1946

The Philosophy of Education of Robert Maynard Hutchins

Joseph F. Small
Loyola University Chicago

Recommended Citation
http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/371

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Copyright © 1946 Joseph F. Small
THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

OF

ROBERT MAYNARD HUTCHINS

BY

JOSEPH F. SMALL, S.J.

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER
OF ARTS IN LOYOLA UNIVERSITY

JANUARY

1946
VITA

Joseph F. Small, S.J., was born in Chicago, Illinois, October 4, 1917.

He was graduated from St. Ignatius High School, Chicago, June, 1935, and entered the Society of Jesus at Milford Novitiate, Milford, Ohio, in August, 1935.

In the same year he enrolled at Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, in the Department of Arts, but transferred to Loyola University in 1939 when he was registered in the West Baden College of that University at West Baden Springs, Indiana.

The Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in English was conferred by Loyola University, June, 1940. From 1940 to 1942 the writer devoted his time to graduate study in philosophy.

During the scholastic year of 1942-1943 he was engaged in teaching English and Latin at St. Xavier High School, Cincinnati, Ohio. The past two years, 1943-1945, he spent as instructor of English at the Colegio Centro America, Granada, Nicaragua.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. PHILOSOPHICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAN--HIS NATURE AND NEEDS</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. MEANS: APPROVED AND REJECTED</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. CATHOLIC CRITICISM</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Gibbon was wrong when he said that because modern war requires the knowledge of a large number of arts and sciences, Europe need never fear another barbarian conqueror. Today no one belittles the world's scientific knowledge, but neither can anyone deny that the current wartime barbarianism makes the Mongols seem like tyros.

Clearly, we have not learned to live together as civilized men. We see that government by force provokes opposing forces and results in conflagration. Hatred for the neighbor has grown to such intensity that one wonders how lasting peace can ever be hoped for. The relocation of boundaries and the redistribution of power persuades no thinking man to believe that the millennium has arrived.

Admitting, then, that we have failed to live in a civilized fashion up to now, it is time to find out why we have failed and how we may succeed.

It is evident that the education of men is an all-important factor in forming habits of life, in setting ideals and stan-
ards. Therefore in aiming at a civilized world we must aim at an educated man. But it is also evident, judging from the mass of educational literature, that educators have much to learn. They themselves are among the loudest critics of American education, but their cries are the cries of Babylon. "Authorities" are without number and each with his own pet theory.

But the shepherds of education are not the only complainers. The sheep, too, have begun to bleat. Against our widespread emphasis on vocationalism many successful tradesmen state that trade techniques are most efficiently learned on the job. From experience these men have come to prefer apprentices with a good general education. Complaints of returning servicemen are just beginning to be heard. Ex-soldiers attempting to continue their education speak with disgust of the childish trivialities in our university customs and curricula.

The stir caused in the educational world by an ex-Marine, who told the Saturday Evening Post of his reactions on returning to high school, may be a portent of the growing dissatisfaction among both sheep and shepherds. That a Marine should complain is not strange, but that his complaints should be seconded by educators is ominous for the status quo.

Among the pleaders for a better educational world perhaps none is receiving more attention than Robert Maynard Hutchins,
Chancellor of the University of Chicago. The word attention is by no means synonymous with approval. Hutchins' innovations at the University of Chicago have lately been condemned by an impressive number of academic potentates. They have been condemned by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, by the Association of American Colleges, by the National Conference of Church Related Colleges, by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and by the American Association of University Women. This array of opposition in itself demonstrates the importance of the man. His infamy among educators may also be gathered.

Who is this nefarious individual? In 1930 Robert M. Hutchins became President of the University of Chicago and the youngest university president in the United States. Since that date he has also been the enfant terrible in the minds of all defenders of the status quo.

From the beginning of his term he theorized lucidly and with logic on how man should and should not be educated. As president of a large and famous university he was listened to. His theories were pondered and drew concentrated fire. But Hutchins did more than theorize. He persuaded the trustees of the University of Chicago to introduce his recommendations at Chicago. Experi-
mentation, of course, has had the blessing of educators since the turn of the century. But Hutchins' activities were not experimental; they were revolutionary. Accrediting agencies therefore condemned Chicago University. But Hutchins and his university continue on their independent way.

While Hutchins believes in the need of nothing less than a change of civilization, his zeal is not sophomoric. He does not count on his theories being as persuasive as the music of the Pied Piper. Rather he is willing to strike out on his own and hope for the gradual acceptance of his ideas.

The only way in which the ideal proposed could ever be accepted by our fellow-citizens and by the educational system would be by the gradual infiltration of this notion throughout the country. This can be accomplished only by beginning. If one college and one university—and only one—are willing to take a position contrary to the prevailing American ideology and suffer the consequences, then conceivably, over a long period of time, the character of our civilization may change.1

What precisely are the educational theories of Robert Maynard Hutchins? On what fundamental principles does he base his educational system? What objectives does he believe education should strive to attain? What means does he advocate in order to reach these objectives? What features of the status quo does he

therefore reject? And what do Catholic educators think about his ends and means? These are questions which the following investigation hopes to answer.

We do not intend, therefore, to delve into Hutchins' pronouncements on the administration of educational housing projects. As a university administrator this is definitely part of his business. But his executive functions do not affect his philosophy of education.

Nor in this opus are we interested in methodology or teaching techniques. Instead of inquiring into how a subject should be taught, we are interested in learning what subjects Hutchins believes should be taught.

While every statement of policy by Hutchins brings to mind parallel statements of other educators as well as their criticisms of Hutchins, we do not plan to present these other opinions here. The one exception we make on this point is in the case of Catholic criticism. We do hope to make clear the points of agreement and disagreement between Hutchins and Catholic education.

Obviously any man's philosophy of education is founded on his notions of man's place in the animal kingdom. Before teaching man we must know his nature. "How can we talk about
preparing men for life unless we ask what the end of life may be?\textsuperscript{2} Hence the second chapter of our investigation will be a consideration of Hutchins' theories about the nature of man.

With a clear notion of what Hutchins believes man's nature to be we shall take up in the third chapter the educational objectives that such a nature demands.

Then in the fourth chapter we shall consider educational means calculated to lead man to his educational ends. Here while presenting the system advocated by Hutchins we shall also point out the methods which he rejects.

The final chapter will summarize the Catholic criticism of Hutchins' position.

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., 24
CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

MAN--HIS NATURE AND NEEDS

In reasoning to his system of education Hutchins first studies man's nature in order to determine the ends toward which educators should strive. He begins his study of man by observing prevailing catastrophic conditions in the world today. This observation shows him what man's nature is not. From that point he arrives at positive conclusions about the objectives of human nature and about the type of political state in which man is meant to live. Having determined these philosophical presuppositions Hutchins is ready to go on to educational implications.

In his *Education for Freedom* written at the nadir of the Allies' fortunes in World War II Hutchins looks with alarm at a disintegrating world. With traditional Europe fast disappearing and our own political and economic life under the severe repercussions of war, men must, he says, "inquire into the first causes of the catastrophe, into the methods of averting its most serious consequences, and into the foundations of the new order
which the survivors should seek to lay.  

At the root of the world's present tragedy Hutchins finds a pervasive materialism. And because materialism is the cause of our troubles, he believes that "we cannot be content with a rearrangement of things in the material order." Redistribution of wealth cannot be a permanent solution, because men have an unlimited desire for the world's limited material goods. There is no possibility of everyone's being satisfied. As long, therefore, as men as well as nations are motivated by an insatiable desire for material goods, we cannot hope for world peace or personal contentment.

Hutchins rejects the idea that mechanical and technical progress is identical with civilization. It is true that technology can supply us with needed material goods, but it is inane to make technology synonymous with justice.

Technology can give us bigger, brighter, faster, and cheaper automobiles. It cannot tell us who ought to have them, or how many, or where they should go. The notion that a just and equitable distribution of goods will be achieved by the advance of technology or that by its aid we shall put material goods in their proper relation to all other is reduced to absurdity by the coincidence of the zenith of techno-

1 Ibid., 39
2 Ibid., 39
logy and the nadir of moral and political life. Clearly, Hutchins believes we have sought material goods as an end in themselves. Hence all effort is judged by economic standards. How much can we gain with the least possible overhead? Moral principles, of course, being obstructive and restrictive are not allowed to compete with economic criteria.

Hutchins also points out that communism, the antithesis of capitalism, "is simply the logical prolongation of capitalistic materialism." Admitting economic criteria to be the determining factor of all activity, he argues that private property and competition prevent the realization of perfect materialism, the economic rationalization of the whole of life. Communism by concentrating all economic power in the hands of the state is the technically perfect economic realization of materialism.

No one will deny that materialism has become a strong motivating force in education. A school and its courses are judged by the success of their students in the business and professional worlds.

This in brief is the materialism that Hutchins finds at the root of present day evils. The world of materialistic concepts is crashing and will not be sustained by a rearrangement of ma-

3 Ibid., 40
4 Ibid., 42
terial things. If the world is to be reformed, and Hutchins is definitely a reformer, what will be the basis of our new evaluations?

Hutchins affirms that our investigation must be metaphysical. The word 'metaphysics' is, he admits, even among some learned people simply a technical term for superstition. By a metaphysical investigation he means an inquiry into fundamental, universal principles. To prove that there are such principles he quotes Dr. H. S. Burr of Yale.

One of the primitive assumptions of science is that we live in a universe of order; order determined by, and controlled through, the operation of fundamental principles capable of elucidation and reasonably exact definition. This assumption states that there is a metaphysics, a body of universal laws which can be grasped by the human intellect and utilized effectively in the solution of human problems.5

To hold to the precedence of fundamental principles in the solution of our problem is to insist that the instinctive urge for the immediate present good must be made to conform with the primary objectives of man's nature.

Regarding man's nature Hutchins says

Man is a moral, rational, and spiritual being. He needs material goods; unless he has them he cannot survive. But he does not need them without limit. Preoccupation with material

5 Ibid., 24
goods will hinder and not assist his progress toward his real goal, which is the fullest development of his specific powers. Nature will not forgive those who fail to fulfill the law of their being. The law of human beings is wisdom and goodness, not unlimited acquisition. The economic rationalization of life proceeds in the face of the basic law of human nature. That law would suggest to us the idea of sufficiency rather than the idea of unbounded possessions.\(^6\)

Here we have in one paragraph Hutchins' idea of human nature and the end of human nature. How and why he reaches these conclusions he does not intimate except as a reaction against the obviously failing materialistic philosophy.

His failure to offer proof of his position he might defend by saying that his books were intended as a popular presentation of merely what he believes, not why he believes it. Surely he would not contend that his principles are self-evident.

Hutchins states that man's true goal is the "fullest development of his specific powers," and "the law of human beings is wisdom and goodness." This for Hutchins would seem to be the ultimate. His educational system is in no way related to a supernatural being.

As he denies that materialism is the end of human nature, it is logical for him to affirm that the economic rationalization of life is contrary to the law of human society. Unlimited acquisition of material goods cannot be the end of a "moral, rational, \(\text{\ldots}\)"
and spiritual being." He has already stated that the real goal of man is "the fullest development of his specific powers," wisdom and goodness. Therefore everything else in this world is a means to aid man to his final objective. Material goods are thus subordinated.

It follows, therefore, that the state too is a means to aid man to wisdom and goodness and not an end in itself. The common good is the care of the state, and this is achieved by the state's preserving justice.

The common good, in fact, is little but justice more broadly conceived: peace, order, and an equitable distribution of economic goods. Since the state is charged with responsibility for the common good, and since the production and distribution of material goods are one aspect of the common good, the economic order must by subordinate to the political order. 7

Thus, according to Hutchins, the dignity of man determines the relative subordination of all other values. Hence the state is not an end in itself but a means to protect the common good. Similarly the economic order may not look upon men as mere instruments of production or as means of enriching individuals, but rather, economics must be directed to the common good. This subordination of values shows that men are social animals banded together for mutual aid toward the objectives of their nature.

7 Ibid., 45
After considering man's nature, its ends, and the correct subordination of values Hutchins asks what type of government would be best suited to foster and preserve the common good. Clearly, this is a necessary consideration for a man attempting to formulate a philosophy of education. The training of Nazi youth differed greatly from the training of American youth.

First let us consider the type of state which Hutchins rejects. He looks at Fascist Italy.

The trains, we are told, ran on time. The beggars had disappeared. There was less crime than there is in the United States. Italy had gained power and prestige. But it is only when we understand the nature of man that we can understand the nature of the state. And when we understand these we understand that the Italian state is not a state at all. It is an organization of force. It rests on a misconception of the purpose of the state. It denies the proper end of the person. It distorts the proper relation that should obtain between the person and the state.8

Force, therefore, cannot be the basis of a state worthy of the nature of man. Hutchins next looks into the worth of a democracy and challenges his readers, who are currently at war to preserve democratic principles, to tell him what a democracy is. "We know," he says, "that Germany is not one. She says so. We know that Russia is not one, though Stalin says she is one....We

8 Ibid., 57
are not altogether sure about this country."  

Hutchins leaves no doubt about his own position. He says that democracy is not merely a good form of government; it is the best. His reasons are clear cut.

The reasons why democracy is the best form of government are absurdly simple. It is the only form of government that can combine three characteristics: law, equality, and justice. A totalitarian state has none of these, and hence, if it is a state at all, it is the worst of all possible states. 

Why should law, equality, and justice be the distinguishing notes of a democracy? Hutchins explains.

Law is an expression of their (men's) collective rationality, by which they hope to educate and control themselves. Law is law only if it is an ordinance of reason directed to the good of the community. It is not law if it is an expression of passion or designed for the benefit of pressure groups. We have a government of men and not of laws when the cause of legislative enactments is anything but reason and its object anything but the common good. 

Equality is characteristic of a democracy because of the dignity of every individual. "Every man is an end; no man is a means." Man, says Hutchins, as a social animal needs to organize politically, and to fully achieve his end in life he must

---------

9 Ibid., 80
10 Ibid., 82
11 Ibid., 82-83
12 Ibid., 83
participate in that organization. Therefore, he has political rights which may not be denied him.

Regarding justice Hutchins points out that men are organized politically for the good of the community. Community or common good implies common purposes and principles.

Justice, by which we mean a fair allocation of functions, rewards, and punishments, in terms of the rights of man and the principles and purposes of the community, holds it [the community] together.\(^{13}\)

After selecting democracy as the ideal form of government because it alone combines law, equality, and justice, Hutchins goes on to draw the obvious conclusion that if we are to understand democracy and to defend it for what it is, we must recognize the value of principles. Without a recognition of political principles we can have no community but "only a conglomeration of individuals wrestling with one another in the same geographical region."\(^{14}\)

Next he asks what is the basis of the principles of law, equality and justice. Obviously if these principles are to be believed, we must admit that there is truth and that we can find it. But this is not the experimental truth of the natural sciences. The truth of political principles cannot be verified in a

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 84
\(^{14}\) Ibid., 84-85
laboratory. Nevertheless we must believe that this truth is objective.

If the above principles must be believed, then further conclusions about man's nature follow immediately. Man must, therefore, be a rational animal whose total conduct cannot be explained in terms of instinct, emotion, or "visceral reactions." Admitting that man is moral and intellectual we must conclude that there is a difference between good and bad.

In summing up Hutchins' doctrine on political organizations suitable for man we recall that he affirms the common good to be the objective of any community or state. Totalitarianism he rejects as nothing more than an organization of force unworthy to direct creatures of man's dignity. Democracy he defends as the ideal form of government. If democracy, a state combining law, equality, and justice, is the ideal form of government, then from that conclusion we learn much about the nature of man. Man is a rational, moral being who can discover objective truth, whose life can be directed by universal principles.

Hutchins also has some interesting observations on the nature of human freedom. He points out that ordinarily when we think of freedom we think of Rousseau's notion of freedom from restriction. "Freedom of the press is freedom from censorship. Academic freedom is freedom from presidents, trustees, and the
public. Freedom of thought is freedom from thinking.\textsuperscript{15}

But this interpretation of freedom Hutchins rejects. We should not think of freedom as an end in itself.

We do not want to be free merely to be free. We want to be free for the sake of being or doing something that we cannot be or do unless we are free. We want to be free to obtain the things we want.\textsuperscript{16}

What we want, of course, as human beings is Good, our individual or economic well-being along with the development of our specifically human faculties, our personal good. Hutchins subordinates the various classes of good as follows.

This personal, human good is the highest of all the goods we seek. As the private good, which is our individual economic interest, is subordinate to the common good, which is the interest of the community, so the common good is subordinate to our personal and human good and must be ordered to it.\textsuperscript{17}

Any state, therefore, which sacrifices the common good to the political organization is not a state but a fraud.

Are we prepared as Americans to defend the above principles? Hutchins says that we certainly are not. Our tradition in scepticism refuses to allow us to accept any absolute good or evil. There are no morals, only mores. Man being merely animal has no

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 87
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 88
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 89
other objective than subsistence. "The only common principle that we are urged to have is that there are no principles at all." 18

Clearly, the reformer Hutchins sees the need of reform. America's perspective is awry. If we are not cognizant of the true dignity of man, aware of the blessings of democracy, we shall be the victims of a political revolution at the hands of the proponents of government by force. But he sees an alternative to political revolution—spiritual revolution through education. "We must therefore attempt the reconstruction of the educational system, even if the attempt seems unrealistic or almost silly." 19

---

18 Ibid., 93
19 Ibid., 59
CHAPTER III

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

In the previous chapter we studied Hutchins' attempt to determine the objectives of man's nature by analyzing that nature. Now we shall consider the educational objectives which Hutchins advocates for the achievement of man's end in life.

With Hutchins, the reformer, let us first glance at the status quo to observe those objectives which he rejects as incapable of achieving man's end. In the present educational world Hutchins finds confusion reigning.

The most characteristic feature of the modern world is bewilderment. It has become the fashion to be bewildered. Anybody who says he knows anything or understands anything is at once suspected of affectation or falsehood. Consistency has become a vice and opportunism a virtue. We do not know where we are going, or why; and we have almost given up the attempt to find out.1

This is truly an extraordinary situation when we realize that today we have far more information than our ancestors had. What reason can be given for this paradoxical state of American edu-

cation? Hutchins suggests that

The crucial error is that of holding that nothing is any more important than anything else, that there can be no order of goods and no order in the intellectual realm. There is nothing central and nothing peripheral, nothing primary and nothing secondary, nothing basic and nothing superficial. The course of study goes to pieces because there is nothing to hold it together. Triviality, mediocrity, and vocationalism take it over because we have no standard by which to judge them. ²

More specifically what condition obtains in the individual departments of our schools? Take, for example, the objectives of the fine arts and literature. Because there are no fundamental principles, the true and the false cannot be discussed. Two approaches are thus left in this field: "history and the communication of ecstasy."³ The first method does not require a consideration of the work of an author, merely the social, political, and domestic conditions under which it was written. The second method measures the excellence of a work of art by the thrill it sends down one's spine.

But saddest of all is the fate that has overtaken theology. Really, according to Hutchins, there is no theology being studied. Here again the lack of basic principles removes the content from the course. Theologians for lack of a theology are reduced to

² Hutchins, Education for Freedom, 26
³ Ibid., 55
studying experimental psychology, the empirical social sciences or
even the empirical natural sciences.

If current education, then, is without objectives or at least
without worthy objectives, what objectives should it have? We
have already seen that Hutchins in analyzing man's nature states
that wisdom and goodness are the final objectives of that nature.
His educational objectives, therefore, should be calculated to
attain wisdom and goodness.

Considering, first of all, educational objectives in general
Hutchins claims that we should seek to produce free minds. At the
same time he reminds us that it is not the negative freedom of
Rousseau, but that proper freedom whereby minds are free to "un­
derstand the order of goods and can achieve them in their order."4

The negative freedom rejected by Hutchins is that which is
espoused by the more extreme of those called progressives in edu­
cation. To these people freedom means freedom from discipline,
freedom to pursue whims. The late Mr. Butler of Columbia des­
cribed this as the "rabbit theory" of education. "Any infant is
encouraged to roam about an enclosed field, nibbling here and
there at whatever root of flower or weed may, for the moment,
attract his attention or tempt his appetite."5

4 Ibid., 89
5 Ibid., 90
Free minds according to Hutchins are minds able to operate well. Because the human mind is not determined but may range at will over the good and the bad, to be properly free it requires habits of intellectual discipline to fix it on the good. He refers to St. Augustine's remark that virtue, or good habits, is the right use of our freedom. The first step in education, therefore, is to train the mind to good habits.

The second step is the understanding of what is good. A mind cannot be free if it is unable to distinguish the good from the bad or if it is enslaved to the bad. This determination of the good is the primary object of all moral and political education. Yet, Hutchins claims, it is quite possible today to progress through the university without ever considering good or evil.

An educational system that does not make these questions the center of its attention is not an educational system at all. It is a large-scale housing venture. It may be effective in keeping young people out of worse places until they can go to work. It cannot contribute to the growth of free minds. It cannot help the rising generation solve the great problem of our time.

It is Hutchins' belief that the great problems of our time are moral, intellectual, and spiritual. How is that? He points out that while manufacturing a marvelous quantity of goods we are

6 Ibid., 91
7 Ibid., 91-92
sinking into poverty. Learning to prolong life we have failed to learn the meaning of life. Loving liberty we see much of the world in chains. This is a fact because we have been concerned with means, not with ends. We have directed our talents to the transitory without solving the basic problems of life and society.

Elsewhere Hutchins describes free minds as minds capable of independent thinking.

It must be remembered that the purpose of education is not to fill the minds of students with facts; it is not to reform them, or amuse them, or make them expert technicians in any field. It is to teach them to think, if that is possible, and to think always for themselves. Democratic government rests on the notion that the citizens will think for themselves. It is of the highest importance that there should be some places where they can learn how to do it.8

So much for the objectives of education in general. Now let us consider Hutchins' more specific objectives.

In conformity with his general objectives he states that the object of higher learning is to train the mind, to produce intelligent citizens. At the college level the aim is to teach.

It is not to conduct scientific investigation or professional training. It aims at transmitting to young people an intelligible scheme of things. This is a full-time job. It requires an excellent staff centering its attention on teaching, on improving its teaching, on making

8 Hutchins, No Friendly Voice, 8
its scheme of things more intelligent and intelligible. The responsibility of adding to the world's knowledge does not rest upon the college. Its object is to communicate it.9

This is what Hutchins calls the leading of students into the world of ideas. A high school graduate, he says, has not yet an appreciation of the vast fields of science, history, philosophy, literature, and the arts. In college

This is not done [revealed to the student] by a Cook's tour of all human knowledge; the effort is to get the student to master those fundamental principles upon which understanding must rest. The college attempts to avoid superficiality on the one hand and premature specialization on the other.10

At the college level, therefore, the aim is a general education. Students are to be taught their historical background and intellectual traditions. Hutchins quotes Whitehead in this regard (Here Whitehead obviously uses the word 'university' as Hutchins uses the word 'college.')

...the university course is the great period of generalization...At the university the student should start from general ideas and study their application to concrete cases....I do not mean to say that it should be abstract in the sense of divorce from concrete fact, but that concrete fact should be studied as illustrating the scope of general ideas....Whatever be the detail with which you cram your student, the chance of his meeting in after-life exactly that detail is almost infinitesimal....The function of a uni-

9 Ibid., 92
10 Ibid., 21
versity is to enable you to shed details in favor of principles.11

The above quotations give us some ideas of the most general objectives at the college level. What does Hutchins advocate for the university?

The common aim of all parts of a university may and should be the pursuit of truth for its own sake. But this common aim is not sufficiently precise to hold the university together while it is moving toward it. Real unity can be achieved only by a hierarchy of truths which shows us which are fundamental and which subsidiary, which significant and which not.12

Hutchins realizes that this principle of unity was theology in the middle ages, but, as we saw above, the supernatural has no place in his system. He admits that the theocentric unity of the medieval universities was rational and practical—for its time.13

But these are other times; and we are trying to discover a rational and practical order for the higher learning of today. Theology is banned by law from some universities. It might as well be from the rest. Theology is based on revealed truth and articles of faith. We are a faithless generation and take no stock in revelation. Theology implies orthodoxy and an orthodox church. We have neither. To look to theology to unify the modern university is futile and vain.14

Dr. Hutchins' rejection of theology as a basis of education

11 Ibid., 37
13 Ibid., 96
14 Ibid., 97
is not necessarily a personal conviction, but, to his mind at least, a necessary compromise with a naturalistic, secular world. At the same time he is convinced of the need of revelation in the world today. "Yet, no one will venture to express a doubt that the message of Christ is more necessary to the world today than at any earlier period in our history." This quotation is from one of his earlier writings possibly before he was persuaded to the necessity of compromise. At that time he was more unbending in advocating the whole truth.

Issues must be discussed precisely because they are controversial. Positions must be taken even if they are unpopular. Forces must be opposed even though they seem overwhelmingly rich and powerful. An organization can attempt such a campaign of public education only if it is ready to declare its independence and guarantee to its professional leadership adequate security as long as it is honest and competent. The problems that lie ahead require honesty and competency.

Nevertheless, modern exigencies, to Hutchins, make it impossible to unify the world's education through theology. For theology he substitutes metaphysics and admits that this omission of theology places his educational system in substantially the same position as that of ancient Greeks. Both systems are distinguished by thought unified by the study of first principles.

--------
15 Hutchins, No Friendly Voice, 137
16 Ibid., 137-138
Hutchins is known as an intellectualist, and the above analysis shows us in a general way the ultimate objectives of his intellectualism. Does this intellectualism imply that the further faculties of man, the "whole man," are to receive short shrift in a university or even relegated to agencies outside the university? It is not merely implied but stated explicitly.

Of all the meaningless phrases in educational discussion this [the whole man] is the prize. Does it mean that education must do the whole job of translating the whole infant into a whole adult? Must it do what the church, the family, the state, the Y.M.C.A., and the Boy Scouts allege they are trying to do? If so, ...what becomes of that intellectual training which educational institutions might be able to give if they could get around to it? ...Is it too much to say that if we can teach our students to lead the life of reason we shall do all that can be expected of us and do at the same time the best thing that can be done for the whole man? The task of education is to make rational animals more perfectly rational.17

On this point Hutchins is very determined. He refers to it in each of his books, not just once but again and again. Moral training or character building is the responsibility of parents and can have no place in an intellectual institution. Besides, direct efforts to teach character will fail. "They degenerate into vague exhortations to be good which leave the bored listener

----------------

17 Hutchins, Education for Freedom, 36-37
with a desire to commit outrages which would otherwise never have occurred to him.\(^{18}\)

Hutchins also claims that the best foundation for character is hard intellectual work, for if intellectual virtues are lacking, morals rest on habit and precept alone.

Religious training, too, falls by the wayside under intellectualism.

The old methods of emotional appeal have lost their effectiveness. I doubt if they ever had much permanent influence. Certainly they will not bring young men to Christ today. The appeal that must be made to them is the appeal to reason. A process of conversion to be worthy of that name must be an intellectual process. Faith is an intellectual assent...\(^{138-39}\)

Education that sets as its stated and obvious aim the development of character is likely to degenerate into sloppy, sentimental talk about character. The result is neither character nor education. Rigorous intellectual activity remains the best character education; and the less said about character the better.\(^{19}\)

In another place Hutchins points out that his intellectualism is in conformity with the teaching of one of the great Catholic educators. "The...characteristic of the University of Chicago has been its perpetual agreement with Cardinal Newman that the object of a university is intellectual, not moral."\(^{20}\)

---

18 Hutchins, No Friendly Voice, 93
19 Ibid., 138-39
20 Ibid., 164
Before concluding this chapter on objectives it is fitting that we consider who is to be educated. Are we to aim at providing education for all mankind or only for the more intelligent? We all agree that everyone capable of learning at all should be allowed to attend elementary school. Nor is anyone above the moron-level barred from a free high school training here in America. Hutchins has some clear, if purely theoretical, opinions on this subject.

From the motives of good economics he insists that we must continue to educate all youth up to the age of twenty years. Industry cannot absorb them. However, at the level of our present junior year of college (which in the Hutchins' or Chicago Plan, to be considered in the following chapter, represents the end of college and the beginning of university) a firm stand must be taken in order that those incapable of profiting by a university training be forced into a gainful occupation.

For work beyond that point specialized courses, small classes, and elaborate equipment are required. All these things are justified for students that have the interest and ability that scholarly and professional work requires.21

But the taxpayer cannot afford to educate those who lack this interest and ability.

21 Ibid., 116
"Education is an act of faith; and it is an article of my faith that no one is ineducable—no one, that is, above the grade of moron." 22 There are two types of pupils for whom we have not made provision, those who cannot read and those who are not interested in reading. By pupils unable to read Hutchins means the functionally illiterate, people who can understand the less difficult parts of a newspaper but no more. These types have failed not because they were stupid but because our education has not been directed to their particular capabilities. We have been acting "as though they were all bound for the literary delights of a classical tradition." 23

"I must admit that I do not know the answer to the problem of the functionally illiterate and hand-minded boy. What I am asking for is recognition of the problem and a change in our attitude toward it." 24 Elsewhere he says that it is not a problem of content but of method. In other words, all are to receive training in intellectual discipline.

I concede the great difficulty of communicating the kind of education I favor to those who are unable or unwilling to get their education from books. I insist, however, that the education I shall outline is the kind that everybody should

22 Ibid., 118-119
23 Ibid., 119
24 Ibid., 120
have, that the answer to it is not that some people should not have it, but that we should find out how to give it to those whom we do not know how to teach at present. You cannot say my content is wrong because you do not know the method of transmitting it. Let us agree upon content if we can and have faith that the technological genius of America will solve the problem of communication. 25

Hutchins sums up his educational objectives as follows:

First, it assumes that everybody has a mind and that we must find out how to train it. Second, it assumes that it is a good thing to train it. Certainly I should be put to it to argue that a trained mind will result in a large income. I have no difficulty in holding that it will result in a happy and useful life. It will result in benefit to the individual and to the community.

It will do more. A program of general education resulting in trained minds will facilitate social change and make it more intelligent. The educational system cannot bring about social change. It cannot work out and impose on the country a blueprint of the social order desired by the teachers colleges. But the educational system can facilitate social change; it can make it more intelligent. A program of general education which is based on ideas, which leads the student to understand the nature and schemes of history, to grasp the principles of science, to comprehend the fine arts and literature, and to which philosophy contributes intelligibility at every stage, is the kind of program that we must now construct. 26

25 Hutchins, Higher Learning in America, 61
26 Hutchins, No Friendly Voice, 130-131
CHAPTER IV
MEANS: APPROVED AND REJECTED

Part 1. Rejected Means

Up to this point we have learned what Hutchins believes man's nature to be and the educational objectives necessary for an adequate development of that nature. Now we shall consider his opinion of various means of achieving these objectives.

We have already seen that Hutchins points to a pervasive materialism as the underlying cause of the current world calamity. He also names materialism the ogre in education and sadly claims that educators in general nod approval when S.R. Livingstone, Director of Personnel of the Thompson Products Company, says:

I think most of us will agree generally with this broad statement—that the purpose of education is primarily and basically to equip young people with knowledge and skill by means of which they can most effectively contribute to the production of food, clothing, and shelter, and the luxuries which go to make up our standard of living. While knowledge of such fields as the arts, languages, philosophy, history, and others is of importance to society, still I believe these fields are secondary, at least at this time, to the production of the material necessities and luxuries, as society is now demonstrating that it cannot be happy without an abun-
dance of the material things.  

Since this is the setting in which American education operates, the tendency is more and more to drive out of the course of study everything that is not immediately concerned with making a living. This is vocationalism. People in love with money think that education is a way to get it. They think too that democracy means that every child should be permitted to acquire the educational insignia that will be helpful in making money. They do not believe in the cultivation of the intellect for its own sake.  

Hutchins points out that if schools are meant to teach trades there is no limit to the triviality that may be introduced. And the number of trades that may be taught are limited only by the resources of the school.

He also claims that the graduates of a technical school are likely to find their techniques outdated. Worse still, their whole education proves to have been a waste of time if they finally choose some other trade or profession for their life work. "Since 50 percent of engineering graduates do not become engineers engineering schools should try to give them an education useful in any occupation instead of teaching them tricks that are useful, if at all, only in engineering."  

-------------

1 Hutchins, *Education for Freedom*, 42-43
2 Hutchins, *The Higher Learning in America*, 31
3 *Ibid.*, 48
Hutchins points to a couple of straws in a favorable wind. When the University of Minnesota asked 37 industries what specific training they wanted high school boys to have, they unanimously replied that they favored no specific training at all.

The machines the schools could train them on were already antiquated. The teachers were more antiquated still. The industries themselves could train the boys on the machines actually in use in about two weeks.⁴

The most enlightened engineers and engineering teachers now favor as the best preparation for their profession first a good general education and second a program of theoretical studies almost indistinguishable from non-professional work in chemistry; physics, and mathematics.⁵

That is to say, vocationalism from the merely pragmatic point of view is bad for the individual. Vocationalism is also bad for the university and for the professions themselves. The university suffers because its individual departments become isolated, interested in nothing and informed about nothing outside their own particular field. The university is also debased by vocationalism, for there is lacking that atmosphere congenial to quiet investigations, to impartial, detached study. Pressure groups and propagandists insist on voicing their opinions through the university.

He cannot imagine that the university is not interested in pressure or propaganda. He assumes

⁴ Hutchins, No Friendly Voice, 126
⁵ Ibid., 171
that if it is not with him it must be against him. We have come to the point where the pursuit of truth for its own sake is actually regarded as dangerous by nervous newspaper publishers and worried business men.  

Vocationalism is bad for the professions because each profession requires for its continuous development the existence of centers of creative thought. To the extent to which universities and professional schools abandon creative thought and degenerate into trade schools the profession must degenerate into a trade.  

This state of vocationalism is, in Hutchins' mind, the cause of the present condition of theology, law, and engineering in America. While materialistic vocationalism is for Hutchins the greatest deformity in American education, there are a number of other anti-intellectual scars that he would like to see removed. We have already noted his attitude toward character training. He is similarly impatient with what he calls the "great-man theory" of education. According to this theory the content of a course is not important. The aim of the school is to have great men on the campus. Their mere presence exalts, stimulates, inspires. Of course, Hutchins admits, each school should strive to provide good teachers. But

The fact is that the great-man theory is an ex-

6 Hutchins, The Higher Learning in America, 43-44
7 Ibid., 44
cuse, an alibi, a vacuous reply to the charge that we have no intelligent program for the higher learning. It amounts to saying that we do not need one; we could give you one if we wanted to. But if you will only accept the great man theory you will spare us the trouble of thinking.8

Another mark to education is the teaching of current events. Aiming to prepare the student for the contemporary scene this course pours out miscellaneous information which the student is expected to give back in the examinations. Since the facts of science and history are unrelated and unassimilated, they serve merely to bewilder the student who has not the perspective to evaluate their relative importance. The information passed out in these courses is proposed as useful, calculated to adjust youth to its environment. But "in the present state of the world the educators might as well admit that there is no stable or valid knowledge that can be communicated to the young generation."9 Presumably this quotation refers to information doled out as from an encyclopedia, without unifying principle and without basic principles for distinguishing good from bad, true from false.

"Adjusting youth to environment" and "preparing youth for the contemporary scene" are slogans of progressives in education. Hutchins admits that these people have made great contributions

----------
8 Ibid., 28
9 Hutchins, Education for Freedom, 54
to the method of education. They have cleared away arbitrary restrictions to giving and getting an education. But to Hutchins the really important questions in education are of content not of method. "The ideas that the progressive educators have had about content have been either misconceived or misapplied."\(^\text{10}\) For instance, while aiming to fit the student for the status quo we have no assurance that the status quo or some other status will confront the student upon graduation. In other words, the superficial and transitory are stressed to the neglect of the permanent.

Opposed to Hutchins' reasoning to the nature of man and building his educational system on his conclusions are, of course, the sceptics. Their slogans are, "Everything is a matter of opinion;" "I will take no position because I am tolerant and open minded." Hutchins remarks,

> If we can know nothing about society, if we can have only opinion about it, and if one man's opinion is as good as another's, then we may decide to get what we irrationally want by the use of irrational means, namely force. The appeal to reason is vain in a sceptical world. That appeal can only be successful if those appealed to have some rational views of the society of which they are a part.\(^\text{11}\)

Hutchins classifies another group of his opponents as those who belong to the cult of presentism. There is no past. To learn

10 Hutchins, *No Friendly Voice*, 128
11 Hutchins, *Education for Freedom*, 31
an industry you have merely to tour the steel mills or the stock yards. Social progress has no need of antiquity or the Middle Ages. We can learn nothing from thinkers of former times.

But Hutchins maintains that we cannot understand our environment by looking at it; it is a mass of incomprehensible items. "We attack old problems not knowing they are old and make the same mistakes because we do not know they were made." 12

Another band of anti-intellectuals are those whose exaggerated notions of science brand them with the sign of scientism. These people claim that science alone is trustworthy. In our quest for the good life we must follow science. Clearly this cult cannot admit metaphysics and therefore, according to Hutchins, can tell us nothing about the goals of human life and of organized society.

In a final class of anti-intellectuals Hutchins names all the followers of Mr. Eliot, "the great criminal," "who as President of Harvard applied his genius, skill, and longevity to the task of robbing American youth of their cultural heritage." 13 Obviously this colorful description has reference to the elective system. Because Mr. Eliot did not distinguish between objectively good and bad subjects of study, his system of unrestricted electives ruined

12 Ibid., 32
13 Ibid., 25
the intellectual content of the **curriculum**. Hutchins observes that while it is possible to get an education in an American university today, a person would have to be so wise to get it that he wouldn't really need it. It is not difficult to appreciate that our heritage is lost when the pupils themselves decide what ought to be learned. It is an interesting fact that Harvard and Yale have recently announced the adoption of a greatly restricted elective system. And Hutchins nods knowingly.

Mr. Hutchins sums up his views of opposing systems of education as follows:

I do deny that either the public schools or the universities are devoting themselves to producing people who have had genuine intellectual discipline and who have acquired those intellectual habits which the ancients properly denominated virtues. 14

And Mr. Butler of Columbia in the same vein has said,

The youth thus deprived of the privilege of real instruction and real discipline is sent into the world bereft of his great intellectual and moral inheritance. His own share of the world's intellectual and moral wealth has been withheld from him. It is no wonder that the best use he can so often find to make of his time is to try, by whatever means he can devise to share the material wealth of some of his fellows. 15

14 Ibid., 56
15 Ibid., 56-57
In order to educate man in a manner befitting his nature, Hutchins has developed a system of intellectualism. He points out that this is not the intellectualism of Descartes whose denial of all previous knowledge produced a reaction in succeeding generations which finally led to a denial of man's intellectual powers.

It has already been noted to what extent Hutchins bases his philosophy on metaphysical principles. In education he ascribes a double role to metaphysics. Educators use these principles to determine what education should be, and students by means of metaphysical principles lay moral, intellectual, and spiritual foundations for their lives.

The intellectualist, he who insists that education be concerned with ideas, with permanent principles, is according to Hutchins truly scientific and truly liberal. He is a scientist because he understands the permanent problems of science, and he is a liberal because he understands the nature and possibilities of mankind and not merely human conventions.

Let us now consider the educational system that Hutchins outlines for the training of an intellectualist.

At the primary school level he prefers a six year course since our elementary instruction is now preparatory to secondary school and not terminal as it was when Horace Mann devised the
eight-year program. England and the Continent complete elementary instruction in six years. Why should we use eight years to accomplish the same thing?

The four-year high school program, which pupils would begin at the age of eleven or twelve, is considered preliminary to the general education of college. We have already noted that Hutchins believes this general education to be in theory at least the proper training for all youth above the level of the moron.

Policymakers at the University of Chicago have thus come to the conclusion that young people can and should begin their college training at the age of fifteen or sixteen. Experience has taught these educators that the adolescent's faculties are sufficiently matured at that age for college work, that students who hope to go into medicine, law, teaching, scientific research, or other professions should be allowed to do so as soon as possible.

The core of the Chicago college curriculum consists of general courses in the biological sciences, the humanities, the physical sciences, and the social sciences. The primary aim is not to provide a survey of current knowledge. Rather, the student is taught how knowledge in a given field is acquired and tested.

"It is more important, for example, that a college student should learn what kind of problems the physicist investigates, how he
formulates them, and by what method he seeks to solve them, than that he should memorize a set of facts and theories.

Logically, therefore, since the primary aim of the college course involves an understanding of how facts are acquired and the reasoning processes by which facts are interpreted, college education is basically the practice of reasoning, the examination of arguments.

With this end in view students meet with instructors in small discussion groups to analyze matter given in lectures or presented in their reading assignments. It is assumed at Chicago that students do not understand a fact or theory until they are capable of justifying acceptance or rejection of the matter.

The special function of a college is to teach people who have learned to read how to reflect on what they have read, how to discover and estimate the premises of arguments offered to them, and how to identify and test the conclusions of these arguments. To the extent to which it develops these abilities a college enables its students to solve their personal problems wisely, to achieve their ambitions in an occupation or profession, and to contribute to the life of the nation. The citizens of a democracy must be able to do more than merely grasp the meaning of what is being said to them or written for them. Unless they are able to analyze and evaluate appeals addressed to them, they may easily become the victims and even the tools of blind or self-...

16 The College of the University of Chicago, Chicago University Press, Chicago, Illinois, 4
seeking leaders. 17

Recognizing the importance of being able to communicate acquired knowledge Chicago provides a three-year course in writing. Mathematics and foreign languages are included in the curriculum to clear up deficiencies of individuals or to aid others who will need such knowledge in later specialization.

The college curriculum is as follows:

First Year
1. Biological Sciences or Physical Sciences 1
2. Social Sciences 1
3. Humanities 1
4. English 1 (Reading, Writing, and Criticism)

Second Year
1. Biological Sciences 2 or Physical Sciences 2
2. Social Sciences 2
3. Humanities 2
4. English 2 (Reading, Writing, and Criticism)

Third Year
1. Physical Sciences 3 or Biological Sciences 3
2. Social Sciences 3
3. Humanities 3
4. English 3 (Composition)

Fourth Year
1. Observation, Interpretation and Integration
2-3-4. Open for special-interest courses, or for advanced work.

The three-year course in the natural sciences includes two years of biology and one in the physical sciences or two in the physical sciences and one in biology. The physical sciences include chemistry, geography, geology, mathematics, and physics.

The three-year course in the social sciences includes the study of American history, the analysis of economic, social, and political institutions, and the study of the problems of freedom

17 Ibid., 5
and control in contemporary society.

The humanities deal with literature, art, music, philosophy, and history.

Its purpose is to acquaint students with the major achievements in these fields and to develop competence in the analysis, understanding, and appreciation of historical, rhetorical, literary, and philosophic writings and of works of art and music. The three courses which make up the series deal progressively with richer and more difficult materials and aim at increasing progressively the ability of students to use the humanistic disciplines and skills.¹⁸

The study of the literary and philosophical classics is considerable and done in translation. By special arrangement a student may take an extra course in a foreign language.

The three-year English reading and writing course aims at developing skill in written composition. The three years deal respectively with narration, exposition, and exposition along with argumentation.

The single course in observation, interpretation, and integration taken in fourth year is just that. The humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences are looked at as a whole. Students are led to analyze and compare methods of acquiring and testing knowledge in these fields. The history of the relationships between the fields is also studied.

¹⁸ Ibid., 8
It is the final aim of the course to prepare students to distinguish clearly the differences in the nature of the manifold problems they will encounter as individuals and as citizens and to prepare them to determine the kinds of information and approach needed for the solution of each.\textsuperscript{19}

At the end of this four-year college course Chicago University awards the Bachelor of Arts degree. This is two years earlier than ordinary American students receive theirs. As expected the innovation has caused a storm of protest over the educational world. The arguments pro and con do not concern us; suffice it to say that Hutchins has defended his action with logic and persuasion.

Awarding of degrees brings us to a consideration of the measurement of learning. How would Hutchins measure learning? He would most certainly not use the widely accepted credit system. He states that we are not really interested in learning how long a student has been in school. Nor do the numerical grades or the number of units to his credit tell us much about the intellectual level he has attained. Hutchins maintains that since the credit system merely requires a student to take a course, memorize data, and give back that data in an examination given by his teacher, a credit represents nothing more than regular attendance, satisfactory memory, and ability to understand those peculiar adults who

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 10
have become teachers."

Hutchins prefers a system of measurement that sets up goals for the student to reach and recognizes that the method of reaching the goal is immaterial.

A system of general examinations to be taken by the student when he is ready to take them, and given, if possible, by external examiners, seems to me to offer the best program of measurement. Under such a system the period of incarceration is irrelevant. The question is whether the student has mastered the material. Since the material covers more than one course, it is impossible to create the delusion of mastery by mastering the teacher's habits or by memorizing little bits of information. The painful accumulation of credits ceases to be the characteristic curse of education. 20

As we might expect by now, Hutchins' theories on this subject of measurement have not remained in the abstract.

We have heard since I can remember, for example, that the credit system was the curse of education in America. I have never met anybody who had a good word to say for it. Nobody had ever done anything about it. The University of Chicago decided that if the system was bad it ought to be changed. The University abolished it. The great academic characteristic of suspended judgement, of not doing anything..., has not infected this University. 21

We have already noted that Hutchins believes that all ordinary youth are capable of taking the general education course of

---------
20 Hutchins, No Friendly Voice, 108
21 Ibid., 164
college. He admits that right now we do not know how to teach the more retarded pupils, but this is a problem of method, not of content. At the end of college, however, there must be, he insists, a rigorous selection of students in order that only those capable of doing university work be allowed to enter a university. The others must be directed into some gainful occupation. At present 95 percent of the workers are trained on their job. Some industries, as we have noted, prefer this arrangement to vocational schools. If others should favor a type of apprenticeship in the schools, Hutchins goes on record as favoring the arrangement made at the University of Cincinnati whereby the University shares the responsibility of training the worker with the industry. Hutchins also favors a plan by which men who have begun in a certain vocation may return to school for part-time work in order to acquire further proficiency.

And what does the intellectualist university offer the college graduate? All students, no matter to what profession they may be pointing, study metaphysics, social sciences, and natural science. The student will study all three with emphasis perhaps on one, but with no vocational aim. The study would proceed not from present observations back to first principles but from first principles to present knowledge.

The three above mentioned faculties are considered as ex-
haustive. Metaphysics includes speculative philosophy, principles of change in the physical world, and an analysis of man and his productions in the fine arts. Social sciences embrace ethics, politics, economics. Natural science, of course, is the study of nature. Medicine and engineering stem from this body of knowledge.

This university is concerned primarily with thought and not with the collection of information. However,

Since it is desirable that the collection of historical, and current data should proceed in the vicinity of the university, research institutes in the social and natural sciences may be established in connection with it, though not as a part of it. Technical institutes in the same relation to the university may also be created if needed to give special training for occupations which require a background of special knowledge and facility in special techniques. 22

Thus, training in techniques of any profession is left to the profession or to technical institutes distinct from the university.

This reduction and unification of the work of a university is meant to do away with narrow and exaggerated professionalism. It is also calculated to abolish the present isolation of university departments. Finally, the education acquired will not be piece-meal but unified.

If the country is not prepared to believe these things, it can get what it wants through the

22 Hutchins, The Higher Learning in America, 116
technical and research institutes I have proposed. They are so planned as to draw off the empiricism and vocationalism that have been strangling the universities and to leave them free to do their intellectual job.

If we can secure a real university in this country and a real program of general education upon which its work can rest, it may be that the character of our civilization may slowly change. It may be that we can outgrow our love of money, that we can get a saner conception of democracy, and that we can even understand the purposes of education. It may be that we can abandon our false notions of progress and utility and that we can come to prefer intelligible organization to the chaos that we mistake for liberty. It is because these things may be that education is important. Upon education our country must pin its hopes of true progress, which involves scientific and technological advance, but under the direction of reason; of true prosperity, which includes external goods but does not overlook those of the soul; and of true liberty, which can exist only in society, and in a society rationally ordered.23

We cannot deny that this is intellectualism. The program is completely intellectual and obviously well calculated to achieve the educational objectives that Hutchins has set for himself.

23 Ibid., 118-119
CHAPTER V
CATHOLIC CRITICISM

In Chapter II we noted that Hutchins rejects the materialistic vocationalism of American education. He insists that educational objectives should be based not on pragmatism but on universal, fundamental principles. We must admit that Truth is objective and discoverable. Man must be educated to the full development of his specific powers, wisdom and goodness.

In affirming the existence of objective, discoverable, fundamental principles Dr. Hutchins finds the whole Catholic world in complete agreement.

When Hutchins says that "man is a moral, rational, and spiritual being," he expresses his belief that man is essentially different from a mere animal and that man's specific activity is essentially higher than the instinctive urges of the brute. William J. McGucken, S.J., in explaining the Catholic position completely agrees with Hutchins. "Because of his intellect and free will man is essentially different from the highest form of brute life. Man is an animal but a rational animal. No mere
On page 11 we pointed out that Hutchins' philosophy of man makes no reference to a supernatural being. Here, of course, Catholic critics must protest. It is true that when Hutchins affirms the validity of metaphysical principles, he is expressing the Catholic position. But when he applies metaphysical principles to the nature of man, he ignores the fact that metaphysics necessarily deals with the existence and nature of God, the Creator of man. Catholics readily concur with the metaphysical principles enunciated, but they find it difficult to understand why he goes no further.

We have seen that Hutchins affirms without supporting proof the moral nature of man. Were he to try to demonstrate his position instead of assuming it, he might more clearly see that man cannot really be understood as a moral nature without reference to God, the last end of that nature.

His colleague, Professor Adler, has well expressed the scope of metaphysics.

Metaphysics is valid knowledge of both sensible and suprasensible being. Metaphysics is able to demonstrate the existence of suprasensible being, for it can demonstrate the existence of God, by appealing to the evidence of the senses and the

principles of reason, and without any reliance upon articles of religious faith. 2

At this point Catholics while admiring the sanity of Hutchins' theories, are forced to take issue, not because his metaphysics is false—it is not—but because it is deficient; it has no roots.

Fr. T. Corcoran, S.J., has expressed purely from a philosophical viewpoint and independently of revelation the traditional Catholic understanding of man's nature and education.

Education is the organized development and equipment of all the powers of a human being, moral, intellectual and physical, by and for their individual and social uses, directed towards the union of these activities with their Creator as their final end. 3

Clearly, any system that fails to recognize God's dominion over man Catholics must reject as an inadequate expression of man's ultimate objective.

When Hutchins denies that economic rationalization of life is the law of human society and that unlimited acquisition of material goods is the end of a moral, spiritual, and rational being, he finds Catholic authorities in complete agreement. His conclusion that the law of human nature suggests a sufficiency rather than

2 Adler, Mortimer, "God and the Professors," Vital Speeches, New York, N.Y., VII (Dec., 1940), 101
3 McGucken, F.M.R., 7
unbounded possessions is a reiteration of the norm of sufficiency expressed in the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* of Pius XI.

At the same time a man's superfluous income is not left entirely to his own discretion. We speak of that portion of his income which he does not need in order to live as becomes his station. On the contrary, the grave obligations of charity, beneficence and liberality which rest upon the wealthy are constantly insisted upon in telling words by Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church. 4

From economics Hutchins passes on to political science. Between pages 12 and 14 we have attempted to point out his views on the political governing of men.

The traditional attitude of the Catholic Church toward political organizations has been liberal in the extreme. The Church has approved of any type of government as long as it is capable of obtaining the common good. In 1888 Pope Leo XIII stated that the Church does not disapprove of any form of government provided it can by itself secure the good of the citizens.

In Hutchins' political doctrine there is clearly nothing with which Catholic authorities will take issue. His theories will be admitted in their entirety. When it comes to practical application, however, Catholic authorities can be expected to insert a word of caution. And the word of caution will be on the score of

4 *Five Great Encyclicals*, The Paulist Press, New York, N.Y., 1939, 139
the political maturity of some peoples. Pope Pius XII stresses this point in his distinction between the people and the masses.

The people lives and moves by its own energy; the masses are inert of themselves and can only be moved from outside. The people lives by the fullness of life in the men that compose it, each of whom—in his proper place and in his own way—is a person conscious of his own responsibility and his own views. The masses, on the contrary, waiting for the impulse from outside, become an easy plaything in the hands of anyone who seeks to exploit their instincts and impressions. They are ready to follow, in turn, today this flag, tomorrow another. 5

In the practical order it is only too clear that many people are not sufficiently politically mature to be able to judge the common good, to understand political issues, in short to govern themselves. What system should be used for governing such people? To take away their voice in the government is a serious danger and possibly the lesser evil compared to the potential political tyranny of an absolute ruler. Certainly every means should be taken to educate the people to political maturity.

In the second step of our investigation of Hutchins' philosophy we considered his educational objectives. At the beginning of the third chapter we attempted to present the educational status quo as Hutchins sees it. Here we noted his opinion that

5 Pius XII, Pius XII and Democracy, The Paulist Press, New York, N.Y., 1945, 9
theology is not now being studied. We need not belabor the attitude of the Church toward these opinions of the present status of theology. It may be true that outside the Church theology is as degraded as Hutchins claims. We know that inside the Church it is still the queen of sciences. And very probably Hutchins did not mean to refer to Catholic theology.

Hutchins' educational objectives may be classified under two main headings: 1. To train man in intellectual virtues; 2. To train man exclusively in intellectual virtues. Our criticism from the Catholic viewpoint will fall under these two classifications.

Hutchins' emphasis on the intellectual virtues is echoed by Fr. McGucken. "The Catholic secondary school has the specific function of training for intellectual virtues."6

We have seen that Hutchins defends his intellectualism because the dignity of man demands it. Catholics agree, but their concept of man's dignity differs essentially from Hutchins'.

The purpose then of the Catholic high school... is to turn out intelligent Catholic citizens with an appreciative knowledge of their heritage.... Only in the Catholic school can this appreciative knowledge be fully secured. If it be true—and we know that it is true—that our concept of democracy is based on the dignity of man, then it is only in the Catholic school that the proper dignity of man can be learned, because only there

6 McGuckén, PCE, 23
will youth learn that man has dignity because he is created by God to His image and likeness....

William Kane, S.J., also agrees with Hutchins' attempt to train man's specific faculties but with McGucken insists that man's ultimate objective is beyond this life. "We have abundant means of knowing that education must point human beings toward 'the good life,' toward the pursuit of truth, beauty, goodness." We know that the final norm of educational objectives is the attainment of the specific end of his faculties, true happiness.

That happiness, as experience proves, is not perfectly attainable in this life; its full fruition must be unending, must be in eternity. Hence the ultimate objective of education is one with the ultimate objective of all human effort, the attaining of eternal happiness in heaven.

The specific end of a university has been defined by Hutchins as "the pursuit of truth for its own sake." McGucken says, "The traditional purpose of the university is a) the conservation of knowledge and ideas and values; b) the interpretation and transmission of knowledge and ideas and values; c) the quest for truth through scholarly research; d) the preparation for professions."
And again, "The university itself must promote the quest for truth advancing the frontiers of knowledge by its research and experimentation." ¹¹

These views expressed by Catholic educators should be sufficient to show that Catholic training is as thoroughly intellectual as the system advocated by Hutchins. These views also show that the Catholic concept of education is far more embracing than Hutchins'. This brings us to the Catholic comment on the 'whole man.'

Pius XI says

It must never be forgotten that the subject of Christian education is man whole and entire, soul united to body in unity of nature, with all his faculties, natural and supernatural, such as right reason and revelation show him to be.... Hence, the true Christian, product of Christian education, is the supernatural man who thinks, judges, and acts consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ; in other words, to use the current term, the true and finished man of character. ¹²

Fr. Kane points out that while the school does not hold sole responsibility for character training, moral training should be stressed.

Much of the criticism directed against school education today is based precisely upon the com-

¹¹ Ibid., 29
¹² Five Great Encyclicals, 54
parative neglect by schools of objectives of conduct. As we shall see, some of that criticism of school education is unfair, if only because it takes for granted that the school should be the supreme agency in education, and assigns to the school parts that should be given to other agencies. But the existing situation as regards school education emphasizes the practical need of stressing the value and importance of objectives of conduct, or in plain common sense, for coming back to the homely truth that the welfare of the individual and of the group depends more upon the individual's being a good man than upon his being a learned man.\textsuperscript{13}

Doubtless Hutchins' claim that Cardinal Newman agrees to the exclusively intellectual role of education would draw an objection from anyone acquainted with Newman's views. Let us let the Cardinal speak for himself.

I wish the intellect to range with the utmost freedom, and religion to enjoy an equal freedom; but what I am stipulating for is that they should be found in one and the same place and exemplified in the same persons....It will not satisfy me, what has satisfied so many, to have two independent systems, intellectual and religious, going at once side by side, by a sort of division of labor, and only accidently brought together.... I want the same roof to contain both the intellectual and moral discipline.\textsuperscript{14}

Possibly we can sum up the Catholic criticism of Hutchins' objectives by observing that the Church heartily approves of in-

\begin{footnotes}
\item[13] Kane, Some Principles of Education, 82-83
\end{footnotes}
tellectualism which recognizes the dignity of man and aims at directing man toward the finis of his specific faculties and whole nature. At the same time the Church is forced to point out the inadequacy of that intellectualism which conceives of man as a merely earthly animal with no finis beyond the natural.

After considering Hutchins' intellectualism we studied his opinions about who should be given this intellectual training. We noted that he advocates a strong intellectual training up to the end of college for everybody. He affirms that if at present this seems impossible, it is not because the matter cannot be grasped but because we have not developed an efficient method for transmitting the matter.

It might be most interesting if Dr. Gallop would poll a large number of classroom educators asking them if the above opinion of Dr. Hutchins is "such stuff as dreams are made of." Fr. Kane's remarks are apposite.

This principle of balance seems worthy of note because most human beings tend in varying degrees to go to extremes in their views of themselves and others as the material of education. Theorizers in education, for instance, are often too rosy and optimistic in their estimates of educational possibilities; whilst those actually engaged in teaching or training others are often too unduly depressed by the limitations they note in their pupils.15

15 Kane, Some Principles of Education, 53
In general, it may be stated that Catholic opinion favors intellectual training of individuals to the point of their capacity. Individual differences must be taken into account, and when a pupil reaches a point of intellectual saturation, it is advisable to direct him into some gainful occupation. Regarding methodology for teaching the functionally illiterate or hand-minded pupils an understanding of and appreciation for the dignity of man and the relative worth of all things, we should consult those Catholic educators, notably nuns, who deserve much credit for the vitality of Catholicism in America. While a great many of these primary school teachers have not been trained in methodology, they have implanted in their pupils a true and lasting perspective which has given meaning to the remainder of the pupils' lives. This is more than the scientifically trained, degree laden teachers have been able to claim for American education in general.

In the fourth chapter we studied the means approved by Hutchins for attaining his educational objectives. Now let us consider whether these means are well calculated to attain those objectives. We have seen that Hutchins recognizes the need of basing the education of man on metaphysical principles. With this intention Catholic educators entirely agree, but they also unanimously agree that the program outlined by Hutchins is superficial from the metaphysical point of view and therefore an inadequate
attempt to provide youth with permanent and universal principles, to attain Truth.

The profundity of philosophical problems demands study and reflection. Untrained minds cannot appreciate the expressions of philosophers until they understand the nature and importance of a given problem.

It is true that Catholic educators labor under a handicap that does not burden the proponents of the Great Books. Catholics believe that they have objective truth and certitude. And they have accepted the obligation to pass on that truth to the following generation. Thus as philosophers they are required to present a rational explanation of God, the cosmos, and man. This rational explanation, moreover, must be proven, not merely presented and discussed. If it does not prove, then no matter how intellectually stimulating the course may have been, it is a failure. Now the directors of the Great Books course have no such obligation. Their aim is to present and to discuss the thoughts of great men. It is to be doubted that intellectual certitude can thus be achieved.

However, Catholics should not be thought of as minimizing the worth of the literary and philosophical classics. These classics are ours today because the Catholic tradition preserved them. Also, while an individual is studying one system of philosophy or
after he has studied it, the great philosophers are invaluable for giving him perspective and deepening his knowledge of individual problems.

The above criticism of the Chicago Plan from the philosophical viewpoint is, I believe, the unanimous opinion of Catholic authorities. However, criticism of the humanities from the literary standpoint would not be unanimous. The main objection would arise from the study of literature in translation. Catholic educators generally, and notably the Jesuits, have always insisted that an adequate appreciation of a piece of literature could be had only in the original.

Hutchins objects:

The classical position degenerated into a defense, not of reading and understanding the great books of the ancient world, but of studying their language in infinite detail and as an end in itself in such a way as to create in the student a profound distaste for the ancient world and all its works.16

If it is a matter then of philology or thought content, Hutchins says we must not allow the infinite detail of philology to prevent the ancient authors from communicating their thought to us. On this point Hutchins does not stand alone. Non-philologist Catholic educators will cheer, not too raucously we hope.

16 Hutchins, No Friendly Voice, 79
But the philologist will respond that there is no finer mind trainer, no surer way of developing the logical faculty than practice in a declined language. This is their defense of the "infinite detail." Hutchins believes that a thorough training in English grammar is sufficient.

Admitting the value of the thought content of the ancient classics we must also admit that Hutchins has a point, that he has hit the Achilles' heel of our training. But perhaps the choice is not between philology and thought content. Perhaps the thought content can be taught in the original. This is precisely the hope of Dr. Raymond Schoder, S.J., whose new textbook attempts to teach Greek through readings from Homer.

Among educational means is, of course, the measurement of learning. We have seen that Hutchins condemns the credit system and substitutes a series of general examinations to be taken by the student whenever he is ready for them. Catholic educators, too, have long recognized the evils of the credit system, but seemingly they have lacked either the necessary intellectual astuteness to solve the difficulty or the financial independence to carry on without the recognition of accrediting agencies.

To sum up our criticism we can say that Catholics agree with Hutchins that the aim of liberal education should be to discover the principles of the good life and to train human beings to wis-
And virtue. But since wisdom and virtue have such a fuller connotation for Catholics they are forced to conclude that Hutchins' objectives, while good, are superficial. Even if Hutchins, as a secular educator, does not teach theology or religion, Catholics cannot understand why he omits to teach theodicy, the knowledge of God from natural reason.

As a final point it should be made clear that Hutchins' system is not without great worth. To a generation that has lost its grasp on values Hutchins' plan is a valuable step in the right direction.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources


-------------------, *No Friendly Voice*, Chicago, Illinois, Chicago University Press, 1936

*The College of the University of Chicago*, Chicago, Illinois, Chicago University Press.

Critical Sources


