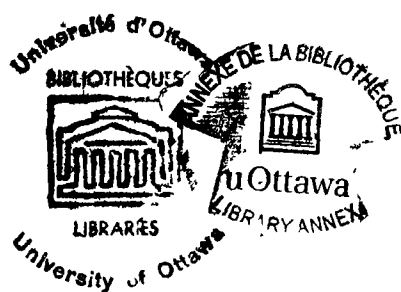


THE EDUCATIONAL IDEALS OF WOODROW WILSON

by Michael J. Nittoli

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Psychology and Education of the
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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Michael J. Nittoli was born on February 10, 1924, in Newark, New Jersey. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from the School of Education of New York University in 1945 and his Master of Arts degree from the same institution in 1948.

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INTRODUCTION

The renown of Woodrow Wilson primarily issued from his role as the twenty-eighth president of the United States and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1918. This identity of the man with government service has tended to obscure his role as an educator, although in the years allotted to him following the completion of his formal training, Wilson's role as an educator occupied virtually double the number of years devoted to government service. It is with these twenty-five years as a teacher and administrator in the field of higher education that this thesis will concern itself.

The purpose of this study is to bring to light the educational ideals of Woodrow Wilson, of which, unfortunately, there is an apparent general lack of awareness within the realm of some classified as authorities in the field of higher education. The inspiration for this thesis was born of a trichotomous influence: in part from Dr. Ramunas, the adviser to the writer, from the writer's position as a university lecturer in United States history, and from the centennial theme of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, which has dedicated its being to the task of keeping alive the memory of this great statesman. This aforementioned theme, "Education in the Nation's Service," quite apparently represents but one aspect of Woodrow Wilson's educational ideals. This

researcher will attempt to extend this theme and make it as complete as possible within the confines of his abilities and the facilities available to him. He is well aware that in spite of his many efforts and considerable time the results cannot be considered a definitively exhaustive study.

The problem, therefore, is to delineate Woodrow Wilson's role with reference to the crisis which developed in American higher education between 1850 and 1900. This crisis centered about growing scientism, free election, educational statism, vocationalism, and non-sectarianism.

The hypothesis, therefore, will endeavor to show that Wilson's ideals of higher education were set on a fourfold foundation. One represented serious scholarship which he described as the embodiment of the liberal tradition. The second represented genuine democracy in which he called for the elimination of the class system and monied influences on the campus. The third represented service to the nation and mankind in general which, he believed, spoke eloquently for itself. The fourth represented education rooted in the Christian tradition which to him was the sine qua non of education's very being. These ideals would, as he envisioned them, bridge the ever-widening gulfs between late nineteenth century scientism, free election, educational statism, vocationalism, and non-sectarianism.

For this writer the objective to be realized and the methods to be employed are relatively simple. After a brief description of the crisis in American higher education from 1850-1900 which relies heavily on the best available secondary sources, an account of Woodrow Wilson's ideals will follow. The method employed will reflect that of an historical researcher pursuing systematic investigation of those outstanding sources, largely primary, relating to the theme. After investigation, analysis, and validation of the hypothesis, it is hoped that a new understanding of Woodrow Wilson's educational ideals will accrue, the results of which will bear favorably the light of careful examination and thus conclude to a reasonable establishment of the validity of the hypothesis.

In reviewing the literature the most accessible and valuable primary source data that offer insight into the period of Woodrow Wilson the Educator are the Princeton Collection (1879-1920) and the Close Manuscripts (1902-1910), both housed at the Rare Book Room of the Firestone Library, Princeton, New Jersey.¹

The most famous published and accessible primary source is the Baker-Dodd edition of the Public Papers of

¹ These sources have recently been recatalogued and presently both categories are listed under Woodrow Wilson Collection.

Woodrow Wilson-College and State in six volumes.² Because Woodrow Wilson is one of the twentieth-century presidents whose complete, or nearly complete, public papers have not been published to date, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation is presently engaged in a one and a quarter million dollar project of editing said sources. Dr. Arthur Link, noted Wilsonian scholar, is editor-in-chief with the project scheduled for completion in 1974.

It is interesting to note that although Wilson was the author of some ten books, none of them deal with education nor his role in this field. His works include histories of the United States, government, and essays. Some of Wilson's biographers intimate that after his retirement from public life he planned both to pursue a career and to publish works in the field of education.

In the field of biography, word portraits of Woodrow Wilson began to appear as soon as he achieved political prominence. These accounts continue to the present day. Two problems arise with reference to biographies: number and objectivity. Yet, among these, two were of exceptionally fine quality and especially useful to this researcher. One was R.S. Baker's second volume of Woodrow Wilson, Life and

² Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd, (eds.), The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson, College and State, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1925.

Letters,³ published in 1927 by a man who served as Press Director of the American delegation at Versailles during the peace conference following World War I. His close association with Wilson dated back many years. The other, Wilson, The Road to the White House,⁴ volume one, by Arthur Link, renown scholar who has spent his lifetime in a study of Woodrow Wilson, represents the most definitive and exhaustive study yet completed.

The availability of non-periodical reference sources with respect to the Princeton period of Wilson's career is very limited. Those available clearly indicate a need for discretion and caution. Hardin Craig's book, Woodrow Wilson at Princeton,⁵ is both personal and pro-Wilson. It is based almost in its entirety on the memory of its then eighty-year old author, save for fleeting documentation from R.S. Baker's Wilson's Life and Letters, volume two. McMillan Lewis' book, Woodrow Wilson of Princeton,⁶ is replete with a

³ Ray Stannard Baker, Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters, New York, Doubleday, Page and Co., 1927, Vol. 2, xxxiv-325 p.

⁴ Arthur S. Link, Wilson, The Road to the White House, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1947, xiii-570 p.

⁵ Hardin Craig, Woodrow Wilson at Princeton, Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1960, xi-175 p.

⁶ McMillan Lewis, Woodrow Wilson of Princeton, Harberth, Pennsylvania, Livingston Publishing Company, 1952, xii-118 p.

fund of human interest stories. It was compiled from the responses received in answer to some four thousand questionnaires sent to Princeton alumni of the Wilson period and is further supplemented by personal interviews within the confines of said group.

Additional light is shed on Wilson's role at Princeton in Some Princeton Memories,⁷ edited by William S. Meyers, and The Modern Princeton,⁸ by Charles S. Osgood et al.

But one thesis was uncovered by this researcher relating to Wilson and his influence as an educator. This unpublished doctoral thesis, The Educational Contributions of Woodrow Wilson,⁹ was written by Edward W. Clement while at Stanford University, California. Dr. Clement begins with a statement of Wilson's philosophy of education, devotes some four chapters to biographical data, and concludes with a discussion of Wilson's contributions to curriculum, methodology, and administration. It would appear that by proportion alone, of the entire one hundred and fifty pages too much emphasis is placed on biography thereby rendering

7 William Starr Meyer, (ed.), Some Princeton Memories, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1946, vi-91 p.

8 Charles S. Osgood et al., The Modern Princeton, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1947, vii-159 p.

9 Edward W. Clement, The Educational Contributions of Woodrow Wilson, unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Stanford University, California, March 1952, ix-194 p.

ineffectual and superficial in the few remaining pages a meaningful delineation of Wilson's major contributions to education.

Diverse and voluminous is the periodical literature detailing the person, beliefs, and philosophy of Woodrow Wilson. Probably the best and most extensive accounts of Wilson's career at Princeton are to be found in The Daily Princetonian and The Princeton Alumni Weekly, both published by Princeton University. These periodicals, beginning with 1910 and continuing to the present, are replete with sketches and analyses of President Wilson. Though few of these relate directly to the topic under discussion, a few are worthy of mention. "Woodrow Wilson the Educator,"¹⁰ appearing in the N.E.A. Journal, March, 1924, was most useful. It discussed Wilson as an educator of three dimensions: teacher-administrator, practical educational philosopher, and educational statesman whose aim was to lead people "to a higher level of thinking." "The Late President's Record of Achievement"¹¹ in March, 1924, Current History reviews Wilson's early history, scholastic career, and successes and failures

10 "Woodrow Wilson the Educator", National Education Association Journal, Vol. 13, No. 3, issue of March 1924, p. 109.

11 "The Late President's Record of Achievement", Current History Magazine, Vol. 19, No. 6, issue of March 1924, pp. 859-942.

in applying his ideas to the practical problems of state, national, and international politics. The autumn edition, 1956, of The Virginia Quarterly Review¹² is devoted to a series of scholarly articles written by some of the most distinguished authorities in American history on the subject of Wilson. Finally, "The Academic Mind of Woodrow Wilson,"¹³ by Laurence R. Veysey of Harvard in the March, 1963 quarterly, of The Mississippi Valley Historical Review examines his role in the "first generation of the American university." Most of the periodical literature is largely a restatement of what has already appeared in books dealing with Wilson.

Having introduced the topic, stated the problem and hypothesis, surveyed in brief the literature, the plan of this thesis is as follows: Chapter One will briefly review the crisis in American higher education from 1850 to 1900. Chapter Two will discuss Wilson's ideal of a basic, sound, and enduring program of study for college. Chapter Three will survey Wilson's fight against money and social distinction gaining influence in the post-Civil War college period.

¹² The Virginia Quarterly Review, Woodrow Wilson 1856-1924 Centennial Number, Vol. 32, No. 4, issue of Autumn 1956, pp. 481-640.

¹³ Laurence R. Veysey, "The Academic Mind of Woodrow Wilson", The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. 49, No. 4, issue of March 1963, pp. 613-634.

Chapter Four will discuss unselfish service to the nation and mankind as the all-important position of higher education.

CHAPTER I

CRISIS I. AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Political, Economic, and Social Ferment in the United States: 1850-1900

The political, social, and economic forces of the last half of the nineteenth century were so inextricably entwined in the fabric of American higher education that it is incumbent upon this writer to broadly outline these forces in order that the essential unity and coherence demanded of this thesis may accrue within the historical framework of said period. Politically, the United States was on the eve of the great Civil War, the resolution of which ushered in the traumatic period of upheaval commonly called the Reconstruction. These turbulent years witnessed the rise of that new political amalgamation known as the Republican party, the extension of the franchise to large groups hitherto denied a voice in their government, and the myriad complexities of implementing their constitutional guarantees of a full measure of social, civil, and political freedoms secured under the constitutional amendments.

The rampaging economic growth of this era was accelerated by the changes wrought in the post Civil War period. It ushered in the age of mass production, which necessitated the formation of huge corporations. These corporations

inevitably led to the formation of monopolies culminating with the chartering of the first million dollar corporation in American history, the United States Steel Corporation. Machine technology made great strides, and the dominance of business and the manufacturing classes became a reality. The most basic tenet of this capitalistic philosophy was an insatiable slaking of its thirst for economic acquisition. The primitiveness of this creed was masked behind a facade which publicly called for "[...] making more funds available for the expansion and improvement of public education."¹ Whether the motives were altruistic or self-seeking, the immediate result was the rapid enlargement of secondary schools, colleges, and state universities. This expansion triggered the economic spiral of growth, the money for which emanated from public generosity and private philanthropies. As originally noted, disregarding the motives, the result was an unprecedented expansion in American education.

Socially it was a period of upheaval. Many, diverse, and complex were the reform and humanitarian movements. Numbered among these were the abolition of slavery, temperance, the right of labor to organize, women's suffrage, and the exercise of the Civil War Amendments calling for social, civil, and political equality. These concepts that

¹ R. Freeman Butts, The College Charts Its Course, New York, McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc., 1939, p. 159.

characterized this new era were first put to the test with the expansion of the American West. The growth of this new frontier was predicated upon social democracy. The success of this doctrine of equal opportunity for all thus cast serious doubt upon the validity of the entrenched existing forms of education, especially higher education, and a concomitant demand for expansion of existing facilities with emphasis upon a more vocational and utilitarian approach.

2. Challenges to Education as Traditionally Constituted

American higher education thus cast in its political, socio-economic context, an evaluation of the forces which were to challenge education as then constituted must necessarily focus upon those forces that began to question its makeup. America was imbued with the principles of Jeffersonian-Jacksonian Democracy. This belief called for an open society and a hitherto unknown mobility of population which pushed beyond the borders of geography, past the previously detailed frontiers of political, social, and economic understanding, and now stood ready to challenge the domain of education. As Hofstadter states:

American society was too democratic to accept completely the idea of a gentleman's education, too practical and perhaps too philistine to accept complacently its classical content, too dynamic and competitive to accept indefinitely its static character.²

Again, speaking of this era, Rogers states:

This period, roughly 1860-1890, might well be called the critical period in American higher education, for the rapid transformation of society rendered obsolete much of the older learning, producing new and strident demands for a new education for the new world.³

Having briefly outlined the political, economic, and social ferment occurring in the United States between 1850-1875 with its later concomitant influences, there came a demand for curricular changes in order that the program of higher education might be brought into harmony with the needs of a practical growing people. The traditional college program, said David Starr Jordan, was "[...] as stagnant as a Spanish convent and as self-satisfied as a Bourbon duchy."⁴ Seemingly this indictment was further bolstered by James A. Garfield, future president of the United States, who "[...] examined the catalogues of some twenty Eastern, Western, and

² Richard Hofstadter and Dewitt C. Hardy, The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States, New York, Columbia University Press, 1952, p. 22.

³ Walter P. Rogers, Andrew D. White and the Modern University, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1942, p. 2.

⁴ David Starr Jordan, The Days of a Man, quoted by Walter P. Rogers, Andrew D. White and the Modern University, Op. Cit., p. 6.

southern colleges and found them all alike."⁵ In addition to this uniform pattern, the academic level of most institutions was pitifully low. In fact, Nevins, speaking of Harvard, said, "The law and medical faculties gave their degrees to any man who had paid three term bills covering eighteen months and had not been very irregular in attending lectures."⁶ The prized position of the traditional college with its classical tradition centered about the Seven Liberal Arts was to be shattered in the second half of the nineteenth century. "The flood that engulfed them [the colleges]," said Schmidt, "came from three main sources: the new Western universities, German scholarship and higher criticism, and the philosophy of evolution."⁷ Thus a two-pronged attack on American higher education was under way. The first of these challenging influences was native while the second was imported. "This," says Schmidt, "marked the re-entry of Europe into American academic life."⁸

The proponents of the state universities held that their concept of the function of a university was not without

⁵ Allan Nevins, The State Universities and Democracy, Urbana, Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 1962, p. 5.

⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

⁷ George P. Schmidt, A Century of the Liberal Arts College, in William W. Brickman and Stanley Lehrer (eds.), A Century of Higher Education, New York, Society for the Advancement of Education, 1962, p. 55.

⁸ Ibid., p. 55.

its foundation in antiquity. To them the roots of a state university idea were very old and, in a sense, traceable to Greece and Rome. There the Academy of Athens and the Rhetorical Schools at Rome represented state undertakings in the field of education. Plato, for example, insisted that it was "[...] the duty of the state to educate men for public service and the Roman sages insisted that it was the duty of the state to inculcate civic virtues."⁹ Again a type of responsibility for higher education was seen during the Middle Ages when "[...] Frederick II, in 1220, [...] established the University of Naples."¹⁰ Still later men like Francis Bacon insisted "[...] that knowledge is power [...]"¹¹ According to Rousseau, "Education comes to us from nature, men, and from things."¹² Rousseau also maintained that in our older universities there was too great an influence on books, lectures, and men, and too little emphasis on nature and things; i.e., science, laboratories, and workshops. Obviously the foregoing practices were the ingredients by which the proponents of the state universities justified the need for such institutions in the United States.

⁹ Merle Curti and Vernon Carstensen, The University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press, 1949, Vol. 1, pp. 6-7.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 7.

¹¹ John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, Higher Education in Transition, New York, Harper and Brothers, p. 140.

¹² Nevins, Op. Cit., p. 11.

A further philosophical justification for such schools was found in the writings of Jeremy Bentham and John S. Mills, who advanced the idea that "[...] the ethical good, including truth itself, is relative to time and place and to be determined by whatever promotes the greatest good for the greatest number."¹³ These concepts, echoing at a time when the industrial and commercial forces were becoming dominant in Europe, served as a rallying point for those segments committed to the establishment and growth of state universities.

Pushing from the historical justifications found in the Greek, Roman, and European chronology, the proponents of the state universities offered historical proof for their ideas in the domestic annals. They contended that colonial colleges were chartered by colonial legislatures, received moneys from such Assemblies, and were supervised by colonial visitors. Not to be overlooked in their documentation was the Ordinance of 1787, which set aside land for a state university and thereby promoted the growth of the state university idea.

As if these forces were not sufficient, the state university proponents were blessed with still greater climate of favorability in which to implement their all-consuming idea of education. Again, this climate of favorability was of

13 Curti and Carstensen, Op. Cit., p. 26.

European origin. It was a corollary of late eighteenth century European Enlightenment and Rising Nationalism. Norman Foerster, speaking of the foregoing movements, said, "By the close of the eighteenth century, the central feature of the modern creed was well established."¹⁴ Continuing, he avers that "[...] they concentrated upon the pressing claims of the present and dreamed of a golden future in which the natural man, free, equal, and fraternal, might fully express himself."¹⁵ It must be understood that they (the proponents of the state universities) equated natural man with economic man. Thus economic man, or natural man if you will, had as his goal to conquer the physical and industrial order. The state university was to be the means by which he would acquire the necessary knowledge to enable him to reach his goal.

This doctrine achieved immediate and widespread popularity.¹⁶ A perfect crystallization of this philosophy is to be found in the writings of Curti and Carstensen when they state:

¹⁴ Norman Foerster, The American State University, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press, 1937, p. 47.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 59-60.

[...] the term [state university] implied that providing for higher education was a vital function of society, that the most suitable agency in the United States to perform this function was the state, independent of religious and private bodies; that the state university should crown the whole system of public education with which it was to be closely integrated; that the recipients of higher education in a democratic civilization should not be an intellectual elite, but all citizens capable of benefiting from such training; and that the curriculum of a state supported institution of higher education should embody not only the scholarly purposes of traditional institutions but the professional and practical needs of the citizenry, individually and collectively.¹⁷

3. Emergence of State Universities

Yet despite the realization of a climate favorable to their being, the response to the state university idea was slow to gain a foothold. The first public universities located in Georgia, Vermont, and North Carolina were nothing more than a reflection of colonial traditions. "Their charters treated them as if they were private incorporations; and the courts backed up this interpretation."¹⁸ The trustees of the universities were considered private, not public officials, and in most cases were not appointed by the legislatures of the states.

The University of Virginia, however, conceived in its entirety by Thomas Jefferson, was the first bona fide state university. At this institution "[...] the board of visitors

17 Curti and Carstensen, Op. Cit., p. 3.

18 Brubacher and Rudy, Op. Cit., p. 142.

was appointed by the governor of the state and approved by its legislature."¹⁹ Operating funds were supplied by the state. Truly unique to this institution was the breadth of studies it offered.²⁰ Though taken for granted today, the University of Virginia offered a system of electives, itself a revolutionary concept in higher education. Added to this was its designation as non-sectarian. However, despite the evidence of adequate planning, all did not augur well for Jefferson's brain child. The secondary students were ill-prepared for university work, resulting in lack of attainment which had a demoralizing effect upon the faculty. Further, denominational strifes impaired the proper functioning of the university to which was added a general air of apprehension that the existing private denominational colleges would be dwarfed by the rise of state universities. These deleterious influences tended to hamper the progress of the Jeffersonian experiment. Yet it was to be enduring, and notwithstanding the many problems confronting it, "[...] the design, short of its embodiment, had its effect on the subsequent development of American higher education."²¹

19 John S. Brubacher, A Century of the State University, in Brickman and Lehrer, Op. Cit., p. 70.

20 Ibid., p. 70.

21 Ibid., p. 72.

4. Western Influence and State Universities

Though state universities could look to the South for their real origin, their emergence and development "[...] would be defined in the great Midwest and West, where frontier democracy and frontier materialism would help to support a practical-oriented popular institution."²² Here in the West, America's new frontier, where the people were less tradition bound and where social democracy was a de facto way of life, was to be found the truly necessary climate for the emergence of a state university. Though Western in climate, its direction was Eastern since the leadership exerted in its behalf came from those emigrants recently arrived from New England.²³ These New Englanders with their traditional faith in education offered leadership and encouragement to the state plan. Supplementing this support was that offered by other recently arrived emigres. Wisconsin, for example, was settled by Germans still mindful of their own universities and imbued with the German respect for learning; these were followed by Scandinavians with traditions of civic cooperation.²⁴ Thus was created a milieu which was favorable to the rise of the state university.

²² Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1962, p. 277.

²³ Brubacher and Rudy, Op. Cit., p. 150.

²⁴ Hofstadter and Hardy, Op. Cit., pp. 46-47.

The pacemaker among the early universities of the West, from every point of view, was the University of Michigan.²⁵ Here was realized the earliest fulfillment of the Jeffersonian ideal and the plan for future state universities, of which the University of Wisconsin is a notable example. To Michigan must be ascribed the role as pacemaker for a variety of reasons. Primarily Michigan favored a centralized, tax-supported state system of education; further they were blessed with a succession of able leaders to keep the foregoing policy in effect.²⁶ Outstanding among Michigan's educational leaders was Henry P. Tappan, who was greatly influenced by the Prussian educational system which he studied at first hand. Rooted in this tradition, he dreamed of a true university devoted to advanced studies at the top of an integrated system.

As Tappan put it:

We hold therefore that Universities are natural and necessary in a great system of public education. To delay their creation is to stop the hand upon the dial-plate which represents the progress of humanity.²⁷

As to the form of the Institution, Tappan stated:

25 Brubacher and Rudy, Op. Cit., p. 153.

26 Ibid., p. 153.

27 Henry P. Tappan, On University Education 1851, in Richard Hofstadter and Wilson Smith (eds.), American Higher Education. A Documentary History, Chicago, Illinois, The University of Chicago Press, 1961, Vol. 2, p. 503.

We would take as models, in general, the University of Paris, the Universities of England before they were submerged in the Colleges and the Universities of Germany.²⁸

As to courses, Tappan held "[...] there should also be established courses particularly designed for the benefit of those engaged in commerce and the useful arts."²⁹

With respect to the university's religious character, Tappan believed "[...] an entire separation from ecclesiastical control and a renunciation of all sectarian partialities."³⁰ Tappan planned a Prussianized version for the American state university, controlled by the state and aided by private munificence.

Despite his influence and achievements, Tappan's career at Michigan was to come to naught. Because American nationalistic influences clashed with his Prussian leanings and because sectarian pressures were brought to bear, the regents of the university asked for and received his resignation in 1863, just eleven years after he assumed the presidency at Michigan.³¹ It was he "[...] who helped to lay the theoretical foundations for the development of Western state universities."³²

²⁸ Ibid., p. 504.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 506.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 507.

³¹ Ibid., p. 488, Introductory note.

³² Butts, Op. Cit., p. 155.

It is safe to say that Michigan, under his aegis and with the help of the Morrill Act of 1862, helped to pioneer the future developments at Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the "all purpose" state university at Cornell.

The aforementioned Morrill Act gave great aid and a powerful impulse to the movement for state universities. This act was designed to promote the establishment of agricultural colleges. The Federal Government donated to the states thirty thousand acres of public land for each representative it had in Congress for the purpose of providing funds from land sales with which to found the colleges.³³ The law further stated:

[...] each state which may take and claim the benefit of this act, to the endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics [passed during the Civil War] to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life [...]³⁴

Where the land grants were given to a single institution, such as Cornell University in New York, or given to the pre-existing state university, the benefits were notable. But where the

³³ Harry G. Good, A History of American Education, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1962, p. 293.

³⁴ The Morrill Act 1862, Section 4, in Hofstadter and Smith (eds.), Op. Cit., p. 568.

grants were divided among several institutions, the results were less fortunate. In time, the United States government, by virtue of the second Morrill Act (1890), the Bankhead-Jones Act (1905), and the Nelson Amendment (1907), further extended the original endowments.³⁵ Such courses of action were made necessary because the earlier grants were insufficient or the proceeds from said grants were misused by state legislatures.

In concluding this summary of the impact of the rising state university on American higher education the question arises: what was its special significance and how did it affect higher education? A number of answers immediately present themselves. First, the state university was founded on democratic principles of equality of opportunity which, per se, was an extension of the demands for social and political democracy. Education-wise these took the form of free election of studies. Second, the state universities, aided by the Morrill Act, offered a broad and utilitarian program demanded by the agricultural, commercial, and industrial interests of the time. Third, service to the community, such as the "Legislative Reference Bureau" at the University of Wisconsin to aid law-makers and public officials, was deemed a valuable function and was justified by "[...] the help they gave to raise the standards of literate leadership throughout

35 Ibid., Introductory note, p. 568.

the Western country."³⁶ Finally, the American state universities pioneered in such developments as secondary school accreditation, coeducation, extension education, and emphasis on graduate programs of study.

5. Opposition to State Universities

Notwithstanding the significant contributions of American state universities, these institutions have come in for some sharp criticism by such men as Foerster, Flexner, and Butler. Foerster charges the state universities as characterizing the material society which they serve. He further charges the students at the state university as devoted to the "Religion of Getting On", "Go-Getters", and primarily interested in a diploma, student activities, and job preparation.³⁷ Flexner refers to some of the state universities as "service stations for the general public."³⁸ He insists that "[...] neither secondary, technical, vocational, nor popular education belong to the realm of the university."³⁹ Nicholas M. Butler, in 1921, goes on to say:

³⁶ Brubacher and Rudy, Op. Cit., p. 168.

³⁷ Foerster, Op. Cit., pp. 60-66.

³⁸ Abraham Flexner, Universities, American, English, German, New York, Oxford University Press, 1930, p. 38.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 27-28.

The ruling passion is not to know and to understand but to get ahead, to overturn something, to apply in ways that bring material advantage, some bits of information or some acquired skill. Both schools and colleges have, in large part, taken off the true business of education, which is to prepare youth to live, and have fixed them on something which is very subordinate, namely, how to prepare youth to make a living.⁴⁰

The foregoing statement represents some of the indictments of the universities of the time, and though terse, they indicate some of the opposition the state universities encountered.

6. Acceleration of the German Influence

The second influence to change the traditional character of American higher education in the last half of the nineteenth century was the impact of German scholarship. Though there appears to be universal agreement as to the magnitude of this force on the development of the American university,

[...] there is a wide gap in American historiography. Only one study exists that directly attempts to relate the German and American Universities. It is Charles Franklin Thwing's The American and the German University. One Hundred Years of History.⁴¹

It is not the purpose of this writer to authenticate the foregoing statement, which no doubt is true, but there were

⁴⁰ Nicholas Murray Butler, quoted in Foerster, Op. Cit., p. 68.

⁴¹ Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States, New York, Columbia University Press, 1955, p. 367, Footnote 1.

indeed great migrations to German universities, and these migrations bore a later influence on their American counterparts. According to Thwing, Benjamin Franklin, in 1776, was the first American to pay a visit to the German university.⁴² Benjamin Smith Barton, "the Father of American Materia Medicine," was believed to be the first American, in 1789, to receive a medical degree in Germany. Everett, Tichnor, Bancroft, and Cogswell were the "forerunners of a great host of scholars and teachers to follow this same route."⁴³ In the hundred years which have passed (1815-1914) since the foregoing took their degrees at Göttingen, about ten thousand American students have matriculated in German universities.⁴⁴ Thus by weight of sheer numbers it is difficult to deny the de facto existence and extent of German scholarship.

7. The Singular Attraction of German Universities

The question has arisen: why the attraction to Germany for study? why not the United States, France, or England? The answers were legitimate yet subtle. The United States lacked opportunities for advanced study, and most advanced degrees were meaningless. "As late as 1825 the Master of Arts

⁴² Charles Franklin Thwing, The German and American University. One Hundred Years of History, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1926, p. 12.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 16-17.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 37.

degree was awarded 'in course' to any holder of a Harvard Bachelor's degree after the lapse of three years and the payment of a fee."⁴⁵ Few places, except perhaps Yale, offered a Ph.D. degree before Johns Hopkins "helped to establish a trend in 1887 [...]"⁴⁶

France as a place of university study was not popular in the United States primarily because Protestant America objected to French Catholicism. Then there was opposition in New England to French liberalism, and France as a place of higher study was considered dangerous. Finally, France seemed to be neglecting scientific instruction, which was considered vital to Americans.

England as a place of study was also not without its alleged deficiencies. The objections were similar to those raised about France. Little instruction in science was offered. Emphasis was on the cultural or general education, and the qualification that "[...] no one could be a candidate for a degree unless he were an Anglican, a requirement which remained in effect until 1871 was a further barrier. It is important to note that neither did Oxford nor Cambridge make any provisions for advanced studies."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Brubacher and Rudy, Op. Cit., p. 188.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 189.

⁴⁷ W.H. Cowley, The University in the United States of America, in Edward Bradby (ed.), The University Outside Europe, London, Oxford University Press, 1939, p. 53.

Therefore, because advanced studies were most limited in the United States and because students were "unwelcome" in England and "afraid" of France, Germany presented itself as the most likely place. Yet, this attraction was far more than a process of elimination, for the intensely stimulated curricula of the vigorous German universities served as a magnet for American students.⁴⁸

American students who went to Germany for advanced studies were imbued with the German concept of a university and the methodology employed therein. To the Germans "[...] the collective idea of a university implies a Zweck, an objective study, and the Bedingungen, or conditions. The object was Wissenschaft; the conditions, Lehrfreiheit." By Wissenschaft the Germans mean knowledge in the most exalted sense of the term; viz, the ardent, methodical, independent search after truth in any and all of its forms, but wholly irrespective of utilitarian applications. Lehrfreiheit meant that the one who teaches "[...] is free to teach what he chooses, as he chooses. Lernfreiheit, or freedom of learning, denotes emancipation of the student from Schulzwang, compulsory will by recitation."⁴⁹ Therefore, the German university was, according to Rudolph, "[...] a body of scholars and

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 53.

⁴⁹ James Morgan Hart, Comparison of the German University and the American College during the 1860's, in Hofstadter and Smith (eds.), Op. Cit., pp. 571-572.

students pushing forward the frontiers of pure knowledge."⁵⁰ It is significant to note that the emphasis was on pure knowledge and freedom for the professor to lecture and say what he thought and the freedom of the student to attend any lecture, engage in any study he chose, and liberty to move from one university to another. While great freedom was allowed the students in Germany, this freedom was never absolute. Before being awarded a degree, the students had to pass rigid examinations and give evidence of scholarly research at the conclusion of their studies. American students returning from Germany bearing the prized German doctorate brought back a new concept of higher education.

These American students in German universities observed "the intimate union of investigation and instruction [...]"⁵¹ whereas in England at the time most of the great scholars were not affiliated with the universities, the situation in Germany was such that "[...] all university professors are investigators and scholars and that all investigators and scholars are teachers in universities."⁵² This was a very important fact that in Germany the students met face to face with the great thinkers of the day, and the impressions such

⁵⁰ Rudolph, Op. Cit., p. 334.

⁵¹ Friedrich Paulsen, The German Universities, New York, Charles Scribner Son, 1906, p. 4. (authorized translation by Frank Thilly and William Elwang)

⁵² Ibid., p. 4.

men as Hegel, Fichte, and Schelling left on the young minds of their day was indelible.

American students in Germany also observed that the German universities were "[...] almost entirely dependent upon the state for funds. Departments cannot be developed unless the state provides the money; new chairs cannot be established without the sanction of the education ministry."⁵³ Hence this statism, which was nothing more than the realization of Fichte's idea that the control of education was necessary if Germany was to realize its character and destiny, greatly influenced the returning American scholars.

Having received a new point of view as to what a university meant in Germany, the American students were pleased with the new methodology they witnessed in Germany. Americans were greatly impressed by the thoroughness in thinking and the research in Germany. Here the most exacting standards were demanded. In addition, "[...] the Germans applied the scientific method to every conceivable kind of knowledge."⁵⁴ The new method was applied to language, literature, and history and was to alter greatly existing methods in the United States with the return of the American students from Germany.

⁵³ Flexner, Op. Cit., p. 347.

⁵⁴ Cowley, The University in the United States of America, in Bradby, Op. Cit., p. 56.

While in Germany, Americans observed the elective system in line with the German concept of freedom for the students. They also observed the lack of compulsory class attendance and specialization, one of the main characteristics of the German university. There were no dormitories nor communal living in the German universities, and student life was quite impersonal. Cowley and some American educators believe that the rise of extra-curricular activities and athletics as a means of injecting a more personal note into university life "[...] may be ascribed to this German-born impersonalism."⁵⁵

Here at the German universities Americans saw the best use of the lecture method. "The professor lectured on his specialty without demanding day-to-day recitations or giving daily marks."⁵⁶ The lecture as a means of bringing the results of a research specialist was something new to American students and intensely appealing.

Besides witnessing the lecture method replacing the prolectio of the medieval period, the Americans observed both the full use of the laboratory method in science and the seminar. Replacing the old lecture-demonstration method in science, the German students undertook research in the

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 59.

⁵⁶ George P. Schmidt, The Liberal Arts College, New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1957, p. 157.

laboratory; "[...] working side-by-side with his master, the student learned the methods of his discipline and undertook his own investigations."⁵⁷ Outside the area of science, beginning with the field of philosophy and gradually extending to other areas, the seminar as a method of instruction developed. "The Seminar, which once had been the means of training acolytes in the art of disputation, became, along with the laboratory, a workshop of scientific progress."⁵⁸ This combination of teaching and research gave the German universities a distinction that greatly impressed Americans.

Envious of the German universities, American students returning from Europe were fired with a zeal to transform existing institutions of higher learning in the United States. One of two courses could be followed: either adapt existing colleges to the German model or establish a new, independent university type. The former plan was what Tichnor and later Eliot undertook at Harvard. The latter plan was what Tappan, Gilman, White, and Stanley Hall undertook.

Tichnor, in his Remarks on Changes Lately Proposed or Adopted in Harvard College, in 1825 had suggested:

⁵⁷ Hofstadter and Metzger, Op. Cit., p. 373.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 373.

[...] opening Harvard to students who did not wish a degree; dividing the instructional staff into separate departments of study [...] allowing a certain amount of choice of studies to students; dividing classes according to proficiency.⁵⁹

Eliot carried the principle of election begun by Tichnor to its zenith and saw it as the answer to declining motivation in our colleges at the time and a means whereby he could bring science to a level with the traditional subjects by dropping prescription. Eliot then proceeded to strengthen the professional schools and grafted the graduate school as a superstructure on the existing undergraduate college. Opposition to Eliot's elective principle was immediate, especially from the older eastern colleges; yet there was hardly a college that did not have to examine its curriculum in relation to Eliot's projected reforms.

The second group of college reformers attempted to establish a new type of university. Tappan's ideas were already mentioned in connection with the rise of the state university. Tappan's plan of a German university integrated with the lower levels of education "[...] were, however, too far advanced for a pioneer culture."⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Tappan's plan was eventually realized, and his Prussianized version of American education was used as a model in other states.

⁵⁹ Butts, Op. Cit., p. 104.

⁶⁰ Cowley, The University in the United States of America, in Bradby, Op. Cit., p. 55.

Gilman, armed with a grant in excess of three million dollars, experimented at Johns Hopkins with a new type of university, the research university. The aim of Johns Hopkins, primarily a graduate college, was stated by President Gilman as "[...] the encouragement of research; the promotion of young men; and the advancement of individual scholars, who by their excellence will advance the sciences they pursue, and the society where they dwell."⁶¹ With a large staff of able teachers, abundant resources in the laboratories, advanced liberal instruction, academic freedom, and non-sectarian in charter, Gilman hoped to establish in Baltimore an institution which he termed as the "Touchstone of Truth."

G. Stanley Hall, who had been a member of the faculty at Johns Hopkins, attempted to establish a graduate university in New England at Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts. Following the same principles laid down by Gilman at Johns Hopkins, he proceeded with his plans but on a somewhat smaller scale. "However, a misunderstanding soon arose between Hall and the school's founder, Jonas Gilman Clark."⁶² The latter came to oppose the president's emphasis on the

⁶¹ Daniel Coit Gilman, "Inaugural Address February 22, 1876", in David Andrew Weaver (ed.), Builders of American Universities, Alton, Illinois, Shurtleff College Press, 1950, Vol. 1, p. 321.

⁶² Brubacher and Rudy, Op. Cit., p. 182, Footnote 77.

graduate side of the institution and withheld financial backing.⁶³ As a result, the Clark experiment received a setback, and the hopes of the founder were not fully realized.

Andrew D. White, who formulated the so-called Cornell Plan, was to attract nation-wide interest. Rather than found a trade school as Ezra Cornell had intended, White persuaded the founder to establish an institution that would join scholarship with vocationalism and applied sciences implicit in the land grant concept. Therefore, Cornell would unite the liberal and the practical in a non-sectarian, "all-purpose" State University placed at the zenith of the New York State System of Education. Though White saw in Germany his ideal of the true university, it must be remembered that the vocational aspect of higher education is not in line with the German ideal.

In the process of transformation, our American colleges grew both vertically and horizontally. The forces that moulded our institutions

[...] were public and private, local and national, lay and professional. Americans did not build their universities with the logical consistency of the Germans: for various reasons no sharp lines separated colleges from graduate schools, or technical from intellectual concerns.⁶⁴

63 Ibid., p. 182, Footnote 78.

64 Hofstadter and Metzger, Op. Cit., p. 376.

As a result

Our postwar [Civil War] institutions of higher learning were therefore not merely motley, but mongrel; not only different from each other in size, quality, independence, and sophistication [...] but eclectic in their character and purpose (which on the whole was something new).⁶⁵

It is not that a plea is being made for consistency, but it seems

[...] that our eclecticism was responsible for a confusion and ambivalence in the relation of the university to its public which affected in turn the spirit and goals of academic research.⁶⁶

In concluding these remarks on the influence of the German university on American higher education, a type of hybrid institution was almost inevitable. To copy the German system was impossible for us. The German institutions were state universities in an undemocratic society under the control of a minister of education. In the United States education is under state control in a democratic, pluralistic society. Higher education in the United States was largely, and still is, under private auspices.

While this eclecticism carried many penalties, it offered advantages:

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 370.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 378-379.

From the standpoint of science there was much to be said for keeping open the channels between pure and applied research. From the standpoint of social policy it could be argued that there is something intrinsically good about a system that did not draw tight distinctions between one kind of interest and another, one kind of student and another, one kind of inquiry and another.⁶⁷

8. Pragmatism and Evolution Protrude

The third force to shatter the historical traditions of the classical curriculum was the impact of science with the attending theory of evolution and the philosophy of pragmatism. Prior to the mid-nineteenth century attempts to introduce science in the college curriculum had failed both in England and the United States. In the United States both Franklin and Jefferson had suggested the introduction of science; but the colleges controlled by classicists and religionists "[...] looked with unconcealed disdain upon what they considered to be the spiritually unprofitable grubblings of the scientists."⁶⁸ But while science did not enter the college curriculum, research was going on outside the college doors. This antipathy for science prior to 1850 was readily understandable. In a pioneer country which was largely agricultural and not yet industrialized, the importance of

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 382.

⁶⁸ Cowley, The University in the United States of America, in Bradby, Op. Cit., p. 65.

science was not realized. Calvinism and the influence of German idealism also led many American philosophers to a monistic view of the universe--a fixed place in relation to the whole, and where truth was fixed, uniform, and eternal. With such a philosophy it is easy to understand the rationale for the classical curriculum of the prevailing liberal arts college. Butts states "[...] for inasmuch as truth was always the same, a single group of unchanging studies could always be prescribed as the best means of arriving at truth."⁶⁹ With the rise of industrialization and the frontier to be conquered, this philosophy appears out of step in the United States. Much more appealing was the philosophy of pragmatism advocated by James which "[...] looked upon the universe as essentially incomplete and changing; varieties of existence and experience were set over against the organic unity and homogeneity of idealism."⁷⁰ In other words, "Truth became plural and became subject to change whenever better methods of acting and thinking were devised to meet the exigencies of life."⁷¹ Difficult indeed was the task of the traditionalists to defend the college curriculum in the light of this new philosophy.

⁶⁹ Butts, Op. Cit., p. 163.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 163.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 163.

Of even greater significance than the philosophy of pragmatism was the theory of evolution which challenged the scientific and religious notions of the eighteenth century. Darwin's Origins of the Species, published in 1859, held that the world was not created by God but evolved over millions of years and "by natural processes the simpler forms of life became more complex, and that man and all living things were branches of a common stock of life."⁷² If man is matter only, then the immortality of the soul and redemption are nothing but delusions. If the world is not directed by God but some impersonal force, prayer is ridiculous. If the world is governed only by laws, the Scriptures and tradition are myths. In time, as science gained acceptance in the college curriculum and as science became converted to evolution, the Darwinian legacy shattered our college tradition.

The man to apply and popularize the evolutionary concepts of Darwin was Herbert Spencer. From Spencer came a plea for science in education. This plea appeared in his essay what Knowledge Is of the Most Worth. To Spencer science was good for training the memory. Spencer held "the superiority of science over language as a means of discipline in that it cultivated judgment."⁷³ Whereas a language leads to

⁷² Ibid., p. 162.

⁷³ Herbert Spencer, Education, Intellectual, Moral and Physical, London, Watts and Company, 1949, p. 58.

dogmatic teaching because of its reliance on the teacher's word, authority, and dictionaries, "Science makes constant appeal to individual reason. Its truths are not accepted on authority alone, but all are at liberty to test them."⁷⁴ Spencer even went so far as to state that science is superior "[...] because of the religious culture which it gives."⁷⁵ What a terrible thing for the universe and its causes not to be studied for "Devotion to science is a tacit worship--a tacit recognition of worth in things studied and by implication their causes."⁷⁶ Spencer concludes with the admonition:

[...] that for discipline, as well as for guidance, science is of chiefest value. In all its effects, learning the meaning of things is better than learning the meaning of words. Whether for intellectual, moral, or religious training, the study of surrounding phenomena is immensely superior to the study of grammar and lexicons.⁷⁷

The impact of Spencer on American education was tremendous. He helped lay the foundations of modern progressive education. Spencer argued for education for life which meant the curriculum should be as broad as life. He held to the importance of science in education both in the realm of the natural and social order and the scientific method as the

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 59.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 60.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 61.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 63.

means for attainment. He, like Rousseau, insisted that student interests were important and that the natural [facts] not the artificial [words] was the way to student interest. This was the good way to education according to Hofstadter and Metzger "[...] first because nature was good and guaranteed human perfectibility; second because control of nature was good and insured competitive success."⁷⁸

9. Traditional Colleges React

What was the reaction of the traditional colleges to the Darwinian and Spencerian doctrines? Certainly these were alien doctrines, doctrines which had far-reaching implications and attacked the very foundations upon which the older colleges rested. Evolutionists attacked religious authority, the Scriptures, and the Bible. Evolutionists attacked sectarianism and doctrinal moralism--"[...] that veracity was a function of faith; that only the believer could be believed."⁷⁹

The reaction of the colleges to Darwinism was by no means the same everywhere. In some of the smaller religious colleges the study of evolution was forbidden. It is a familiar story in the history of higher education when the

⁷⁸ Hofstadter and Metzger, Op. Cit., p. 359.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 353.

professor in a small religious-bound denominational college attempted to broach the subject in class suddenly found himself without a position. In some of the larger, less religious-bound colleges of the East when science impinged upon philosophy, the president of the college, sometimes with the aid of trustees, attempted reconciliation or mediation. It must be remembered that prior to 1860 most college presidents were clerics and usually taught a course in moral philosophy or ethics to seniors. Most evolutionists, however, attacked "[...] the competence of the clergy to judge the issues of science."⁸⁰ The truth of the matter was that most of the ministers of the time were not trained in science and were not prepared to enter into debate with the ardent scientists of the day. Most of the emerging state universities and such institutions as Harvard, Cornell, and Johns Hopkins accepted evolution and the role of science in their broad and free design.

All of these had shattering effects on the harmony of the colleges. With the impact of science and Spencer's belief that education should be as broad as life, many new subjects were added to the curriculum. This increase in the curriculum aided both specialization and the system of free electives which Eliot instituted at Harvard. As the philosophy of idealism came under attack, this philosophy

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 347.

slowly gave way and was replaced by pragmatism in which truth depended upon the consequences that resulted when men acted in a certain manner. As a result of the struggle, the disappearance of the clergy as a force became a reality. Both the office of the president of the college and the boards of trustees became secularized. Eliot was the first layman as president of Harvard (1869), followed by such secular and scientific men as G. Stanley Hall at Clark, David Starr Jordan at Stanford, and F.A.P. Bernard at Columbia.⁸¹ Slowly but inexorably religious worship in American colleges became voluntary, not compulsory.

Commenting on the influence of Darwinism on this period in American higher education, Hofstadter and Metzger stated:

For the great Darwinian debate was richer in significant issues than any in the annals of disputation. It went beyond the substantive problem of whether evolution was true, and far beyond the psychological problem of how to hold to acquired science while retaining birthright beliefs. Touching on the nature and sanctions of authority, the methods and problems of verification, the standards of scientific debate, the Darwinian controversy implicated all that was problematic in the area of human judgment. The philosophy of science, psychology of learning, the metes of intellectual freedom, all entered the purview of the controversy. In consequence there was not a war, but many particular wars: a war between two kinds of knowledge--clerical and scientific; between two sorts of educational control--sectarian and secular; between two fundamental ways of knowing--the authoritarian and the empiricist; between two basic approaches to instruction--the doctrinal and the natural.⁸²

81 Hofstadter and Hardy, Op. Cit., p. 33.

82 Hofstadter and Metzger, Op. Cit., p. 346.

10. Evolving Patterns of the New Universities

Having indicated the social, economic, and political forces at work in the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century and those forces which vied with the traditionalists in the battle for educational supremacy, it may be well to examine the ultimate goal of these American educational innovators and the concomitant effect on the then existing American institutions of higher education. These innovators whose efforts led to the establishment of state universities were motivated in part by the desire to create universities in which America would favorably compete with the German universities. That their efforts changed the traditional character of American higher education is a matter of historical fact. It was, however, an unsettled period, and the momentum and direction of the new educational tide was in the process of precise definition. The question of changing the strict denominational college, tradition-bound with class recitation and devoted to the genteel pursuits, was a thing of the past. Change was inevitable. The prescribed manner of change was also indicated. A German model graduate school grafted on the existing English type college was to evolve. Research would be at the center of this graduate enterprise. Ultimately this new fusion would witness science gaining an equal footing with classical studies and the scientific approach being applied to other

fields of study such as language, history, philosophy, and literature. Specialization and the adoption of methods and training to the practical problems of the age so as to insure less misery, poverty, and ignorance would also be the philosophy underlying this new being.

Referring to this post-Civil War crisis in American higher education and admirably summarizing what has been presented, Berelson says:

So it is by no means hyperbole to call this period one of educational revolution. In 1876 college was at the top of the educational program with a largely ministerial faculty, a classical and traditional-centered curriculum, a recitation class session, a small student body selected from the gentility and social status, an unearned Master's degree given to alumni for good behavior after graduation, and serious advanced students went abroad. By 1900, in a short twenty-five years, the university was firmly established in America and was leading the educational parade with its professional character, its utilitarian and community centered programs, its stress on advancing learning, its new subjects of study, its seminars and laboratories and dissertations, its growing attraction for a new class of students--all capped by the earned Ph.D. graduate was on the road of growth and of increasing importance in American education: it was institutionalized in the graduate schools of the important Universities, it had dedicated faculties, it had ambitious students, it had adequate funds, and it had an important mission. The face of American education would never be the same.⁸³

⁸³ Bernard Berelson, Graduate Education in the United States, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1960, p.16.

11. Wilson's Role in the Educational Crisis

The questions then arise as to the role of Wilson in this educational crisis and its possibility of delineation. According to Laurence R. Vesey and others, it is possible to categorize the academic leaders of the period into four rather well-defined positions as to the role of American higher education.⁸⁴ This is not to say that every academic leader of the period can easily be placed into one of the four categories; but certainly, as the literature suggests, four trends are discernible.

The first group represents the exponents of the traditional college as it existed before 1860. These educational leaders believed in prescription, based on the old classical curriculum with heavy emphasis on Greek and Latin. These leaders also endorsed mental discipline as the psychological foundation of learning with religion as the basis of the course of study. McCosh and Patton of Princeton, Noah Porter of Yale, and the smaller denominational college presidents were the chief representatives of the traditional college and hoped to exert their influence to preserve the existing system, even though their supporters were few and their leaders fast becoming extinct.

⁸⁴ Laurence R. Vesey, "The Academic Mind of Woodrow Wilson", The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. 49, No. 4, issue of March 1963, pp. 615-617.

The second group of educational leaders saw the rising university as primarily vocational and utilitarian. These men envisioned the university as a means of practical and professional training for the new society. Education for democracy, citizenship, and the good life were their "watchwords." Free election and the "all-purpose" state university characterized their educational philosophy. The chief representatives of vocationalism and utilitarianism were Eliot, White, and the builders of the state universities.

A third group of educational reformers viewed higher education, especially the university, as a place for original research, the use of scientific method, and freedom for teachers and students. These men hoped to replace the English model with the German type. The chief representatives of the research university were Gilman of Johns Hopkins and G. Stanley Hall of Clark.

The fourth group, of which Woodrow Wilson was one of the chief representatives, advocated the "liberal culture." These men were inspired by the English system of higher education rather than the German type. They

[...]insisted upon the unity of human experience. This led them to reject the elective system of college studies as fragmentized, haphazard, and divisive, and to reject specialization in either of its two guises: as practical training for livelihood or as the abstract investigation of compartments of knowledge.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 616-617.

They advocated broad training in literature, philosophy, mathematics and science, and in Wilson's case, political science and modern language.

They wanted to infuse certain standards, including those of morality as well as taste, downward and outward toward the masses. This they would do by educating leaders to a common pattern. They wanted to produce gentlemen with a concern for the well-being of the commonwealth.⁸⁶

Yale and Princeton Universities provided the atmosphere conducive to the exponents of the "liberal culture."

Thus, from the foregoing, Wilson's position with reference to the revolution in higher education is both clear and, in a sense, unique. Though not a traditionalist, Wilson believed in the value of Latin, Greek, and religion and insisted upon the unity of human experience advocated by the exponents of the traditional college. Though not a true progressive because he rejected scientism, utilitarianism, professionalism, and free election, nevertheless he did see value (if somewhat reluctantly) in the study of science and some of the new disciplines. Therefore one may conclude that what Wilson aimed to do was "[...] to balance innovation with a keen sense for the value of the past [...]"⁸⁷ and what may have been considered archaic and lacking vision at the time,

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 617.

⁸⁷ Hofstadter and Smith, Op. Cit., p. 595.

yet Wilson insisted in 1902 that "[...] the true American university seems to me to get its best characteristics, its surest guarantee of sane and catholic learning, from the very heart of a college of liberal arts."⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Woodrow Wilson, "Education for the Nation's Service", in David Andrew Weaver (ed.), Builders of American Universities, Op. Cit., p. 77.

CHAPTER II

CHRISTIAN LIBERAL CULTURE VERSUS PROFESSIONALISM, UTILITARIANISM, FREE ELECTION, AND SCIENTISM

1. Wilson's Opposition to Emerging College Patterns

Central to the educational beliefs of Woodrow Wilson is his consistently negative attitude and oft-repeated opposition to professionalism, utilitarianism, and aspects German (especially with reference to science). On the positive side he displayed a predilection for and preached the doctrine that undergraduate college programs must be rooted in the tradition of a Christian liberal culture. These beliefs were mirrored in his tenure as President of Princeton University wherein he resisted all attempts, though they were popular, to make universal a college education which vitiated against its efficiency.

Thus for a more adequate understanding of Wilson's adamant resistance to the emerging college patterns of the professionalism and utilitarianism of his day, it is incumbent to examine his conceptions of the function of the college. To him its primary purpose was to train young men to use their minds rather than to be preoccupied in the pursuit of an occupation. Further, no interest at the university could be personal. It was the student's obligation to develop in college an outlook designed to be broad and in the interest of service.

2. Opposition to Professionalism

Wilson was well aware of the professional temper of his time. In fact, he once stated, "The separation of general and specific training is an acute symptom of the specialization by which we are now so sorely afflicted."¹ The causes for these "afflictions" were most obvious. A new class of men--sons of business people who had lately prospered--were entering the colleges, and social distinction rather than scholarship loomed before them. Also, in an age where "efficiency with us is accomplishment, whether the accomplishment be by just and well-considered means or not; and this standard of achievement it is that is debasing [...] the intellectual morals of our age."² The question of the proper professional training must be considered from two points of view--the individual and society. The individual likes to move rapidly and to achieve his professional goal as quickly as possible, but society should demand of the professional more than mere technical training. Technical

¹ Woodrow Wilson, "Should an Antecedent Liberal Education be Required of Students in Law, Medicine and Theology?" in Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd (eds.), The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson, College and State 1875-1913, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1925, Vol. 1, p. 229.

² -----, "The Training of the Intellect", in James Milton O'Neill (ed.), Modern Short Speeches, New York, Century Co., 1924, p. 266.

training discloses special skills, but a liberal education discloses general principles. If a liberal education is not attained before the acquisition of professional training, it is difficult to obtain a subsequent equivalent at a later date. Wilson's attitude was aptly expressed in an address which he delivered in Chicago when in speaking of a student of medicine he posed the question as to how one such "[...]" could understand the physical life of man without understanding the physical life of the universe,"³ or in the case of a minister of religion he opined that he too would be "[...]" a poor pretender if no serious survey of other subjects precede and accompany his direct preparation for the ministry."⁴ And again, when speaking of the lawyer, he stated, "[...]" the worst enemy to the law is the man who knows only its technical details and neglects its generative principles [...]"⁵ Wilson thus concludes that professionalism has caused us to lose sight of our common standards of training and that the spirit of the professional school has not been the spirit of learning, for "[...]" it is necessary that the spirit of

³ Woodrow Wilson, "Should an Antecedent Liberal Education Be Required of Students in Law, Medicine and Theology?" Op. Cit., p. 225.

⁴ Ibid., p. 226.

⁵ -----, "The Legal Education of Undergraduates", in Baker and Dodd, Vol. 1, Op. Cit., p. 234.

scholarship be detached, disinterested, and not immersed in particular interests."⁶ The college then must not be a place to make men excellent servants of a trade but a place where the student could find himself.

Wilson then proceeds to question the democratic function of that college which is serving special and not general needs. He concludes that the professional temper of this school is un-American. Such a conclusion is based on the principle that American life which has emanated from its American heritage demands versatility and adaptability, or in his own words, "[...] all specialism--including professionalism and semi-professionalism--is individualistic in object."⁷ Here the point of view centers on self and not on society or service. His reasoning leads him to the belief that when one's bread and butter is affected by choice that it becomes well nigh impossible to operate in terms of the "spirit of learning." Thus he can conclude that the college is not a place for particular interests or learning practical and utilitarian skills. Rather, "the college is a place of orientation; the professional school is a place of concentration."⁸

⁶ Woodrow Wilson, "The Training of the Intellect", Op. Cit., p. 266.

⁷ -----, "Position and Importance of the Arts Course as Distinct from Professional Courses", in Columbia Quarterly Review, Vol. 12, No. 2, issue of March 1910, p. 210.

⁸ -----, "The Spirit of Learning", in Baker and Dodd, Vol. 2, Op. Cit., p. 103.

3. Opposition to Indiscriminate Free Election

Concurrent with emerging professionalism in the college of his time was the principle of free election which allowed for as many courses of study as feasible in a college with freedom of choice of selection of subjects. To Wilson this was intrinsically wrong. To him education was an organic whole. The parts that comprised the whole must be related to each other in a rational fashion. Selection of subjects was permissible but only within defined areas and following some coherent pattern. To be carried away with free election would cause a confused groping and "[...] a very negation (of the essence) of education."⁹

Still, curiously enough, despite his adherence to an opposite educational belief, Wilson acknowledged Eliot's service to higher education. Speaking in New York in 1910, Wilson observed that when Eliot arrived on the American educational scene, he succeeded in convincing authorities that universities should open their doors to the new areas of learning, especially science. Previous to this, circa 1850, most American colleges were committed to a definitive program of studies. The great new bodies of modern studies that were

⁹ Woodrow Wilson, "The Meaning of a Liberal Education", in High School Teachers' Association of New York City, Vol. 3, (no number), issue of 1908-9, p. 22.

then pressing their way into the educational limelight, and especially science, were gathering momentum. The traditional colleges remained adamant in their refusal to concede that there was any value in the study of science and thus made no provision for it within their curriculum. It was Eliot who insisted that universities should open their doors to science. "That was [his] function," said Wilson. "He battered down all the closed doors of the university world. He fought until he had destroyed all the established prejudices of academic men. He insisted that there was no body of learning which by reason of traditional prejudices had precedence over any other body of learning [...]"¹⁰

Thus Wilson appraised Eliot's mission as a success but hastened to add that the time, Eliot's, was not one favorable to constructive programs. To Wilson's way of thinking the time had come to organize the unorganized and to give unity and coherence to the college program. There is according to Wilson, "[...] a natural sequence of studies, there is a natural hierarchy of studies, there is a natural combination of studies. I mean natural as based upon the nature of the studies themselves."¹¹

¹⁰ Woodrow Wilson, "Address at the Princeton Club of New York, April 7, 1910", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 10, No. 27, issue of April 13, 1910, p. 448.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 448.

Wilson then set out to implement this program at Princeton by abolishing the considerable free election allowed at that institution in the junior and senior years, which program was instituted by former President McCosh. From this Wilson foresaw the feasibility to "re-coordinate the unclassified studies" into a logical coherent scheme which would benefit Princeton and serve possibly as a pattern for other colleges and universities.

4. Opposition to Major Germanic Influences:
Standardization

Wilson then focused his thinking on the German influence which constituted still another threat to the college as constituted in his time. "Historically," said Wilson, "the American University is compounded of the college which must be at the heart of it and its vital motive force, and the schools of advanced and professional learning which naturally spring out of the college and which are the necessary modern means of supplying the nation with thoroughly equipped men for its various professions and enterprises."¹² Consequently, to Wilson, the university was not specialized professional schools apart from the University College, but

¹² Woodrow Wilson, "Address of Mr. Wilson to the Western Association of Princeton Clubs at St. Louis, March 26, 1910", in Wilson--Addresses 1906-1910, in Manuscript Division, Princeton University Library, pp. 1-2.

it was from the Liberal Arts College that the university received its vitality.

He further objected to the universities patterned after the German model by a denunciation of the American's insistence upon mimicking these models, the natural result of which would lead to standardization. In an address in the Northwest, Wilson stated that "a true university should stand for something of its own [...]"¹³ He further observed that "[...] the strength of democracy is in its variety [...]"¹⁴ Somewhat reluctantly he conceded the merits of the German university pattern, but he was adamant in his opposition to its wide acceptance in the United States. More specifically he objected to the impersonalization associated with the German method of instruction which was diametrically opposed to his conception of the university as a "community of scholars"--living and working together--and thus creating the environment whereby undergraduates could profit from mature association with these advanced scholars. Thus a striking contrast is drawn between the concept of community and the German predilection for individual attainment. He added substance to his objection by observing that the method of

¹³ Woodrow Wilson, "President Wilson in the Northwest", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 3, No. 30, issue of May 2, 1903, p. 492.

¹⁴ -----, "Address to Harvard, June 26, 1907", in Harvard Graduate Magazine, Vol. 16, No. 61, issue of September 1907, p. 86.

instruction employed in German universities was especially unsuited to the type of students who gained admittance to American universities. It was axiomatic that young men entering German universities from the Gymnasiums were better prepared for university level studies than their American counterparts coming from the many and diverse American high schools and academies.

a) Research.- Still fleshing out the substance to his objections, Wilson steadfastly maintained that the role of the American university was national in scope. Specifically this meant that our national cultural heritage must be advanced. "A university should be an organ of memory for the state for the transmission of its best tradition."¹⁵ He posed the dilemma: How could the United States mimic the German pattern when the cultural and political heritage of each was so different? Doubtlessly Wilson further objected to the "dry as dusk" methods of research enforced on the universities of the United States following the German pattern. Wilson himself despised these methods, to which he was subjected while a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University. He once said that the supreme method of graduate research was

¹⁵ Woodrow Wilson, "University Training and Citizenship", in Baker and Dodd, Vol. 1, Op. Cit., p. 248.

not minute research but "divination." Essentially then, Wilson would prefer to subordinate the facts to the subtleties that lie behind the facts.

b) Freedom.- Finally, Wilson could not accept the freedom of the scholar which was indigenous to the German type university. This to Wilson presupposed a predilection on the part of the student. He failed to comprehend how an unschooled young man lacking guidance or experience was to know which courses to pursue. It was possible for a few to chart their courses, but the vast majority of young men needed the guidance of prudent counselors with years of experience to show them the way.

The impact of science inherent in the influence of German universities on American higher education was a further item which aroused Wilson's ire. As some biographers indicated, Wilson never really eradicated the anti-scientific bias he held. Others felt that his views as therein reflected were in line with his "loyal Presbyterian background." In the 1890's, when the scientific thrust had reached the American universities, Wilson was known to be quite vocal in his opposition to the scientific influence on the colleges. In 1895 Wilson warned: "Keep the microbes of scientific conceptions out of our higher education." But as time progressed and more especially during his tenure as President of Princeton University, he exhibited a much more tolerant view of pure science

but continued his dogged resistance to practical science. Here again the general principles of biology, physics, and chemistry were an indispensable foundation for the practical sciences. He felt that to learn specific techniques in the ever-changing modern industrial world was to render one useless shortly after the techniques were acquired. Thus he continued to abhor the scientific method of inquiry which was gradually becoming the method of investigation. He conceded it to be a valid method but stoutly insisted that it was but one and not the only method, and he regretted the great impact made by the method of scientific inquiry. Speaking at the Sesquicentennial of Princeton in 1896, Wilson said:

I have no indictment against what science has done; I have only a warning to utter against the atmosphere which was stolen from laboratories into lecture rooms and into the general air of the world at large. Science--our science is new. It is a child of the nineteenth century. It has transformed the world and owes little obligation to any past age[...]. But their work the scientists has been so stupendous that all other men of all other studies have been set staring at their methods, imitating their ways of thought, ogling their results ... This is the disservice scientific study has done for us; it has given us agnosticism in the realm of philosophy, scientific anarchism in the field of politics. It has made the legislator confident that he can create and the philosopher sure that God cannot. Past experience is discredited and the laws of matter are supposed to apply to spirit and the make-up of society.¹⁶

¹⁶ Woodrow Wilson, "Princeton in the Nation's Service", in Baker and Dodd, Vol. 1, Op. Cit., p. 282.

This then was what Wilson called "the noxious intoxicating gas" which had seeped into the lungs of the academic world and had to be checked. Wilson strongly believed that science had not altered the laws of social growth, made history saner, or human nature easier to understand or reform. Said Wilson, "We must make the humanities human again; we must recall what manner of men we are; must turn back once more to the region of practicable ideals."¹⁷

Thus it is possible to conclude that Wilson was somewhat of an idealist who was given to describing "the perfect place of learning" as he envisioned it. He conceived it to be a free place, itself a world with sagacious men, with singleness of purpose, with men with a will, where ideals are kept in heart, where the truths of the ideas of the past are heard, and where debates about present affairs ensue. A university is a place where science and literature take their place and the windows of this place "open straight upon the street where many stand and talk, intent upon the world of men and business."¹⁸ This was the idealized Wilsonian conception of the college.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 283-284.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 284-285.

5. Wilson's Philosophy of Higher Education

Moving from this idealized conception of the true American university, one is then confronted with the detailed extracting of Wilson's philosophy of higher education. Confusion had here been compounded as a result of nebulous planning. In our colleges, development had followed developments in the nation; *viz.*, "apparent dispersion, competing interests, and rival forces." This being acknowledged, our colleges must come under examination and be reexamined from time to time. Yet, in this process Wilson cautioned that to tear down and engage in destructive criticism and offer no constructive programs was to be immoral.

The statesman in any field is a man of ideas and action. In an effort to reconstruct the disintegrating and chaotic college programs, some college authorities were trying new fads and theories. To this Wilson bitterly objected. In a speech in the Northwest, Wilson said:

The educator has no business to be trying new things. It is his business to gather the best of the past and present it in forms which have the sanction of time instead of running after new fads and theories.¹⁹

He thus divorces himself from curious speculation and new theories. Also embraced in this area of distaste were

¹⁹ Woodrow Wilson, "President Wilson in the Northwest", Op. Cit., pp. 492-493.

pedagogical methods. In ruling out their acceptance for educators he asserted:

There is something offensive in the word pedagogue. [...] a man who is an eminent teacher feels insulted if he is called a pedagogue; and yet we make a science of being pedagogues. [...] I suppose a great many dull men must try to teach, and if dull men have to teach, they have to teach by method that dull can follow.²⁰

It becomes increasingly clear then that Wilson viewed teaching as an art rather than a science.

This statement representing his analysis of the problems at hand, Wilson then offered this solution:

What the colleges need is what the nation needs; to have a synthesis made of its variety; to have its variety made unity; its rival and inconsistent interests brought into a real and working community of interests.²¹

This was the Wilsonian assessment of the dilemma and to resolve this is what Wilson at Princeton attempted to do.

6. The True American University

How was Wilson to accomplish this? He visualized the true American university as being comprised of many parts:

²⁰ Woodrow Wilson, "The American College" in O'Neill, Op. Cit., p. 207.

²¹ -----, "Life of the College", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 9, No. 5, issue of October 28, 1908, p. 71.

At its heart stands the college, the school of general training. Above and around the college stands the graduate and technical schools in which special studies are prosecuted and preparation is given for particular professions and occupations.²²

The graduate school of the university formed a necessary part of the university, but the technical schools, though not a necessary part of the university, greatly benefited from their association with the university.

At the heart of the university stands the college of liberal arts apart from any particular interest or concern and not affected by the material interests of the outside world. Here it was that the young man retired for four brief years--away from the hustle and bustle of worldly concerns. It is here that the student "learns to release his faculties" for use. It is here the student is "made a citizen of the modern intellectual and social world." It is here the student learns the "proper adjustment to the physical and social world." It is here the "spirit of learning" pervades and the student is "trained to use his mind and connect it with the past."

A young man is not educated by degrees and by the performance of tasks. For tasks are for the elementary and secondary schools. And college is not acquiring information,

²² Woodrow Wilson, "The Ideal University", in Wilson--Addresses 1906-1910, in Manuscript Division, Princeton University Library, p. 1.

which to Wilson's observations, seemed to be the bulk of college work. In fact, said Wilson, "Information may clog the powers of the mind instead of drawing them forth."²³ What one does with information is important, not acquiring it. Educational training is that training, according to Wilson, that comes in advance of information and puts the "mind in condition." Wilson drew a very interesting analogy when he stated that the liberal arts was like a gym.

A liberal education consists in putting the mind in such shape that all its powers, like the muscles of the body, will have been called into exercise, will have been given a certain degree of development, so that the mind will not find itself daunted in the midst of tasks of the world any more than the body itself, and will be able to turn itself in the right direction even as the athlete, quickly and gracefully not overwhelmed by the strain and able to accomodate the several faculties so that they will unit in carrying the strain.²⁴

Aptly did Wilson state his vision of the true university:

[...] the ideal at the heart of the American university is intellectual training, the awakening of the whole man, the thorough introduction of the student to the life of America and the modern world [...]²⁵

²³ Woodrow Wilson, "School and College", in Proceedings of Twenty-First Annual Convention of the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland, published by the Association, (no volume or number), issue of 1906, p. 78.

²⁴ -----, "The Meaning of a Liberal Education", Op. Cit., p. 24.

²⁵ -----, "The Ideal University", Op. Cit., p. 2.

7. Student Selectivity in American Universities

Consequently, if "the ideal at the heart of the American university is intellectual training," it becomes obvious that higher education is not for the majority but for the minority. Wilson made this quite certain when he stated, "It [college] is for the minority who plan, who conceive, who superintend, who mediate between group and group and must see wide as a whole."²⁶ This exclusive view of education was certain to come under criticism in a democracy where "equalitarianism" was basic both as a political creed and the educational creed being advanced by the emerging state universities. Nonetheless Wilson held steadfast to this view, and though it appears exclusive and un-American, Wilson felt that whereas in some countries of the world nobility and birth determined educational opportunity, in the United States we must recognize the fact that intellectual potential is even more vital for leadership in a democracy.

8. The Christian Liberal Culture

Now if the ideal at the heart of the true American university is intellectual training, and if "liberal culture" is the means of achieving the college objective, then a

²⁶ Woodrow Wilson, "Princeton for the Nation's Service", in Baker and Dodd, Vol. 1, Op. Cit., p. 448.

careful analysis is needed of Wilson's meaning of "liberal culture." To him, liberal in its best sense meant "popular"; i.e., "open-minded, catholic, and broadly human" lacking any class prepossessions or narrowness. Yet when one says liberal lacking any class prepossessions or narrowness, it cannot be inferred that Wilson acquiesced to the philosophy of the rising state universities. In fact, Wilson declined offers of the presidency of several state universities because he felt that private rather than public institutions were, for the most part, free from state politics and legislative control. Aware of the fact that taxpayers are utilitarian, Wilson in 1903 asserted that state education was valid only "[...] if we can get legislatures to pay for giving men the right to think for themselves [...]"²⁷ In addition, Wilson's "liberal culture" was to be infused with the spirit of religion--always strong at Presbyterian Princeton, and this could hardly be done at the state universities.

9. The Object of the Liberal Arts Course

The means of liberalizing the student was to be through a pursuit of the liberal arts course, and this was intended solely for preliminary training. This concept must

²⁷ Woodrow Wilson, "State Education: Its Relation to Political Life and Development", in Boston Transcript, issue of January 3, 1903, p. 3.

be brought to reality despite the curricular disorganization that had come about in the past two generations and despite the fact that courses of study were nothing but a mass of subjects and despite the fact that "[...] the old curriculum have been so added to and varied and expanded that all common standards have been lost ...²⁸ Wilson, in the spirit of a reformer and not an innovator, pleaded for a return to the "forgotten virtues." What Wilson sought in the revision of the course of study at Princeton was most explicit, for as he remarked, "The real difficulty, then, is that there is no course of study, because by a course of study, I mean a course laid out, a course measured, a course surveyed, a course determined."²⁹ The course which Wilson envisioned had a unifying effect of planned order along with a type of coordination and sequence. It certainly was not a grand tour, an excursion by the student over a "miscellany of unrelated subjects." In Wilson's "Annual Report to the Board of Trustees of Princeton University in 1904" he clearly stated that the object of the course revision was

²⁸ Woodrow Wilson, "Life of the College", Op. Cit., p. 70.

²⁹ -----, "The College Course and Methods of Instruction", in Annual Report of Schoolmaster Association, New York and Vicinity, (no publisher), issue of 1903-04, p. 47.

[...] to give a consistency to the selection of studies which undergraduates are not-at-large called upon to make among the multitude of courses and subjects of modern instruction. Its course revision object is organization; to present for use of the student an organic body of studies conceived according to a definite and consistent system and directed toward a single comprehensive aim; namely, discipline and development of the mind.³⁰

10. Specifics of Course Reform

Some features became immediately discernible in the Wilsonian course reform at Princeton. Most apparent was that the object of undergraduate training was general rather than specialized skills, a familiarity with principles rather than the acquisition of knowledge. It was emphasized that a look at the graduate ten years after graduation would reveal how much of the knowledge he received was actually retained. No doubt it would be little; but the graduate should have been taught "[...] what to do with the mind in receiving knowledge, taught to see, taught to discriminate, taught to sympathize, and enabled to comprehend."³¹ Knowledge is the mere material upon which habits are formed. These habits include "[...] stating ideas with precision, reasoning with

³⁰ Woodrow Wilson, "Annual Report of the President of Princeton University 1904, to the Trustees of the University", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 5, No. 13, issue of January 7, 1905, pp. 215-216.

³¹ -----, "Position and Importance of the Arts Course as Distinct from Professional Courses", Op. Cit., p. 210.

exactness and fearlessness and moving from premise to conclusion."³² This then was the type of discipline a young man should receive from the liberal arts course.

Secondly, Wilson insisted on organic unity in the program of studies. Noting often that the growth of the American university in the past two generations had been inorganic, merely miscellaneous, unsystematic additions to the course of study, Wilson suggested that the American universities which had developed around the college must be part of or integrated into an organic whole. Therefore, in undergraduate study Wilson aimed at an organic system by

[...] cutting out subjects that were not central and fundamental, and arranging in each department of study a discipline which would serve the student best, not only for general culture, but as a foundation for any subsequent, more advanced study he might wish to undertake.³³

Just as in the human organism if one part of the body should develop disproportionately in relation to the other and cause the individual to become grotesque, so in education the lack of proportion and balance would have the same grotesque result.

³² Ibid., p. 210.

³³ Woodrow Wilson, "Brooklyn Speech, March 21, 1910", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 10, No. 24, issue of March 23, 1910, p. 394.

11. Liberal Training Involves Enlightenment,
Orientation, and Discipline

Following in logical progression the receipt of the object of liberal training--proportioned general preliminary training--Wilson then proceeded by observing that this education should involve "enlightenment, orientation, and discipline." An understanding of each is essential to the Wilsonian ideal of higher education.

a) Enlightenment.- By way of underscoring that liberal training involved "enlightenment," Wilson in a speech at Harvard, declared, "The object of liberal training is not learning but discipline and enlightenment of the mind."³⁴ By enlightenment Wilson most assuredly did not understand the term in its eighteenth-century context. He rejected the "Age of Enlightenment" that was rooted in Cartesian rationalism, Newtonian science, and Lockian empiricism, which undermined the established patterns of church, state, and study and were far too divisive as well as far too destructive. Furthermore, Wilson never abandoned his belief in a kind of intuitive power which, to him, was surely at odds with the scientific thrust of his time. It is for this reason that Wilson sometimes described himself as a

³⁴ Woodrow Wilson, "The Spirit of Learning", Op. Cit., p. 109.

"modern of the non-scientific moderns." Also rejected by Wilson was the notion that enlightenment could be a narrow, confining religious concept which he believed to be the view held by McCosh, a former President of Princeton University, as well as numerous other leaders of strictly religious oriented colleges. Conversely, Wilson understood enlightenment to be a term used almost synonymously with education, meaning "an illuminating perception of what things mean."³⁵ This perception was to be realized by penetration into a subject.

It is a great deal better to see one thing than to merely look at a thousand; it is a great deal better to penetrate to the heart of some one mystery than to idly speculate about a score of mysteries.³⁶

It was hoped that as a result of this enlightenment one would come out of his provincialism and know what the world at large was thinking. It was further hoped that as a result of this enlightenment the educated man could be

[...] discovered by his point of view, by the temper of his mind, by his attitude toward life and his fair way of thinking. He can see, he can discriminate, he can combine ideas and perceive whither they lead; he has insight and comprehension. His mind is a practiced instrument of appreciation.³⁷

79. 35 Woodrow Wilson, "School and College", Op. Cit., p.

36 Ibid., pp. 79-80.

109. 37 -----, "The Spirit of Learning", Op. Cit., p.

To Wilson this "practiced instrument" meant discipline, and "appreciation" meant a type of inspirational love of culture. Hence what would emanate from the illuminating effects of enlightenment would be a sense of uplift--both of mind and of soul.

b) Orientation.- Yet enlightenment as a primary function of education must be complemented by orientation, for Wilson was well aware that the "continent of knowledge" was vast and forever increasing. No program of general studies or single curriculum could ever lead one through the whole body of knowledge. The road to traverse was seemingly limitless, and the time of the undergraduate was short. But Wilson felt that it was possible by proper selection to acquaint the student with modern learning by eclectic sampling in the fields of philosophy, one of the sciences, languages, history, and politics. It was within the framework of this orientation that the student was to receive:

[...] valid naturalization as a citizen of the world of educated men--and no smatterer merely, able barely to spell its constitution out, but a man who has really comprehended and made use of its chief intellectual processes and is ready to lay his mind alongside its tasks with some confidence that he can master them and can understand why and how they are to be performed.³⁸

³⁸ Woodrow Wilson, "What is a College For?" in Baker and Dodd, Vol. 2, Op. Cit., pp. 167-168.

c) Discipline.- Finally, education involved discipline. If any word occupies a position of prominence in the many Wilsonian educational pronouncements, it is the word discipline. In 1907 Wilson stated:

We have talked a great deal in our day about enlightenment and about orientation; but we have stopped talking about discipline. The chief object of education is discipline.³⁹

Certainly Wilson did not understand discipline in the mid-nineteenth century context of the conservative college president, for the term then connoted "mental discipline"--the sharpening of the mind through exercises in Greek, Latin, and mathematics. Indeed, to Wilson, the curriculum was far more inspirational than the conservative view of mental discipline. Learning was by "contagion" and the association of the mature mind with the immature mind. However, it is possible to ascribe even greater comprehension to Wilson's use of the term discipline, for he stated, in 1907, that the classical course of ancient learning is always most desirable as a means of limbering-up before the process of narrowing one's self begins.⁴⁰ Realizing that the circle of liberal studies had been extended and enlarged and that the old discipline of Greek, Latin, and mathematics could not be

³⁹ Woodrow Wilson, "School and College", Op. Cit., pp. 81-82.

⁴⁰ -----, "Address at Memphis, Tennessee, November 9, 1907", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 8, No. 9, issue of November 20, 1907.

required of all undergraduates, Wilson insisted that the college program include disciplinary studies in the first two years. This would include mathematics, science, and some language. Wilson's purpose is thus evident when he states,

They are indeed disciplinary. The mind takes fibre, facility, strength, adaptability and certainty of touch from handling them [...] They are disciplinary only because of their definiteness and their established methods; and they take their determinateness from their age and perfection.⁴¹

Of course this required a teacher who knew the art and the power of the subject. Therefore, the liberal studies required training, preferably classical, which would discipline the mind and make it serviceable for our intellectual life.

12. Element of Liberal Education: The Four Bodies of Discipline

Establishing that education involved "enlightenment, orientation, and discipline", Wilson then settled on the elements that were to comprise a liberal training. As previously noted, Wilson was well aware of the plethora of knowledge associated with the then modern learning. To this disunity he sought to bring some degree of coherence, proportion, and an acquaintance with certain fundamental areas

⁴¹ Woodrow Wilson, 'Princeton for the Nation's Service', Op. Cit., p. 451-452.

of human experience and thought. "what we seek", said Wilson, "[...] is not universal knowledge, but the opening of the mind to a catholic appreciation of the best achievements of men and the best processes of thought since days of thought set in."⁴² The college program of liberal studies should contain planned order and sequence and afford the student a "rounded whole," so as to spare us from intellectual "yokels" and "provincials" condemned to servitude by sprawling superficial knowledge. Knowledge is trustworthy only when it is complete.

Against this background Wilson placed four categories of fundamental knowledge which would provide the content of a liberal mastery of life. Said Wilson, "There are four bodies of discipline"--elements which make up the 'good studies.'" These included pure science, pure literature, pure philosophy, and history and politics--meaning political economy. Of the four areas of fundamental knowledge Wilson, in all probability, would emphasize pure literature and history because of his personal conviction that the importance of education lay in service to the nation and mankind. It may be well to note in passing that Wilson further exhibited those characteristics by which he deserves to be ranked among the moderns in that he granted recognition to social

⁴² Ibid., p. 451.

science--a relatively new discipline in the liberal arts curriculum.

Basic in this Wilsonian concept of the curriculum was "thorough drill in some part of pure science." It is important to note that Wilson considered physics, biology, chemistry, geology, and astronomy to be the pure sciences. There was no place for general science and never any thought of practical science which, to Wilson, was anathema. He reasoned that pure science claimed an essential place in the curriculum of liberal studies because it affords

[...] us direct introduction into the most essential, analytical, and rational processes of scientific study, impart penetration, precision, candor, openness of mind, and afford the close contacts of concrete thinking.⁴³

From the discipline of some part of pure science " ... the mind can never afterwards shake off the prepossessions of scientific inquiry."⁴⁴ While Wilson acknowledged the place of pure science in the liberal arts curriculum (in view of his earlier anti-scientific bent), he was a hostile critic of scientism--the thesis that the methods of natural science were the only methods of investigating in all areas of learning. This he abhorred and feared, and to him is

⁴³ Ibid., p. 454.

⁴⁴ Woodrow Wilson, "Position and Importance of the Arts Course as Distinct from Professional Courses", Op. Cit., p. 212.

attributed the statement that he feared nothing worse than a revolution led in the scientific spirit. Perhaps this was a touch of clairvoyance, for years later when President of the United States he witnessed the Communist Revolution of 1917 and the advent of scientific socialism, which still plagues the world.

The second element of the liberal studies was pure literature, and Wilson's first preference was classical literature. "The classical literature gives us, in tones and with an authentic accent we can nowhere else hear, the thoughts of an age we cannot visit."⁴⁵ The writers of literature were to Wilson the best expounders of politics, for, as he once observed, he found more political interpretation in the poets than in the writers of political science textbooks. In the study of literature thorough grounding in English, the mother tongue, was also basic. Thus pure literature, embracing the written and spoken word, had to be an indigenous element, for how could a man be made "free of the world of thought" without a knowledge of his own literature and the mystery of his own tongue.

The third element of the liberal studies included history and politics. The inclusion of these subjects is not

⁴⁵ Woodrow Wilson, "Princeton for the Nation's Service", Op. Cit., p. 452.

surprising in view of Wilson's own background; viz., history, law, and government. While Wilson offers few if any concrete reasons for the inclusion of history and politics, it is fairly logical to deduce that Wilson's firm faith in the belief that institutions of learning are not private but public and that "affairs" have a legitimate existence within the university and thus conclude that history, politics, and economics form a necessary part of the liberal arts. Previously alluded to and a topic which will later be considered in detail "education in the nation's service," the theme of two of Wilson's great addresses, confirms the need for the study of history. Wilson strongly believed that to serve was to comprehend. The logical corollary of this belief then is the impossibility of intelligent service to nation and mankind without a knowledge of institutions both at home and abroad. By way of summation it may be sufficient to note that Wilson was fond of remembering that to be a full man one must be a good citizen and that the university had as its function training in citizenship.

The final element of a liberal education which Wilson considered basic was some element of pure philosophy. By pure philosophy he meant "[...] an explanation of nature and human life which seeks to include all the elements[...]"⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Woodrow Wilson, "Position and Importance of the Arts Course as Distinct from Professional Courses", Op. Cit., p. 212.

It is hardly possible to believe that Wilson restricted this concept to a "philosopher's philosophy," which despite its merits could be as narrowing and specialized as some subjects in vogue in the curriculum. Hence to Wilson "the final synthesis of learning is philosophy," and the best index to the spirit of the university is found in the philosophy it teaches. Apparently Wilson would ultimately construe this to result in a philosophy of right conduct which would probably be the result of the student's knowledge of the "thought and affairs" of the generations that preceded him. Admittedly nebulous and relying largely on abstract language, Wilson nonetheless is somewhat pragmatically capable of admonishing that, "We were not put into the world to sit still and know; we are put into it to act."⁴⁷ He sums up his philosophical deliberations in the spirit that right actions and right behavior will result from the study of philosophy, or perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that such was to be devoutly wished.

13. Christian Character of the Liberal Arts

Wilson moved easily from the objects to the elements of the liberal arts, structuring it on four basic studies and then ascribed to one such basic-philosophy--a revered

⁴⁷ Woodrow Wilson, "Princeton for the Nation's Service", Op. Cit., p. 459.

position which he chose to term "the final synthesis of learning." He freely concluded that from a proper pursuit of this study right conduct proceeds. Wittingly or unwittingly he had thus entered the field of morality which became inextricably entwined with his religious convictions. He was firmly convinced that any university would be found wanting "[...] if its teachings be not informed with the spirit of religion and that religion of Christ and with the energy of positive faith."⁴⁸ Reared in a strict Presbyterian tradition with ministers of religion on both sides of his family, including his father, the influence of religion was to remain strong throughout his life. Educated at Presbyterian Princeton, Wilson asserted in 1896, "She [Princeton] had always been a school of religion, and no one of her sons who really loved her life has escaped that steady touch [...]"⁴⁹

14. Religious Foundation of Wilson's Educational Thinking

The strong influence which religion exerted in his personal life is a key ingredient to the understanding of his educational thinking. The regard for the individual in the Wilsonian concept of education is primary and fundamental.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 459.

⁴⁹ Woodrow Wilson, "Princeton in the Nation's Service", Op. Cit., p. 270.

Even though he often spoke of the communitarian spirit in higher education, his regard for the individual was evidenced by his fostering of the preceptorial system, the special honors program, and the selective dispensation from required courses of study for those of special native endowments. This belief in the individual is underscored by Wilson's statement: "The end and object of Christianity is the individual, and the individual is the vehicle of Christianity. There can be no other value."⁵⁰

It was the obligation of education to inculcate in this individual a strong sense of duty. The whole program of the liberal arts was to make the individual serviceable. To Wilson it was religion that strengthens the idea of service. In his Sesqui-Centennial Address of 1896 he asserted, "There is nothing that gives such pith to public service as religion. A God of truth is no mean prompter to the enlightened service of mankind [...]"⁵¹

Wilson's dislike for science, though somewhat modified when he became President of Princeton University, probably stemmed from the godlessness associated with many early

⁵⁰ Stanley A. Hunter (comp.), The Religious Ideals of a President, India, The Allahbad Press, 1914, p. 10.

⁵¹ Woodrow Wilson, "Princeton in the Nation's Service", Op. Cit., p. 270.

scientists. The attitude of the latter that religion and science were incompatible just could not be accepted by Wilson. Speaking of the scientist, Wilson stated:

They know there is a spiritual segment in the complete circle of knowledge which they cannot supply and which must be supplied if the whole circle is not to show its imperfection and incompleteness.⁵²

Hence the spiritual aspect must be considered if the work of the scientist is to be complete and acceptable.

Wilson's dislike of practical education stemmed from the belief that practical judgments change from age to age but principles abide. Hence the proper study for college was a program that concerned itself with general principles, such as in pure science and not technical education which could become obsolete. Superseding in importance, general principles were ideals. With deep religious conviction Wilson asserted:

Our true wisdom is in our ideals. Practical judgments shift from age to age, but principles abide; and more stable even than principles are motives which simplify and ennoble life. That, I suppose, is why the image of Christ has grown not less, but more distinct in the consciousness of the race since the tragic day in which He died upon the cross [...]⁵³

⁵² Hunter, Op. Cit., p. 14.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 19.

Wilson foresaw that the ideal of man is Christ, the "complete and unalterable epitome" of what man is and should be--a citizen of two worlds.

The whole argument that raged over efficiency in education, said Wilson, "[...] can have no permanent validity if the efficiency sought be not moral as well as intellectual."⁵⁴ Wilson observed that the ages of achievement have been times of strong moral convictions, especially Christian. The history of the United States was proof of this. Perhaps the strongest argument that Wilson advanced for a liberal training was in his statement of 1902 which claimed: "Moral efficiency is, in the last analysis, the fundamental argument for liberal culture."⁵⁵

15. Breadth Plus Depth in Education

Before taking leave of what Wilson considered to be the elements of the liberal culture and its foundations, it must be mentioned that exposure to basic areas of human thought was not sufficient. To become intellectually mature a young man must supplement breadth with the discipline of depth in some area of learning. With faculty assistance

⁵⁴ Woodrow Wilson, 'Princeton for the Nation's Service', Op. Cit., p. 459.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 459.

Wilson instituted this plan during his tenure as President of Princeton University, where the young student moved from the fundamental and disciplinary subjects in the first two years (necessitated by the varied and unequal background of the students) to concentration and choice of a course of study in the third and fourth years. Here the student chose from a scheme of related subjects. In the process of this reform, Wilson established at Princeton University four divisions which he hoped would eventually be separate schools. Philosophy, art and archaeology, language and literature, and mathematics and science were the four divisions. Under these divisions were organized twelve departments of study. For example, the Division of Philosophy contained the Departments of History, Political Science and Economics, and the Department of Philosophy. The Division of Languages and Literature contained the Departments of Classics, English, and Modern Languages. The Division of Mathematics and Science contained the Departments of Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Geology, and Biology. (Astronomy was included in this division but not yet structured into a separate department.) Art and Archaeology comprised a single division bearing the same name. In the scheme of reorganization each department offered to junior-level students two well conceived subjects. (History was the exception which offered three to junior-level students.) Each junior pursued five courses (revised

downward from a previous seven), two of which were from a single department, plus one in a related division, one outside the division, and one elective. Therefore it was hoped that the junior year not only would be expository in nature--by adding new subjects--but would serve as a foundation for more specialized work in the senior year as well as serving for the foundation for exact scholarship to follow in the future.⁵⁶

In the senior year the course plan somewhat followed the scheme of the junior year, allowing for three to five courses in a single department. But since no department offered more than three upper-class courses, the student "[...] could easily qualify himself for either of two cognates, or even contrasted departments in his senior year."⁵⁷ Hence the aim of the curriculum reform represented elasticity with provision for change from one department of study to another in addition to breadth and variety. Of course, special provisions were made for honors courses and independent research. Here an independent research project served as the germ from which Princeton's present plan of independent study for

⁵⁶ Woodrow Wilson, "Annual Report of the President of Princeton University 1904, to the Trustees of the University", Op. Cit., p. 216.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 217.

juniors and seniors emerged, culminating in a piece of thorough, scholarly, and original research manifested in the senior thesis which is an university requirement. Thus Wilson proved himself a true educational statesman by implementing his ideals with practical and lasting reforms which much of the literature of Princeton University's history testifies is the blueprint from which modern Princeton has been built.

In the Wilson plan there was no opportunity to traverse a miscellany of unrelated subjects, no narrow specialization but smacks of system and consistency. As the student reached the senior year, the courses were more detailed and specialized; yet the program exuded elasticity which allowed for change of major even in the senior year. The aim was "[...] to draw the general training of the earlier years to as definite a completion as may be along particular lines."⁵⁸ In other words the student progressed from the general to the special, and Wilson considered the drill of the first and second years as important to the senior year as the introductory view of large subjects offered in the third year. The entire plan was formulated so as to enable undergraduates to make a systematic choice aided by the mature judgments.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 217.

16. Method

Finally, in the schema of reform, attention should be given to method--in this case the preceptorial system. This was Wilson's method of giving body and action to his philosophy. He envisioned the preceptorial system as a method of welding the colleges into a real community of liberal learning. Wilson's practical concern was personal reality in education. Toward this end Wilson instituted the preceptorial system, over which he had been meditating at least ten years.⁵⁹ This new order was really not a system, nor did it dispense precepts. "Tutorial method" was probably a better term, but somehow the apparent misnomer "stuck". It, no doubt, was nothing new in the field of education, and it was a method well known at the English universities. But here at Princeton one distinction stands out over the British system. At Princeton the forty-seven "preceptors" appointed in 1905 were designated as full faculty members with the rank of assistant professor.⁶⁰ In England the tutors did not enjoy professional rank. Wilson hoped that in time all professors would be "preceptors", for his ideal concluded

⁵⁹ Woodrow Wilson, "University Training and Citizenship", Op. Cit., p. 258.

⁶⁰ -----, "Annual Report of the President of Princeton University 1905, to the Trustees of the University", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 6, No. 13, issue of January 6, 1906, p. 234.

"We are all preceptors." The care with which Wilson selected the preceptors is astounding. Most of the literature relating to "new system at Princeton" testifies that it was his remarkable insight, careful work in selecting preceptors, and personal appeal which enabled him in a single stroke to bring to Princeton one of the most remarkable groups of scholars. Robert K. Root, instructor in English at Yale, who came to Princeton as one of the original preceptors in 1905 said of his interview with Wilson:

My interview lasted some forty minutes. Mr. Wilson asked me no questions about myself, but spoke with winning eloquence about his plans for Princeton. Before five minutes passed I knew that I was in the presence of a very great man. Of course I was not sufficiently a prophet to foresee the scope of his subsequent achievements, that his great qualities of mind and spirit were to make themselves felt not only in academic circles but throughout the country and the whole circuit of the world. But I did recognize that I had never before talked face to face with so compelling a person. Before the talk was over my loyalties were entirely committed to him.⁶¹

Most of the preceptors were young scholars seasoned in the ordeal of attaining a doctorate who had, for the most part, partaken either first or second hand in German university training and who were aware of its virtues and limitations. Most of these young scholars were eager to escape the

⁶¹ Robert K. Root, "Wilson and the Preceptors", in William Starr Myers (ed.), Woodrow Wilson, Some Princeton Memories, Princeton University Press, 1946, pp. 14-15.

limitations imposed upon them at other institutions and to participate in a new, refreshing educational undertaking which was both appealing and challenging.

Three qualities were regarded as important by Wilson in the selection of these tutors. He required that they be scholarly, gentlemanly, and lively. And the preference that he gave to the first two qualities is worthy of note. In 1905 Wilson, speaking of the qualities of preceptors, stated, "If their qualities as gentlemen and as scholars conflict, the former will win them the place."⁶² It is interesting to observe further that Wilson as an advocate of the "liberal culture" was quite definite in the relation of the university to the American political and social scene. In an effort to influence certain standards of taste and morality downward and outward to the masses, the need for the gentleman-scholar was essential for common pattern necessary to function properly in the republic.

The general theory of the preceptorial system is that college is different from high school. College was not "[...] merely getting up tasks, learning the lectures and ideas of particular instructors, or mastering textbooks, but the student should feel that they are reading up subjects for

⁶² Woodrow Wilson, "Practical Journalism in University Life", in Daily Princetonian, Vol. 30, No. 41, issue of April 17, 1905, p. 1.

their own sake."⁶³ The preceptors were to direct reading intelligently and to acquaint the students with the chief matters involved in several studies. It was hoped that as a result of this system the student would be given independence in handling himself under competent guidance and would be stimulated by scholarly association. The liberalizing influence resulted from very hard work rather than from studies.

Wilson reasoned on the theory that work in the classroom "[...] is never calculated to deeply interest a man in study."⁶⁴ And while the small college allows contact, it does not necessarily give the broad community life and "quickenings rivalries" of the great university. Therefore, the object was to make the university a place of close intimate contacts, lost or diluted at present, "by the general mass of men." This is exactly what Wilson had in mind when in 1905 he stated that the aim of the "preceptorial system" was:

⁶³ Woodrow Wilson, "New System to be Introduced", in Daily Princetonian, Vol. 30, No. 46, issue of April 28, 1905, p. 1.

⁶⁴ -----, "The New Preceptorial System", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 5, No. 26, issue of April 22, 1905, p. 471.

[...] to give the undergraduates in a great university the advantage of the same sort of close and intimate contact and counsel with his instructors that the undergraduate of a small college enjoys.⁶⁵

The aim of this new system was "direct personal contact" or "[...] to get hold of the personal equation of each man [...]"⁶⁶ This was not to be done by merely enlarging the faculty or by some mere extension of classroom work. Each student was to be treated as an individual and encouraged to put zest into his work.

This was no small job. First of all Wilson realized that it is more difficult "[...] to stimulate other minds to do things than it is to do the thing yourself."⁶⁷ Anyone who has taught will vouch for that. Secondly, the new system was very expensive. It required an immediate addition of some fifty professors that, fortunately for Wilson, the Board of Trustees approved. Thirdly, not all professors are suited for preceptorial work. While it is to Wilson's credit that the initial group of preceptors hired were outstanding, when the system was extended to regular university staff members, some did not qualify. It is a paradox that such was

⁶⁵ Woodrow Wilson, "Statement on the Tutorial System", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 5, No. 20, issue of February 25, 1905, p. 335.

⁶⁶ -----, "Practical Journalism in University Life", Op. Cit., p. 1.

⁶⁷ -----, "The Meaning of a Liberal Education", Op. Cit., p. 30.

the case of Wilson himself. While a professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton, he would lecture to as many as four hundred students and render the class spellbound by his eloquence. In fact, the literature indicates that it was not uncommon for the class to stand and applaud at the conclusion of his lecture. Yet in small seminars Wilson was largely ineffective. His aloofness and reserve rendered him ineffectual in places that demanded close personal contact. Finally, the burden of course reading and the evaluation of required papers imposed on the preceptors were extremely taxing which few but the most dedicated of scholars could endure.

The mechanics of the new system demanded that the student attend two lectures and one preceptorial meeting. The latter would be limited to very small groups--perhaps even a single student. These occurred at a convenient place and time--some, in the professor's home. During these meetings there would be discussion periods involving the assigned readings, and with Socratic skill the preceptor would challenge his students. In addition, there was much written work (somewhat on the order of an informal thesis course), and the resulting papers were judged on both content and the correct use of the English language. The ability to express ideas with precision was a paramount requisite. Should weaknesses in diction or mechanics manifest themselves, the student was

referred to the English department for corrective treatment. The preceptors did not prepare the examinations; however, when a student's performance at the preceptorial conferences indicated lack of progress, the tutor would frequently suggest that this student be excluded from the final examination.

The preceptorial system soon attracted national attention. Duly noted were the substantial changes in the study of subject matter and the tremendously increased circulation of library books. Not to be overlooked either were the expanding numbers of students who were now able to express their ideas with precision and effectiveness and close and lasting associations which developed between professors and students. Princeton's firm belief in the value of this type of instruction is evidenced by the fact that even today some seven hundred preceptorial meetings are held each week at Princeton University--a glowing testimonial to the vision and ideals of Woodrow Wilson.

The system was born of the conviction that it was necessary to get rid of the schoolboy idea that a course consists of lectures, quizzes, exercises, and cramming for final examinations and supplant it with the very different idea that demands the discipline of hard work with care and thoroughness and

[...] that a course is a subject of study to be got up by as thorough and extensive reading as possible outside the classroom; that the classroom is merely a place of test and review, and that lectures, no matter how authoritative, are no more than a means of directing, broadening, illuminating or supplanting the student's reading.⁶⁸

The governing idea of the system was subjects, not course. The process was individualized reading, comparing and reflecting, and daily methodical study, not cramming for examinations. This was to be accomplished through the prudent use of skilled preceptors who served as expositors, advisers, and friends. Proudly did Wilson report in 1905 that the preceptorial system

[...] has systematized and vitalized study, made reading men of schoolboys, established intimate teacher-pupil relationships and yet the system is elastic enough so that the individual gifts and talents of the preceptors 'might have free play.' Yet amidst all the variety there have been no failures.⁶⁹

Having detailed Wilson's opposition to professionalism, utilitarianism, free election, and things German as they emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century American universities and having delineated Wilson's

⁶⁸ Woodrow Wilson, "Annual Report of the President of Princeton University 1905, to the Trustees of the University", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 6, No. 14, issue of January 13, 1906, p. 252.

⁶⁹ -----, "Annual Report of the President of Princeton University to the Trustees of the University 1906", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 7, No. 15, issue of January 19, 1907, p. 255.

preference for the Christian "liberal culture", including the elements, content, and method, it is now necessary to address the social milieu or climate necessary for the Christian "liberal culture" to flourish.

CHAPTER III

DEMOCRACY VERSUS CLASS AND SOCIAL PRIVILEGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Social Coordination: The foundation

Having expounded his thesis of the Christian Liberal Culture and initiated the preceptorial system as a means of broadly implementing this all-inclusive and all-pervasive concept of the function of higher education, Wilson and the Board of Trustees, since he had to operate with their sanction, moved into an area fraught with the explosive ingredients of wealth, class distinction, and privilege whose very being was threatened with annihilation as the revolutionary method of the preceptorial system moved to its logical conclusion. Strong personal conviction, altruism, reaction, honest differences of opinion, and the uncertainty of treading uncharted educational terrain played their parts in the ensuing drama which was, at times, accompanied by acrimonious debate, faltering vacillation, and flurries of positive action.

The initial setting for this move was the meeting of the Board of Trustees on June 10, 1907. Wilson, now at the peak of his power at Princeton, advanced a proposal "heretical in character," as he so stated, but yet "a necessary corollary" for the ultimate objective of the preceptorial

system which had been recently established. The latter, in conjunction with the new order of study, was considered by Wilson "[...] the greatest strategic move [...] in the whole history of American universities."¹ The very foundation of this system demanded a new "social coordination" of the University which would truly knit the students together into an organic body and insure those vital intellectual contacts, which must rank fundamental in the life of the college. With this first premise accepted by the Board of Trustees it followed that the second necessitated an organizing of the undergraduate students into residential quads--which would replace the then popular eating clubs, or--at the very least--their absorption into the said residential quadrangles or colleges where the undergraduates would live and eat. By these quads or colleges Wilson did not mean colleges of the English type characterized by separate autonomy but residential colleges designed to break down the barriers of class and social adhesion which interfered with the primary function of the University. The eating clubs, as Wilson noted, were undermining the "old democratic spirit" of Princeton.

¹ Woodrow Wilson, "Report on the Social Coordination of the University, June 10, 1907", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 7, No. 36, issue of June 12, 1907, p. 607.

2. Development of Eating Clubs

Eating clubs at Princeton had their origin during the tenure of President McCosh. It was he who caused the abolition on campus of Greek letter fraternities. In their stead came the eating clubs necessitated by the inadequacy of available dining facilities; these eating clubs were seemingly innocuous and destined for a short life, a transitional expediency comprised chiefly of upper-classmen. Yet, these eating clubs proved to be hardy and popular and led to the acquisition of luxurious homes, elegantly furnished in attractive settings that became, and still are, the show-places of the town of Princeton. Wealthy alumni bequeathed huge sums of money to the clubs where they once lived, and in time these eating clubs amassed sizeable fortunes. Life at the clubs was elegant, and the socials and parties sponsored by them became the prime motive for attendance at Princeton. This prompted Wilson to say in 1909, "The sideshows [...] have swallowed the circus, and those who perform in the main tent must often whistle for their audiences, discouraged and humiliated."² Being admitted to the right club, since

² Woodrow Wilson, "What is College For?", in Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd, (eds.), The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson, College and State 1875-1913, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1925, Vol. 2, p. 174.

there was a hierarchy of clubs, was the supreme concern of under-graduates. Toward this end, but with subtle reserve, freshmen and sophomores sought to make the "right acquaintances" and used all possible influence to achieve their desired goals. Thus there came into being freshmen and sophomore clubs which served for preliminary training in gaining admittance to their exclusive counterparts of the upper class level. Spring time was the period of recruitment, and these spring campaigns assumed the role of principal importance while university work, for all practical purposes, came to a halt. Though many of the clubs considered this situation regrettable and entered into treaties of cooperation with the University which also viewed the situation as undesirable, Baker states that "[...] under the compulsion of rivalry, [the clubs] could not resist the tendency toward more exclusiveness, more luxury, more politics in seeking under-classmen who were known for their family connections, or their money, or as athletes, or as 'socially desirable'."³ That college was becoming a place to acquire "social background" rather than to receive a real education was of concern to many thoughtful educators. In

³ Ray Stannard Baker, Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters, New York, Doubleday Page and Co., 1927, Vol. 2, p. 218.

fact, the commencement speaker at Columbia University's graduation of June 12, 1906, Charles Francis Adams, called attention to this evil and advocated a plan similar to that later proposed at Princeton by Wilson.⁴ But while many conceded the evils of the clubs as constituted at Princeton, few were willing to do anything save talk. Any attempt to change this firmly entrenched social structure ran headlong into powerful opposition which was most formidable. It was against this background that Wilson, nonetheless, proceeded with resolute conviction. Using one of his favorite quotations of the English orator and statesman, Edmund Burke, he stated, "Public duty demands and requires, that what is right should not only be made known, but made prevalent; that what is evil should not only be detected, but defeated."⁵ Therefore duty, as God gave him to see it, demanded a change in the present social policy at Princeton, and Wilson set out to effect the change.

It would appear that the key to unlocking the thought processes, the personality, and the motivating forces behind his every action is to be found in this--Wilson's resoluteness. Not spontaneous nor impulsive, he was given to long

⁴ Ibid., p. 218.

⁵ Edmund Burke, quoted by Baker, Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters, Op. Cit., p. 219.

periods of study, analysis, and reflections out of which came his conclusions and judgments. Thusly committed nothing could deter him from his usually well-conceived and well-formulated course of action. Such was the case in his advocacy of the abolishment of the eating clubs (which was inherent in his quad plan), but it is highly improbable that he realized the problems he would encounter as he attempted to uproot "vested property rights, ceremonial traditions and social privilege." This is not to reflect adversely on his ability to deliberate but rather is probably best explained by the fact that he envisioned in others the same purity of motives that sparked his thinking and consequently concluded that moved by the same spirit of altruism a similar assent of the will would follow.

Wilson's attack on the eating clubs stemmed primarily from his indictment that the club system separated the social function from the intellectual function of the University. Wilson boldly stated in 1908 "[...] that the university exists first, last, and at every turn for intellectual objects."⁶ Wilson viewed the college as a community--"a place of close, natural intimate association." He disliked sharply displayed

⁶ Woodrow Wilson, "Address at Pittsburgh, May 2, 1908", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 6, No. 32, issue of May 13, 1908, p. 521.

edges such as specialization and particularization. This attitude is mirrored in Wilson's belief regarding the "true American attitude" wherein he pointed out that it consists in combining interests and ignoring particular interests. Therefore to speak of agricultural, labor, or business interests was, as far as Wilson was concerned, to talk of illegitimate interests. Hence the rationale for the evils attending the clubs as outlined in his Report of 1907 to the Board of Trustees is understandable against this background.

If the college is an intellectual community then "[...] leisure and study ought not to be separated in airtight compartments. Leisure ought to be enriched and diversified by the interest which study creates."⁷ The aim of the "Preceptorial System" was for close natural relationships, easy and informal, between teachers and students that would "revitalize" study at Princeton. This method required:

[...] a new social coordination--a coordination which will not only make sure of a constant and natural intercourse between pupil and teacher, but also knit the student body itself together in some truly organic way which will ensure vital intellectual and academic contacts but with the comradeship of a common life with common ends.⁸

⁷ Woodrow Wilson, "Report on the Social Coordination of the University, June 10, 1907", Op. Cit., p. 607.

⁸ Ibid., p. 607.

Wilson believed that the best way to do this was to establish residential quadrangles and abolish the clubs which represented obstacles to the fulfillment of social coordination. Club life bespoke a division of the classes into segments and separated the underclassmen from the upperclassmen. Such a structure deprived these underclassmen from association with the upperclassmen; however, this association was vital in the forming and developing of points of view of the underclassmen.

Aggravating an already bad situation was the fact that not all sophomores were admitted to clubs. "About one-third are left out in the elections; and their lot is a little less than deplorable."⁹ Those who were not elected to clubs were bitter. They were isolated and cut off from the elected club members and went on to graduation "[...] like men who are in the University but not of it."¹⁰ Some men left the university because of the humiliation felt by not being elected to a club. All of this, Wilson indicated, was most damaging "to our university democracy." Yet the saddest thing of all was that despite the noble ambitions and high ideals of students to devote themselves to study, they could not resist the attractions of club life. "In brief, the

⁹ Ibid., p. 608.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 608.

social ambitions created by the existing system of club life were too strong for individual honor [...]"¹¹ Therefore, Wilson suggested that the only answer was the end of the clubs and "[...] the absorption of the social life into the academic."¹²

3. New Social Coordination Plan

On June 10, 1907, Wilson presented the Report on the Social Coordination of the University to the Board of Trustees for approval. With great care Wilson worked long and hard on this report which he had read to and discussed with his committee for their approval. Twenty-five of the twenty-seven trustees were present for this historic meeting.¹³ After hearing the Report, the trustees adopted the plan and gave Wilson permission to mature it, being certain to prepare minute details of the proposal for the trustees' continuing inspection and to seek the cooperation and counsel of the clubs at every turn.

The Report on the Social Coordination of the University, which one biographer of Wilson states ought to be

¹¹ Ibid., p. 600.

¹² Ibid., p. 610.

¹³ Baker, Op. Cit., p. 220.

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considered one of the "permanent canons" in the history of education, emphasized the intrinsic evils of the clubs and their eventual effect on the university even though they were sanctioned by the University.

The University, which gives life to these clubs and constitutes their ostensible raison d'être, seems in danger of becoming, if the present tendencies of undergraduate organization are allowed to work out their logical results, only an artistic setting and background for life on Prospect Street.¹⁴

The University was, therefore, sanctioning an evil. Consequently Wilson had to rid Princeton of this evil. If the social life of the University was undermining the intellectual life of the University, which was the chief and only legitimate object of the University, then what was needed for the student was "[...] an interpenetration of his experience inside the classroom and conference and his experience outside academic exercises [...]"¹⁵ The Report continues by outlining the previously mentioned evils which club life fostered. The committee, reluctantly acquiescing, then advanced some suggestions for remedying the evils. Wilson continued to outline his plan. As previously noted, it called for grouping the four classes in residential quadrangles with common rooms and common dining. Each would have a residential master and

¹⁴ Woodrow Wilson, "Report on the Social Coordination of the University, June 10, 1907", Op. Cit., p. 600.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 606.

preceptor. In a memorandum attached to the end of the Report, Wilson summarized the plan:

The plan in its briefest terms is this: to draw the undergraduates together into residential quads in which they shall eat as well as lodge together, and in which they shall, under the presidency of a resident member of the Faculty, regulate their corporate life by some simple method of self-government. For this purpose it would be necessary to place all future dormitories in relation to place already erected as to form close geographical units, and to erect in connection with each group a building which should contain a dining room, kitchens and serving rooms, a handsome common room for social purposes and rooms for the member of the Faculty who shall preside in the quad--that is, to take his meals there as well as lodge there; and the residents of each quad would be made up as nearly as might be of equal numbers of Seniors, Juniors, Sophomores, and Freshmen: because it is clear to everyone that the life of the University can be best regulated and developed only when the under-classmen upon such terms as to be formed and guided by them. The self government of each group would naturally be vested in Seniors, or in the Seniors and Juniors, who were members of the quad.¹⁶

The object of this arrangement was threefold: first, to bring unmarried members of the Faculty to live in close contact with the undergraduates and knit the social and intellectual life of the place. Second, to allow all four classes to live together in a truly organic body and get rid of "cliques and separate social organization." Third, to allow the University that type of "social consciousness"

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 614.

that would come from closer social contacts or the contacts of "daily stuff".¹⁷

This was the object of the new plan. Wilson hoped that the clubs would make the supreme sacrifice in the University's interest to become, by "natural process," part of the quad arrangement and even possibly retain their historical identity by incorporating as a unit into the quadrangle. Immediately the question arose as to the property rights of the clubs. In response to this Wilson suggested that the property rights of the clubs be vested in the hands of some small board of trustees selected by the clubs and administered in behalf of the University with the aid or direction of University authorities. This new scheme of social coordination required a capital outlay of some two million dollars and quite apparently the aid of the clubs and alumni was necessary to effectuate the plan.¹⁸

4. Social Coordination and the Graduate College

It was nigh to an exercise in futility for Wilson to believe that his plan as constituted could achieve success.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 614.

¹⁸ Arthur S. Link, Wilson, The Road to the White House, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1947, p. 52.

On June 12, 1907, the Princeton Alumni Weekly published the Report on the Social Coordination of the University. This brought to the thousands of alumni the complete proposal, and a raging controversy ensued, most intensely between June and September of the same year.¹⁹ The general reaction both among alumni and faculty was that Wilson and the Board of trustees had acted in unwise haste. It was a complete shock to the older members of the faculty in general and Dr. Andrew F. West in particular. As Dean of the Graduate School he had already had his differences with Wilson concerning the location of the proposed new building for the Graduate College.²⁰ West envisioned an elegant building appreciably set apart from the other buildings. Moreover, he was possessed of many influential friends and had garnered powerful alumni support for his plan. West further desired an autonomous structure in the graduate school which he would fully control. These were diametrically opposed to Wilson's scheme of social coordination and sparked a controversy between Wilson and West, both headstrong individuals, which finally culminated with Wilson's resignation. According to Link, Dr. West wrote to Woodrow Wilson and

¹⁹ Woodrow Wilson, "The Quad Plan", in Woodrow Wilson Collection, Manuscript Division Princeton University Library, (no publication data or date), p. 1.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 1.

[...] accused him not only of presumptuous action but also of moral wrongdoing. West pointed out that the action of the board had been taken without allowing any opportunity for faculty opinion to be heard and had now made impossible unconstrained discussion of the fundamental questions involved.²¹

Sharply does West state his point--to wit, "If the spirit of Princeton is to be killed, I have little interest in the details of the funeral."²² It would appear, based on an examination of the existing literature, that Wilson had unfolded his plan to only a few of his most intimate associates on the faculty.

5. Opposition and Defeat of Wilson's Plan

As the protests mounted, Wilson responded with the statement that the Board of Trustees wanted full and free discussion of the plan. This may or may not have been an artful dodge, but the essence of the problem remained; if the Board of Trustees had approved the "essential idea" and only the details of maturing the plan were required, then any such discussion was meaningless. Perhaps the best crystallization of this facet of the controversy was expressed by one of the older members of the faculty, Henry van Dyke, who in a communique to Wilson characterized the "essential

²¹ Link, Op. Cit., p. 49.

²² Dean West to Woodrow Wilson, July 10, 1907, in Baker, Op. Cit., p. 251.

idea" as the concept that made a radical change at Princeton University.²³

Wilson did not waiver, and with respect to the basic issue he proved himself to be totally uncompromising--a pattern which he was to duplicate in his political career. Perhaps this is what prompted Link to write:

The Princeton period was the microcosm of a later macrocosm, and a political observer, had he studied carefully Wilson's career as President of Princeton University, might have forecast accurately the shape of things to come during the period when Wilson was President of the United States.²⁴

The obstacles confronting the plan for maturing the "social coordination" of Princeton University were staggering. The alumni, which held the purse strings, opposed it; the clubs so vitally affected opposed it; and the faculty in many respects opposed it. Undaunted, Wilson moved forward his plan of execution, relying heavily on assets which he deemed sufficient to the challenge. His revered position at Princeton University and his growing national fame as an outstanding educator when coupled with his close relationship with the Board of Trustees would, in his opinion, marshal the support of the majority of the faculty. To be sure, the fifty preceptors who enjoyed faculty status would, to a man,

23 Link, Op. Cit., p. 48.

24 Ibid., p. 90.

support him. Yet these proved insufficient. Powerful opposition led by some of the older and more influential members of the faculty were not to be denied. Then Wilson expected, somewhat naively, that the students and the alumni would act on the highest motives "[...] assuming a discipline of mind, a devotion to purpose equal to his own."²⁵ In a letter to Mr. Imbrie, one of the trustees, wherein he responded to several questions regarding the quads, Wilson concluded by saying that he was sure the bulk of the alumni would undertake the radical plan for his Alma Mater.²⁶ Yet, though Wilson had accomplished much at Princeton, he was asking for more than he could reasonably expect.

Central to the issue is that in the scheme of reform Wilson initiated the fight and had made some serious charges against the clubs. Justly were they accused of snobbery, exclusiveness, and the undermining of the democratic spirit at Princeton. Had he continued his struggle based on the issue of social democracy (as recommended by Jacobus and Jones of the Board of Trustees),²⁷ he would doubtlessly have

²⁵ Baker, Op. Cit., p. 244.

²⁶ Woodrow Wilson, "The Residential Quads", Letter by Wilson to Andrew C. Imbrie, July 27, 1907, in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 8, No. 1, issue of September 25, 1907, p. 9.

²⁷ Link, Op. Cit., p. 50.

received the wider support of the press (which well-publicized the controversy), other colleges, and the nation-at-large. It must be remembered that the United States was then well in the throes of Progressivism, under the aegis of President Theodore Roosevelt, a reform movement which had as its objective political, economic, and social reform--combating the problems of great wealth, proper relationships of capital and labor, graft, and mismanagement. Thus Wilson's educational reform fit perfectly into the national temper of the time. Most of his biographers state that this struggle at Princeton brought Wilson into national prominence, and talk began of considering Wilson as presidential timber.

But Wilson rather chose to fight the issue on educational grounds--glossing over the evils of exclusiveness and snobbery which were indigenous to the clubs. Surprisingly did Wilson state to Jacobus that the life and spirit of the clubs was excellent and that the "whole point" was that the social consequences of club life stood in the way of the intellectual purposes of the University.²⁸ Though this was a somewhat strange line of logic, it has been suggested that Wilson pursued the line of good to the University rather than the evils of the clubs in an effort

²⁸ Woodrow Wilson to M.W. Jacobus, July 6, 1907, Baker Papers, quoted by Link, Op. Cit., p. 51.

to avoid further antagonizing these clubs. Thus it was that Wilson settled on stressing the theme of social democracy. Certainly after 1907, and to the end of his Presidency of Princeton in 1910, Wilson was relentlessly scathing in his attacks on wealth, class and privilege that were then flourishing at the American colleges and universities.

The opposition of those antagonized followed two general lines--"First, the proposed remedy in itself was all wrong [and] second, the methods of the reformer were all wrong."²⁹ The arguments against the remedy persisted. How could a university, in justice, tamper with inviolable property rights? Wilson obviously held these rights to be sacred. To confiscate or to pressure clubs to turn over their vested property rights to some administrative board was tantamount to seizure. The clubs rebelled and were vocal in their opposition. The clubs further believed that class spirit played no small part at Princeton and that historically this same spirit, which was club fostered on the campus, was largely responsible for the generous financial outpouring of the alumni which proved a boon not only to the clubs but to Princeton University as well. Thus the club members reasoned that any abolition of the present system could have drastic future results on the well-being of the

²⁹ Baker, Op. Cit., p. 245.

University. What the clubs could not or would not understand was that Wilson foresaw a new spirit--an intellectual spirit which would replace the old and become all-engrossing. Apparently Wilson was mistaken and far too idealistic in view of the realities of the time. A by-product of the objections to Wilson's remedy was the fostering of bitter resentment toward Wilson and the Board of Trustees for dictating how students were to carry on their social life--a pattern not very different from today.

Thus Wilson stood indicted as "too drastic" and "too dictatorial" in regard to his method of reform. These charges against Wilson were comparable to the charges against President Theodore Roosevelt (1901-03) in his attacks on the "malefactors of great wealth." Wilson's aim was not the reform of the clubs, for it was he who said, "We are not seeking better clubs." Rather his aim was the elimination or absorption of the clubs into the quads. Therefore, the argument of conciliation and evolution rather than revolution had no place in the Wilsonian scheme.

No doubt mistakes were made. Wilson was human. He was too impatient with dullness; he was so swift and clear in his own mental processes that he did not explain enough; and half-measures--feeble passes irritated him sharply.³⁰

³⁰ Ibid., p. 245.

The storm clouds of protest threatened to engulf Wilson completely. Opposition to him and his plan for "social coordination" was sharpening. An estimate indicated that opposition to the plan by the alumni ran from "three-fourths to nine-tenths."³¹ The members of the Board of Trustees were poised on the horns of a dilemma. At this point they even questioned whether they really had approved the essential idea of the plan. Thus a meeting of the Board of Trustees was convened on October 7, 1910, and the members thereof withdrew the previously granted approval of the plan of social coordination.³²

6. Wilson's Despair and Course of Action

Wilson was substantially broken by this action of the Board of Trustees. Never before had he experienced such discouragement and defeat. His immediate impulse was to resign as President of Princeton University, but, according to Link, as Wilson began to write his letter of resignation, "[...] he just could not bring himself to do it."³³ Those who have studied Wilson's career know he was

³¹ Link, Op. Cit., p. 52.

³² Woodrow Wilson, "The Residential Quads", Op. Cit., p. 1.

³³ Baker, Op. Cit., p. 262.

a fighter and resigning was not his way of waging battle-- especially when he was convinced of the righteousness of his cause. By now some of his friends on the Board of Trustees had urged him to continue the struggle of democracy against the forces of class and social privilege. Therefore, Wilson foresook the attitude of hopelessness and defeat and assumed a posture of grim determination to wage the battle in a positive vein.

He decided to carry his appeal directly to the alumni and to ignore the Trustees of the University. It was not, however, without a sense of impending rebuff, for in response to the comment of his brother-in-law, Stockton Axson, "You'll win yet", Wilson replied, "No, I won't. What I am opposing is privilege. They would let me do anything in educational reform, but here I am attacking social privilege."³⁴

Wilson commenced the struggle in 1908 with an appeal to the Baltimore alumni. Here Wilson, in a rather moderate tone, asks the alumni "[...] that something be done to put the intellectual instead of the social interests of the University at the front, both in the consciousness and in

³⁴ Donald Day, (ed.), Woodrow Wilson's Own Story, Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1952, p. 85.

the activities of the undergraduate."³⁵ The address was quite conciliatory--no reference was made to the democratic feature of the "quad" fight. In fact, Wilson went so far as to state that "[...] he would most cheerfully cooperate in the perfecting of any such plan."³⁶ Shortly thereafter, on March 12, 1908, in Chicago, Wilson spoke of the clubs as "[...] perfectly legitimate and even admirable," but he charged that "[...] the University obliges its undergraduates to devote their energies to the creation of a social life practically independent of the University itself [...]"³⁷ Wilson, therefore, called for reform and insisted that "learning in order to be pervasive must be social in its operation."³⁸ Once again Wilson's speech was somewhat general, and he failed to speak out on the clubs at Princeton.

In the main, Wilson's attempts to appeal directly to the alumni were a complete failure. The necessary support of this group to provide the funds necessary to effect the

³⁵ Woodrow Wilson, "Address at Baltimore, March 6, 1908", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 6, No. 23, issue of March 11, 1908, p. 370.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 371.

³⁷ -----, "President Wilson's Chicago Speech, March 12, 1908", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 8, No. 25, issue of March 25, 1908, p. 404.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 404.

social coordination of the University was never forthcoming. Though the bitter struggle culminated in defeat, Wilson proved himself a formidable fighter. His loss, however, was not without personal costs, for it left him bitter and frustrated. Said Link,

The conclusion is inevitable that Wilson's intransigence in the matter of social coordination, his refusal to compromise by accepting a reform of the club system, and his refusal to treat tolerantly those who oppose him were among the major mistakes of his career.³⁹

Having detailed Wilson's failing efforts to effect the social coordination of Princeton--which atmosphere he considered essential to the proper functioning of a university in a democratic society--it may now be in order to examine the whole basis of the projected Wilsonian reform; viz., education for the nation's service.

³⁹ Link, Op. Cit., p. 57.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATION IN THE NATION'S SERVICE

1. The Wilsonian Ideal

One of the distinguishing features of higher education in America is its "[...] positive dedication to the service of an evolving dynamic democratic community."¹ It is difficult to envisage any man who placed greater emphasis on the ideal of service than Woodrow Wilson. This belief represented the foundation of his educational thinking, for education, according to Wilson, had as its object to fit a man not only for life-in-general but for the specific life of the community. "College students", said Wilson in 1896, "are to be citizens and world servants in every field of practical endeavor [...]"² Previously, in 1894, he stated that "[...] every man sent out from a university should be a man of his nation, as well as a man of his times."³

1 John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, Higher Education in Transition, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1958, p. 378.

2 Woodrow Wilson, "Princeton in the Nation's Service", in Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd, (eds.), The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson. College and State 1875-1913, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1925, Vol. 1, p. 271.

3 -----, "University Training and Citizenship", in Baker and Dodd, Op. Cit., Vol. 1, p. 246.

A thorough understanding of Wilson's conception of the meaning of service must take into account that he viewed it in somewhat of an aristocratic fashion which was not in keeping with the academic milieu of the early twentieth century. Leadership and political purification so sorely needed in this same period in the United States, characterized by a corrupt era of both local and state politics and in the abuse of economic power, demanded disinterested expertise and not the power of wealth and political machines. The remedy, according to Wilson, "[...] lay in divorcing government from the interests of the wealthy, in placing it upon the pedestal upon which it rightly belonged."⁴ Thus this remedy demanded an aroused civic consciousness. "Though Wilson spoke of an aroused civic consciousness, he placed his trust in an educated elite".⁵

Wilson looked to leadership in a properly trained governing class, free of private or particular interests.

The ideal for us is a civil service, cultured and sufficient enough to act with sense and vigor, and yet so intimately connected with popular thought [...] as to find arbitrariness or class spirit quite out of the question.⁶

⁴ William Diamond, "The Economic Thought of Woodrow Wilson", in The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Baltimore, Maryland, The Johns Hopkins Press, Series 61, No. 4, 1943, p. 49.

⁵ Ibid., p. 50.

⁶ Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Administration", in Baker and Dodd, Op. Cit., p. 152-153.

Consequently, Wilson was to put his trust in an educated class, capable of analyzing the problems of government and not afraid to put thought into action for the common good of our democracy.

This concept of education for intelligent leadership is no doubt rooted in the ancient Greek belief of the "[...] Platonic ideal of the philosopher-guardian of society [...]"⁷ To Wilson, therefore, democracy could only be preserved and made to flourish by putting into power the best minds. This may explain why Wilson idealized those countries that placed scholars high in the realm of politics. It also offers an explanation for Wilson's admiration of the ancient Greeks as well as his great esteem for the British. This is, perhaps, why several writers suggest that Wilson saw in such men as Bagehot and Burke a model for himself and, at times, a reflection of himself.

The ideal of service associated with the American universities (though it was to assume different forms and interpretations) greatly impressed foreign visitors. Lord Bryce "[...] found it to be unique in the modern history of education. Josiah Royce [...] viewed this idea as representing not gross materialism and utilitarianism, but rather the

7 Diamond, Op. Cit., p. 50.

highest form of idealism which was broadening and deepening the entire national life."⁸

It is important to note that Wilson's concept of service in education is not to be confused with an emerging pattern of the same period. The notion of a type of professional expertise as fashioned at the University of Wisconsin was rejected by Wilson. The Wisconsin formulation traced its origin to the election of Robert LaFollette as Governor in 1900. The new governor, a Progressive, enlisted the aid of the experts from the university to assist him in office. In addition, through the creation of a "Legislative Reference Bureau", legislators could obtain advice on the drafting of bills. Eventually this idea was to gain momentum and become a part of many state universities.

Wilson envisaged the idea of service as placing in position of leadership men who were educationally trained by the university, not politicians who had to depend on the state university for advice and direction.

2. Role of the University is Public, Not Private

Realizing Wilson's deep regard for education in the nation's service, the question must necessarily arise as to how such a comprehensive supply was to be obtained. It is axiomatic that the relation between education and the national

⁸ Brubacher and Rudy, Op. Cit., p. 378.

strength was implicit in the many Wilson pronouncements. Wilson supplied the answer in his Inaugural Address of 1902 when he stated that "[...] the service of institutions of learning is not private but public".⁹ In a dynamic evolving society, as the problems of the nation grow in size and intensity and as the influence of the country goes beyond its continental boundaries, the universities must supply the leaders necessary to meet the challenge. This was to be no private affair but a public charge, and the universities must prepare themselves to meet this vastly increased need.

Universities, even though chartered under private auspices, have a transcending public obligation which is service. A vital part of this transcending obligation would require that the universities transmit the best traditions of the state. In the transmission process the institutions of higher learning thus serve as "organs of memory" of the state and become national in character. To borrow the traditions of the European universities as a model for patterning American higher education would have the effect of denationalizing in the sense that they would not be transmitting those characteristics of our own national culture. Against this background then does the focus of the Wilson pronouncement of 1894 become exceedingly clear when

⁹ Woodrow Wilson, "Princeton for the Nation's Service", in Baker and Dodd, Op. Cit., Vol. 1, p. 443.

he said, "Universities should not denationalize, but nationalize".¹⁰

In the public service, universities have as their duty "[...] also to advance civilization".¹¹ While Wilson recognized the role of the university in satisfying the individual's curiosity and perfecting, as he said, 'the spirit of the individual,' institutions of higher education as the seats of learning had incumbent upon them the advancement of civilization. This was a solemn and transcending public obligation of private universities.

Recognizing the public nature of universities, Wilson was more prone to relegate that function to private rather than public universities. Private institutions were in a better position to advance these educational objectives "[...] because unlike state universities they are not obliged to seek changing favor of politicians".¹² Also, the utilitarian inclinations of many of the state universities were incompatible with the intellectual function of the university as Wilson conceived it.

¹⁰ Woodrow Wilson, "University Training and Citizenship", Op. Cit., p. 251.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 248.

¹² -----, "President Wilson in the Northwest", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 3, No. 30, issue of May 2, 1903, p. 493.

3. University Mirrors National Image

To serve a nation properly the university must reflect the image and life of that nation. Because this represented a central tenet of the Wilsonian ideal, Wilson vigorously opposed the attempts by many educators in his time to transplant the German model or type to the United States. Obviously the image of life reflected in Germany in the nineteenth century was quite different from the image of life reflected in the United States. Conversely, here in the United States

[...] the American universities serve a free nation whose power, whose prosperity, whose happiness, whose integrity depends upon individual initiative [...] Their history, moreover, has set them apart to a character and service of their own.¹³

Thus it is readily understandable why Wilson rejected all types of proposed educational reformation that was inconsistent with life in a free democratic society which placed its trust in the individual and not the state.

While Wilson recognized that university learning was cosmopolitan and without geographical boundaries, he still insisted upon a national feature. This national feature was specifically identified in 1894 when Wilson wrote that "[...] scholarship [...] selects the truths it

¹³ Woodrow Wilson, "Princeton for the Nation's Service", Op. Cit., p. 443.

shall search for and emphasize. It is this selection that should be national".¹⁴ Wilson further elaborated as to how this national character of a university might best be achieved.

In order to be national, a university should have, at the center of its training, courses of instruction in that literature which contains the ideals of its race and all the nice proofs and subtle inspirations of the character, spirit, and thought of the nation which it serves; and besides that, instruction in the history and leading conceptions of those institutions which have served the nation's energies in the preservation of order and the maintenance of just standards of civil virtue and public purpose.¹⁵

This, Wilson insisted, was to be the common foundation for all university students, regardless of their field of study. Then having been schooled in the common traditions and ideals of America, the graduate could safely take his place as a private or public citizen and make his contribution to the life of the nation.

To sharpen further the focused image of life in the United States the universities and the secondary schools must emphasize basic ideals of America. Democracy is the most important of these ideals. Since the United States was the first modern country to achieve democracy, these ideals should be stressed and re-emphasized. To Wilson democracy

¹⁴ Woodrow Wilson, "University Training and Citizenship", Op. Cit., p. 247.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 248.

was the antithesis of all government by privilege. Maintaining that this was obviously the best form of government, Wilson stated that "[...] democracy is unquestionably the most wholesome and lovable kind of government the world has yet tried [...]. They [the people] are themselves the sovereign authority".¹⁶ Wilson thus believed that this form of government represented the highest ideals of duty and sense of brotherhood the world has ever known. It could only be preserved and made to flourish by intelligent understanding and safeguards against abuses. This, perhaps, offers a further reason why Wilson so objected to the exclusiveness of the club system at Princeton and sought by every means to effect social democracy at Princeton, for it must necessarily follow that life at Princeton ill equipped young men to discharge their duties in a democratic society where class and social privilege were rampant.

A second ideal which needed emphasis in schools and colleges was liberty. Wilson insisted that liberty was not abstract and not without restraints. Rather, he viewed "[...] liberty as the best adjustment between governmental power and individual initiative".¹⁷ He observed that in the

¹⁶ Woodrow Wilson, "On Liberty and Higher Education", in Princeton Alumni Weekly, Vol. 60, No. 46, issue of May 5, 1947, p. 8.

¹⁷ -----, "Spurious versus Real Patriotism in Education", in School Review, Vol. 7, No. 10, issue of December 1899, p. 612.

history of the world liberty appeared to be the special privilege of some particular group or groups. The problem with a free class is that it refuses to recognize the "[...] conditions precedent to the liberty of the classes underneath them".¹⁸ In a society where there are no economic or social privileges, it is easy for liberty to take hold. But in its continuing growth and development, such as in the United States, the realization of economic wealth brought privilege, power, and prestige. In such circumstances the concept of liberty is likely to be lost. It is incumbent, therefore, upon the schools and colleges to emphasize the vital role of liberty in a democracy. Wilson suggested that the schools accomplish this by holding the Golden Rule before their students as the norm of conduct.

A third ideal to be stressed by the schools and colleges was equality. Wilson cautioned against the taking of the concept literally as stated in the Declaration of Independence.¹⁹ Speaking before the meeting of the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools in 1899, he explained that equality means equal opportunity and equal justice for all before the law. This was not true at this time in the United States, for lobbyists, the inordinate

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 614.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 616.

expenditures of money in elections, and the crushing weight of political machines served to negate this ideal. If these abuses and their deleterious effects on an individual's liberty were to be checked, it would require that they become generally known and identified. Then the weight of public opinion and officials imbued with the ideal of service might initiate ameliorative action.

Finally, schools must instill a sense of patriotism in the young. "Patriotism," said Wilson, "expresses itself in sentiment, but it does not consist of sentiment. Patriotism is a principle, not a sentiment".²⁰ Wilson envisioned patriotism as a principle of devotion, characterized by selflessness and manifested in service to others. To be patriotic, Wilson admonished, one must thoroughly understand the object of his devotion. It is not blind allegiance but criticism if necessary and rebuilding or reconstructing true to our origin. This placed a great burden of responsibility on the schools and teachers. The task of the teachers with reference to patriotism was "[...] to show what is inherent and essential in the character of American institutions and so call out those generous sentiments which must rise at the sight of lovely objects".²¹

²⁰ Ibid., p. 599.

²¹ Ibid., p. 604-605.

4. Vitality Inherent in a Complete Education

To serve the nation properly the education offered at the university must be alive, vital, and complete. To achieve these purposes required that education be a complete preparation for life. It precluded a cloistered sheltering and in its stead required a comprehensive commitment that would admit of no other demands. Home life, outside pursuits--none must interfere. On the part of the university it required a metaphorical opening of the windows to let in the affairs of the nation. No narrow academic must pre-empt this vital aspect. Wilson did not understand this "rushing-in" process of the affairs of the nation to be a forum for partisan politics but rather an occasion for the university to bring to the attention of the students the problems and responsibilities of the nation. Thus, this vital and living aspect of education could not content itself with the dry-as-dust processes of mere research. While Wilson recognized the essential role of research, he was prone to relegate it to a few scholars, and while Wilson recognized that facts were essential in research--and especially historical research--he was much more concerned with what one did with the facts. Under the circumstances education must come alive through implementation--a process that would demand action and involve the whole man. Concretely did Wilson express his views on this subject in 1909 when he said

that the American university had as its ideal

[...] the awakening of the whole man, the thorough introduction of the student to the life of America and of the modern world, the completion of the tasks undertaken by the grammar and high schools of equipping him for the full duties of citizenship.²²

Education to be of service must be not only vital and alive but complete. For this reason Wilson rejected university training which was fragmentary or specialized. In the elective system Wilson saw education as fragmentary and inorganic. To be serviceable education must be organic. The parts must be related to the whole. Education was not the amassing of credits without direction or unity. This type of education could not render an individual serviceable to the nation. In addition, university training was not specialization. Specialization required a preliminary orientation to make one serviceable. Furthermore, specialization was self-centered, and university training demanded unselfish service to the nation, regardless of the field pursued. This, perhaps, explains why Wilson in 1902 so emphatically insisted on a certain general education before specialization because "[...] we mean simply that every mind needs for its highest serviceability a certain preliminary orientation that it may get its bearings and

²² Woodrow Wilson, "The Ideal University", in Wilson-Addresses 1906-1910, Manuscript Division, Princeton University Library, p. 2.

release its perception for a wide and catholic view".²³ It is in history, literature, philosophy, and science that the experiences of the world are summarized. Therefore in the liberal culture was the best means to give the student the broad catholic orientation for serviceability. "Now, the college of liberal arts is the intellectual gymnasium".²⁴ Here it is that the brain is put in shape for service.

Understood in this context, the simple implication of the college program was hard work. In a manner of speaking one could not simply study books, but he must "get inside" the books. He must weigh and deliberate. He must expose himself to as many shades of thought as practicable. While his knowledge must be rooted in the past, he must ever be aware of the present. This then was the means to proper enlightenment. The responsibility was the student's, but it was the obligation of the university to foster the "spirit of learning." Therefore, all that would tend to distract the student in college from the "spirit of learning" must be removed. Perhaps, this explains Wilson's objections to the overemphasis on sports and social life. This "spirit of learning," according to Wilson, could best be conveyed

²³ Woodrow Wilson, "Princeton for the Nation's Service", Op. Cit., p. 449.

²⁴ -----, "Remarks of Woodrow Wilson '79'", in (no title), Washington, D.C., Press of Gibson Brothers, 1914, p. 4.

by contagion, that is, daily personal contact of the mature with the immature mind.

In the process of instruction at the university, a student not only should obtain a broad and catholic view but be taught to connect his mind with the best thinking of the past. Wilson considered the worst enemy of society as "[...] the man who with a strong faculty for reasoning and for action, is cut loose in his standards of judgment from the past".²⁵ Universities which attempt training without its proper connection to the past are "instruments of destruction," admonished Wilson. He further averred that no man is ever severed from the past and anyone who thinks so is foolish. Again this offers a possible explanation of Wilson's bias toward science. This field owed but a limited amount to the past and, to Wilson, potentially bred a spirit in college which was destructive.

Finally, university training, said Wilson, should put a student "[...] in possession of the materials for a systematic criticism of life."²⁶ By this he meant the ability to see and analyze the problems of life and after having achieved this, to offer some constructive solutions. To pick apart and tear down without offering constructive

²⁵ Woodrow Wilson, "University Training and Citizenship", Op. Cit., p. 255.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 254.

criticism was, in his view, immoral. It followed that fragmentary education and specialization did not equip an individual for a "systematic criticism of life." This type of education was incomplete for useful service in this regard. Neither was the scientific education that was in vogue capable of offering a satisfactory explanation. To Wilson scientific training is, in the main, analytical and picks to pieces those objects or ideas that come under its scrutiny. It is jealous and often intolerant of traditional views. It relies almost exclusively on the faculty of reasoning. "Now, it happens that the pure reasoning faculty, whose only standard is logic and whose only data are put in terms of determinable force, is the worst possible instrument for reforming society."²⁷ It appears that Wilson could not accept the idea that in the efforts to reform society we consider men as specimens and attempt scientific experiments with them in the hopes of reform. To reform, one must understand the human spirit, and this is to be achieved by a study of literature, institutions, history, and philosophy. Therefore, the combination of the humanities properly pursued with the study of science would put one "in possession of the materials for a systematic criticism of life."

²⁷ Ibid., p. 254.

5. University's Reason for Being is Service

The ideal of service represented the very heart of all Wilsonian educational reform. It was, in a sense, the synthesis of all Wilsonian reform. As such not only was it the primary duty of the university to serve the state but ultimately it was the university's only reason for being. Consequently, the training at the university must develop good citizenship, honesty, and the faithful responsibility of service.

To Wilson, "Service [...] consists chiefly in comprehension."²⁸ To serve, one must know and understand the needs of the nation. This was to be obtained by proper training and an awareness of the affairs of the nation which, according to Wilson, had a legitimate place in the university curriculum. Service was not possible if it was characterized by a condescending attitude. The true ideal of service demanded that one place himself on the level of the one being served. This seemingly compulsive preoccupation with service and the unique manner in which it was to be rendered may be partly explained by Wilson's own special training in the science of government, his great concern for political rectitude, and the liberty-loving statesmanship which he felt

²⁸ Woodrow Wilson, "Remarks of Woodrow Wilson '79'", *Op. Cit.*, p. 7.

was so intrinsically bound in the historical sense of the American forefathers. Further elucidation may be found in the understanding of Wilson's concept of patriotism. He saw the birth of the American republic as possible only through the courage and moral force of generous-spirited men. Thus, this great ideal could only be made to grow and flourish through the similar action of other men imbued with this self-same ideal of devoted service.

Wilson's own devotion to this service was rooted in his strong moral sense. This morality pervaded his whole being. Hence, there could be no separation of morality and politics. The university must infuse standards of morality so as to uplift and ennoble the political life of the country. The university, while thusly serving the state is, in a broader sense, serving mankind. In his person Wilson epitomized the example of this service.

It would, then, seem reasonable to conclude that most of Wilson's ideals were, so to speak, derived from or concomitant with his belief of the university as a vehicle of public service for the general welfare. He reasoned that if disease could be alleviated as a result of the study of medicine and the problems of business solved by searching of the problems in the scientific laboratories, why could not the elimination of abuses in politics result from a clearer understanding of the national history,

municipal and state government, and public finances. Thus the university was the key to the betterment of society, or in his own words:

The only thing that lifts the world from century to century is the accumulating power and purity of the human spirit; and the university is a place in which spirits are bred, in which ideals are formed, in which dreams are dreamed--not dreams that go to the ceiling as the smoke out of our pipes, but dreams in which one sees mankind serving and being served in all the great tasks of enlightenment which ought to be understood by the rulers and the graduates of a university better than any other body of men in the world.²⁹

²⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The problem with which this thesis concerned itself was to delineate the role of Woodrow Wilson in the late nineteenth century crisis in American higher education. Briefly stated, the crisis was the rapid and powerful emergence of growing scientism, free election, educational statism, vocationalism, and non-sectarianism which threatened to emasculate and seriously diminish in influence the heretofore generally accepted primacy of the liberal arts tradition as the most efficacious means of structuring American higher education. Wilson saw in this philosophy a dangerous challenge which, if carried to its logical conclusion, would destroy that education which was rooted in the Christian tradition. This was the very antithesis of all the educational beliefs and ideals of Woodrow Wilson and, as such, demanded an all-consuming response which knew no limitations--not even sacrifice of self.

By the foregoing it is not intended that Wilson should be characterized as seeing this emerging challenge as a total intrinsic evil but rather to emphasize that if this new educational philosophy were to gain a total acceptance, the import would be one of destruction. Thus Wilson chose from the tenets of this newly emerging belief those aspects which he believed desirable and consonant with what he was prone to describe as a "Christian liberal

culture." This culture would serve as the basic content. Supplementing it would be the campus practice of democracy. The end or purpose of this education would be service to the nation and mankind. Thus Wilson, throughout the crisis, maintained a middle-of-the-road posture, calling for acceptance of those aspects of the new belief which he considered worthwhile and beneficial, while maintaining an unyielding refusal to compromise those principles which he considered to be the sine qua non of all educational endeavors.

This uncompromising posture on the essentials is understandable in light of his view of education as an organic whole--a unitary process. Specifically, this meant that higher education demanded a core of subjects embodied in the liberal arts tradition. From this general core the student would proceed to specific areas of concentration, which areas must bear a discernible relationship to the organic whole. Responsibility for the necessary planning of this progression was to be vested in university authorities who were experienced in the specific areas of individual pursuit. Wise and experienced counselors would aid the students in the pursuit of studies which were to follow a planned order. Thus Wilson admitted of the advisability of a latitude of choice but seriously objected to the free election system as propounded by Eliot. Herein he saw but

a miscellany of subjects and a mere amassing of credits which would result in fragmentary or incomplete education.

Again, Woodrow Wilson believed that education involved not only proper orientation of the liberal arts but also the implementation of discipline. He was not so unyielding as to believe that mental discipline could be accomplished only through rote drill in Greek and Latin but that the introduction of modern languages to the curriculum could serve for discipline as well as to meet a new-felt need by the innovators. Hence Wilson included drill subjects such as mathematics and languages in his core grouping of basic subjects. He reasoned that these drill subjects gave the mental fibre and discipline necessary for the more specialized work.

The emphasis on mental discipline leads one to the conclusion that to Wilson the training of the intellect was basic to the function of the college. Unceasingly did he state that the aim of the college was "first, last, and always an intellectual function." This then would tend to place him within the circle of the Platonic-Aristotelian ideal which trusted in the belief that the highest power is intellectual power. From this premise he brought to the schema of reform the insistence that philosophy was, per se, the core of the university program of studies. Philosophy to Wilson was "the final synthesis of learning" and the best index of the spirit of the university. It was Wilson's

fervent hope that as a result of the study of philosophy right behavior would result.

Thus Wilson moved into the field of morality. The latter was so closely entwined with his understanding of religion as to cause him to use the words almost interchangeably. Hence he was fond of stating that there could be no real education which was not infused with the "spirit of religion" and "the energy of positive faith." This he then combined into a single judgment which maintained that in the final analysis intellectual virtues could not exist without a moral force.

The attainment of these desired goals, according to Wilson, could best be realized in a residential college. The college must be a closely-knit community. Thus a residence college would provide a place of "close, natural, and intimate associations", where the "spirit of learning" would be conveyed by contagion. In this respect Wilson showed his strongest link with the mid-nineteenth century advocates who insisted that college be a residential experience. Herein, there could be no barriers to divide the students. This would necessitate the elimination of any device such as upper and lower classmen or eating clubs which were predicated upon wealth or social distinction. Rather, Wilson would encourage an intermingling so that the association of the immature mind with the mature mind might foster the "spirit of learning."

As a consequence, education was to be further served by direct personal contact. From this belief stemmed the basis for the preceptorial system. Little was to be gained from exclusive use of the lecture system. While admitting its value for the purpose of introducing a subject, or for synthesis, the small informal meeting, he maintained, was the best method of instruction.

Finally, the chief reason for the existence of the university was service to the nation and mankind in general. "To serve was to comprehend." Comprehension demanded the best and most complete education possible. Here Wilson placed his trust in an educated elite--"the man of letters" who could understand and analyse the problems of government and society and then fashion the measures necessary for their correction.

The exposition of Wilson's educational thinking and ideals having been completed, it is, perhaps, desirable to detail those forces which moulded his educational thinking. There was little that was original and, by and large, it reflected an affinity for the English system of education. England, which remained largely untouched by the German and French educational influences, retained her classical culture and a strong religious influence. In the American counterpart for a similar atmosphere Wilson emphasized the importance of the "man of letters", a religious basis for

education, and an anti-scientific bent. (The latter was most severely pronounced in his earlier years.) He expressed a liking for the residential college and the preceptorial plan which were of English origin. The idea of the best minds serving the nation was a further manifestation of English influence.

His educational thinking also gives evidence of his birth and rearing. Born into a family of "fair" means with a background of Presbyterian ministers on both sides of the family, he was educated at private schools. This may serve to explain his predilection for a religious-oriented education and the pre-eminent position which he attached to private schools. He ranked high as a scholar with a varied educational background that included Princeton, the University of Virginia Law School, and Johns Hopkins University. From the latter institution he was granted a Ph.D. degree in Political Science. His biographers picture him as a serious student whose achievements were note-worthy. His twenty-five years as an educator, chiefly at Princeton as a teacher and administrator, were years of distinction. Thus, with good reason did he picture himself as a "man of letters."

Wilson's fame as an educator resulted largely from his unerring ability to diagnose problems and fashion solutions. His most notable triumph was his role in the late

nineteenth century crisis in American higher education. He foresaw the evils of rampant specialization and outlined in its stead a core of liberal arts to serve as the foundation for a later period of guided specialization. He saw in the elective principle a fragmenting of education which ill equipped the man for his rightful place in a democratic society. He rightfully viewed the scientific method as but one means of inquiry and warned against a universal acceptance of it as the sole means of searching for truth. In non-sectarianism he questioned the possibility of inculcating intellectual virtues devoid of moral foundation. In exclusiveness in higher education he saw a negation of one of the basic tenets of American democratic life.

Thus Wilson preached a doctrine of "in media veritas". He advocated a middle-of-the-road course between mid-nineteenth century prescription along the lines of the old classical curriculum and the advocates of free election, specialization, and vocationalism. He acknowledged the place of science in the college curriculum. He accepted the relatively new discipline of the social sciences and embodied them in his plan. As a result a picture of Wilson emerges as a discerning and contemplative administrator who viewed education as an organic whole. Within this process was the student, indivisible, whose education must reflect this same unity. Thus he insisted that the only proper

education was that which developed the whole man with his transcending obligations.

Perhaps the most adequate testimonial to this man of vision is the reconstruction of the college curricula. This, of course, poses a problem for further investigation as to the scope and depth of the acceptance of the Wilsonian ideals in modern-day American universities.

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APPENDIX 1

ABSTRACT OF

The Educational Ideals of Woodrow Wilson

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The Educational Ideals of Woodrow Wilson¹

This thesis had as its purpose to examine the role of Woodrow Wilson with reference to the crisis which developed in American higher education between 1850 and 1900. This crisis centered about the threat which growing scientism, free election, educational statism, vocationalism, and non-sectarianism posed to the entrenched, religiously-oriented system of the liberal arts tradition.

The thesis moves from the statement of the problem to a brief survey of the literature and then proceeds to examine Wilson's role under four general chapter headings. Chapter one briefly reviews the crisis in American higher education from 1850 to 1900. It treats in detail of the rise of state universities, the influence of things Germanic, and the impact of Evolution and Pragmatism. Wilson is cast in the light of a moderate who saw value in the study of the classics as well as in the study of science. He emerges as an educator who wishes "to balance innovation with a keen sense for the values of the past."

¹ Michael J. Nittoli, doctoral thesis presented to the Faculty of Psychology and Education of the University of Ottawa, 1966, xiv-150 p.

Chapter two discusses Wilson's ideal of a basic program of study for college. This sound and enduring program for higher education involved proper orientation, enlightenment, and discipline rooted in the Christian tradition. The method of instruction demanded close and intimate association between teacher and student.

Chapter three discusses democracy as opposed to class and social privilege. It examined Wilson's fight against money and social distinction that had gained greater influence in the post Civil War period. Wilson is pictured as a valiant though defeated protagonist in his efforts to achieve reform in the face of heavy opposition from the eating clubs and wealthy alumni.

Chapter four discusses the object of Wilson's entire projected reforms in higher education with the object of making the college graduate serviceable to the nation and to mankind in general.

The thesis concluded with a summary which is a synthesis of Wilson's educational ideals. It underlines his unique ability to diagnose problems and fashion solutions. It takes due note of the supreme importance of the training of the intellect by which a core of subjects embodied in the Christian liberal culture would serve as that general training from which areas of specific concentration might later proceed. This would then give an organic unity to the

entire process of education. The setting for this process was of major importance--Wilson insisting that it be a residential experience with no barriers of class or social distinction, for the association of the immature mind with the mature mind must obtain at all levels, both in and out of the classroom. The importance of the preceptorial method was paramount for only through direct personal contact could the personal dimension be infused into the educational process. Thus learning became a personal experience which went beyond the classroom, the lecture, and the testing, which though admittedly important, rather emphasized the up-to-then impersonal nature of learning. The end product of this process should result in an educated elite--"the man of letters" who would serve the nation.

The adequacy of the proposed Wilson remedy to the crisis in American higher education poses another problem for further investigation: viz., what has been the scope and the depth of acceptance of the aforementioned Wilsonian ideals in modern-day American universities?