of course, that he may have had a point, it may indeed have been rigged, but in his favour and by the Russians!) Two thirds of Trump supporters believed the campaign was being rigged while 80% of Clinton supporters and 57% of all respondents believed the election was fair.

Curiously, even when populists enter government they still have somebody to blame and manage to convey themselves as victims. Right wing Erdogan in Turkey blames Gulen and his domestic supporters, while left wing Hugo Chavez in Venezuela blamed foreign enemies. On some occasions, faced with the reality of governing, populists moderate and lose their appeal as outsiders, as with Syriza in Greece and the True Finns in Finland. In others, they take aim at the institutions of the state which they perceive as countervailing powers. The attack on non-compliant judges in the US and the UK, the description of judges as enemies of the people by the Daily Mail in the UK and President Trump in the US is a foretaste of Hungary's Orban lowering the retirement age for judges in order to fill the new positions with loyalists, and most extreme, Turkey's Erdogan's wholesale attack on the judiciary.

Ominously, both Erdogan in Turkey and Orban in Hungary have taken aim at universities seeing them as countervailing sources of pluralism and perceiving in their autonomy a threat to state monopoly. Orban's efforts to shut down the Central European University in Bucharest, which was created precisely to support the development of liberal democratic values in the region was surpassed only by Erdogan's wholesale attack on academics and universities in the wake of the recent coup attempt.

Generally, according to Muller, populists define “the people” as those who agree with them. He argues that populists put words into the mouths of what is, after all, their own creation. As an example of this he cites Nigel Farage’s assertion that Britain’s vote to leave the EU was “a victory for real people” as if the 48% of British people who voted Remain were not real people. Muller believes populists to be defined by their claim that they alone represent the people, that all others are illegitimate. He distinguishes between inclusive and exclusive varieties of populism. Exclusive populism, exemplified by supporters of Trump, but more common in Europe, focuses on shutting out stigmatised groups, like migrants. Inclusive populism, more often found in Latin America, demands that politics be opened up to stigmatised groups

The surprise election of Donald Trump is seen as a victory for populism and certainly it came as a surprise to the establishment (as well as, apparently, to the candidate himself). Donald Trump, however, did not set out as a populist, but thanks to the strategy of Steve Bannon, he became one. This was crucial to his ultimate victory. Trump’s initial message was not one of the *pure people* against the *corrupt elite*, rather it was the *brilliant deal maker* against the *corrupt elite*. When he announced his candidacy, Trump used versions of the word “I” 256 times. By contrast, in his inaugural address, he used it 3 times. His campaign rhetoric transitioned from claiming that he alone could fix the broken system, to: he would be the voice of the forgotten men and women of the country. By the time of his inauguration Trump was being consciously modelled on the populism of Andrew Jackson. He declared: “*January 20<sup>th</sup> 2017 will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again.*” As Mudde has argued, Trump shifted from selling himself, to presenting himself as a vehicle of the people, so that his supporters could be part of something bigger than Trump.

That Trump can get away with claiming to be a voice for the people confirms that populism is about sharing values, not economic circumstance. Thanks to his refusal to disclose his tax returns, we have no idea how rich Trump actually is, but he has all the accoutrements of being very rich indeed, and yet he is accepted by many millions of US voters as one of the pure people. Moreover, it is worth remembering that the majority of voters earning less than \$50,000 actually voted for Secretary Clinton.

While President Trump's narcissism is legendary, his claims in the face of overwhelming evidence have an ideological explanation too. As my former colleague, Pippa Norris, has written: *"The legitimacy of populists come from mass opinion. Trump doesn't have legitimacy through the popular vote. He doesn't have legitimacy through experience. He doesn't have legitimacy through the Party. So he claims this mythical link to the people."* As the chosen emissary of the people Trump has difficulty in reconciling this role with relatively low turnout at his inauguration, with weak poll numbers, the loss of the popular vote, mass protests by people claiming he doesn't represent them, and media criticism of policies for which he claims to have a mandate, like banning Muslims, building border walls, eliminating health insurance for millions, and so on. As he has himself said: *"Part of my whole victory was that the men and women of this country who had been forgotten will never be forgotten again."*

President Trump's preoccupation with "fake news" his acceptance of "alternative facts" and his general flagrant disregard for evidence is quite an extreme example of the long tradition of anti-intellectualism in America and to a lesser extent the UK. (Burke was no populist but he elevated the very British

notion of “common sense” over the more theoretically driven ideology of his continental contemporaries.)

Richard Hofstadter brilliantly described the Anglo-Saxon approach marked by pragmatism and empiricism in his Pulitzer Prize winning book “Anti-Intellectualism in American Life” published in 1964. He wrote: *“What used to be a jocular and usually benign ridicule of intellect and formal training has turned into a malign resentment of the intellectual in his capacity as expert. Once the intellectual was gently ridiculed because he was not needed; now he is fiercely resented because he is needed too much.”*

Whereas John F Kennedy famously, but briefly, brought “the best and the brightest” into the White House, Hofstadter surveyed the McCarthy era and the Eisenhower Presidency when appointments tended to go to those with connections, not expertise. He provides an illustrative example of a Senate Confirmation Hearing for Maxwell Gluck as Ambassador to Ceylon. Mr Gluck is asked if he knows the name of the Prime Minister of India. Mr Gluck replies *“Yes, but I cannot pronounce his name.”* He was then asked: *“Do you know who the Prime Minister of Ceylon is?”* Gluck replied. *“His name is unfamiliar now.”* Mr Gluck was appointed anyway. Incidentally the Senator asking the questions was none other than Senator William Fulbright.

Often Republican leaders have sought to appear less intelligent than they are. When aides expressed concern about Eisenhower facing a press conference he reassured them: *“Don’t worry”* he said *“I’ll just go out there and confuse them”*. Ronald Reagan described himself as an *“ordinary American”* not some *“little intellectual elite in a far distant capitol.”* George Bush told the *“C Students”* in a Commencement Address at Yale that *“you too can be*

*President.*” Candidate Trump famously said at a campaign rally in Nevada in February: *“I love the poorly educated.”*

I’m sure many of you have heard the quote written by H L Mencken in 1920, I’ve no idea why it comes to mind now, and I present it without comment:

*“As democracy is perfected, the office of the President represents more and more closely, the inner soul of the people. On some great and glorious day the plain folks of the land will reach their heart’s desire at last and the White House will be adorned by a downright moron.”*

This disdain for experts goes hand in hand with populism. For me, and I expect many others, the most memorable line of the Referendum campaign last year was that expressed by Michael Gove (educated at my university, sorry) that “We have had enough of experts”. A 2016 YouGov poll demonstrated that 2/3 of Leave voters and ¼ of Remain voters believe it to be wrong to rely too heavily on experts and that it is better to rely on “ordinary people.” In the US 87% of Scientists in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences say that climate change is caused by humans yet 50% of all US adults believe this. Similar percentages of Scientists believe GMOs are safe as compared to 37% of the public. A 2012 National Science Foundation survey found that 26% of Americans do not know the earth revolves around the sun. A 2015 Pew Research Survey found that 35% of US adults disagree with the theory of evolution.

Populism feeds distrust in experts and the corrosive effect on democracies when that happens has long been foreseen. Hayek wrote about it (perhaps approvingly) in 1960. *“The greatest danger to liberty today comes from the men who are most needed and most powerful in modern government,*

*namely the efficient expert administrators exclusively concerned with what they regard as the public good.*" The risk is that we find ourselves in a vicious cycle: voters have disengaged from politics and are not informing themselves adequately to make reasoned judgements. In the absence of an informed citizenship, technocrats and experts become dominant, trust breaks down between voters and experts: experts retreat from the debate and talk only to one another. The duty of universities is not to retreat, we have a crucial role to play in bridging this gap, but more on that in a moment.

Belief in the face of countervailing evidence is not the sole preserve of President Trump's beloved poorly educated. 74% of Republicans in the Senate and 53% in the House deny the validity of climate change. 17% of US adults believe parents should be free not to vaccinate their children. The anti-vaccine movement in both the US and the UK exists independently of any populist politics, but it has the same antecedents. It also highlights the fact that anti-expert sentiment is not confined to the poor and disenfranchised. The rebellion against vaccines took off most forcibly in educated suburban areas like Marin County where 8% of parents requested exemptions for their children. Today, campaigns against experts are often led by people who have the tools to know better. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the internet is an essential element in nurturing anti-expert attitudes. The internet rarely generates the wisdom of the crowd. More often it feeds confirmation bias among the like-minded. Too frequently it is used to claim a veneer of knowledge, enough to claim expertise, and to challenge the expertise of established others, but not actually enough to become an expert.

The recent surge in Populism is not a uniquely British and American experience, of course. Populist movements have been thriving across Europe.

In France in the 1950s Poujadists fought for the defence of the common man against the elite and the state and had 400,000 members; among them was Jean-Marie le Pen who founded the National Front in the 1980s. His daughter, Marine le Pen, just won almost a third of the vote in France in the run off Presidential elections. In The Netherlands, right wing Pim Fortuyn was succeeded by Geert Wilders. In Spain left wing Podemos, has been garnering popular support. Italy has the Five Star Movement, advocates of direct democracy. The True Finns garnered 18% of the vote in 2015, although they are running into difficulties this week. In Poland the Law and Justice Party has become the right-wing government, as had the Fidesz Party in Hungary, led by Viktor Orban. In Austria support for the Austrian Freedom Party grew from 5% in '83 to 27% in '99. In Germany, the Alternative for German Party has been polling at 15% of the vote. This weekend in France we appear to have seen the trouncing of most of the traditional parties in the legislative elections.

The collapse of UKIP, the defeat of Marine Le Pen in the French Presidential Election in May, and the fact that Geert Wilders' Freedom Party did less well than expected in the Netherlands in April, has caused some to conclude that the high-water mark of populism in Europe has passed. It may have, but the evidence is not clear cut. Recent defeats conceal the fact that populist parties have made sizeable increases over previous elections. Le Pen's defeat was a relief for many but still represented a doubling of the support gained by her father when he contested the 2002 presidential election and gained 17.8% of the vote. Wilders may not have done as well as expected but his anti-immigration party did increase its seats from 15 to 20. Inglehart and Norris have demonstrated that on average over the past 50 years populists increased their share of seats from 4% to 13%.

Some consolation is derived by opponents from the fact that those who supported the Brexit campaign and candidate Trump are disproportionately old and the conclusion is drawn that support will naturally decline. Again the signs are not so clear. 50% of young voters voted either for Le Pen or the hard left Jean Luc Melenchon in the first round of the French Presidential election. In 1995, 16% of 16-24 year olds in the US thought that democracy was a bad way to run the country. That figure in 2011 was 24%. There is some evidence to suggest that Millennials, resentful of the starker economic realities they face, are less attached to democracy than their parents. A paper published in January by Foa and Mounk charted the rise in support across the world over the past 25 years for: “having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliamentary elections”. Last week’s general election has certainly demonstrated the power of the youth vote - almost 70% of 18-24 year olds appear to have voted for Labour whether in support of the anti-establishment Corbyn, or in opposition to BREXIT, or both, is not yet entirely clear.

The claim by Norris and Inglehart that populism represents “*a cultural backlash, a retro reaction by once predominant sectors of the population to progressive value change*” is supported by a recent analysis by Podobnik et al. They examine the effect of immigration on anti-globalist sentiment. Analysing poll data in EU countries affected by the immigration crisis, they find that the percentage of right-wing populist voters in a given country depends on the prevalence of immigrants in this country’s population, as well as the total immigration into the EU. Moreover, they find that the increase in right-wing voters significantly surpasses the level of immigration, implying that if the process continues, right-wing populism is likely to prevail politically.

Steve Bannon is seen as the evil genius behind Donald Trump's victory. He orchestrated the transformation from Trump, the self-promoting deal-maker, to Trump the self-promoting populist. He has described his role in team Trump as: "Thomas Cromwell in the court of the Tudors". This is not an auspicious allusion for universities, as it was Cromwell who orchestrated the dissolution of the monasteries and the visitations (or purges) of universities and colleges in 1535, leading to the destruction of a great many books, and leaving Oxford without a library, until Thomas Bodley's donation in 1602.

In the presidential election, the old adage that truth is the first casualty of war may have been displaced by truth being the first casualty of political campaigns. Oxford University Press named the term "post-truth" the Word of the Year. Emotion, not evidence, appears to have been more influential in swaying voters. Trump voters, for example, believed by a margin of 69 to 12 that the multiple women who accused Donald Trump of making unwanted advances to them were lying to hurt the campaign. Clinton supporters believed them by a margin of 83 to 7. In a recent interview Christiane Amanpour asked Hillary Clinton whether she thought misogyny played a role in her defeat. Google searches for the word misogyny promptly rose 10,000%. As Clinton incredulously said to a reporter: "Six months after the presidential election and people still don't know what misogyny means!" Confronted with evidence, for example on the size of the crowds at his inauguration, Trump simply dismisses inconvenient fact as fake news, and his followers believe him. This is a dangerous time, and not just for experts and universities.

One of the most striking features of the US Presidential election and the UK Referendum on membership of the EU is the analysis of voting patterns. The single biggest predictor of a vote for Brexit and a vote for Donald Trump

was not income, age or race but educational attainment. In the UK one quarter of university graduates voted to Leave the EU whereas three quarters of those with no post-secondary qualifications voted to Leave. Similarly, 75% of white people with no college degree voted for Donald Trump. A November headline in the Atlantic Magazine captured the reality: “America’s Educational Divide Put Trump in the White House”.

Even controlling for race and income the concentration of college degrees was the strongest indicator of whether a county voted for Trump. Education level mattered more than anything else, even when controlling for economic factors. More college graduates in a county hurt Trump’s vote more than having a larger Asian population, more than having a larger Hispanic population, more than having a larger black population. Education could be a proxy for economic factors, of course, but the education gap persisted even when controlling for a county’s median income, its industrial base, and whether it had lost local manufacturing jobs. While white working class males had long been Trump’s base of support, money and race did not decide the election, education level did.

Similar patterns applied in the Brexit vote. Those with post graduate qualifications voted 75/25 for Remain. Those who left school without qualifications voted 73/27 for Leave. Class and age mattered, but education mattered far more. In general, areas with older and poorer voters tended towards Leave while those with more immigrants and more college educated voters tended to Remain but, by far the strongest indicator was education. This is an entirely new phenomenon. This educational divide could have portentous ramifications. It has the potential to undermine the bonds that hold representative democracy together. These bonds rely on trust, and assume

certain shared values like respect for knowledge. If knowledge is perceived as simply a perk of the plutocracy the underlying consensus, the basis of trust on which decisions are made, could be eroded even endangered.

## Universities

What are Universities to do in this situation?

In short, I believe that universities should stand our ground and do what we do best: pushing at the frontiers of knowledge and educating the next generation. In doing so, however, we must be more engaged, more willing to persuade, and remain irrevocably true to our principles.

It is over 150 years since Cardinal Newman set out arguments for a liberal education, arguments that are repeated today. His book The Idea of a University is often incorrectly thought to make the case for a cloistered university, a pure seat of learning separate from the world around it. He wrote:

*“If then a University is a direct preparation for this world, let it be what it professes. It is not a Convent, it is not a Seminary; it is a place to fit men of the world for the world. We cannot possibly keep them from plunging into the world, with all its ways and principles and maxims, when their time comes; but we can prepare them against what is inevitable; and it is not the way to learn to swim in troubled waters, never to have gone into them.”*

Newman, like John Stuart Mill writing around the same time, believed in the moral purpose of the university. Mill wrote eloquently in his Rectorial address at St Andrews of the elevation of spirit that attends education and of the purpose of a University being not to produce skilled lawyers and shoemakers

but thoughtful and civilized men who would make themselves good lawyers and shoemakers.

Today universities tend to shy away from an explicit acknowledgement of their moral purpose and some critics, such as Roger Scruton, argue that universities have lost sight of it altogether. I don't believe we have, that we should, or that we can.

Universities inculcate a love of learning and thirst for knowledge, we raise aspirations and value achievement. We are a place of community, of belonging, of diversity and of tolerance, a place that embraces rather than fears difference. Part of our role must be to export these qualities to the world through our students.

We are also a community that celebrates freedom of speech, so we must be prepared to defend it against all challengers, whether these are our own students demanding a right not to be offended, or our government demanding that non-violent extremists be prevented from speaking. We must defend the expression of all legal speech and be prepared especially to defend speech we find objectionable. We must not, however, be shy about challenging speech with which we disagree.

During the US presidential election most of us stood aghast as we read expletive-laden banners and listened to chants of "lock her up". Politicians did not object for fear of losing favour, and in the knowledge that they would be dismissed as partisan. The media did not object, no doubt in part because they benefited financially from the controversy. Universities could have been a voice appealing for the kind of robust civility that prevails, or should prevail, on all university campuses.

I see the fact that the victories for the Brexit and Trump campaigns came as a surprise to most of us in universities as something of an indictment. We should not have been surprised. If we are to play the role we claim in identifying looming social and political issues, and in seeking solutions to societal problems, we should be the first, not the last, to recognize their impact. We must be deeply engaged in the world around us.

Many of our great universities, and certainly this one, make legitimate claim to be global institutions, yet we are also civic and national ones too. We must be engaged in our local community sharing the benefits of our resources, like our libraries and museums, ensuring that our local communities see us as their university too, and ensuring that they recognize the economic and cultural contributions we make to the local community. For too long universities have considered these benefits to the community to be self-evident, but we must be altogether more focused on ensuring that our local communities participate in and appreciate our contributions. In so doing we bring ourselves closer to these communities and to keener understanding of the developments taking place around us.

We must also ensure that across the country ambitious students and their families can aspire to attend our most selective universities. We must shatter the myth that our most selective universities are the preserve of any particular sector of society. It is no secret that this has been a particular challenge for Oxford. The fact that a Sutton Trust study tells us that 43% of state school teachers do not recommend Oxbridge to their smartest students, that focus groups tell us that parents think we are more expensive, that most of our students are posh, polo-playing and privately educated - these are failures of communication on our part.

Universities serve as drivers of social mobility. We must ensure that our communities know this. We serve as engines of the economy. We must ensure that our communities know this. We also serve as guardians of our culture and generators of new ideas and innovative practices. If we continue to do all this, and continue to ensure that our communities understand our role, we will continue to play our part as foundations of our very democracy.

The populist votes for Brexit and Trump are often explained as the revenge of those who are losing out to globalization. Certainly we have all stood by and watched silently as the gap between rich and poor in our society has widened. It is true that at a global level hunger, poverty, illiteracy and diseases are at an all-time low, but that is of little consolation to British and American voters who see their jobs outsourced to another country or see their factory jobs taken by lower-paid immigrants. None of us were paying attention, confident that the influx of migrants improved the cultural fabric of our societies and enjoying the benefits of low cost immigrant labour. We were, in effect, too disengaged.

Our universities contribute to individual, local and national wealth. Male graduates in the UK earn 28% more than non-graduates and pay £264,000 more in taxes. Female graduates earn 53% more than non-graduates and pay £318,000 more in taxes over their working lives. The best way to avoid resentment of this differential is for every family to know that their children will have equal access to a university education.

Our universities, however are critical to our local and national economy. Just my university alone adds £2.3 billion of the Oxfordshire economy, £5.8 to the national economy and almost £7 billion to the global economy. A 2015 study by UUK demonstrated that the university sector contributes at least £73 billion a year to the UK economy and that for every 100 people employed directly by

universities 117 jobs are created in the wider economy. We contribute 2.8% of GDP and support 3% of all jobs.

Universities can be at the vanguard of forging a successful post-Brexit economy with an emphasis on science and innovation. Over the past decade Oxford has developed two spin out companies every two months. Over the past year, thanks in part to the creation of OSI, a largely foreign financed fund of \$580 million to invest in Oxford IP, we have been producing spinout companies at the rate of one a fortnight.

Universities also contribute to the health of the individual and the nation. Graduates are healthier than non-graduates, they are less likely to drink heavily, to smoke and to be obese. A 30 year old graduate is likely to live another 51 years as compared to 43 years for a non-graduate (King's College London Policy unit). Nationally we train doctors and nurses. Our medics, moreover, are at the forefront of global efforts to find cures for disease. Critical developments in addressing disease and advancing life-saving technologies have been made in universities in recent years: coronary bypass surgery, DNA fingerprinting, genetic engineering and sequencing, IVF, MRI and Polio Vaccination. Indeed, a recent study by Stephen Brint found that universities contributed to 74% of ground-breaking inventions and had a leading role in 40% of inventions since the 1950s. Does the public know this? Probably not. We need to make sure that they do.

But what is the role of a university in a post-truth world?

Universities are premised on the belief that truth is an aspiration not a possession. Inside a university there is no such thing as an "alternative fact." Facts become facts when they are supported by evidence. But populism feeds

on misinformation and innuendo. Truth and opinion become deliberately blurred. What can universities do to counter this?

The first thing we can do is teach, teach our students respect for evidence, help them to distinguish between opinion and information, between information and knowledge, and between knowledge and wisdom. Equipped in this way we hope they will enter the world beyond the university and become advocates for evidence-based reason, policy and decision making.

This task is becoming more and more difficult, thanks to advances in technology which can, for example, enable you apparently to see and hear a person saying something they never actually said. The scale of information available on the internet poses other challenges. Sifting, analysing and sourcing information on the scale at which it is becoming available, is proving beyond the capability of internet users across the globe. The internet is increasingly outsourcing control of “the truth.” As Wikipedia has grown too big for human editors to manage its text, bots have been created to control it. In some languages 50% of Wikipedia edits are now made by bots. To give you an example of the implications of this. On Arabic Wikipedia a bot has been created which seeks out the word “Palestine” and changes it to “Palestinian Territories”. Another bot has been designed to seek out references to “Palestinian Territories” and change them to “Palestine”. If you were to regard Wikipedia as the truth, the version of it that you see would depend on which bot had last visited the site you consulted. As information increasingly becomes digital the dangers of allowing technologies to tamper with records are readily apparent.

The discovery of new facts, new technologies, new truths in effect, is critical to the status and reputation of universities. Unless universities continue to

operate at the frontiers of knowledge their reputation will decline and public trust diminish. The threat to the place of universities could come from a decline in public funding, as politicians reflect the public's lack of faith in universities on the one hand, and the exponential growth of commercially funded research. Already today major technology companies like Microsoft, Google and Facebook are bigger players in research than the US government even before President Trump's proposed cuts to government agencies. It is imperative that universities engage in blue-skies research as that is where the most important discoveries are often made, but the commercial benefit is far from evident at the time.

### Conclusion

Universities today remain more trusted than other parts of the establishment. We should take advantage of this fact. The latest Edelman Trust Barometer found that 60% of academics experts were considered extremely or very credible as compare with 37% of CEOs and 29% pf government officials.

Universities must become fierce and objective guardians of knowledge and allow open access to that knowledge. We must not be shy about challenging falsehood coming from any direction, being a national fact checker, in effect. The ability to do so is correlated to the public's faith in our willingness to be objective and fair minded. We must not become handmaidens of the government. It is not ultimately in the national interest that we do so. We must preserve our autonomy and be prepared to speak truth to power. We must, above all, have uncompromising standards of scholarship

We must tell the truth and be prepare to say what others won't. We should engage objectively in national debates. We should be prepared to say, for example, that the biggest threat to national jobs comes not from trade, but

from automation. (An Oxford Martin School study recently argues 47% of all jobs are at risk of being automated in the next 20 years.) We should be prepared to talk about the risk of terrorism, the nature of risk, and the likelihood of any individuals being killed by terrorism as a counter to sensationalist media hype. We should present evidence of climate change.

We must also demystify the other and educate about the nature of foreign religions and cultures. A craven media and/or politicians will undoubtedly try to delegitimize us if we make claims that don't suit them, but we must be seen to be objective. We must not allow censorship of any kind in our universities. We should recognize that we have been beneficiaries of the rising inequality in our society, and we have been a party to it. We occupy a very privileged position, we should demonstrate that we deserve it.

We must not only be prepared to speak out, we must figure out a way to be heard, not just by other members of the elite but by society at large.

Finally, I'd like to close by returning to Senator Fulbright. He once wisely said: *"Creative leadership and liberal education, which in fact go together, are the first requirements for a hopeful future for humankind."*

And what he said of his exchange programme could well be said of universities today:

*"They are no panacea but they provide an avenue of hope."*