1974

The Educational Ideas of Irving Babbitt: Critical Humanism and American Higher Education

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Recommended Citation
Dissertations. Paper 1363.
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The Educational Ideas of
Irving Babbitt:
Critical Humanism and American Higher Education

by
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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

February
1974
VITA

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am sincerely indebted to my major professor, Dr. Gerald Lee Gutek, whose patience, understanding, and guidance belied many of the anxieties of this writer. Dr. Gutek's mastery of the field of Historical Foundations enabled him to constructively criticize this work and assist in bringing it to fruition. To Doctors Rosemary Donatelli and John Wozniak goes very special thanks for their valuable assistance as members of this dissertation committee.

This writer wishes further to acknowledge with gratitude the valuable assistance rendered by Loyola University in providing him with a leave of absence to complete this dissertation. Without this opportunity to immerse myself totally in this endeavor and the generous support made available through the Arthur J. Schmitt Foundation, this study would have been difficult if not impossible to accomplish.

Lastly, a very special thank you is due to my wife and children. Without their total support and understanding, not only would this dissertation have remained unwritten, but my entire graduate career would not have been a reality. To Grace, Ginger, Beth and John, a very special thank you.
PREFACE

The intent of this work is to focus attention on the significant part played by man's values in virtually every endeavor of life. We seek here to portray the notion that "how" one acts or reacts to a situation is determined primarily by his own philosophy of life and its culmination, one's values.

It is posited that most philosophies underscoring educational decision making today may be reduced to either positions of tradition or utility. And, it is felt that the key to America's future growth and with it, its educational institutions, lies in the proper mediation of problems. That is, in the proper mediation of tradition versus utility.

Since this writer contends that schools are reflective of society and do not exist or operate in a vacuum, it is suggested that our institutions must, by necessity, precariously seek a balance between the past, present, and future as they attempt to preserve, codify, and transmit the culture of which they are a part.

This dissertation, then, seeks to view history as a conflict between traditional values and utilitarian values. And, within this milieu to examine the role of the school as a participant in the change that results from this conflict. The methodology used to achieve this goal will be non-empirical. And, the documentary sources utilized most extensively in this work will be those of Irving Babbitt--published works and manuscripts.
The selection of Irving Babbitt and his philosophy of critical humanism provides us with a philosophical rationale for viewing the dichotomy that exists between tradition and utility. Further, it is asserted that Babbitt's educational position, while basically traditional in approach, can be modified and serve as a vehicle for the successful mediation of problems confronting society and education.

In the unfolding of the above stated treatise, the reader will find that considerable space is devoted to providing an adequate historical explanation of the role of humanism in its evolution and as a mechanism for mediation. Further, we have sought to provide a basic understanding of Babbitt's own lifestyle as well as the philosophical perspective from which he seeks to view the basic problem of tradition versus utility.

The ensuing pages will also depict the modification of Babbitt's educational position by one of his major disciples, Norman Foerster. Foerster, it would seem, is more eclectic in his attempt to provide an educational curriculum aimed at mediating the extremes of tradition and utility.

Much of the exposition found in the last two chapters of this dissertation reflect this writer's own position and his interpretation of Babbitt's philosophy of critical humanism within the context of societal change and the problems emanating therefrom.

The intent, therefore, of this dissertation is to provide a rationale for sane change based on a sound philosophical perspective. And, through the
implementation of this rationale to, hopefully, provide a valid basis for the future of education as it seeks to discharge its societal responsibility of preserving, codifying, and transmitting the cultural heritage.
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CHAPTER I

A HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF HUMANISM

Classical Humanism in Antiquity

The dissertation that follows seeks to examine the humanism that was advocated by Irving Babbitt (1865-1933), who was a distinguished professor of classical languages and French literature at Harvard University. To establish a framework for examining Babbitt's humanism, it is necessary to establish an historical context for his theory of education. Like humanists throughout the ages, Babbitt was concerned with answers to some basic questions about man and the human condition.

What exists in man that makes him distinct from other animals? Is man unique? What is man's relationship to God and the Universe? The answers to these questions have concerned the creative genius of prominent scholars from the days of ancient Greece to modern times. The answers to these questions are, to say the least, crucial to one's understanding of humanism.

That the humanism espoused by Irving Babbitt is a culmination of historical epochs cannot be argued. Few movements in history were created by individuals. Movements, such as humanism, result from the ebb and flow of historical circumstances happening within cultural epochs. History deals with the impact of these circumstances on people and their reactions to them. To understand modern humanism, one must understand the historical evolution and
impact of classical humanism. The historical overview which follows is intended
to be an adequate background for examining the humanism espoused by Irving
Babbitt.

History is replete with examples of primitive societies seeking to
educate their future generations in the noble traditions of the past. Primitive
and, in most cases, agrarian societies seek to preserve, codify, and transmit
their cultural heritage to future generations. These societies allow for little
change in what must be transmitted, for in most cases the survival of the culture
is contingent upon the accurate transmission of the past.

Education in traditional societies definitely fosters the *status quo.*
In fact, there is little room for any ideology that might tend to frustrate
the permeation of the past.

As societies move from an agrarian way of life and become more techno-
logical, there is created within the society an internal conflict that, on the
one hand, dictates a continuance and preservation of past traditions; while on
the other hand, owing chiefly to the division of labor emanating from the
society's increased technology, militates against the past and its traditions.
The internal strife generated as a result of growth and specialization very
often results in new vehicles for the preservation and transmission of a culture.

The model portrayed in the foregoing paragraphs lends credence to the
ensuing discussion of classical humanism as it evolved. For it will be upon
the model depicted that the transition from classical to modern or critical
humanism will unfold.
Since humanism in its incipient phase has been referred to as classical; that is, "the literatures, the principles of the arts and sciences, ethics or the principles of conduct--in short, those areas of endeavor which revealed what a man could and should do with his freedom," what better place, therefore, to begin our discussion than in Greece, the birthplace of the Western humanities and classics. 

The Dorian invasions occurring between 1200 and 1050 B.C., divided Greece into petty and unprosperous city states. By 800 B.C., the various city states of Greece, notably Sparta and Athens, had recovered sufficiently from the economic and social disorganization perpetrated by the Dorian tribes to become self-sufficient and viable.

The underlying principle upon which the emerging city states of Greece grew was the Polis. The notion of the Polis implied not only the political but also the social integration of Greeks into society. The Polis, though an abstract concept, became the means of self-identity for the individual Greek. Further, it was the source of community; of shared religious, civic, economic, social, political, and aesthetic endeavors through which the individual lived his personal and corporate life. The notion of the Polis was as functional in a dyarchy such as Sparta as it was within the democracy of Athens. In short, the Polis became the way of life for Greece. It typified best the notion of individual self-sacrifice for the common good of the whole of society. 

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The Polis served the Greeks well for some four hundred years. By 400 B.C., however, the expansionist commercial growth of Greece tended to undermine the basic tenets of the Polis and lay stress upon individual interests in lieu of the good of the entire city state. As a result of the commercial interests of the Greeks, specialization occurred. The Polis depended on all Greeks working in close harmony; with the dawn of specialization, many groups were disenfranchised, thus weakening the Polis.

Those involved in commercial pursuits soon became the monied classes of Greece. Their new-found wealth, while making them respected by many, caused others, notably those of the aristocracy, to view with alarm their quest for social and political mobility.

The dilemma expressed here relates well to our previously expressed model. Greece during the period 800-400 B.C. was basically an agrarian society whose educational aims centered upon the preservation and transmission of a culture emanating from an ideology of self-sacrifice for the common good. As the city states became more specialized as a result of commercialism, individuals tended to be less interested in the common good, and more interested in their own gain.

The education appropriate to pre-commercial Greece was, in the main, Homeric. It stressed the classics. The epics of Homer emphasized the wisdom, traditions, and values of Greek life. The Homeric classics served the society by enculturating the youth; in short, they provided models for imitation—models upon which the society based its very continuance. Most important, the classics
espoused a behavioral norm typifying the basic notion of the Polis; namely, that the individual exists for the good of the entire state.

As with most movements in history, the emphasis upon the classics as a vehicle for preservation and transmission of a cultural heritage must meet with an equal and opposite reaction as the society becomes specialized.

The evolvement of Sophistry as a response to the classics as a vehicle for cultural transmission coincided with the rise of commercialism in Greece. Sophists, loosely referred to as itinerant teachers, became prominent during the commercial era of Greece as they sought to meet the educational needs of the rising commercial class.

With the advent of the Sophists, the educational emphasis shifted from an education that lauded the noble deeds of the past and sought to inculcate a value system appropriate to the goals of the state to one of a more utilitarian nature seeking to fulfill the needs of only a segment of society. The Sophists purported to provide the nouveaux riche commercial class with an education that would enable them to rise up the ladder of political and social mobility. Through the practical arts of rhetoric and persuasion, the Sophists sought to democratize the Polis. The traditions of the past disseminated through the classics had now met a challenge from a newly emerging and economically powerful segment of society which was unwilling or unable to tolerate any longer the study of the noble dead which, to them, fostered the status quo and stayed change.

The notion of classical humanism, espoused in pre-commercial Greece, sought to provide an education via the classics that developed a worthy citizen
of the state; an education that aimed at the moral, physical and intellectual
capacities of the educand.

Prominent Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle
viewed man as an entity distinct from Nature. Aristotle, for example, viewed
man as possessing matter (body) and form (soul). Men, like animals, are possessed
of appetites; but unlike animals, men have a principle of rationality (form)
which enables them to control their appetites. It was the position of Aristotle
and his colleagues that men, because of the rational characteristic of form,
could conceive guiding principles of norms and, thereby, control their appetites.
The notion, therefore, of classical humanism as espoused by Aristotle and the
resultant study of the humanities act as the means of providing the norms
necessary for man's rationality in channeling appetite.

Men like Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates sought to rebuild the crumbling
standards of society by infusing standards more in line with the emerging
critical spirit of the time. The Sophists, on the other hand, in their re-
action to classical humanism sought an education suited more to the utilitarian
needs of their constituents. The education espoused here was not geared to the
preservation and transmission of values, but to the individual needs of those
able to afford the tutelage of the Sophists.

Sophists such as Protagoras and Gorgias of Leontine viewed man to be
the measure of all things. Man was, therefore, considered to be part of the

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3 Irving Babbitt, Democracy and Leadership (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin
Company, 1924), p. 149.
ebb and flow of Nature, having no real element of permanency. Or, as contrasted with Aristotle, man did not possess that element of rationality that sought to define norms for appetite. Therefore, any education that satisfied the ends desired was appropriate. And, if this education must strike-down tradition in the name of progress and change, then so be it.

If we accept the Sophist's philosophical position then surely the education appropriate to the "man of flux" must be dictated by the times in which he lives and the demands of the social, economic, and political order. What was being espoused here was simply an early form of naturalism.4

A similar comparison may be made of Rome. During the period of the Roman Republic, circa 450 - 27 B.C., the society was basically agricultural. Traditional beliefs and values were stressed through the informal agency of education; namely, the family. What was essential to the Republic was that the youth of Rome be trained by the family in the values essential to the continuance of Roman culture.

The notion of the educated man during the period of the Republic centered upon the Ciceronian notion of "humanitas"5 which implied that the educated man be

4A complete discussion of naturalism is found in the fourth chapter of this treatise.

5Humanitas refers here to the study of the liberal arts, i.e., history, philosophy, and law. And through the study of these subjects it implies an elevation of man's will to a plane that distinguishes man from beast. For a further discussion of this concept See: Aubrey Gwynn, S.J., Roman Education From Cicero to Quintilian (New York: Teachers College Press, 1926), pp. 57-58.
both a man of practical affairs in the Roman tradition as well as a man of culture in the Greek tradition. In short, the educated man is a worthy man; a man both human and humane.

As with Aristotle, Cicero recognized the basic dualism in man's nature and sought an education appropriate to its development. He sought to establish that man, guided by reason, could be both human and humane. For Cicero, that principle which then determined the good man was reason. And, it was to this end that education must evolve.

Roman education during the Republic of Cicero seems to embody the classical tradition inherited from pre-commercial Greece and the utilitarian notions espoused by the Sophists. It is necessary here to clarify a point. We have stated elsewhere that the Sophists were essentially itinerant teachers interested in disseminating their skills to the commercial classes of Greece. Emphasis was placed on the notion that the Sophists were, in the main, uninterested in the education of man qua man. However, certain of the Sophists, notably Isocrates was indeed interested in the education, both intellectually and morally, of man. He, unlike many of his contemporaries, was a Sophist concerned with blending the traditional mode of cultural transmission with the needs of the rising commercial class.

Isocrates saw education as a humanistic tool; not as a gimmick as with most of the Sophists. Isocrates provides a middle-ground to the extreme positions found in Greece. As an eclectic, he tried to fuse the traditions of the past
with the needs of the future. In all of this, however, he held to the notion that education must inculcate a value system appropriate to the continuance of the culture.

In attempting to inculcate a value system, Isocrates must be viewed as a Sophist-classical humanist seeking to develop the rational element present in man (Aristotle-form; Cicero-reason). And, thereby establish norms for behavior. Education for Isocrates was, therefore, more than the teaching of rhetoric for personal gain; rhetoric was a means of humanistic education. It sought to produce not only a good orator, but an orator devoted to the common good and, himself, capable of living an exemplary life.

Cicero sought to emulate the eclectic approach of the Greek classical humanists by stressing the need for Roman citizens to be aware that education, to be truly humanistic, must take into account the past traditions and the present needs of the state.

It should be pointed out that a distinction exists between what has been called "classical humanism" and what will later be referred to as Babbitt's "critical humanism." The former relates to the use of the classics and/or humanities as a vehicle to achieve norms of behavior appropriate to the preservation of a culture. The later, too, is a means to preservation, but takes cognizance of the notion that preservation may be had by avenues that are not as extreme or dogmatic, but which tend to coalesce the extreme positions of tradition and utility. And, after all, humanism is an eclectic position aimed at moderating extreme positions.
The Christian Element in Classical Humanism

Thus far we have asserted that the philosophical base for classical humanism in antiquity has been the notion that man is essentially dualistic in nature; composed of matter and form. And, it is form that lends reason to matter. Further, it was asserted that the education appropriate to the normative aspect of form is the humanities. We have indicated that normative behavior, as with Aristotle and Cicero, stems from the convictions established as right behavior through the use of reason. For reason, after all, is the function of form. At least it was so considered in antiquity.

As Christianity spread from East to West, it established a solid base of spiritual power. This is not to say, however, that the rise of Christianity in the West was without incident. As the culmination of the Jewish tradition, Christianity met with persecution as early as the First Century A.D.

Christianity as an institution solidified its position spiritually as well as temporally by the Fourth Century A.D. with the collapse of Rome. The power vacuum created by the disintegration of Roman government in the face of barbarian invaders left to the Roman Christian church the undisputed position of political and spiritual leader of the Western civilized world.

The ascendency of Christianity served to confirm the distinctively humanistic notions found in the positions of the philosophers of antiquity. However, to the notion of reason as the mediating force in man's nature was added the concept of God. It was with authority that Christianity stressed that man was distinct in Nature because of an immortal soul infused in man by God. The
spiritual elements of humanism expressed by the Christians served to alleviate some of man's burden in establishing norms appropriate for behavior. No longer must man rely upon his reason to determine right conduct, but he may now call upon the revealed truths of God as guidelines for normative behavior.

As Louis Mercier points out:

But Christianity asserted a great deal more than the humanism of antiquity. Its distinctive message was that man could be more than was due merely to his human nature; that he was called even in this life to become a partaker of the divine nature through the infusion of grace; that he should constantly act according to the will of God with the help of the Grace of God; that his whole life should thus be a co-operation with God; and that because he would thus have acted and treasured the supernatural life in him, he would, through a new gift, the light of glory, be capable in the next life of the direct vision of God.6

Medieval man then, according to Mercier, was called upon to not only lead a rational life, distinguishable as well as distinct from other forms of being, but also, through the Graces of salvation merited by Jesus Christ, to lead a supernatural life. Christianity, then, took the appeal to reason for norms found in classical antiquity and elevated it to a spirituality based on revelation. The rational base of classical humanism was, therefore, raised to a position of spiritual humanism.

And what of the Christian element of humanism and its relationship to the classical humanism espoused by Aristotle and Cicero? Mercier contends, and rightly so, that these two forms of humanism need not be in opposition. For the supernatural humanism of Christianity, based on revelation, provided man with the

6Mercier, American Humanism in the New Age, p. 2. Louis Mercier was a frequent commentator on humanism and a fellow humanist of Irving Babbitt.
norms necessary for his spiritual development. Man's natural pursuits of life, property, enjoyment, and education, though guided by the ultimate norms dictated by supernatural humanism, still remained to be cultivated in a practical way. In short, the ends espoused through revelation dictating that man live a good life had to seek a practical means of fulfillment. And, this fulfillment could certainly be through the humanities.

The Christian notion of humanism is perhaps best typified by its evolution in the Middle Ages. The temporal and spiritual power garnered by the Christian Church after the decline of Rome solidified during the more than seven hundred years of the Middle Ages. This period in history can be described in similar fashion as that of Greece and Rome.

The advent of the Middle Ages, referred to as the Medieval Period, can be characterized by a Theocentric World View. Simply put, the notion of supernatural humanism, as institutionalized by the spiritual and temporal Christian church of the Medieval period, permeated all institutions of society.

In previous paragraphs, we have asserted that the opposition between the classical humanism of antiquity and the supernatural humanism of Christianity could be mediated through the fusion of revelation and the humanities. However, this was not to be. For the emphasis of the Medieval Christian church stressed Theology and Philosophy as those disciplines capable of best developing man's supernatural and natural ends. In short, man's proximate as well as ultimate ends were to be formed by the revealed truths of the Roman Catholic Church. And,
the stress upon the humanities as a tool for man's proximate ends was dead; not to be rediscovered until yet another age.

In accord with our model expressed earlier, that position which this writer termed as eclectic; namely, the position of Aristotle, Plato, and Cicero, during the Medieval period became the extreme position to which the Christian Church reacted in an equally extreme manner.

Conservative elements within the early Christian Church, notably Pope Gregory the Great and Bishop Tertullian, fought vigorously to rid education of any vestiges of Greco-Roman learning. A more moderate position in this regard was that espoused by St. Augustine who admired Cicero and was keenly attracted to the then termed pagan literature--the classics.

St. Augustine's position more readily lends itself to our discussion of a mediation between the classical or rational humanism of antiquity and the supernatural humanism of Medieval times. For it was Augustine who felt that the classics had qualities that were valuable to Christianity. It may be asserted that Augustine attempted to bridge the gap between classical humanism and supernatural humanism. The humanities could be utilized to discipline man's mind and to prepare him for the truth of revelation. The use, then, of the humanities from antiquity was for Augustine an orderly preparation for the acceptance of the supernatural. It can, therefore, be asserted that the classical humanism of antiquity became for Augustine a rationalization for the non-sense world of the supernatural.
The moderate position of Augustine was, however, not to dominate the educational climate of the Medieval Period. Medieval schoolmen, espousing a similar position to that found in pre-commercial Greece, rejected the possibility of social change; education was not to be a vehicle for societal reform, but a means of preserving the status quo. True education for the Medieval man was based on the unerring authority of revealed truth. The task of education was, therefore, to preserve and transmit beliefs and traditions rather than to seek a fusion of tradition and change. This position made social mobility impossible and only fostered a static society and class inequality.

The Renaissance--A Fusion of Rational and Supernatural Humanism

When it was posited earlier in this work that most historical epochs have within them given positions that create opposite reactions, it should be obvious that the reaction to a given position need not come within the same epoch. For example, we have seen how the aristocratic position of pre-commercial Greece was reacted against by the rising middle class of commercial Greece. This within a given epoch. However, the Middle Ages may be viewed as both a reaction to the rational humanism of antiquity, which was itself a mediation between the extremes of antiquity, as well as an action to which another epoch in history would react.

The Renaissance, in particular the Italian Renaissance, may be construed as a reaction to the supernatural stress of the Middle Ages on revelation as the
mediating force for man's proximate and ultimate ends. The Renaissance as a reaction to the Middle Ages reasserted that man was distinct from the supernatural. While Renaissance humanists could agree that man's ultimate ends must be determined by revelation, they could also assert that man's proximate ends on this earth could be determined by means other than revelation.

It must be noted that while the Renaissance may be viewed as a reaction to the Middle Ages, no reaction occurs suddenly. While the Middle Ages may be viewed as Theocentric, they were also dynamic and progressive. The period between 1100 and 1500, as Mercier points out, "achieved more social, political, intellectual, and artistic development than in the four hundred years since." A fact, Mercier continues, too often overlooked since it is generally not known to what a low degree civilization had fallen in the two hundred years after Charlemagne. Further, there seems to be little doubt that the Middle Ages ignored the study of the natural for the supernatural.7

The crux of this is simply that the Renaissance evolved as a result of the artistic and intellectual pursuits of the Middle Ages. Further, since the Middle Ages foresook man's natural ends for his ultimate ends, the culmination of the artistic and intellectual pursuits of the Middle Ages manifested themselves in a secular manner during the Renaissance. The Renaissance, then, may be termed as both a culmination and a reaction to the Middle Ages.

The continued growth of artistic and intellectual pursuits during the Renaissance, especially through the re-introduction of the classics of antiquity, can be viewed as a culmination of these pursuits within a framework seeking to circumvent the Theocentric World View of the Middle Ages.

Renaissance thought, encompassing nearly three hundred years from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, sought to develop a view of man based on man as man rather than on faith. It is essential to note that the distinction referred to, is one of degree. Renaissance thinkers did not, in the main, reject the supernatural. On the contrary, they sought to produce "Christian gentlemen." However, the means to this end were now based on the literature of antiquity, the classics, rather than the scholastic philosophy and theology of the Middle Ages. The role of the supernatural became supportive to the Renaissance rather than focal as it was during the Middle Ages. The World View of the Renaissance man was, therefore, more man-centered than God-centered; learning was based on a revitalization of the classics and not scholasticism.

Perhaps the greatest of the Italian Renaissance humanists was Vittorino Da Feltre. Born in 1378, Vittorino by the age of eighteen left his native town of Feltre to attend the University of Padua. Possessed of a keen intellect, Vittorino was indeed fortunate to take-up residence at Padua in the house of

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8Irving Babbitt, "Humanism: An Essay at Definition," (Manuscript), Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.8, p. 3. (HUG refers to: Harvard University Graduate. In future references the abbreviation HUG will be used.) Babbitt indicates that: "as is well known, the word humanist was applied first in the Italy of the fifteenth century... to the type of scholar who was not only proficient in Latin and Greek, but who at the same time inclined to prefer the humanity of the great classical writers to what seemed to him the excess of divinity in the Mediaevals."
Barzizza. Barzizza, according to Woodward, best typified the rational humanism of antiquity and, his appointment to the faculty of Padua dates the introduction of critical scholarship into the University. Woodward continues that after the death of Barzizza, Vittorino was considered to be the leading exponent of Latin learning; specifically, the rationalism of Cicero. 9

Another factor in the shaping of Vittorino's humanism may very well have been his exposure to Vergerius. For he was, at the time of Vittorino's arrival at Padua (1396), an instructor of the Arts. Woodward points out that Vergerius' treatise, "Concerning Character" published in 139210 was:

an endeavor to combine in his ideal the virtues of the ancient world with obedience to Christian duty . . . . It was of prime importance that the first, and perhaps the most widely read, of the many tractates [written by Vergerius] on Education called forth by the Revival of Learning, should have distinctly upheld the Christian standard of faith and life. His influence upon Vittorino we can well understand; as a scholar, as a thinker, as an educationist, he was fitted to leave the impress of his personality upon so sympathetic and earnest a nature as that of the young scholar from Feltre. There is little doubt that, next to his intercourse with Barzizza, the treatise of Vergius, enforced by its writer's life and example, served mainly to determine Vittorino in the great decision of his life.11

And this decision, as Woodward points out, is the aim of Renaissance

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10 Ibid., p. 14. For a complete translation of this treatise refer to pages 96-118.

11 Ibid., pp. 15-16.
humanism. Specifically, the harmonious development of man's mental, physical and moral faculties. What Vittorino attempted, then, was to blend the rational humanism of antiquity with the supernatural humanism of the Middle Ages. He sought to eradicate neither position; only to introduce a form of eclecticism that would mediate the extremes of two conflicting historical periods.

What is essential to our understanding of the historical evolution of humanism is the distinction to be made concerning the humanism of Vittorino and the aforementioned humanisms of the rational and supernatural. It may be posited that Vittorino adhered to the notion of the supernatural; that is, belief in a morality. But, this morality was not derived from revelation as was the case in the Middle Ages. Rather, this morality was derived from a study of the noble deeds found in the classics of antiquity. Vittorino looks for standards and values in the traditions of the past: those which have stood the test of time. Vittorino, while not totally rejecting the notion of the supernatural, seeks it not in revelation but in antiquity. In this sense, then, the Renaissance may be viewed as both a culmination and a reaction to the Middle Ages.

Thus far we have devoted considerable space to a philosophical and historical base for Renaissance humanism. But, what of its purpose in terms of education? To this end, we shall now focus our attention.

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12 Ibid., p. 36. See also: Babbitt, "Humanism: An Essay at Definition," pp. 4-5. "These early humanists were encouraged to aim at a harmonious development of their faculties in this world rather than at an other-worldly felicity. Each faculty, they held, should be cultivated in due measure without one-sidedness or over-emphasis, whether that of the ascetic or the specialist. Nothing too much is indeed the central maxim of all genuine humanists--ancient and modern."
The aim of education for Renaissance humanist educators like Vittorino was to produce the future statesmen, scholars, administrators and clerics. All of them to be "Christian gentlemen," possessing social grace, aesthetic expression and, above all, a liberal outlook. Renaissance humanists sought to educate the Christian gentleman in the literature of the classics. For, it was held that literature is the one sure source of practical wisdom.\(^\text{13}\)

It is to be noted that the Christianity referred to above is more a matter of sound judgment or practical wisdom than an appeal to any sect's theological position. Further, it must be posited that the type of education being espoused here, not unlike that of the Middle Ages and classical antiquity, was elitist in orientation. That is, as a form of higher education it was not meant for the masses. And, this should surprise no one, since the notion of higher education for the masses is indeed a modern notion.

Considering our previous discussions within the framework of one of the underlying themes of this paper may prove fruitful at this juncture. We have posited that the preservation and transmission of a society's cultural heritage is essential to its continuance. We have also indicated various positions as to how this shall be carried out. For example, in pre-commercial Greece it was through the classics; in commercial Greece, through rhetoric and persuasion; in the Middle Ages, through revelation; and in the Renaissance through a revitalization of the classics. In all of these varying methods, the aim was preservation and transmission of a culture.

\(^{13}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 184.}\)
What is necessary to our discussion of humanism at this point is to understand that in all of the varying methods used to carry-forth the culture, there was an element of commonality. And, this element may simply be termed a value schema. That is, the rational humanists of Greece and Rome sought to instill values within man for the growth of their culture through man's reason; the supernaturalists of the Medieval Period and Middle Ages sought values through revelation; and the Renaissance humanists sought values through an education that was both classical and moral.

In all of this we have reference to humanism as a value-laden tradition. What is being alluded to here, and this will become clearer in our later discussions of the humanism of Irving Babbitt, is that humanism, considered within the framework of societal preservation and growth, demands a value system within which to work. What must be understood is that a humanism based on flexible, not absolute, values can be viewed as a model for change. For a philosophic position that calls for the transmission of standards from the past and present and, further, seeks to coalesce these values with present conditions in society will provide a viable model for the preservation and transmission of the culture.

The Enlightenment and Humanism

It may be said that Renaissance humanism placed more emphasis on man, less on God, and virtually none on Nature. It should surprise no one, therefore, that a position should evolve which stresses that aspect of Renaissance humanism
not treated; namely, Nature. Renaissance humanism, a reaction to and culmination of the supernatural humanism of the Middle Ages, did not abandon revelation but accorded it less status. In this sense, it may be viewed as a form of mediation of the humanistic extremes of the Middle Ages and as an extreme itself during the Enlightenment. Renaissance humanism became an extreme position because of its major emphasis on the value of man and, to a lesser degree, its emphasis on morality.

What was to evolve as the antithesis of Renaissance humanism was Naturalism. This position sought not only to eradicate classical antiquity but also revelation as a source of values. Where then, were the Naturalists to place their emphasis for the preservation and transmission of man's cultural heritage? From whence would come the values to govern mankind in his relationships with his fellowman? The answers to these questions reside within the historical and philosophical framework of the Enlightenment. We shall, therefore, examine this period within the context of the questions posed as well as the theoretical model which we have previously discussed.

Enlightenment thinkers sought the preservation and transmission of culture through the use of reason and natural law. It was felt that through reason, guided by natural law, man would progress and with him his institutions.

Much of Enlightenment thought centering upon man's social ameliorization was based on Newton's *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. In
this treatise, Newton postulated a natural law theory based on the law of gravity. The universe was viewed as an orderly system of atoms moving in absolute time and space and functioning according to its own intrinsic law and design. Through the use of the scientific method, Newton asserted that man could discover these natural laws.

The rationale for the scientific understanding of the universe was socialized and made applicable to society and its institutions by the French Philosophes. The Philosophes, essentially literary and philosophic men of the eighteenth century, were displeased with the aristocratic monarchy of France. They felt that reform was essential if man was to progress.

To this end, the Philosophes proposed that if the universe could be governed by certain natural laws, then surely the institutions of society, in like manner, must be governed by certain natural laws. And, as with Newton, the Philosophes sought to fix the regeneration and understanding of society upon the understanding of these laws.14

In terms of man's progress in understanding the laws of nature that govern society, the Philosophes believed supremely in man's rationality. For it would be through man's rationality that a natural education would evolve that would lead to societal regeneration.

Inherent in the Philosophes' position is the notion that man is innately good. Specifically, this position varies considerably from the Calvinistic notion of human nature as depraved and the Catholic notion of man's nature as deprived. If, as the Philosophes contended, man's nature were intrinsically good, then evil must certainly come from other than man. Evil must come from social institutions. And man, once in full command of his rationality, achieved through natural education, would be in a position to understand and reform the institutions of society.

Implicit in the Philosophes' stress on discoverable natural laws leading to societal regeneration through reason was the theological stress on Deism. As a form of benevolent secularism, Deism sought to fix God within the same mechanistic framework of the universe as understood by Newton. In short, Deism held that God had created the universe and its continuance was based on its functioning according to the laws established by God. Man, it was felt, through reason, could not only come to know the laws governing the operation of this universe, but could, through reason, manipulate them to form a better world.

In this short exposition on Enlightenment philosophy, certain things become clear for our discussion of humanism. Basically, what is being espoused here by the Philosophes is a natural synthesis. We have, in previous pages discussed the evolution of norms and standards based on the notions of rational and supernatural humanism. The former stressing man's use of his reason; the latter stressing revelation. This dichotomy was fused into a Renaissance synthesis that
did not reject revelation, but paid less credence to it and more to man. Enlightenment thinkers, in the opinion of this writer, attempted to eradicate the philosophical tradition of viewing man's nature as essentially dualistic. It was no longer necessary to view man as composed of matter and form and governed by the rationality of form as with Aristotle; nor was it necessary to view the control of man's lower appetites by revelation as with the Medieval Church. No dichotomies exist in man; man is now synthesized with God and Nature in Enlightenment thought. So long as man is understood within the context of natural law, guided by reason, he will prove worthy of progress.

Enlightenment educators, as a result of this philosophic base, stressed an education aimed at an understanding of those natural laws which governed man and his universe. It is not surprising, therefore, that classical and religious education should be held in disrepute. For in the world view of the Enlightenment, these bookish and verbal forms of education had done little to aid in the regeneration of society. In fact, they were viewed as hindering progress and aiding the perpetuation of the status quo. A new standard now evolved upon which society would not only continue, but grow and become good. And this new standard was based on an understanding of the universe--man, God, and Nature--within the mechanistic world view of reason, progress, and natural law.

But, is the standard espoused really a standard? The notion of standards generally implies permanence. Yet, it would seem that what is really being espoused here is not standards for societal reform, but rather, a hopeless philosophical position of becoming.
The position of Enlightenment thinkers emerges, then, as an extreme position in reaction to Renaissance humanism. It is extreme because of its inherent relativism. The socio-natural laws sought by the Philosophes cannot, in the opinion of this writer, be immutable. These laws, if discoverable, must allow for change that will occur in future generations. And, in allowing for future change, they must prove adaptable to change. For, if they do not or cannot, they will border on absolutism.

Now, what is being said here is not contradictory. We have accused the Philosophes of espousing a creed of becoming in their search for standards; on the other hand, we have said even if the Philosophes could establish certain immutable laws governing society, these laws would have to be flexible. A philosophy of becoming and a philosophy based on flexibility, then are distinct. In their attempt to fix permanently man's relationship to Nature and God, the Philosophes sought to understand this relationship from a framework being in a constant state of growth. Man in this state has no appeal to standards or norms of behavior outside of himself. As a result, man does not achieve the constancy he seeks but only flux. And, even if men found the constancy they sought, how would this permanence relate to man in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Would the same, constant natural laws governing mankind be appropriate then? A philosophical position seeking permanence through utility will never achieve its goal.
One last commentary should be made on the naturalistic philosophy. And, this within the confines of modern-day education. The Progressive Movement, of which John Dewey was a leading proponent, sought to establish a system of education based on a naturalistic view of man. As with the Philosophes, man's position in the universe was consistent with a oneness of nature—man had no duality or element within him which had permanence. Naturalism and Pragmatism both became a Heraclitian philosophy of becoming.

An example of this argument may prove beneficial. The Pragmatist would contend that each individual in society is considered to be a social-vocal phenomenon. The connotation here is that the individual and society grow to the extent that the individual participates in society. And how does the individual participate in society? The Pragmatist would contend that it is by means of vocabulary growth. In short, as the individual garners a more sophisticated vocabulary, and with it ideas and clusters of concepts, the more he becomes beneficial to the society. And, the more his value increases to the society, the greater is his own development of self-hood. So, the individual exists to serve the needs of society and in the process achieves personal growth and satisfaction.

Philosophically, at least, this doctrine of social efficiency sounds realistic and, to some, a welcome change. Yet, is it? Is a philosophical position that views man's value and worth within the context of social efficiency
really a sound doctrine? Is a position that views man as distinguishable but not distinct from Nature really much better than the relativistic position espoused by Protagoras some two thousand years ago? If man's value is solely judged by the degree to which he benefits society and he cannot be considered apart from the nature or reality of that society, then man becomes little more than a problem-solver bent on playing-out his life in the ebb and flow of Nature.

Certainly, if there is no permanence in man, how can there be permanence in value that, theoretically at least, can transcend time. A philosophical position, then, based on a problem-solving approach, aimed at social efficiency, that does not account for man as a distinct entity in reality is little more than a modern-day version of the tried position of the eighteenth century Philosophes.

Much of what is being discussed here will be examined in greater depth in our later treatment of humanism and naturalism. Specifically, the notions of standards and flux will be considered within the philosophical framework of the critical humanism of Irving Babbitt and the romantic naturalism of Jean Jacques Rousseau. It will be posited that the extreme position of naturalism, as a reaction to Renaissance humanism, will seek its synthesis in Babbitt's conceptualization of the "higher will" as a source of standards and traditions.

The philosophical and historical frame has now been set. We have viewed within major historical epochs the shifting emphasis on the types of education needed to preserve and transmit a culture. We have also witnessed, in cursory
fashion, the evolution of humanism as fixed by the philosophical positions of these historical periods.

Historically, we are bordering on the life of Irving Babbitt. And, as we have already stated, it will be Babbitt who challenges the naturalism of the Enlightenment. Before considering this disputation, however, it will prove helpful to our understanding of the humanistic evolution to discuss the early years and life of Irving Babbitt.
CHAPTER II

IRVING BABBITT: THE MAN

Much of what is known about Irving Babbitt's childhood and early years is told to us by his widow, Dora. 1 Irving Babbitt was born August 2, 1865 to Augusta and Edwin Babbitt in the town of Dayton, Ohio. Irving's father, Edwin Dwight Babbitt, M.D., had by young Babbitt's birth, entered upon a joint business venture with a Mr. Abram Wilt. Dr. Babbitt and Mr. Wilt were co-owners of a business school in Dayton. Dora Babbitt relates little else of Dr. Babbitt's background and relation to his son, Irving. Noting only that during Irving's childhood the family moved frequently from town to town. 2

1Frederick Manchester and Odell Shepard (eds.), Irving Babbitt, Man and Teacher (New York: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1969), pp. ix-xiii. Dora Babbitt depicts in chronological form the life of her husband, Irving Babbitt. See also: The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography (New York: James T. White and Company, 1933), Vol XXIII, pp. 19-20. "The family was founded in America by Edward Bobet or Babbett (later spelled Babbitt), an Englishman, who settled at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1643. The line descends from Edward and his wife Sarah Tarne, through their son Edward and the successive generations of Erasmus, William and Abiel (sic) to Professor Babbitt's grandfather, Samuel Tillotson Babbitt, a congregational clergyman." See also: Manuscript by William F. Maag, Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.52, p. 8. Maag indicates that in a conversation with Babbitt it was related that one of his ancestors was named Abner Smith, "a Harvard graduate whose diary Mr. Babbitt possessed." It would seem that the name Abiel used in The Cyclopaedia should really be Abner as related by Maag.

2Dora Babbitt, "Sketch of the Life of Irving Babbitt," (typewritten), Harvard University Archives, AT9387, HUG 1185.17, p. 1. "During Irving Babbitt's childhood the family moved frequently and he (Irving Babbitt) had recollections of life in New York City and in East Orange, New Jersey, where he went to the local public schools. The expression 'breaking up housekeeping' was familiar to him, and as a small boy he used to think it was great fun dashing around upsetting things and doing his part in the breaking up process."
One might wonder as to the roving nature of a medical doctor and his peculiar interest in starting a business school. The very notions herein expressed seem contradictory to the basic idea of the lifestyle of a medical doctor.

Commenting on this seemingly paradoxical situation, Austin Warren indicates that:

Dr. Edwin Babbitt, a physician with a mind open at both ends, was a kind of naive and liberated Transcendentalist, forever moving from place to place and, upon failure after failure, incurably sanguine in the belief in the natural goodness of man and in his own mission.3

The elder Babbitt, then, seemed more interested in the phenomenon that his son would come to repudiate; namely, naturalism. Edwin Babbitt, it appears, held firmly to the notions of Transcendentalism espousing, in the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, that Nature had truly established its yoke over man; that man, regardless of his pursuits, was ruled inextricably by the whims of Nature; that man, in his quest for knowledge, need only adhere to the dictates of Nature to discover his place in the universe.

Commenting further on Dr. Babbitt, Austin Warren states:

... and he was a prolific writer of what are now called self-help books--books covering everything from sex and color vibrations to faith healing and comparative religion, accompanying all his volumes, which he vended by mail, with copious charts and diagrams.4

3 Austin Warren, New England Saints (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1956), p. 144. Mr. Warren was a former student of Irving Babbitt and grew to know him well.

4 Ibid.
At age eleven, Irving's mother, Augusta Darling Babbitt, died. Due to the frequency with which Dr. Babbitt moved about, it was deemed best for Irving Babbitt to reside with his older brother Tom and his sister Katherine, with the Babbitts' maternal grandparents, the Darlings, near Cincinnati.

Dora Babbitt relates that on the Darling farm in Madisonville, Irving developed into a country boy. He attended the small district school and was attentive to his chores. His adventures on the Darling farm are marked with the humorous mischief characteristic of so many boys his age. Dora Babbitt relates, for example, how one day Irving and several other boys began drinking from the cider barrel, which of course, they were not supposed to do. The cider, being hard, affected many of the would-be drinkers. Young Irving, however, seemed unaffected by the nectar and all the more proud of his venture. 5

By age sixteen, Irving rejoined his newly married father in Cincinnati. Young Babbitt, who by this time, had already passed a qualifying examination enabling him to teach at a district elementary school, entered Woodward high school. Part of Babbitt's training at Woodward involved coursework in bookkeeping. 6

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5 Manchester, Irving Babbitt, Man and Teacher, p. x.

6 Irving Babbitt, "Day Book--Woodward High School," Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.2, September - December, 1884. This account ledger kept by Irving Babbitt indicates he was involved in keeping financial records for what appears to be a course in bookkeeping. It contains financial records of "Sales," "Expenditures," and "Profit."
Upon graduation from high school, and with little hope of further education due to a lack of family funds, Irving Babbitt struck-out on his own to secure financial assistance. Aid came from two of Irving's uncles, Thomas Babbitt of Dayton, Ohio and Albert Babbitt of Cheyenne, Wyoming. Armed with the needed funds and a determination to succeed, Irving Babbitt entered Harvard University in 1885.  

Babbitt pursued the traditional liberal arts curriculum at Harvard, that which eventuates in the degree of Bachelor of Arts with a concentration in the classics. 

He quickly established a reputation for his keen wit and became known to many at Harvard as "Assistant Professor Babbitt." This title accrued to Babbitt because of his skill within the classroom of baiting his professors and, 

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7 Dora Babbitt, "Sketch of the Life of Irving Babbitt," p. 3. Mrs. Babbitt indicates that "Irving was in high school longer than he needed to be and often said that he came to Harvard over-prepared." It is assumed that Mrs. Babbitt's reference here relates not only to Irving Babbitt's having been in high school longer than usual, but also his having attained the superior credentials essential to his Harvard admission.  

8 Irving Babbitt, "Class Notes--French 3, 4, and 10 and English 2," Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.3 (1885-93--includes Babbitt's graduate work at Harvard). The English class notes indicate Babbitt's familiarity with literature; having had to read many of the great masterpieces, i.e., "King Lear," "The Fairy Queen," "Becket," and "Edward III." This notebook contains Babbitt's analysis of these and other plays. From reading his notes, one can readily discern Babbitt's incisiveness. Also, one finds the wit of Babbitt in a class paper entitled, "Eastern vs Western Journalism," Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.3 [1887]. This piece of amusing folly compares journalistic styles and merited the following comment from Babbitt's instructor: "This is extravagant as you know; but entertaining for all that, if the reader does not get too much of it." See also: Appendix A, p. 238 for a copy of Irving Babbitt's undergraduate academic record.
to the astonishment of his classmates, of escaping unscathed from the impending wrath of his professors. His classroom manner of speech was straight-forward and unadorned. Yet, in dialoging, he possessed a mischievous fondness for playing-out the game of argument to the finish and inflicting a sudden and disastrous checkmate on his unwary opponent.

William Giese, who spent three years at Harvard as Babbitt's roommate, comments further on Babbitt's ability to unsettle and frustrate the insecure:

My early encounters with Irving Babbitt left me quite unnerved. As a callow sentimentalist, steeped in Rousseau, I was ill-prepared for a confrontation with a hard-headed apostle of the rational and superrational. Conversations left me vaguely overwhelmed, profoundly impressed, and at the same time disquieted, as a naive and unfledged ephebe might have been after enjoying the painful pleasure of having his little stock of conventional ideas subjected to analysis by Babbitt's great model, that merciless dialectician who haunted the Athenian market place and amused himself by insidiously removing the underpinning from random philosophies by which insufficiently inquiring minds professed to live and die.9

Babbitt's incisive criticism and argumentation were at once mature, as though he needed no stages through which to pass. His method was distinctly Socratic and his humanism was conceived in the tradition of Oriental thought. On this subject it should be noted that Babbitt was deeply influenced by Buddhist traditions, to the extent that the last vestige of theology (dogma) was eliminated from his reasoning. Giese further comments on Babbitt's transition

9Ibid., p. 3.
from traditional theology to the oriental influence:

Yet, there remained in Babbitt his faith in a higher will, his mystic concept of an inner check, which was for him one of the primary data of experience. But beyond this, in the direction of dogma, he refused to go. Emerson's dictum that the man who makes immortality a dogma is already fallen was one of Babbitt's commonest quotations in those early days.10

Babbitt, in addition to being a diligent student at Harvard, was also a lover of nature, cherishing the rugged primitivism of the outdoors. While he could fulminate against Rousseau's return to nature in the winter months, Babbitt would invariably return to the lakes and mountains of New England in the Spring and Summer.11 Physical exercise, he felt, was absolutely essential to one's health; especially to one who spent so much of his time in the pursuit of intellectual stimulation. It was not uncommon, therefore, to see young Babbitt, much to the amazement of the Harvard academicians, running along the now Massachusetts Avenue in a gauze undershirt and running shorts.12

Among some of Babbitt's extra-curricular activities at Harvard were: his achieving highest honors in classics during his sophomore year; the meriting of final honors in classics during his senior year; his membership in the Classical


11Manchester, Irving Babbitt, Man and Teacher, p. 22.

12Ibid., p. 37.
Club; and, his membership in the Harvard chapter of the Phi Betta Kappa Society. Babbitt interrupted his studies at Harvard during his junior year (1887-8). During this period, we are told, he walked about Europe. And, Mrs. Babbitt indicates that "the most important thing he did while a student was to take his junior year abroad. . . . he walked from the Seine to Granada, then back, through Switzerland and down to Rome." By 1889, Irving Babbitt left Harvard having earned a bachelor's degree and was appointed Professor of Latin and Greek at the College of Montana. The town of Deer Lodge, wherein was located the College of Montana, was by this time a settlement that had already experienced its apex in growth. No longer was it a gold-mining camp or a hub for railroads; it was by 1889 a static town. The young Harvard graduate was judged by his students to be anything but static. Mrs. Hiram Hixon (nee: Anne Douglas), a former student of Irving Babbitt recalls:

He usually spoke, without outward urgency, but if one of us gave a passably intelligent answer, how he straightened in his chair, his eyes sparkling. He was very witty, he usually put things humorously; while lecturing he was usually smiling; his sarcasm was good-natured.  


14 Dora Babbitt, "Sketch of the Life of Irving Babbitt," p. 4. The reference here, it can only be assumed refers to Irving Babbitt's broadening of already acquired textbook knowledge of the classics. See also: Irving Babbitt, "Passport" dated 22 June 1887, No. 13167, Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.5.

15 "Class of 1889--Harvard College," p. 244.

16 Manchester, Irving Babbitt, Man and Teacher, p. 29.
Mrs. Hixon's further recollections of young Babbitt seem to indicate a man existing in a vast wasteland; a man lonely and set adrift in an intellectual climate that nowhere rivaled the challenge of Harvard. Yet, we are told that Babbitt did not show dissatisfaction with his work. Rather, as Mrs. Hixon states:

The picture in my mind of Irving Babbitt is of a young man still boyish but of unusual distinction, in an odd setting, taking a determinedly light view of things he did not like.

During Babbitt's two scholastic terms at the College of Montana, he seems to have left an impression upon Mrs. Hixon not unlike that of the father-figure characteristic of Pestalozzi. While Babbitt could display an incisive wit and perceptive intelligence as evidenced by Giese, he was also capable of, in the words of Mrs. Hixon, "a goodness of heart."

After leaving the College of Montana in 1891, Babbitt journeyed to Paris. Here he studied Sanskrit and Buddhist scriptures under Sylvain Levi.

Irving Babbitt returned to Harvard in 1892 to pursue graduate work in the Harvard Graduate School, continuing his oriental studies under the direction of Professor C. R. Lanman. It was during this period, 1892-3, that Babbitt

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17 Mrs. Hixon speculates that Babbitt may have accepted this unsavory appointment in order to repay financial debts incurred at Harvard as well as to provide for his future study in Paris.

18 Ibid., p. 29

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., p. 42. Levi was Professor of Sanskrit at the College de France. See also: Babbitt's Paris Notebooks, Vol I-VIII, Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.4, 1892.

21 It was under the direction of Professor Lanman that Babbitt completed graduate courses in Sanskrit at Harvard University during the year 1892-3. In the three courses taken under Lanman's direction--Sanskrit 2, 3, and 4--Babbitt earned grades of Am, Al, and Am respectively. Lanman distinguished between A middle (Am), A high (Ah), and A low (Al). A complete listing of Irving Babbitt's graduate transcript may be found in Appendix B, page 239.
is said to have met Paul Elmer More, who was also a student of Professor Lanman's.\(^{22}\)

Louis, the brother of Paul Elmer More\(^{23}\) adds to our knowledge of Babbitt when he recalls meeting Babbitt for the first time during the Christmas of 1892. Louis had come to Harvard from Johns Hopkins to visit his brother. His first impressions of Babbitt are indicative of both the power and grace of this man:

His great figure, massive and awkward from sheer strength and vitality, the intellectual power of his brow, but above all his glorious eyes, a perfect blue, which actually glowed when animated, or smoldered during meditation. And such speech as I have never heard from any other man poured from his lips like a torrent sweeping every obstacle in its path.\(^{24}\)

To this composite of Babbitt may be added the recollections of Frank J. Mather, Jr. Mather first met Babbitt in 1893 at Williams College, where the former was an Instructor of English, and Babbitt was assigned to teach during the sabbatical year of Professor Morton. While Mather had just completed his doctorate at Johns Hopkins, it is worthy of note that Babbitt, after studying for some two years in Paris and at Harvard, declined to pursue the Ph.D. and left Harvard with a master's degree to begin teaching at Williams College.\(^{25}\)

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22 \textit{Ibid.}, p. xii.

23 Paul Elmer More was a close associate of Mr. Babbitt. Both men, at least initially, subscribed to similar notions of humanism.

24 \textit{Ibid.}, p. 37.

25 "Class of 1889--Harvard College," p. 244. Irving Babbitt was awarded the degree of Master of Arts (A.M.) in 1893.
Both Mather and Babbitt taught at Williams College during the academic year 1893-94. Mather recalls that Babbitt was quite eloquent as an Instructor of Romance Languages and made a marvelous impression on the easy-going undergraduates of the 1890's, and was paradoxically popular with the more or less moronic sports whom he mercilessly flunked.

More important, and this from the standpoint of Babbitt's later position on humanistic education, Mather relates that many of their conversations centered about the plight of higher education in America. Both men seem to have agreed that the American model of university education based upon the specialization of the German university was leading American higher education to pedantry. Further, their remedy for this rote path to specialization centered about not only a revitalization of teaching methods based on a criticism of ideas but also on shifting the model for American higher education from Germany to France. For it was in France that Renaissance humanism still survived.

Mather also points to the possible beginnings of Babbitt's eclecticism when he suggests that Babbitt was troubled by the multitude of educational ideals running rampant in American higher education. The educational positions of the day, continues Mather, were viewed by Babbitt as extremes seeming to have no

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26 Dora Babbitt, "Sketch of the Life of Irving Babbitt," p. 4. Mrs. Babbitt indicates that Irving taught French, Spanish, and Italian courses while at Williams College.

27 Manchester, Irving Babbitt, Man and Teacher, p. 43.

28 Ibid.
mediation. It was not Babbitt's intent, says Mather, to frame a dialectic to deal with extreme positions in higher education. Rather, the answer to the conflicting extremes seemed to lie in a lifestyle of "moderation" and "sensitive decorum" similar to that of Charles Eliot Norton.

A final reflection on Babbitt's brief tenure at Williams College is provided by his wife Dora.

He was so young looking that one of the attendants in the library finding him in the stacks said: 'No freshmen are allowed in this part of the building'; and students flocking out of an examination, all discussing the paper, overtook him in the hallway and began asking how he liked it, not recognizing him as one of the faculty.

Babbitt returned to Harvard in 1894 with an appointment in the French Department. He was appointed an Assistant Professor in 1902; Professor in 1912. Babbitt remained a member of the Harvard faculty until his death in 1933.

29 Ibid., p. 45. Charles Eliot Norton, the former Harvard mentor of Babbitt, seems to be an ideal of moderation for Babbitt. As Mather points out, "it was the living presence of Norton that made the great sages of the past--Buddha and Aristotle--come once more alive to be our example and our succor." See also: Austin Warren, "Irving Babbitt: Portrait and Meditation," (April, 1935), a manuscript signed by Austin Warren and presented to Mrs. Babbitt. Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.92, pp. 11-12. Warren so aptly depicts Norton's impact on Babbitt when he says: "Under his (Norton's) tutelage one for the first time grasped the possibility of a literary history which should be more than names, facts, isolated authors or beautiful passages . . . ."

30 Ibid., p. xii.

31 Harvard University News Release, February 4, 1960. Harvard University Archives, Harvard University College (HUC) 300, p. 2. "Although Professor Babbitt taught in the field of French Literature from 1894 until his death in 1933, his famous lectures, especially in French Romanticism and Literary Criticism, drew on the ideas of the ancient philosophers of China and of Greece and on all of Western writing. At Harvard, he introduced the comparative study of the literature of different traditions."
Recollections of Babbitt as a young instructor of French at Harvard are given to us by C. Cestre. Mr. Cestre was a graduate student at Harvard during the period 1896-98. Having just returned from studies in France, Cestre found Babbitt most receptive to friendship. The relationship between Cestre and Babbitt seems to have grown not only because of Babbitt's previous study in France and his desire to know of the current literary happenings there, but also because Cestre, though six or seven years Babbitt's junior, was disposed to similar intellectual pursuits.

Cestre points out that he and Babbitt spent many Sunday mornings walking in the Cambridge countryside discussing literature and philosophy. And, Cestre adds, "these walks and talks were indeed symbolical of the two great concerns of Babbitt at that time of his bachelor life: intellectual activity and physical exercise."

Lest one begin to think that Babbitt's intellectual pursuits were confined to his own speciality, Cestre says nothing could be more untrue. Cestre points out that when Babbitt was writing his New Laokoon and felt the need to delve into German authors, he taught himself the language "in the time that would have carried others only to mere rudiments of the language." Babbitt also displayed an interest in and talent for music, seeking to extend his range of interests beyond the literary arts. These and other interests did he pursue;

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32 Manchester, Irving Babbitt, Man and Teacher, p. 52.

33 Ibid., p. 54.
not as diversions but as apparent foundations to "prepare himself to go beyond the field of literature and to deal with ethics, politics, manners, and social problems."34

Cestre's recollections of Babbitt cause one to reflect upon the portrayal given by Giese and Mrs. Hixon. For Cestre provides us with a composite of the former views that portrays Babbitt as both domineering in disputation, but done with an affection of heart. As Cestre indicates:

When in the heat of discussion, he would slightly bend his shoulders, lean his head on one side, and nail his points into you by the waving of his right hand. All the seriousness of his proselytizing, he meant; but he enlivened it with humor or broad gaiety. I still hear the cheerful ring of his loud laugh, sometimes at your remarks, mostly at his own.35

On June 12, 1900, Babbitt married the former Dora Drew, who spent much of her life in China.36 It may be that Dora's familiarity with the Orient was of some significance in Babbitt's continued pursuit of oriental studies. The Babbitts had two children: Esther, born October 2, 1901, and Edward Sturgis, born June 12, 1903.37

34 Ibid., p. 55.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., p. 58. See also: "Class of 1889--Harvard College," p. 244.
37 Edward Sturgis Babbitt still resides in South Hadley, Massachusetts. Esther Babbitt is married to Mr. George Howe. See also: Letter dated January 17, 1973 from Mr. Edward Babbitt to the author.
Further insight into Babbitt's early years at Harvard is provided by William F. Maag, Jr. Maag recalls his coming to Harvard in September, 1901 as a freshman. Armed with a year-old listing of rentals provided by the College, Maag went in search of lodgings. Luckily, recounts Maag, he came upon the dwelling of Irving Babbitt. Babbitt had a single room for rent. Though somewhat reluctant to rent the room at first, Babbitt, after consulting with his wife, agreed to Maag's request for lodgings. Maag relates the charm and warmth of the Babbitt home on Kirkland Road:

Turkish rugs covered the floors, the walls were pleasantly tinted, and in the living room, as in my room above it, the center of interest was a red brick fireplace with a white mantel. Near the door of the living room was a small set of bookshelves, on the top of which stood several volumes of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. On the table beside the fireplace stood a large reading lamp, beneath which lay often a copy of *The Atlantic Monthly*, to which Babbitt was contributing.  

Babbitt's surroundings, based on Maag's description, seem not uncommon to a rising and successful scholar of the early twentieth century.

Like Cestre, Maag indicates that Babbitt was not only possessed of a keen wit but flawless scholarship. In the words of Maag:

What set Babbitt apart from other men was that he was not merely a brilliant scholar, but so clearly a gentleman as well. Most professors were bookish, plainly more at home in the study than

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38 Manchester, *Irving Babbitt, Man and Teacher*, p. 58. See also: Manuscript by Maag concerning his association with Babbitt. Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.52.
in the drawing room: Babbitt had what Dr. Johnson termed 'perfect good breeding' and 'general elegance of manner'—a reflection of his student days in France and the French ideal of making an art of life and conduct.39

It was not until Maag's junior year at Harvard (1904) that he encountered Babbitt in a teacher-student relationship. Maag indicates that much of his education at Harvard up to this time had been uninspiring and bordered on the pedantic. His encounter with Babbitt in a course entitled Comparative Literature, which stressed Rousseau and the Romantic Movement, was, in Maag's words "as agreeably different as possible from any (course) I have ever taken."40

Continuing, Maag portrays Babbitt as hurrying to class and emptying what seemed to be countless books and notes upon the small seminar table. He lectured, continues Maag,

half the time entirely from memory, such a torrent of facts and ideas, illustrated with quotations from the whole field of history and literature, philosophy and religion, from ancient India down to our own time, that we were overwhelmed and could not take notes fast enough.41

Another former student of Babbitt, Andrew J. Torrielli, recalls his impressions of the Comparative Literature course taken under Professor Babbitt in 1932.42 Torrielli's impressions of Babbitt as a man were similar to those

39 Ibid., p. 60.
40 Ibid., p. 61.
41 Ibid.
42 Dr. Andrew J. Torrielli is currently Professor of Modern Languages at Loyola University of Chicago.
previously expressed by Maag, Hixon and Giese. However, by 1932, one year before Babbitt's death, Torrielli recalls that Babbitt had lost much of his weight. And, his clothes hung baggily upon so immense a frame. Nevertheless, he continued to be of keen wit and perceptive intelligence.

In recalling his experience with Babbitt in the Comparative Literature course, Torrielli indicated that Babbitt seemed to be mild-mannered and, on some occasions, absent-minded. However, Dr. Torrielli continues, those enrolled for Babbitt's course and expecting a literature course based solely on a factual presentation of authors were in for a surprise. That Babbitt's course in Comparative Literature was indeed a significant course in literature cannot be argued; but it was much more. It was, in the words of Dr. Torrielli, "a value-laden philosophy of life interwoven within the fibers of literature." Literature was not taught as pedantic material; it was alive.

That the course was intensive, continued Dr. Torrielli, is typified by the lecture notes and Bibliography. Some twenty-six authors were to be read by the students. Among them: Arnold, Coleridge, Brandel and Elliott. Students were expected to be familiar with these sources. Indeed, according to Torrielli, one would have difficulty following the rapidity with which Babbitt reeled-off authors, let alone grasp their significance, if one did not constantly read and re-read the sources.

43 Interview with Dr. Andrew J. Torrielli, Professor, Department of Modern Languages, Loyola University of Chicago, January 10, 1973.

44 Lecture notes and bibliography from Babbitt's course in Comparative Literature supplied through the courtesy of Dr. Andrew J. Torrielli 19327.
Torrielli came to know Babbitt a bit more intimately than most of the students in the Comparative Literature course almost by accident. Babbitt, by this time, had relegated the grading of papers to his graduate assistant. Torrielli, dissatisfied with the appraisal of his research paper by Babbitt's assistant, sought-out Babbitt. Professor Babbitt, recalls Torrielli, was most cordial and agreed to read the paper himself. After some few days interval, Torrielli was informed that the research and depth of interpretation were such as to warrant at least a grade of "A." More importantly, Babbitt asked Torrielli to be his graduate assistant beginning September, 1933. Babbitt's death in July, 1933 forestalled this occurrence.  

On another aspect of Babbitt's personality, namely, his popularity with students, Torrielli had much to say. It seemed somewhat puzzling to this writer that a course in Comparative Literature with so much reading required would be so popular. Yet, according to Torrielli, it was not uncommon for Babbitt's course to enroll upwards of four hundred people. And why? As Torrielli so aptly stated:

> There was a charisma to this man. One came to his lectures knowing full-well that the work would be intense. However, one had the feeling that he was hearing a truly great person speak. A person who had something to say of life and literature.

Continuing, Dr. Torrielli relates that:

> Babbitt's lectures were not cut-and-dry. He never came to class with a prepared text from which to lecture. Rather, there emerged

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45 Interview with Dr. Torrielli, January 10, 1973.
a theme, and from his immense knowledge of literature would flow examples and excerpts to drive-home the theme. 46

Further insight into Babbitt's personality is provided by another former student, Rudolph Altrocchi. Mr. Altrocchi, writing in 1941, recalls that "more than twenty years have passed since I listened to Babbitt: perhaps not a day has gone by without my hearing, sometimes unconsciously, echoes of his thought." 47 Altrocchi, like Torrielli, presents us with a mature portrait of Babbitt when he recalls:

How well I can see him, with his large frame, prematurely bent, with his prematurely white hair, with a benevolence in his face half hidden by a sardonic smile, with his perpetual tapping of a pencil on the desk in a restlessness that symbolized, as his eyes did, incessant alertness and search. How well I remember his meaty English, his wit, his astounding memory, which supplied him with innumerable quotations, always apt and clever, often humorously demolishing; his repetition of key-words and favorite phrases; his ability to interest and to stimulate—in short, his potent personality. 48

And, as a testament to Babbitt as a teacher, Altrocchi adds:

Whether I stand for or against his ideas, there I find them always confronting me, affecting my daily thought, stimulating me to question, to analyze, to wonder. I doubt whether a greater tribute can be paid to a teacher. 49

Thus far we have concerned ourselves mainly with a sketch of Babbitt's early professional development and some of the reactions to him as evidenced

46 Ibid.

47 Manchester, Irving Babbitt, Man and Teacher, p. 100.

48 Ibid., p. 98.

49 Ibid., p. 100.
by some of his former students. It would seem worthwhile at this point to devote space to some consideration of "why" Babbitt was so revered by his students. To this end we will rely upon testimony from former students.

To be in Babbitt's classroom, according to one of his former graduate assistants, Earl A. Aldrich, was to be in an electrifying atmosphere. Babbitt gave, according to Aldrich, "the impression of enormous reading, of intense earnestness relieved by mordant wit, and of vigorous thinking." 50

While Babbitt was a teacher of literature, he was much more. He seemed to imbue his students with a lust for reading and, above all, critical thinking. As Dean Briggs once said: "Whether one agrees with Babbitt, or not, there is no question that no other teacher in Harvard sets men to thinking as he does." 51

Babbitt's ability to correlate names and ideas gleaned from literature with present-day problems left his students in awe. As Hoffman Nickerson, a former student, relates:

His students used to run a regular betting pool . . . this pool of theirs was concerned with the number of writers which he Brothee would mention in each of his fifty-five minute lectures. It is said that he once mentioned seventy-five--1.36 authors to the minute--and the present writer himself would have been willing to bet that all seventy-five were correctly cited. 52

So enormous was Babbitt's memory that he had the uncanny ability of almost total

50 Ibid., p. 105.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., p. 107.
recall of his sources. This to the utter amazement and, in some cases, embarrassment of his students. For as many of Babbitt's former students recall, it was not conducive to the good health of one's psyche to question Babbitt unless one was indeed prepared to enter into a debate. While Babbitt openly encouraged questions from his students, allowing them to interrupt him at any juncture in his lecture, students soon learned that Babbitt would tolerate no frivolity.

It was not uncommon, as Aldrich relates, to see Babbitt interrupt his own lecture.

At a sudden flux of memory or the impact of a new thought he would plunge his hand into his coat pocket and produce the stub of a pencil. With this cramped awkwardly in the crook of his forefinger . . . , he jotted items on the margin of his notes, or scribbled angular hieroglyphs on a card taken from another pocket. Then, as Babbitt faced his class, his blue eyes ablaze,

and with forearms resting on the desk and palms and fingers outspread, he would make an important point, tapping [in a characteristic way] the tips of both his outstretched little fingers on the desk by way of emphasis.53

That Babbitt was keenly interested in his students may be demonstrated. For example, Babbitt in his lectures, seems not to have been interested in proselytizing. While he certainly had his positions on the great men of history and, especially, Rousseau, he did not, as Aldrich indicates, "teach Babbitt." Students, Babbitt felt, should be allowed their own opinions, and not be forced

53Ibid.
to parrot the doctrines of a professor. This, so long as their opinions were based on sound thinking and reasoning.  

Further, Babbitt seems to have taken very seriously his responsibility of teaching. While he was keenly interested in his graduate students, he did not let his desire for graduate research sway him from his felt obligations to his undergraduate students. As Babbitt's graduate assistant, Aldrich relates that even though he had already taught for some eleven years, Babbitt was reluctant to allow him to grade students' papers. Babbitt, continues Aldrich, considered even the grading of undergraduate papers to be "highly responsible work." It may be said that Babbitt certainly would not allow Aldrich to grade any graduate papers, at least not at the beginning of their association. Interestingly enough, however, as the crush of lectures, seminars, and writings became more demanding, Babbitt did allow Aldrich to grade graduate papers. Of course, he used Aldrich to grade the papers of his Radcliffe students before allowing him to grade his Harvard students.  

In the classroom, Babbitt seemed more interested in the students' comprehension of the totality of his ideas than their interest in his individual lectures. For it appears that students would have much difficulty in not only understanding Babbitt's arguments but, more importantly, the basic literary


55 Manchester, Irving Babbitt, Man and Teacher, p. 108.
positions he espoused, if they were unfamiliar with his basic philosophical position. As a former student, C. K. Judy, relates: "If only one could win possession of his Babbitt's central stand one would be able to see eye to eye with him; and meanwhile captious murmurs might well be suspended."56

Nor was the tension created by Babbitt's classroom manner without retort. A man well-read and willing to challenge ideas and, in some cases, unfounded prejudices acting in the guise of reason, did not go unchallenged. As Mr. Judy indicates:

That students should mutter indictments against a teacher is a sign of healthy mental activity, and Babbitt did not escape being called reactionary for his opposition to popular idols, undemocratic for the exclusions of his elevated standards, and cold for his intellectuality.57

Those students in Babbitt's classes who tied their personal feelings to ideas were utterly shattered. Babbitt, in his attempt to achieve objectivity in both the classroom and the laboratory of life, had no time for feelings, only facts as a vehicle to values. While this lesson, taught to many at the expense of what they felt to be their dignity, was, in the end, a lesson more fruitful than all the amassed facts one could garner. For it was a lesson in critical thinking; a lesson that chided the immature into questioning "why" they felt as they did about matters found in literature. And, more importantly, it was Babbitt's hope to inculcate this critical spirit of inquiry in his students so

56 Ibid., p. 140.
57 Ibid., p. 142.
that they could carry it forth to life outside the classroom. As Henry William Taeusch, a former student, recalls:

Much of the lecture time he spent in applying critical principles to the details of literature and life, so that his classes were almost laboratory periods for testing the validity of ideas.58

Taeusch's encounter with Babbitt came in 1919. Babbitt, now fifty-four years of age, was still quite distinguished in appearance. Though, as Taeusch recalls, "stooped from poring over many books . . . . His face was decidedly handsome, with patrician features and good color, set off with fine gray hair."59

Recalling his first encounter with Babbitt, Taeusch indicates that he had come to Babbitt's home to request permission to enroll in Professor Babbitt's Comparative Literature course. After some discussion, Babbitt turned to Taeusch and said, in a form voice, "No." Babbitt, Taeusch relates, did not consider the preparation of this neophyte sufficient to enter this class. Yet, Babbitt was now dealing with a more mature type of student. A student whose will had been forged in the Great War; a student less likely to be cowed by even the immense presence of Irving Babbitt. Taeusch continues that he pressed on his request for entry into Babbitt's course, continually being vanquished by Babbitt's objections. And, in the end, when the student had thoroughly exhausted his arguments, Babbitt, in characteristic manner, simply said: "All right, you may enter, but on your

58 Ibid., p.167.  
59 Ibid., p. 165.
This illustration, while somewhat humorous, can give insight into the personality of Babbitt. He seems to have taken delight in the mental gymnastics of debate, seeking to challenge positions and the mettle of those espousing them. And yet, he seemed reluctant to assert his own dominance over the will of another. He sought simply to point out that there was undoubtedly more than one way to view an idea. And, more importantly, that if one truly held to a position, he had to be ready to allow for the consequences of his thought.

The final years of Babbitt's career at Harvard are recounted by Warner G. Rice. Mr. Rice called on Babbitt in his office in Widener Library in the Autumn of 1920. Rice recalls having seen Babbitt previously while, as was his custom, he jogged down Massachusetts Avenue. And now, meeting him face to face in his office, Rice relates that the same vigor and energy characteristic of Babbitt's early years still abounded in this aging man. As Rice states: "My first impression was of his power and energy, of his immense vitality."61

Rice had come to Harvard to pursue doctoral study under Babbitt. The meeting between Rice and Babbitt in Widener was simply to determine whether Rice had sufficient background to earn a doctorate from Harvard. In relating his feelings while being interrogated by Babbitt, Rice perceptively shows us that the wit, imagination and intellectual genius of Babbitt had not been tarnished by age. On the contrary, they seem only to have been sharpened and become more

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60 Ibid., p. 166.
61 Ibid., p. 248.
finely honed.

"Under whom had I done graduate work? What had I read? Did I know Greek? What sort of dissertation did I intend to write?" Rice indicates that he satisfied Babbitt "as well as I could on these points--and many more--with the feeling that he had made, in ten minutes, a close and not very flattering appraisal of my intellectual baggage and the range of my ideas."\(^{62}\)

During the course of the interview, Babbitt was quite concerned as to whether or not Rice was married or involved in any emotional entanglement. Rice indicates that Babbitt made it quite clear to him that he should be as free as possible to devote himself totally to graduate study. And, when it was concluded, Babbitt rose and said: "I shall see you again." Rice left Babbitt "conscious of having passed through a kind of initiation."\(^{63}\)

This then was Babbitt, always probing; seeking to penetrate whatever armaments another might have; seeking to find what ideas the person really possessed and what processes of thinking occurred within the person. Babbitt seemed not so much interested with what he found in the course of such an interview. Rather, with how the person came to think as he did.

Many of the commentors on Babbitt's life have remarked that one never really came to know Irving Babbitt by merely reading his books. "For the man," as Rice indicates, "was greater than his writings, and revealed himself fully only in discourse."\(^{64}\)

\(^{62}\)Ibid., p. 249

\(^{63}\)Ibid., p. 251.

\(^{64}\)Ibid., p. 252.
Babbitt, now fifty-five, seems to have, as with good wine, become even more palatable than in his earlier years. Rice indicates that his first impressions of Babbitt in the classroom were that:

he was above all else the philosopher-teacher, a preceptor in the classical tradition and style, acute, witty, skilled in all the arts of verbal fencing, more than a little domineering, but genial, an encourager of every genuine intellectual effort, tremendously in earnest about the doctrine which he gave his best efforts to inculcate. 65

Babbitt's rapport with his students in the classroom is evidenced by the following disputation as related by another former student, Harry H. Clark.

**Student:** But Professor Babbitt, were not the romantic poets expressing aesthetic moods without serious ethical purpose? Have you the right to read them as teachers and reformers concerned with ethical ideas?

**Babbitt:** I choose illustrations almost at random. If Wordsworth wrote to Wilson, 'I wish to be considered as a teacher or nothing,' if Shelley said, 'I have a passion for reforming the world,' we would not seem to be reading them in the spirit in which they wrote, did we not consider them seriously as teachers and reformers concerned primarily with ethical ideas.

**Student:** Your humanism seems to be based on the human rather than on the superhuman aspects of Christianity. Can any civilization exist without supernatural Christianity?

**Babbitt:** I believe that the ethical teaching of the Christian tradition is empirically true, that it has much in common with that of humanism. But in answer to your last question, did not the highest civilization of all time, that of Periclean Athens, develop four hundred years before Christian revelation? 66

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65 Ibid. 66 Ibid., p. 265.
Babbitt's method in the classroom was distinctly Socratic. Allowing questions and proceeding to challenge the minds of his students, he sought to instill in them a method of inquiry that would lay bear the prejudices of illogical thought. Babbitt seems to employ a critical method of historical inquiry, as is evidenced by the foregoing disputation. He does this, however, seeking to coalesce the past with the perspective of the present. Calling upon the past to be interpreted within a philosophical framework that transcends the narrowness of men viewing the past as past, Babbitt seems intent upon using the past for some ethical or philosophical base and this, when fused with man's present knowledge, shall form a critical means of judgment. Suffice to say at his point that Babbitt challenged the minds of his students to drink with an unquenchable thirst from literature, and to use the knowledge gained as a basis for critical thought and a philosophy of life. As Clark so aptly states: "Literature was no longer an escape for sentimental aesthetics or material for memory contests, but an index to life." 67

What is being alluded to here and what will be developed fully in other sections of this treatise, is Babbitt's penchant for using history to enkindle in man a critical spirit so necessary for a philosophy of life. Many of the students taking Babbitt's classes were keenly impressed with his ability to tie together patterns in history and to weave within them sound and abiding principles for

67 Ibid., p. 267.
life. Others felt that Babbitt, in his quest for truth, unsanctimoniously trod upon that which they had been led to believe as true. To those unwilling to subject their beliefs to critical thought, the presence of Babbitt must have surely been painful.

And yet, Babbitt was not a demagogue. Though an intellectual giant, he found the time to endear himself to his students. Whether it was in going over a paper of one of his students, assisting a student in publishing a paper, or merely putting a student at his ease, Babbitt found the necessary time. His devotion to his career seems absolute; almost missionary in zeal. And well it was, for Babbitt seems not to have been solely concerned with his subject matter as an academic preparation, but more as a preparation for life.

And, Babbitt's relationship with his students did not end in the classroom or with graduation. On numerous occasions former students sought his advice and recommendation for teaching positions. Further, Babbitt's scholarship and reputation did not end in the classroom or with his students. For example, his reputation was manifest in his association with many prestigious organizations: The Modern Language Association of America; The Colonial Club of Cambridge; The

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68 William H. Crawford II, "Letter to Irving Babbitt," January 1, 1932. Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.5. Crawford, who was located in the small town of Masselon, Ohio, wrote Babbitt that since the library resources of the community were limited, he would like to know what was Babbitt's definition of "major and minor poets."

69 Gosta R. Stene, "Letter to Irving Babbitt," March 22, 1933. Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.5. Stene is one of several students who sought the assistance of Babbitt's reputation in gaining a teaching position.
Boston Authors Club; and, the French Academy of Moral and Political Sciences. Babbitt was also a Larwill Lecturer at Kenyon College, 1920; Harvard Lecturer at Yale, 1921-22; a West Lecturer at Stanford University, 1922; an Exchange Lecturer at the Sorbonne, Paris, 1923; a Clyde Fitch Lecturer at Amherst, 1930. In 1932, he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from Bowdoin College. Finally, in 1960, Harvard University established the "Irving Babbitt Professorship of Comparative Literature" to honor the literary critic and leader of the New Humanism of the 1920's.

Babbitt, despite what may seem the opposite, was a shy person. His apparent domineering way may have appeared more as a facade for his shyness than anything else. He was a man loved by many. He was a man intellectually scorned by many of his colleagues at Harvard for his directness. He was a man bent on creating a philosophy of life. And above all, he was a man. Irving Babbitt succumbed to death, after a long illness, on July 15, 1933.

What is perhaps a fitting epitaph for Babbitt and one with which he would feel comfortable appeared in the "Records of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences." It read as follows:

70 "Class of 1889--Harvard College," p. 244. See also: The Washington Post, May 9, 1926.

71 The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, p. 20.


73 Boston Herald, Editorial, July 15, 1933. See also: Boston Transcript, July 15, 1933.
And yet, as he would often remark, what he sought to say was nothing new. He refused to have his doctrine called, as it was generally, the New Humanism. For him there was no new humanism. There was only the age-old opposition between naturalism (or the monistic merging of God, man and nature, with its consequent denial of a law antecedent to all human experience) and humanism; the clear conception of man, distinct and unique in nature, the mysterious being in whom the material and the spiritual meet, responsible, therefore, to a law superior to himself, a law which he must discover, a higher will to which he must learn to attune his natural will.74

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74 "Minute on the Life and Services of Professor Irving Babbitt," From the records of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, October 3, 1933, Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.26.
CHAPTER III

IRVING BABBITT'S VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE

Much space has been devoted to providing the reader with a historical background of humanism as well as a glimpse into the life and personality of Babbitt. We have indicated at times that Babbitt proved disquieting to many of his students. We have remarked also that to many, Babbitt's ideas were repulsive. We have, it is hoped, created in the foregoing sketch not only the requisite background desired but, more importantly, a desire to know "why" Babbitt was viewed differently by his many publics. To satisfy the question "why" requires some familiarity with Babbitt's position on human nature and the religious controversy that stems from his humanistic view of man. To this end, we shall now concentrate our efforts.

Historically, the Renaissance is said to have been a reaction to the Medieval emphasis on doctrine and divinity. The Renaissance man felt more inclined to the plight of his fellowman than to the visionary doctrines no longer held to be of consequence. Above all, the Renaissance marked the first forward push toward the unbridled self-indulgence of the individual. Only in the later Renaissance did man return to a more disciplined posture.

As with most historical periods, one sees the beginnings of the Renaissance as an extreme reaction to the felt evils of the Medieval period. Man,
feeling set free both spiritually and emotionally, reacted to his past with the temperament, not of reason, but of passion. The Renaissance may be likened to the pendulum of the clock that has swung full-arc to the extreme from which it is reacting. It is only with time that the pendulum will center itself in moderation.

Humanism, like the pendulum, has vacillated between extreme sympathy and extreme discipline. True humanism, says Babbitt, must be mediated between these extremes; man must seek within himself a harmony between these conflicting forces. For it is by uniting these opposite forces within himself that man asserts his human nature and achieves moderation.

What, then, were Babbitt's thoughts on man's nature; from whence do they spring? Louis J. A. Mercier writing in American Humanism and the New Age asserts that Babbitt was greatly influenced by Ferdinand Brunetiere, the Parisian literary critic and professor at the Ecole Normale Superieure. Brunetiere, being a disciple of Comte, held at first to the naturalistic and mechanistic position of man fostered by such Enlightenment thinkers as Newton and Holbach. Yet, Brunetiere later found the view that man is a part of Nature and not distinct from it, bankrupt.

Babbitt claims that Brunetiere, under whom he studied in Paris, finally disavowed the naturalism that had swept France for some one hundred years.1

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1 Mercier, American Humanism and the New Age, p. 9. Humanitarianism (Naturalism) as a movement did not achieve momentum in America until early in the twentieth century. By this time, Europe had already experienced over one hundred years of humanitarian influence and had rejected it. See also: Irving Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism (Boston, 1919), Appendix. Babbitt further traces humanitarian aspects of man's nature to the Taoist movement in China--550 to 200 B.C.
Further, Babbitt agrees with Brunetiere that man is more than Nature. Man and Nature cannot be juxtaposed; rather, man is man only insofar as he is able to distinguish himself from Nature. Babbitt continues that man can only become good by his resistance to Nature; not by his acquiescence to it. And, "only when men cease to emphasize that which they have in common with brute nature and exalt that which is specifically human" will the true dichotomy of man's nature be known.

The influence of Brunetiere on Babbitt was significant; to the extent that later at Harvard, Babbitt offered a course on Brunetiere. Yet, Babbitt could not totally accept the position of Brunetiere vis-a-vis man's nature. Particularly, he could not succumb, as did Brunetiere, to the notion that the distinctive quality that makes man supra-natural is exterior to man; namely, God. Babbitt felt that there existed within man the capacity to distinguish himself from Nature. Man was, therefore, not obliged to seek that which made him unique outside of himself.

Babbitt would then continue the work of Brunetiere, but would look not to a church or religion to find the factor within man that made him unique. Rather, he would seek it from within the individual. It is at this point that some of Babbitt's critics assume that he became areligious. Curiously enough, we find

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Babbitt's works often referred to in the writings of twentieth century scholastics. This only because of Babbitt's credence to the dualistic composition of man's nature. But, we shall return to this problem later.

A second influence on Babbitt's view of man and nature emanates from his study of Confucius and Buddha. Babbitt saw the position of Buddha as reenforcing man's individuality. Man's belief in himself as an individual above nature must not be based, continued Babbitt, on either authority or tradition. Rather, it should have as its foundation a human law which is both positive and critical and based on a psychology of desire.

Since much of Babbitt's philosophical position relating to critical humanism is steeped in Oriental thought, it would seem appropriate to discuss, in some detail, Babbitt's conceptualization of Buddhism. It is anticipated that this analysis will demonstrate Babbitt's position on human nature in a meaningful manner.

In discussing Buddha, Babbitt asserts that that which is paramount to Oriental thought is the notion of the divine as the "inner check." The inner check, continues Babbitt, "conceives of the good not as some do; that is, in

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6 Irving Babbitt, a speech (handwritten) delivered to Chinese students at Harvard University, 1921. Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.7, pp. 38-9. The centripetal element in human nature, Babbitt says, is the element that really brings men together on the spiritual level, and this is the law of inner control.
terms of expansion, but in terms of concentration. Simply put, the notion of goodness need not be an outward manifestation or action; rather, it can be a form of mediation or inward control.

Babbitt likens Buddha to Aristotle in that both men, while representing different heritages, were supremely analytical. And it was through analysis, says Babbitt, that Buddha traced the evils of man to ignorance. Buddha, continues Babbitt, "in tracing evil to ignorance is at one with Socrates and Plato, but in refusing to identify the opposite of ignorance, knowledge, with virtue, he agrees with Aristotle." Man, may, therefore, know that which is right and chose not to do it. Man is capable, therefore, of choice. Man's ability to be passive, says Babbitt, coupled with ignorance is, for Buddha, the supreme vice--moral indolence.

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7 Irving Babbitt, Spanish Character and Other Essays (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1940), pp. 151-2. See also: Babbitt, Speech delivered to Chinese Students at Harvard University, pp. 38-41. Babbitt says: "If a man is to be truly human, he cannot expand freely along the lines of his ordinary self, but must discipline this ordinary self to a sense of measure and proportion." And, Babbitt continues, "personally, I am struck by the central soundness of his Confucian conception. It does not proscribe sympathy, it would merely have sympathy tempered by selection."

8 Irving Babbitt, The Dhammapada (manuscript), pp. 83-84. Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.8. Buddha, says Babbitt, "not only stands for an idea that is typically, though not exclusively Asiatic--the idea of meditation--but he deals with meditation and the form of effort it requires in a more positive and critical fashion perhaps than any other religious teacher."

9 Irving Babbitt, Spanish Character and Other Essays, p. 153.
And what is the opposite of moral indolence? For Buddha it was supreme virtue or appamada. And, Babbitt continues:

A man should cease to drift with the stream of impulse and take himself in hand. By rousing himself, by strenuousness, by restraint and control the wise man may make for himself an island that no flood can overwhelm.10

Buddha, says Babbitt, urges man to be restrictive of his impulses in order to forge a strong will that is able to cope with his inclination to moral indolence. And further, Babbitt asserts:

If one would be numbered among the noble virtuous and at the same time escape evil, one must put aside the desire for the less enduring in favor of the more enduring, and ultimately put away altogether the desire for the transient in favor of what is no longer subject to birth and decay.11

Babbitt's interpretation of Buddhism seems to be leading to the notion that the virtuous man will seek that which is more permanent over that which is in flux. This dichotomy within man; namely, the notions of moral indolence (pamada) and the pursuit of virtue (appamada), are seen as opposing psychological wills. One will, that of vital impulse (elan vital) is intemperate and seeks fulfillment here and now. Its gratification must be immediate and, as a result, Babbitt would say, shortlived. On the other, man is possessed of a will of vital control (frein vital) which seeks all within experience that has permanency. This will, then, seeks deferred gratification and, through restraint, controls man's will of impulse.

10 Ibid., p. 154.

11 Ibid., p. 156.
Babbitt's interpretation of Buddhism seems to center upon the notion of asserting man's individuality based on an acquired experiential responsibility. Man apparently is required to take hold of himself within the ebb and flow of the natural flux of life. He is part-and-parcel of that flux. But, since he has an element of control (frein vital) within him, he has the power to garner those elements in the cosmos which are permanent and abiding and control his impulse. Man, then, is capable in the arena of experience of responsible action through individual control.

Man, continues Babbitt, must come to love himself. But the self that man should love is not the fleshy self, but the self, as Aristotle and Buddha state, of permanence. That is, one must come to love the abiding within him. "To be a lover of one's self in the Buddhist sense is, so far as the ego is concerned, to be selfless."¹² It is, therefore, to shed all that is changeable in favor of that which is changeless to which the Buddhist strives. And, in this sense, Babbitt's interpretation of Buddhism is not unlike the Christian notion of the permanence of man's soul.

In his discussion of Buddha, Babbitt likens him to Christ; both men, says Babbitt, were great teachers and very otherworldly. It must be understood at this juncture that Babbitt, while viewing Buddha and Christ as great teachers and not as divine does so to solve a definite problem. And this problem is simply

¹²Ibid., p. 158.
to lay-to-rest the comment that critical humanism appeals to religion for standards.

T. S. Eliot writing in 1928, has much to say in this regard. Eliot indicates that Babbitt's position on man's nature, with its foundation in Oriental thought, is little more than a "state of mind" for a few people like Babbitt. Indeed, he continues, it certainly has no long standing tradition equal to that of Christianity. And further, "to exist at all, it is dependent upon some other attitude, for it is essentially critical--I would even say parasitical." 13

Eliot contends, therefore, that since the humanism of Babbitt is critical in scope, it must appeal to a foundation other than itself for standards. And this foundation, says Eliot, is religion. Critical humanism, continues Eliot, can, therefore, grow only to the extent that organized religion grows. Babbitt's humanism cannot, then, be viewed as a substitute for religion; nor, can it grow counter to religion. In short, Eliot contends that the "humanistic point of view and the resultant view of man's nature is auxiliary to and dependent upon the religious point of view." 14

In response to Eliot's comments on the parasitical nature of critical humanism Babbitt replies simply: "the most important manifestation of humanism that the world has yet seen--that in ancient Greece--did not have any such

14 Ibid., p. 44.
What Babbitt suggests here is that the rational humanism characteristic of ancient Greece appealed to no religion for standards but only to man's reason. And, it will be remembered that Greece pre-dates Christianity by several hundred years. The notion, therefore, that Babbitt's humanistic view of man's nature, espousing a dualism similar to that of Christianity, cannot exist without acknowledging religious standards is, to Babbitt, untrue.

Babbitt's view of human nature must, therefore, be viewed within the confines of a positivistic philosophy that seeks its ends within man and does not appeal to an organized body of dogma or revelation for standards. And yet, as we shall see, the higher will, the apex of man's dual nature, in its attempt to grasp the wisdom of the ages can certainly appeal to organized religion for standards. However, as Babbitt has said, it need not necessarily do so. In this sense, then, critical humanism can become acceptable to all men, regardless of their creed.

Continuing in this vein, Babbitt asserts:

Now humanism must, like religion, rest on the recognition, in some form or other, of the inner life, or, what amounts to the same thing, on the opposition between a law of the spirit and a law of the members. It must also, like religion, subordinate intellect to the ethical will and so put its ultimate emphasis on humility.16


16Babbitt, Democracy and Leadership, p. 195.
Babbitt asserts that Buddhism is far removed from the naturalism of the Enlightenment and the pragmatism of the Progressive Movement. Man cannot, in the Buddhist tradition, be viewed as one with nature. Buddha, continues Babbitt, asserted the law of man—man distinct in nature—based not on tradition, but on a positive and critical basis. Buddhism for Babbitt becomes, then a spiritual positivism based on a psychology of desire. 17

Let us pursue for a moment the idea inherent in this last statement. It may be argued that the notion of "spiritual positivism" is synonymous with what Babbitt calls "experimental supernaturalism."

Now, to be positivistic or experimental implies that in reality one seeks to ground one's religion or philosophy on the data of consciousness; not on the beliefs entailed in revelation or dogma. One must be willing, Babbitt

17 Irving Babbitt, The Dhammapada (manuscript), pp. 85-87. On this matter of critical humanism as a psychology of desire Babbitt says: "The psycho-analyst is introspective, at least to the extent that he is concerned with certain desires and impulses of the natural man as reflected in states of consciousness. The behaviorist, on the other hand, is so eager to be 'objective,' to avoid even the suspicion of introspection that he is ready to deny instinct as understood by the psycho-analyst and even consciousness itself." Buddha, Babbitt says, agrees, in a way with the psycho-analyst and behaviorist. "Like the psycho-analyst he reduces the human problem to a psychology of desire, and then deals with desire itself in terms of conflict and adjustment. Like the behaviorist, again, he would deal with man neither metaphysically nor theologically but positively and from this point of view is ready to assert that 'man is what he does.'" Where the difference arises between psycho-analyst and behaviorist and Buddha centers upon "a matter of immediate perception, a principle of control in man that all schools of naturalistic psychology deny in favor of a mechanistic monism." And Babbitt continues: "If one affirms that man is what he does and then, like the behaviorist, conceives of doing merely in terms of reactions to outer stimuli, the result is a monstrous mutilation of human nature. A similar failure to take account of the higher will vitiates the psycho-analyst idea of adjustment."
says,

to deny oneself the luxury of certain affirmations about ultimate things and start from the immediate data of consciousness. It is hard to see, for example, how one can affirm, on strictly experimental grounds, a personal God and personal immortality.18

Babbitt continues in his interpretation of Buddhist religion by stating that:

What one is able to affirm without going beyond immediate experience and falling into dogma is . . . a great power not ourselves that makes for righteousness, a phrase that reminds one of Buddha's conception of the dhamma. Not being able to find any personality human or divine superior to his own, Buddha got his humility, as he himself tells us, by looking up to the Law (dhamma).19

Now what we are suggesting here is that Buddha, as a positivist and experimentalist, seeks to establish a religion based not on revelation or dogma but on the Law. And this Law is experiential. That is, it is seen through experience as being present in reality. What we are here acknowledging is the notion of man's basic duality. Or, since our consciousness indicates that man is capable of choice; that is, of selecting between alternatives, he must be possessed of a will. And, Babbitt asserts, it is through man's will that he must seek to achieve the permanence, wisdom or standards--the Law--that transcends time and space.


19 Ibid., p. 25. See also: The Dhammapada, p. 81.
The will referred to by Babbitt as that capable of attaining permanence is that will which "has been inextricably bound up in the Occident with the doctrine of divine grace . . ." And, this assertion may be the cause of the consternation, to which we will soon have reference, between Babbitt and some of the Catholic writers.

As to the "spiritual" or "supernatural" element in Buddhist thought, one can say that the meaning here is not consistent with that of organized sectarian faiths. Indeed, as Babbitt says,

Buddha denies the soul . . . and does not grant any place in his discipline to the idea of God.

Organized religion, on the other hand,

seems to require faith in a spiritual essence or soul that is sharply set apart from the transitory, and in a God who is conceived as the supreme idea or entity.

Babbitt seems to be seeking, based on his interpretation of Buddha, an experiential approach to the supernatural; based not on a theology but on a psychology desirous of seeking the permanent within flux. For as Babbitt might say, it is only man's search for standards that will serve to guide his will. And, it is through this experimentation to discover the Law that man attains happiness.

From the foregoing, one must assume that if there is permanence to be found in reality, then surely there must be flux. Within and without man is flux;

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20 Ibid.
21 Ibid., p. 77.
and that within man which is in flux—and for Babbitt this is man's reason—longs to be united with that within nature which is also unstable—change. But man, says Babbitt, is capable of escaping flux; he alone has a desire for permanence, if he will only heed it. And how shall man heed this desire for stability? In Babbitt's words it is:

to substitute the noble for the ignoble cravings. The permanent or ethical element in himself towards which he should strive to move is known to him practically as a power of inhibition or inner check upon expansive desire. Vital impulse (elan vital) may be subjected to vital control (frein vital).\(^{22}\)

While the Buddhist does not admit of a Christian soul in man, nevertheless, it is upon the internal conflict between vital impulse and vital control as a psychological and experiential fact that emphasis is placed. A man, continues Babbitt, who drifts supinely with the ebb and flow of nature, quenching his desire for gratification, "is guilty according to Buddha of the gravest of all vices—spiritual or moral indolence (pamada)." The man, on the other hand, who exercises his will of control "is displaying the chief of all the virtues, a spiritual vigilance or strenuousness (appamada)."\(^{23}\) And the end for the man of restraint, concludes Babbitt,

cannot be formulated in terms of the finite intellect. But progress on the 'path'\(^{24}\) may be known by its fruits–

\(^{22}\)Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, p. 150.

\(^{23}\)Ibid.

\(^{24}\)Babbitt, The Dhammapada, p. 86. In its primary emphasis on will, the doctrine of Buddha is not a system in the Occidental sense, but a path. A Buddha is simply one who has trodden this path and can report to others what he has found.
negatively by the extinction of the expansive desires,  
positively by an increase in peace, poise, \( \sqrt{\text{and}} \) centrality.\(^{25}\)

The moral positivism expressed above views the value of man in terms of his ability to check his expansive desires. Buddha, says Babbitt, has put "squarely upon the individual what the individual is ever seeking to evade--the burden of moral responsibility. Self is the lord of self. Who else can be the lord?"\(^{26}\) Buddha makes the positive assertion, then, that men are guilty of innate moral laziness. Thus, the critical humanist, using Oriental philosophy as a basis, can attempt to measure man's morality by the restraint exercised upon his desires, of his vital control (frein vital).\(^{27}\)

And, therein lies a distinction between the notion of rational humanism and the positivistic humanism of Buddha. Man's reason, for the rational humanist, was supreme. Man's impulses, therefore, needed to be controlled by his reason. The Buddhist humanist, on the other hand, asserts that man's mind is part of the flux of reality. It is, therefore, not that faculty which the rational humanists claim is capable of grasping the permanent. Nor is it that faculty capable of fixing standards for life. It is, instead, that faculty which is to be used to determine the credibility of man's higher imagination; a circumstantial faculty that is used to apply principles of the higher will.

\(^{25}\)Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, p. 150.
\(^{26}\)Ibid., p. 151. See also: Babbitt, The Dhammapada, p. 88. See also: The Dhammapada (manuscript), p. 22.
The reason then of Isocrates, Aristotle, Plato and Cicero is insufficient to preserve and transmit the cultural heritage of man. It is insufficient because it is an organ of flux and change. And, as such, can only make pronouncements that are absolute. It cannot render judgments that are viable and adaptable to change because reason itself is part of the change occurring in reality.

Before we encounter the application of Buddhist thought on the philosophical position of Irving Babbitt, it may prove helpful to view the notions of the lower will (elan vital) and the higher will (frein vital) within a more modern context. The usefulness of this exposition resides in its appropriateness to Occidental thought.

The notion here is simply that of Calvinistic thought. The Calvinists felt that man was innately evil or depraved; he was, therefore, prone to excess in his quest for dominion in this world. Calvinist theology, as transplanted from seventeenth century England to Puritan New England, emphasized that man was predestined for eternal hell fire. And, only a certain few of those depraved souls would be divinely elected for eternal happiness in heaven.

How, then, do the notions of elan vital and frein vital relate to the Calvinistic notions of Covenant Theology? Man's incessant desire for excess may be likened to the elan vital. For it is man's lower will (elan vital) that is characterized by Buddhist thought as indolent. Now a word of caution is needed here with regard to the possible connotations of indolent. To many, indolence implies an abstention from action; to be lazy. But, in Oriental thought, it may
also be conceived as a laziness of action; a refusal to moderate one's appetites. The Calvinist would, therefore, view man's nature as fallen--evil--due to the excesses of the lower will. But, they would contend, that man is capable of restraining his will by virtue of faith given by God. And this gift of faith, designating the divinely elected, may be likened to the higher will (frein vital). For if man but used his will of control to curb his expansive desires, he could, through the grace of God, merit salvation.

But to this end the critical humanist would not come. For we have already commented that Babbitt sought to establish his philosophy along positivistic and not theological lines. Therefore, the critical humanist would not assert that man's higher will (frein vital) is a gift from God given only to those divinely elected. Rather, it is a will within all men to be cultivated. Babbitt felt, therefore, that man's higher will was present within all men and did not come as a gift to some and not at all to others. 28

As concerns the theological application of Babbitt's Oriental philosophy to critical humanism, much more can be said. Writing in Commonweal, Russell Wilbur asserts that "Babbitt made of man's moral conscience, conceived of as a 'higher will' a purely irrational--of course super-rational--and, what is more, a purely inhibitory power, an 'inner check.'" 29 Conscience, continues Wilbur, is not an


'inner check' but an 'inner judge.' It does not inhibit, but discriminates.

"Conscience is the practical reason judging concerning matters of conduct, sometimes saying 'yes,' sometimes saying 'no,' to impulse."\(^30\)

The allegation here is that Babbitt has made conscience a faculty of the higher will. In the Christian sense, at least as implied by Wilbur, conscience is a faculty of the "practical reason." And, as we have already said, reason for Babbitt is a part of the flux of reality and, as such, incapable of making judgments other than those concerned with immediate problems.

It would seem beneficial to this writer to continue this exposition on Christianity and critical humanism with a view toward not only understanding their differences and similarities but, more importantly, to better understand the Oriental influences on Babbitt's philosophical position.

At the outset, Babbitt posits that the humanist, from ancient time to present-day, has sought an avoidance of excess. Now, the notion of the possibility of excess implies a duality within man. For, how would one know that excess exists were it not for the fact that another side of his humanity sought moderation. So, in this sense says Babbitt,

life will be dualistic since man recognizes in man a 'self' that is capable of exercising control and another 'self' that needs controlling.\(^31\)

Now, as concerns man's dualism, it should be evident that the duality within as expressed by the rational humanists (Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates and Cicero)

\(^{30}\)Ibid.

viewed man as composed of appetite and reason. The former seeking expansive desires, the latter seeking to curb the unbridled appetites. But to man's reason Babbitt would add another element: that of the higher will.

And what of this higher will. On this point Babbitt is clear:

... the reason that has the support of a higher will, that is, in the Confucian phrase, submissive to 'the will of heaven,' would seem better able to exercise control over the natural man than a reason that is purely self-reliant.32

In the West, Babbitt asserts that the notion of man's higher will is bound-up with God's will and Supernatural Grace. And, as concerns Grace and the higher will, Babbitt has much to say:

The higher will has been identified with God's will, its operation with the doctrine of grace. In that case, it may be urged, if the humanist seeks support in something higher than reason, he must [turn his] needs to Christian theology.33

But, we have said elsewhere that the positivistic basis of Babbitt's critical humanism precludes an appeal to organized religion and Supernatural Grace. It must be said, moreover, that Babbitt seeks not to substitute humanism for religion. Rather, he appears to be seeking an alternative, albeit positivistic, for those who seek a life of moderation based, not on the tenets of dogma, but on the critical spirit of man cultivated through mediation.

32 Ibid., pp. xvi-xvii.
33 Ibid., p. xvii.
Babbitt does not seek to alienate himself from religion; or to make enemies of those who are of a religious persuasion. And on this matter Babbitt says:

Traditionally, the Christian has associated his liberty and his faith in a higher will with grace. I myself have been trying to come at this necessary truth, not in terms of grace, but in terms of work, and that on the humanistic rather than on the religious level.

And further, Babbitt continues:

I am not so arrogant as to deny the validity of other ways of affirming the higher will, or to dismiss as obsolete the traditional forms through which this will has been interpreted to the imagination.

And Babbitt concludes by saying:

My argument should appeal primarily, so far as it appeals to any one, to those who, as a result of having broken with the traditional forms on grounds insufficiently critical, are in danger of losing the truths of the higher will entirely.34

Here then we have a focal point of Babbitt's philosophy. It seeks to allow man, primarily those who have rejected traditional forms of religion, to grasp those elements in reality which are permanent and abiding. It was not essential, according to Babbitt, that man achieve truth and virtue through revelation. Rather, man was capable of goodness through the assertion of his higher will. The position espoused here is certainly consistent with the basic tenet of humanism; namely, moderation. For it seeks a middle ground to virtue.

And, this may be achieved, Babbitt would say, either through the traditions of Christianity or through the critical spirit of humanism. That Babbitt sought an alternative to religion cannot be argued; that this alternative was not acceptable to some Christians is precisely what is being argued here. Specifically, Wilbur argues that in terms of Catholic theology, the "higher will" is not equivalent to "Christian Grace." Also, Wilbur asserts that:

on the matter of [the] higher will Babbitt confused four things: (1) ethical conscience, a natural, rational faculty; (2) the mystical appetite of 'The One' which exists in every man as a rudiment of the supernatural order, its object, The One, being vague and anonymous so far as each individual is concerned until the individual is informed as to the identity of The One by revelation, or by tradition, or by sound theistic reasoning; (3) habitual sanctifying grace which inheres in every soul . . . ; and (4) actual grace which does not inhere in the soul but visits it . . . .

Now what is puzzling to this writer is the apparent dogmatism entailed in Wilbur's position. Granted that the Catholic tradition is based on dogma and Grace. However, it appears that dogma, like other facets of history previously discussed,

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35 F. A. Manchester, "Irving Babbitt and the Contemporary World," The Trend, cutting from advance number (May 20, 1924), p. 9. Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.54. Manchester indicates that: "Decadence in literature and the arts; widespread relaxation in morals, with increase in murders, inicides, in insanity, in divorce; corruption in business and in politics; the Great War itself; all of these and kindred phenomena are, in their marked culmination or excess, but the outward signs and disastrous consequences of an extraordinary inward chaos. Our present business [must be] to build up a new philosophy out of all the data that are before us, a truer and sounder philosophy to take the place of faiths that have passed."

36 Wilbur, Commonweal, p. 365.
has its excesses. We have pointed out elsewhere in this text that Babbitt seeks not to undercut organized religion or to supplant Sanctifying Grace with a positivistic philosophy. Babbitt, it appears, seeks only an alternative position to truth other than organized religion. And on this point Babbitt is quite clear:

... there is a certain psychological agreement between Christian and Buddhist, however far apart they may be theologically, as to the nature of truth: they both include in truth, for example the belief in a higher will and make freedom depend, though it must be admitted in very different ways, on the activity of this will.37

Babbitt's position, then, in his own words is far apart theologically from the Christian tradition. And yet, is it? Judged from the perspective of time, one might be prone to state that Babbitt's position, while unacceptable to the strict dogmatist--in the Medieval tradition--might become palatable to the moderate Christian.

On this point G. R. Elliott may shed some light. Elliott, who knew Babbitt well, contends that Babbitt's philosophical position was not far afield from the liberal Catholic position of the early twentieth century. And this position, says Elliott:

was an evolution from, not a revolution against, traditional Catholicism. Liberal Catholics hold the conviction that truth, like life, is never miraculous in the sense of unnatural. In short he [Liberal Catholic] rejects modernism (against revelation

37 Babbitt, On Being Creative, p. xxiv.
and tradition) but knows that the doctrines and practices of the Church must be modernly revised.38

Babbitt is portrayed by Elliott as leaning more toward the liberal Catholic position. Of seeking to critically evaluate the traditions and practices of the past within the context of the present. In this sense, then, Babbitt could become, at least to some degree, acceptable to Catholics of his time. Though, as Elliott indicates, it is extremely doubtful that Babbitt was aware of the Liberal Catholic position.

Nevertheless, Babbitt's refusal to recognize the inner workings of Grace within man would cause even the most liberal Catholic thinkers to take issue with Babbitt. But, it is not our intent here, and this may have been Wilbur's problem, to assert that one religion is better than another or that religion and humanism cannot be at least compatible.

Continuing in this vein, Babbitt, in a letter to Elliott states:

I agree with you that humanism should not be presented as a substitute for religion or as including religion . . . . I am concerned with building up and fortifying the third storey of my edifice. (First storey, naturalism; second, humanism; third, religion).39

Now, the meaning implied in this statement may be ascribed as a testament to Babbitt's own aim of building a theology, based on the Orient, within his own philosophy of critical humanism. As Gorham Munson indicates, Babbitt

distinguished "three levels on which life may be experienced: the religious, the humanistic, and the naturalistic."\textsuperscript{40} In our present discussion we are dealing with the "storey" of religion and the "storey" of humanism. We shall, in the next chapter, cope with the "storey" of naturalism as typified by Rousseau.

But let us return to the notions of humanism and religion. For Babbitt, the religious "storey" was occupied by Buddhism and Christianity. And, here the supernatural enters, here the consuming search is for the Absolute, here is dying to this world and here there is the life more abundant that comes through rebirth into a world of greater consciousness.\textsuperscript{41}

It is, therefore, posited here that Irving Babbitt, contrary to some opinion, was not anti-theistic. Indeed, he appears to be a very religious man; if only in a humanistic sense. Finally, in Babbitt's own words:

For my own part, I range myself unhesitatingly on the side of the supernaturals. Though I see no evidence that humanism is necessarily ineffective apart from dogmatic and revealed religion, there is, it seems to me, evidence that it gains immensely in effectiveness when it has a background of religious insight.\textsuperscript{42}

But, lest any reader assert that this writer makes of Babbitt too religious a man, we must add that while Babbitt could speak respectfully though he might of the Catholic Church and its 'dogmatic and revealed' religion, Babbitt


\textsuperscript{41}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{42}Irving Babbitt, "Humanism: An Essay at Definition," (manuscript), Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.8, p. 40. See also: Babbitt, "Humanism: An Essay at Definition," in Foerster (ed) \textit{Humanism and America}, p. 39 and 43.
as personally and firmly rejected both 'dogma' and still more, 'organized' or 'institutional' religion--that is, the Church.43

Babbitt's principle problem with institutional religion, it would appear, stems from its being an institution and based, primarily, on dogma and not on that which is experiential. Western religion, it was felt, had degenerated to dogma and tradition. And, for Babbitt, the absence of dogma from the religion of Buddha allowed man to probe reality in an unhampered way--as a critic of life unrestricted.

In the end, one must also confess that Babbitt's position on critical humanism is more a philosophy of religion than a religion in the sectarian sense. And, herein may reside a reason for the misunderstanding of Babbitt's position by some. Religion, at least in the Western tradition, is based on belief--it is not an empirical science, provable in external reality. Philosophy, on the other hand, can be construed as experiential, acquiring from sense data. It may be, therefore, that to judge Babbitt's position on theological grounds is indeed a mistake in basic definition.

To this distinction between theology and philosophy may be added some pertinent comments by Louis Mercier. Mercier, who was himself criticized for attempting to interpolate the critical humanism of Irving Babbitt within the confines of scholasticism, 44 asserts that the philosophical position taken by

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Babbitt is not unlike that of "neo-scholastic philosophers." Theologians of the Roman Catholic Church, continues Mercier, make pronouncements based on revelation. However, philosophers of the Church "completely ignore the supernatural and the question of grace." Now, if the philosopher does not rely on revelation and grace in his consideration of man, but upon reason and, he is not considered to be anti-supernatural, why should Babbitt be viewed as anti-supernatural?

The question centers, once again, on the notion that a philosophical rationale for viewing man's nature apart from a theology must be judged as precisely that, a philosophy. It would be an injustice to criticize it as a theology.

Whether one prefers Buddhist thought, Calvinism as modified above, or the Catholic tradition, the point is that Babbitt was seeking a rationale for a saner individualism based upon an experiential philosophy of religion. He was, in the words of Mercier, "going to develop a theory of humanism on the Buddhistic doctrine of the dhamma (law), and of appamada (virtue) as opposed to pamada (indolence)."

45 Louis J. A. Mercier, "Was Irving Babbitt a Naturalist?" The New Scholasticism, XXVII (1953), p. 44. See also: Benjamin Masse, "A Note on Mr. Babbitt's Psychology; An Essay at Cooperation," The Modern Schoolman, IX, No. 3 (March, 1932), pp. 48-50. (Special cutting presented to Harvard University by Mrs. Babbitt in 1938). Masse indicates that: "Although the Catholic humanist firmly believes that no ideal of human living can be complete without Christ, still he likewise realizes that the happenings of the past four centuries have so widely separated him from non-Catholic thinkers that, if cooperation is to be had with the New Humanists or any other group, the approach must be made under the aegis of philosophy. And, scholastic philosophy, relying purely on experience and reason, can be of inestimable value to the New Humanists." See also: Francis E. McMahon, The Humanism of Irving Babbitt (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1931), pp. 141-159.

Let us then proceed to examine Babbitt's philosophy of critical humanism within the confines of its Oriental origins. What may prove useful here is to schematically portray the philosophy of critical humanism and then discuss its inter-workings as it relates to Buddha and Babbitt. The schema presented here is one developed by Louis Mercier, who, upon presenting it to Babbitt, received his approval as to its correctness of interpretation.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{47}Ibid., p. 18. See also: Warren, New England Saints, p. 158. Warren indicates that Babbitt gave "a kind of deathbed \textit{imprimatur}" to Mercier's schema.
Now, let us turn our attention to a discussion of the foregoing schema. For it is posited that to understand the rationale as portrayed by Mercier is to understand the philosophy of critical humanism as espoused by Irving Babbitt.

Philosophically, says Babbitt,

life does not give here an element of oneness and there an element of change; it gives a oneness that is always changing. Moreover, man does not contemplate this oneness from without: he is himself a oneness that is always changing.48

In this statement, Babbitt reiterates his belief in the duality of man. He asserts that "what is stable and permanent \( \text{in man} \) is felt as real" and that which "is always slipping over into something else or vanishing is . . . associated . . . with the feeling of illusion."49 "To admit," continues Babbitt, "that the oneness of life and the change are inseparable is therefore to admit that such reality as man can know positively is extricably mixed up with illusion."50

Babbitt apparently views man's life as illusion, a problem of the One and the Many. Since man is caught-up in the multiplicity of the Many (change), how is he to determine the Oneness that is sought after by the permanent element of his nature? Babbitt contends, then, that "life is but a web of illusion and a dream within a dream." But he is quick to add that this dream of life "needs to be managed with utmost discretion, if it is not to turn into a nightmare."51

49 Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, pp. xii-xiv.
50 Ibid., p. xiv. 51 Ibid.
In other words, though life may be shrouded in illusion and dreams, man is required to make the proper use of his illusion. In short, according to Mercier, he must solve the problem of values and standards.

Now, as concerns standards, Babbitt tells us that "they imply the imposition in some form or other of the law of the spirit upon the law of the members; standards involve in short a concentration of the will . . . ." And further, "standards force one to look up to a model set so much above one's ordinary self as to induce humility . . . ." 52 Babbitt continues:

In the collapse of traditional standards, the critic (critical humanist) is needed to build up new standards, something quite distinct, on the one hand, from the sentimentalism or expansive emotionalism that so often passes in this country as idealism; quite distinct, on the other hand, from the standardization . . . that is threatening to transform us into a huge mass of commercialized philistines. The process of achieving standards . . . will involve above all the keen and accurate definition of general terms, not worked out abstractly, but with reference to all the ascertained experience of mankind in both the East and West. The standards thus achieved will be pressed into the service of the specifically human quality of will in man. 53

And how is man to achieve values and standards in his life, especially if all of life is illusion? Or, put another way, how is man, who is part of the ceaseless change in reality, to achieve the abiding and permanent in reality? To this question Babbitt answers:

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52 Irving Babbitt, "Misc. Manuscripts," Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.8. This short essay on standards is but two typed pages with penciled corrections in Babbitt's hand.

53 Irving Babbitt, "The Role of the Critic in American Life" (manuscript), pp. 10b, c, d. Harvard University Archives, HUG 1185.8.
Man is cut off from immediate contact with anything abiding and therefore worthy to be called real and condemned to live in an element of fiction or illusion, but he may... lay hold with the aid of the imagination on the element of oneness that is inextricably blended with the manifoldness of change and to just that extent may build up a sound model for imitation.  

In this philosophical analysis, Babbitt seems to be leading us to ask the question: What unity is there that may exist in the multiplicity of our lives? The question itself poses nothing new. Indeed, Plato grappled with the idea of the one and the many over two thousand years ago. Now, there is in Babbitt's position much Platonic thought. For example, Babbitt contends that life is illusion; Plato felt that, and this is typified by his "Allegory of the Cave," sense knowledge is but an imperfect representation of reality—it is an illusion.

True knowledge, continues Plato, comes only to those who go beyond sense perception; it comes only to those who are able to arrive at the essence of sense perceptions. For Plato, man could achieve the solution to the problem of the one and the many through the proper use of reason.  

For Babbitt, since reason was, in Oriental thought, an organ of flux; man could achieve the solution to the problem of the one and the many only through the proper use of the imagination.

Now, it must be posited, and most would certainly agree, that within reality there resides a permanence in the multiplicity. There is, for example, the essence of an object—horseness being the essence of all horses. But,

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Babbitt would continue, a notion of the essence of something is merely an abstraction. And, this was precisely Plato's problem—he never was able to resolve the notion of true knowledge as an abstraction. He was not able, in other words, to concretize, through experience, the essence of reality.\footnote{Babbitt, \textit{Democracy and Leadership}, pp. 71-74.}

And, after all, Babbitt's position sought to concretize a philosophical dilemma. On a positivistic plane, it sought to satisfy the human cravings of men for concrete solutions to the problems of life. Thus, for the moment, let us conclude that within the morass of reality it is possible to perceive the one within the many. How this is to be accomplished will be taken up soon.

It would seem appropriate to pause here and discuss, as Mercier does, the notion of the one and the many within the context of our model for change. Mercier asserts that:

\begin{quote}
To exaggerate the oneness of life and merge it into the All-One, until we lose the sense of individuality, is one extreme; to exaggerate the multiplicity of life, until we lose the sense of standards to which particulars conform, the sense of a universal of which particulars are but variations, is the other.\footnote{Mercier, \textit{The Challenge of Humanism}, p. 65.}
\end{quote}

At the outset of this work, it was asserted that change brings with it extreme positions; those aspiring to the \textit{status quo} are slow to admit change that may disquiet the tranquility of man's life. Yet, and this should surprise no one, there exists within extreme positions a dichotomy of extremes. This is certainly evident from Mercier's statement above, as it reflects the extreme
positions of naturalism; which was itself an extreme reaction to Renaissance humanism. But, we shall treat the subject of naturalism more fully when we discuss Rousseau.

The point of this discourse is simply to show that the philosophy of critical humanism can be viewed as a mediating force between the two extremes of naturalism. And, with Babbitt, the mediation of critical humanism as a philosophical position between the extreme forms of naturalism is Buddhistic in origin. "The Buddhist," says Babbitt, "seems at first sight to belong with the apostles of flux."58

But, continues Babbitt:

Buddha for his part is at least as much concerned as Plato with escaping from the flux and . . . towards what in his own phrase makes for 'tranquillity, knowledge, supreme wisdom, and Nirvana.'59

Babbitt's immersion in Buddhist thought leads him to seek the permanence of reality, not through reason, but "like a true Asiatic . . . in man's will."60

So, as we have stated elsewhere, both Babbitt and Plato sought after permanence in reality. Babbitt, however, steeped in Oriental thought could not allow man's reason, the primary faculty of the rational humanists, to touch the permanent and abiding. It was left to man's imagination, a function of the will, to do this.

In all of this, moreover, what must be understood is that Babbitt was neither an apostle of change nor of the abiding. He sought a oneness in ever-changing man; that, through its discovery, would better not only the man but

58Babbitt, Democracy and Leadership, p. 169.
59Ibid.
60Ibid., p. 170.
also his heritage. Babbitt, then, cannot be accused of being either relative or absolute in his philosophy. For a position that seeks to accommodate change within the confines of the permanent and abiding must eventuate not in relativism or absolutism, but in growth. And, a philosophic position that aims at growth must, in the words of Mercier, reach "flexible standards." For, after all, what is growth but accommodation to change based on flexible standards.

Having posed the basic philosophical problem of the one and the many, the problem which seems focal to Babbitt's philosophy, let us examine "how" Babbitt would seek the abiding within flux.

We have asserted elsewhere that tradition and utility often conflict as society or movements within society become more specialized. We have shown this historically in Greece, as rivalries grew between the traditionalist of Ancient Greece and those newly made rich of Commercial Greece. We have posited that the solution of that time revolved about the rational humanism of Plato, Aristotle and Isocrates. Similar expositions were made of Rome, The Medieval Period, The Renaissance, and The Enlightenment. Now, what seems common to all of this is precisely what we have suggested in our model; namely, the notion of change being assimilated by tradition to insure the preservation of a culture. Or, to now put it within the context of Babbitt's notion of critical humanism: what was being grappled with throughout history, and even today, was the problem of the one and the many. How, we must ask, does one accommodate change while holding fast to those elements within society that are abiding? And, within
this framework, pass on a cultural heritage? The answer to these questions, at least for Babbitt, resides in a proper working of man's reason coupled with his higher imagination seeking to know the abiding in the higher will.

The answer is straightforward. Yet it demands careful study. Let us, therefore, seek to study Babbitt's answer to the question of flexible standards within the context of Mercier's schema as previously presented.

Mercier divides man into separate parts; a dichotomy for illustration. Man's "higher activities" include the "higher imagination" and the "higher will." Man's "lower activities" include "reason" and the "senses."

Thus far we have made much of Babbitt's insistence that man's reason is not a part of his higher activities, as it would be with the rational humanists and supernatural humanists. The reason for this, and it is upon this notion that Babbitt builds his philosophy, is as Babbitt relates:

To suppose that one can transcend the element of impermanence, whether in oneself or the outer world, merely through reason in any sense of the word, is to forget that 'illusion is an integral part of reality.' The person who confides unduly in 'reason' is also prone to set up some static 'absolute'; while those who seek to get rid of the absolute in favor of flux and relativity tend at the same time to get rid of standards.

But, continues Babbitt:

Both absolutists and relativists are guilty of an intellectual sophistication of the facts, inasmuch as in life as it is actually experienced, unity and multiplicity are indissolubly blended.61

61Ibid., pp. 168-69.
Reason for Babbitt, then, is inextricably tied to illusion. It cannot grasp, by itself, the abiding. Now, if man's reason is part of the flux in reality, and, as we have demonstrated, is thereby incapable of grasping the permanent, what faculty shall perform this task. It is, says Babbitt, the higher imagination; that faculty which is part of man's "higher activities."

An example may prove helpful here. "A reason" says Babbitt "that is not grounded in insight will always seem to men intolerably cold and negative and will prove unable to withstand the assault of the primary passions."62 Now, the key to understanding reason's relationship with the higher imagination resides in the notion of "insight." For reason may be understood within the context of the primary faculty, as with Plato; it may be the abstractness of Descartes, or the common sense of some classicists.63

For our example, let us assume that reason is consistent with common sense. Though even this is dangerous since a man may show good sense in some things and not in others—all the more why reason cannot be considered to grasp the permanent. But, as to our example. A person seeking to bathe will choose a water temperature between the extremes of hot and cold—at least most will. Now, certainly the correct temperature of the water will vary, within a few degrees, for most men. The point here is this. "In determining what conforms to the mean (man's comfort in this case) there must always be a mediation between

62 Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, p. 171.
63 Ibid., p. 172.
the particular (those attributes of the situation provided by reason) and the
general principle (that water which is too hot or cold will cause discomfort),
and it is here that intuition is indispensable."64 ·

And what of this higher imagination, which, according to Mercier is
"used to reach universals, the permanent, the abiding." Babbitt indicates that
his understanding of the term "imagination" stems historically from the latin
imaginatio, from which, he continues, our own word imagination comes. Yet, he
concludes, the latin imaginatio "is itself a rendering of the Greek phantasy or
fancy."65

And fancy, says Babbitt, "means literally 'what appears'; in other words,
either the various impressions of sense, or else a faculty that stores up these
impressions and is therefore closely related to memory."66 Now, "what appears"
is imagination. And, imagination is part of illusion. But, "illusion is an
integral part of reality."67 If imagination can garner "what appears" in reality--
sense impressions--and can store "up these impressions," can it not be posited
that these stored perceptions are what one conceives.68 The imagination, there-
fore, has the connotation for Babbitt, of that faculty which gathers things to-
gather; of fashioning things into one.69

64 Ibid., p. 173.
65 Babbitt, Democracy and Leadership, p. 11.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid., p. 12.
68 Ibid. Conceit was in old English usage not only a complementary term, but
one of the synonyms of imagination.
69 Ibid., p. 13.
For Babbitt's philosophy, then, it is but a natural consequence, based on the foregoing analysis, to assert that:

If we mean by imagination not merely what we perceive, but what we conceive, it follows inevitably that the problem of the imagination is closely bound up with that of the one and the many and therefore with the problem of standards; for it is impossible . . . to achieve standards, at least along critical lines, unless one can discover in life somewhere an abiding unity with which to measure its mere variety and change.\(^{70}\)

The imagination, for Babbitt, was depicted as "higher" and "lower." Man's lower imagination, as Mercier has said, revolves about the senses and the changing particular. And man's reason, though itself an organ of flux, does exercise control over the lower imagination. As Mercier puts it, "when the lower imagination is emancipated from the control of reason, it can so combine its images as to lose contact with the real."\(^{71}\)

What we are depicting here within the confines of man's "lower activities" is the notion that both reason and the lower imagination are faculties of flux. However, the appearances of the lower imagination can, to some degree, be brought into contact with the reality of the world. But, one may say, if reason can bring the lower imagination into contact with the real world, how can one assert that reason is an organ of flux? It is simply so, since reason may indeed grasp the reality of the moment. It may not, however, since it is itself a part of

\(^{70}\)ibid.

\(^{71}\)Mercier, The Challenge of Humanism, p. 70.
change, conceive of reality outside of its perspective confined by time and space. It must be left to the higher imagination, then, to, as Mercier states "reach universals, the permanent, the abiding."

What may prove helpful here in this exposition is an analogy. If we view the higher imagination as a faculty of intuition or conceptualization, then it may be likened to the notion of "historical mindedness." Now, the notion of historical mindedness suggests an interpretive function for the writer of history. He is not to be merely a chronologist, but one who can interpret his subject matter within the context of the present. It should follow, therefore, that the more imaginative and, accordingly, intuitive, historian will be capable of examining the data of the past, the wisdom of the ages, if you will, and relating it to the present.

And, herein lies the function of the higher imagination and reason. It is reason that enables man to be analytical; to analyze the conceptualizations of the higher imagination. Specifically, as concerns our example, it is the higher imagination that proves capable of a "world view"; of transcending time and space; of conceiving differences and similarities. However, it is left to reason to discriminate. Reason must, then, since it has contact with the real world, analyze the conceptualizations of the past within the framework of the present.

The higher imagination, then, serves to unify facts; without it, these data would remain inert and isolated. And yet, man's reason must be present to trace cause and effect. And, as Babbitt suggests:

\[\text{this power } \text{reason} \text{ alone can determine whether the unity the imagination has established among the facts is real or whether it exists rather only in some 'realm of chimeras.'}\]

The proper functioning of man's "lower activities" (sense and reason), then, act to perceive and discriminate. The senses provide the data for concept formation--the function of the higher imagination; reason, in this process, acts to analyze the data formed in concepts.

Now, prior to discussing the last element of Mercier's schema; that of the "higher will," let us conclude our discussion of perception (sense), discrimination (reason), and conceptualization (higher imagination) with an example. It is intended that this example shall show the inter-play of all three functions within man.

Let us suppose that we are confronted with an ethical situation; whether to steal, shall we say, a loaf of bread. Now, our senses have perceived many things; namely, all that has passed into our conscious. Our senses have acted to provide us with the data for conceptualization--for nothing is concept without first being the data of experience. Therefore, we have, through the benefit of sense knowledge, formed conceptualizations of whether it is correct to steal

\[\text{73 Babbitt, Democracy and Leadership, p. 233.}\]
a loaf of bread. Thus far we have, on a continuum, moved from the world of sense to the world of idea. And, we have various ideas on stealing. Ideas that lead one to know the wrong of stealing, ideas that enable one to know when stealing is necessary.

There is, then, a basic unity in man's higher imagination: the unity of conceptualizing stealing as right or wrong. But, as Babbitt has said, reason alone can discover whether the unity of the higher imagination is real or not. And so, it is left to man's analytical power of reason to apply the conceptualizations of the "higher imagination" to the circumstances of the present. Reason may, in analyzing the situation, suggest that stealing the bread is quite appropriate--given the circumstances of a starving family. On the other hand, it may suggest the evils of this act and suggest that this action be forestalled or, as the case may be, abandoned.

It can be posited at this juncture that man's reason, considered as an analytical function operating within the flux of reality, can be identified with utility. The higher imagination, on the other hand, can be said to be associated with tradition. These elements of utility and tradition, posed at the outset of this work were said to be generally in conflict; shown to be so historically in our analysis of past cultures. The point here, and this may be crucial to our notion of change, is that utility and tradition need not be juxtaposed against each other. Indeed, it would seem, as Babbitt suggests, that the higher imagination working in harmony with reason should allow for accommodation and
orderly assimilation. What is being suggested here is the notion that growth
or change need not be at the expense of either those advocating utility or
tradition. Rather, the eclecticism of Babbitt would suggest that the proper
functioning of reason and imagination can lead to growth.

Now, thus far we have applied these ideas to the individual. But, we
have asserted elsewhere that society is a coming together of individuals--a
social union. Institutions within society do not exist in isolation. And,
if this be so, who, we may ask, constitutes the make-up of society? It cannot
be other than individuals. It would, therefore, seem logical to apply the
philosophical position of Babbitt, as concerns the individual, to society as
a whole.

What is being suggested here, and this has been alluded to before, is
the notion of change. While this topic will be treated in depth at a later
stage, it seems appropriate to state at this point some application of Babbitt's
philosophical rationale to our model for change.

If we accept the notion that reason is an organ of flux and change,
we can posit that those within society seeking change at the expense of tradition
may be acting as rational humanists. And rational humanism, as Babbitt has
said, has no real permanency. Decisions reached solely through reason, then,
are decisions made based on the needs of the moment. There is no perspective
of time utilized--no historical mindedness--only the dictates of the present.
And, solutions as well as the standards and values derived from these solutions
favor the moment. Since the solutions of reason have not been reached through
the higher imagination, the solutions themselves become as inflexible as the
situation to which reason was reacting. Thus, we will posit for the moment
that solutions reached solely through reason lead to inflexible standards.

In the foregoing paragraphs we have, through examples, sought to bring
about problematic situations. It should be clear that in the example of the
historian as well as the example of the man faced with the choice of whether or
not to steal, there resides in this decision an element of choice. A decision
to "do" something or to "refrain" from action. And it is here, in the notion
of choice that we have the capstone to Babbitt's philosophical position of
critical humanism. As Mercier indicates in his schema, the "higher will acts
as a check on the natural order and secures mediation between extremes." The
notion of the "higher will" for Babbitt, then, is "a will that is felt in re-
lation to man's ordinary expansive self as a will to refrain, and finally as a
will to renounce."\textsuperscript{74} It is the higher will, the \textit{frein vital}, that acts, in
the words of Babbitt as an "inner check" on man's expansive tendencies.

As we shall discover later, the notion of man's will to refrain is
precisely that which pits the critical humanist against the romantic naturalist.
Suffice it to say for the moment that any movement which seeks to attain a more
abundant life by getting rid of the "don'ts" is at odds with the critical
humanist.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{74}Babbitt, \textit{On Being Creative}, p. 254.
\textsuperscript{75}Babbitt, \textit{Democracy and Leadership}, p. 5.
Let us, then, pursue with Babbitt his position on the higher will. He states categorically that:

I do not hesitate to affirm that which is specifically human in man and ultimately divine is a certain quality of will, a will that is felt in its relation to his ordinary self as a will to refrain.\(^76\)

Continuing, Babbitt asserts that the primacy given to the higher will over man's intellect is Oriental in derivation. And further, "the idea of humility, the idea that man needs to defer to a higher will, came into Europe with an Oriental religion, Christianity."\(^77\)

The notion of humility, a virtue contrary to what is perhaps the greatest of all vices, pride, grows or declines with the growth or decline of Christianity. And, continues Babbitt:

Inasmuch as the recognition of the supremacy of will seems to me imperative in any wise view of life, I side in important respects with the Christian against those who have in the Occident, whether in ancient or modern times, inclined to give the first place either to the intellect or the emotions.\(^78\)

While the foregoing may be illustrative of Babbitt's association with Christianity, it must be recalled that Babbitt was not a Christian in the sectarian sense. Indeed, as concerns the notion of will, he asserts:

I differ from the Christian, however, in that my interest in the higher will and the power of veto it exercises over man's expansive desires is humanistic rather than religious.\(^79\)

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\(^76\)Ibid., p. 6. \\
\(^77\)Ibid. \\
\(^78\)Ibid. \\
\(^79\)Ibid.
And, herein lies an important distinction for our understanding of Babbitt. The higher will for Babbitt was more an instrument for mediation. It was an active faculty. In Babbitt's opinion, the Christian sense of the higher will, steeped in Grace, was more concerned with meditation—meditation on God's will. We may further deduce that Babbitt is less concerned with meditation, and more with mediation or "observance of the law of measure that should govern man in his secular relations."  

Further, Babbitt asserts that the higher will "must be accepted as a mystery that may be studied in its practical effects, but that, in its ultimate nature, is incapable of formulation." To deny the higher will would seem for Babbitt tantamount to agreeing with the Heraclitan position that all things are in flux. Or, to quote the homely example used by Babbitt:

The person who declines to turn the higher will to account until he is sure he has grasped its ultimate nature is very much on a level with the man who should refuse to make practical use of electrical energy until he is certain he has an impeccable theory of electricity.  

Babbitt's position on the higher will, as should be clear by now, centers upon those "who, as a result of having broken with the traditional forms of religion on grounds insufficiently critical, are in danger of losing

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80 Ibid. See also: Norman Foerster, Humanism and America, p. 26. What is being suggested here, and will be discussed in detail later, is the notion of decorum. Simply stated, it is the hallmark of the critical humanist; that is, "bridging the gap between the general precept and some particular."

81 Ibid., p. 40.

82 Ibid.
the truths of the higher will entirely."\(^{83}\) The notion of the higher will for Babbitt is, therefore, an alternative for those seeking a critical path to the permanent and abiding.

And, it should be stated that this path can be pursued through "work" or "grace." The critical humanist of Babbitt's persuasion will, of course, elect work.\(^{84}\) Now here is perhaps the singular aspect that separates Christians from Babbitt's humanism. By his refusal, not denial, to take supernatural grace into account, Babbitt must seek another avenue to attain the permanent. And, this avenue is work. And work for Babbitt "consists in the superimposition of the ethical will upon the natural self."\(^{85}\)

Or put another way, "the higher immediacy that is known in its relation to the lower immediacy as a power of vital control (frèin vital)."\(^{86}\)

It is through "work"; that is, the higher will providing "the ultimate source of the abiding" and the "unwritten laws of heaven" and the higher imagination grasping this wisdom and interplaying it with the circumstances of reason that man is capable of being critically human.\(^{87}\) For Babbitt, the higher will

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\(^{83}\) Babbitt, *Democracy and Leadership*, p. 317.

\(^{84}\) Foerster, *Humanism and America*, p. 41. The connotation of work implied here is Aristotelian in derivation. Its meaning, therefore, not unlike the meaning of Grace, implies a constant striving "to rise from a lower to a higher range of satisfactions" (or happiness).

\(^{85}\) Babbitt, *Democracy and Leadership*, p. 197.

\(^{86}\) Foerster, *Humanism and America*, p. 40.

\(^{87}\) Mercier, *The Challenge of Humanism*, p. 76.
is that to which the higher imagination must aspire. It is that which is both above and in man. It is that element of the divine in man that acts as an "inner check" on man's expansive desires. And, as we have said, some would call this supernatural grace.

By mere observation, we must be inclined to admit that there exists within man a tendency to excess. In addition, we must admit that there is also a tendency within man to curb his appetites; whether one seeks to call this Supernatural Grace or the mediation of the higher will is not the issue. We seek here only to set-forth Babbitt's philosophy.

As a positivist, then, Babbitt seeks to utilize a hierarchical structure of philosophy not dissimilar to a philosophy of faith. Yet, he seeks to show the "working" in man of the higher will through observation, the imposition of control on appetite. Babbitt's position, unlike the Christian faith, seeks to be demonstrated in a rationale rather than a belief.

In terms of application to our model for change, let us suggest at this point that a philosophical position based on the higher imagination seeking to garner the "wisdom of the ages," the permanent within the flux, while utilizing either "work" or "grace," as a check against the expansive desires of man's appetites, and guided by the analytical powers of reason, may hold the key to an orderly growth. Indeed, such a philosophical position, put into practice, may lead one to assimilate change within the revered traditions; modifying traditions where necessary in the name of flexible standards. But, a fuller
explanation of this philosophy awaits the reader as we progress to the application of Babbitt's position to his educational thought.

We have in the course of this chapter tried to express the Oriental influence on Babbitt's critical humanism. We have contrasted this humanism with objections raised by sectarian thinkers. And, lastly we have exposed the philosophical underpinnings of Babbitt's position—his view of man.

It is essential to grasp the dualistic philosophy of Irving Babbitt if one is to have an appreciation for our discussion of the romantic naturalism of Rousseau. For, to Babbitt, as we shall soon see, Rousseau epitomized the arch-type against whom critical humanism was pitted. We shall now turn our attention to this task.
CHAPTER IV

CRITICAL HUMANISM AND ROMANTIC NATURALISM--

THE EDUCATIONAL POSITIONS OF BABBITT AND ROUSSEAU

Much of our discussion in the ensuing paragraphs will center upon the educational implications of Babbitt's philosophical principles as applied to the romanticism of Rousseau. It would, therefore, seem only fair at this point to open our remarks with some expositions of the etiology of romanticism and classicism. In so doing, the reader may be better prepared for the argument at hand. And, as we shall soon see, Babbitt is fastidious, to the point of bordering on the pedantic, in setting forth definitions and derivations of words.¹

In approaching any definition, Babbitt favored strict adherence to the Socratic method. This method, according to Babbitt, was

in its very essence a process of right defining. It divides and subdivides and distinguishes between the diverse and sometimes contradictory concepts that lurk beneath one work; it is a perpetual protest, in short, against the confusion that arises from the careless use of general terms, especially when they have become popular catchwords.²

¹Foerster, Humanism and America, pp. 25-51. See also: Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, pp. 1-2.

²Babbitt, Literature and the American College, p. 3. See also: Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, pp. 2, 374-75. A Socratic definition requires that one see a commonality in disparate elements as well as a disparity in things taken to be common. This notion is similar to that previously discussed, i.e., the one and the many. See also: Babbitt, Democracy and Leadership, p. 278. See also: Babbitt, On Being Creative, pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.

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Specifically, the Socratic method implied for Babbitt the art of inductive defining based on a dichotomy encompassing not only the "law for thing" but also the "law for man." The Socratic method, then, seeks to discover and/or prove generalities based on particulars. Or, put another way, man's latent potentialities were brought to fruition through the sensory cues provided in experience.

For Babbitt, then, Socrates provided a model upon which he could relate his own philosophy of critical humanism. Babbitt's concept of defining terms also centered about induction; the verification of general principles found in man's higher imagination through the experience of reason. And, it was felt, that these latent principles within man's higher imagination became manifest in a manner similar to that expressed by Socrates; namely, through the experience garnered from man's senses and, ultimately, through his reason. The generalities, therefore, that existed within man's imagination were concretized through experience.

Applying this analytical procedure, Babbitt would instruct us to perceive the common element or elements in the terms classical and romantic and to trace this unifying element as far back historically as possible; that is, to its underlying phenomenon. To this end, Babbitt asserts that the term romantic

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3 Inductive defining is a process of discovering and proving general propositions from particular cases.

4 Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, p. 2. It should be kept in mind that Babbitt while essentially a classicist was also a master of comparative literatures. And, thus, was capable of fusing language derivations within the confines of literature. Babbitt, therefore, relies heavily on the history of language and the historical derivation of words.
may be traced historically to the old French roman. Babbitt continues that "roman and like words meant originally the various vernaculars derived from Latin, just as the French still speak of these vernaculars as the romance languages; and then the word roman came to be applied to tales written in the various vernaculars, especially in old French."\(^5\) In general, a thing is romantic if it refers to something possible rather than probable. It also refers to things unique or things of fantasy or to adventure.

Babbitt asserts, on the other hand, that a thing is considered to be classical "when it is not unique, but representative of a class."\(^6\) How often we have heard the expression used "the classic case in this area is . . . ." And this is precisely what Babbitt is stating here; namely, that classic connotes that which is representative of a class or group. Indeed, it is not that which is adventuresome or unique. But, rather, that which has stood the test of time. Something becomes, then, the classic case or is classic to the extent to which it is perennial and has stood the test of time.

Babbitt comments further on the chronology of the term romantic when he refers to the folk-lore and imagery attached to historical events in the Middle Ages. Reality was vivified by legend. The masses were made cognizant of history in a fashion which appealed to their intellectual level. The imagery attached to the term romantic may be illustrated as follows:

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 3.

\(^6\)Ibid., p. 4.
The gentleman I am married to made love to me in rapture but it was the rapture of a Christian and a man of Honor, not a romantic hero or a whining coxcomb.\(^7\)

By the seventeenth century the term romantic became associated with outer nature; that is a reality exclusive of a person's self but nonetheless reflective of his imagery. This idea may be illustrated by the following excerpt: "There happened this extraordinary case--one of the most romantique that ever I heard in my life and could not have believed."\(^8\)

It can be posited from the foregoing that through its evolution, the term romantic carried the connotations of imagery (Middle Ages) and adventure (seventeenth century). Further, the etiology of the term romantic reveals that the French spelled romantic in two different ways; romantique, to connote a beautiful scene--reflected in Rousseau's statement in the Fifth Promenade (1777) that the shores of the Lake of Bienne are more wild and romantique than . . . ; and romanesque, to connote adventure or the unusual.\(^9\)

Now, what is important here, and what makes this chronology worthwhile, is the notion that romanticism as referred to thus far connotes the use of "the

\[^7\text{Ibid.}, p. 6.\]

\[^8\text{Ibid.}\]

\[^9\text{Ibid.}, p. 7. \text{See also: pp. 268-393. Babbitt devotes most of these pages to the study of the romantic movement. And, literary as well as poetic references may be found here relating to the romantic movement during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, our intent is not to trace the use of romantic throughout history. Rather, it is to establish its meaning through the use of its historical evolution. And, to use its historical evolution only to the extent that it serves our purpose of defining what Babbitt meant by romantic.}^\]
uncultivated human imagination.” And this imagination has, as we have stated elsewhere, lost touch with reality; it is an imagination set-free from the analytical powers of reason. An imagination, as Babbitt might say, caught in the flux of reality.

Let us set forth at this juncture some chronology of the term classicist. To this end Babbitt relies on Aristotle who asserts that man is bound by two great laws: a natural self that is governed by impulse and a human self that has control over the natural self. The control exerted by the human self over the natural self, and for Babbitt it will be remembered that this is man's will of control (frein vital), is taken to be the core of classical tradition. 11

When the romantic refers to nature, therefore, it is to the "law for thing" to which he has reference. 12 And as Russell Kirk indicates, the "law for thing" is that aspect of man's dual nature which concerns itself with the world of sense. 13 When the classicist refers to nature it is to man's human self or control. For Irving Babbitt, nature without human control "has not even

10 Ibid., p. 5.
11 Ibid., p. 16.
12 The phrase "law for thing" refers to the romantic's monistic view of human nature; that through the satisfaction of appetite and impulse, man can achieve what "ought" to be. This notion will be discussed in greater detail in the remainder of this chapter.
13 Russell Kirk, "The Conservative Humanism of Irving Babbitt," The Prairie Schooner, XXVI (1952), 245-46. It will be remembered that Babbitt's basic philosophical position espouses a critical humanism conceived in a duality of man's nature encompassing his ability to control his will of impulse (elan vital) by means of his will of control (frein vital). Further, it is Babbitt's contention that the romanticists concern themselves only with that aspect of man's dual nature termed impulse or appetite.
the ability to conquer the excess to which the natural intellect and will of man
is prone, nor to attain order and happiness in this life . . . " And, it is
on this fundamental disagreement of man's duality that the argument between
romantic and classicist will soon be waged.

In the Aristotelian sense, the foregoing notions on classicism imply
that the human self must control the natural self. Or that which "ought" to be
must take precedence over that which "is." In short, Aristotle argues that by
control through the human self of the natural self (impulse, appetite, sense)
one can establish a model of acceptable norms that can be viewed as universals
for behavioral imitation. Yet for the individual, this striving for ideals is
a never-ending process. For Aristotle, the classicist is one constantly evolving
toward what "ought" to be.

What must be understood here, and this is crucial to an understanding
of humanism and romanticism, is that the classicist openly states what "ought"
to be cannot be achieved. It is a goal toward which we must strive constantly
and in so doing perfect ourselves as well as serve as models for others. And,
this is what is meant by the "law for self." The romantic, on the other hand,
posits that man's close alliance of his natural self with nature can achieve
the ideal of what "ought" to be. And, this is what is meant by the "law for
thing"; appetite, impulse, and sense.

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14Louis J. A. Mercier, "Legacy of Irving Babbitt," Harvard Graduate
Magazine, XXXXII (January, 1934), 334. See also: Mercier, The Challenge of
Humanism, p. 185.
And, this assertion is consistent with what we have said earlier as regards Babbitt's philosophical position and the notion of change based on flexible standards. It is simply that reason, man's analytical power, which was foresaken by the romantics for imagination, coupled with the proper use of the higher imagination and higher will can lead to growth. And growth, it must be remembered, is a constant process of seeking to attain what "ought" to be.

Yet, as we have attempted to demonstrate, the romantic seeks what "ought" to be on a level of appetite satisfaction. He seems not to be interested in any controls that may have to be placed on his appetites. And, as we shall soon see, the notions of Rousseau are consistent with a philosophy based on the "law for thing."

It should be noted that the Aristotelian concept of classicism was mechanized by the neo-classicists of France. The Greeks who had said that man should seek universals themselves were now made models for imitation. No longer were men to freely exercise control over their impulses in the pursuit of what "ought" to be. Rather, they were to accept as models those who had already done this, i.e., Aristotle, Vergil, Plato. Further, it should be added that the neo-classicist was reacting to the idea of romantic expressed as heroic deeds typified in the Medieval period.


16 Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, pp. 17-20.
What is perhaps characteristic and unfortunate of many reactions is the dogmatism and ritual expressed in the reactions. This was certainly obvious in the neo-classical position on classicism as expressed above. Indeed, what seems to have been the delight of romanticism; namely, man's imagination, became for the neo-classicist a nemesis. Good sense or reason prevailed over imagination for the neo-classicist. And, since the neo-classicists were unable to work-out a proper relationship between reason and imagination, they may be said to be as extreme in their position as were the romantics.

As was pointed out earlier, movements in history often tend to approximate a pendulum in its swing full-arc from one position to the other: on the one hand, the extreme position of the Greek classicists and their philosophy of becoming; on the other, the neo-classicists and their imitation of models. Only with time does the pendulum swing to the center and moderation.

The application of the foregoing may be further typified by the eventual reaction in France to the neo-classical position. The reaction was the beginning of romanticism. In part, the reaction was a return to the medieval concept of romanticism referred to previously; it was also a reaction to the felt abuse of a rigid, inflexible way of life that many felt was perpetrated by the neo-classicists.
The romantic then emerged. He had stripped away the idea of man's human self controlling his natural self as espoused by the early Greeks; he had discarded any notions of reason and regimentation advocated by the neo-classicists. The romantic emerged as a newborn babe whose only aim was to allow his natural self to adhere to the dictates of nature.

We have posited in the previous paragraphs that romantic naturalism is suggestive of human imagination prone to excess; that is, derelict in its use of reason. We have also posited that the romantic contends that man, acting in harmony with nature can achieve the ideal here in this world. Now, it is felt that a philosophical position such as romantic naturalism would indeed have appeal to individuals tired of the abuses of a static society. This may be all the more true since the Enlightenment was an age of vitality and excitement; an age that sought utilitarian answers to issues. It may be posited, therefore, that the felt abuses of the past--social, economic, political, and religious--became manifest at a time when people saw hope for change. This, then was the Enlightenment, the apex of Rousseauistic Naturalism.\textsuperscript{17}

So that our treatment of Rousseau and romantic naturalism may be better understood, it may prove helpful to depict the milieu within which the notions of eighteenth century Romanticism evolved, its antecedent etiology having

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., pp. 26-27, 41. Lest there be confusion here as to the possible paradox suggested by the romanticism of Rousseau and the Age of Enlightenment which is often characterized by Newton's use of reason, let us state that for Babbitt the notion of romantic implied the use of reason, albeit the unbridled reason set apart from man's will of control. It is felt, therefore, that Babbitt would view Newton and Rousseau in a similar way; namely, as monists relying solely on man's reason to achieve progress.
already been discussed. It may also prove helpful to recall the historical discourse treated in the first chapter of this work, that relating to "The Enlightenment and Humanism."\(^{18}\)

Now, within this age of reason, progress and natural law, it was only natural that individuals, like the Philosophes, would emerge to challenge the traditions of the past. And, it may be added that such is consistent with our aforementioned model of change.

Let us now move to an understanding of Jean Jacques Rousseau, who, to Babbitt, seemed most representative of the romanticism found in the Age of the Enlightenment. Now, Rousseau lived in eighteenth century France; a period of discord and despotism. It was a time when the rich exploited the poor and there was little recourse for the poor but to bear the burdens of their lot. Eighteenth century France was steeped in tradition and neo-classicism. However, its clinging to these aspects of humanism was more to impede than promote progress. Little was cared for the possibility of a rising middle class or the injustices perpetrated upon the lowly. All that mattered was the continuance of a static society—a situation not uncommon to a traditionalist society.

Education reflected the static nature of society. It did not look to the scientific progress of the Enlightenment but, instead, gave its students training in the rhetoric and skills of the noble dead. The classics, held in

\(^{18}\)See Chapter I, pp. 20-28.
esteem by so many over the years of educational development, were felt to impede rather than foster progress. And, in this regard, Rousseau was said by many to be correct.19 The study of the classics in a time of new excitement, the scientific method, the age of reason, seemed mundane to say the least.

We have pointed out that man's reaction to abuse is generally to the opposite extreme of the abuse. One could reason that Rousseau, seeing the educational abuses perpetrated by a static society, reacted by espousing a naturalistic system of education completely opposite to the system in vogue.

Rousseau's reaction to the felt abuses of the neo-classical tradition was reflected within the framework of Enlightenment ideology which stressed the ameliorative aspects of society. Society based on consensus of the common good would replace the existing, decadent society whose foundation rested upon a political notion of The Divine Right of Kings and whose tenets were felt to be as outmoded as the classical tradition espoused therein.

That Rousseau felt strongly about the inequality of mankind is evidenced by his work entitled: Discourse on the Origin of Inequality.20 Rousseau is concerned here not only with social but individual inequality. Social inequality, while a part of nature's potentiality, cannot manifest itself until society has

19 Other educational reformers notable Pestalozzi, Froebal, Herbart, Owen, Neef, and Eliot agreed that the classical tradition must give-way to a more utilitarian form of education.

20 Charles W. Hendel, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Moralist (New York: Oxford University Press, 1934), pp. 33-63. A rendering of Rousseau's ideas on inequality may be found on these pages.
passed through various stages of development. In short, as man evolved into a more complex being, it became more difficult for him to act in harmony with his own nature. Rousseau says in effect that man by participating in society cannot help but be affected by the social organization of society that corrupts man.

We see here an important aspect of Rousseau's thought; namely, that man within the social organization of society will be unable to help himself or do anything about the evils encountered. Since man is weak and capable of inimitable self-love, he could not but acquiesce to hollow prizes of honor, titles, and property bestowed by society upon those whom it favored.

It is essential at this point to properly understand Babbitt's notions of Rousseau's position on nature. For, as we shall see, it is upon their basic differences as to how nature is viewed that the argument unfolds.

We have already indicated that disenchantment of the Philosophes with many of the traditions found in eighteenth century France. We have stated their dissatisfaction with an aristocratic and static society which revered the classics of antiquity. In short, we have asserted that the notions of the status quo were untenable to an "enlightened man." Further, the Philosophes and, notably Rousseau, were reacting, as we have already said, against the neo-classical position which stressed formalism and tradition. That the

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neo-classical position was too rigid is even attested to by Babbitt when he says that "the classical tradition had come to suffer . . . from a taint of formalism." 22 But, this is not all, for all formalism and things requiring duty or obedience were equally held in contempt by Rousseau. Rousseau seems to have been so dissatisfied with the "taint of formalism" found in the neo-classical position that he totally rejected any constraints placed on man. Indeed, man was now to be viewed as innately good; his society, from which wickedness stems, was evil.

A further manifestation of the "static society" and "obligation" to which Rousseau reacted was Calvinism. And, Calvinism, it will be remembered stressed the notions of duty, obligation, and man's innately evil nature. A theology espousing the depravity of man's nature resultant from original sin and preaching predestination and salvation for an "elect" few, must have struck hard at Rousseau.

Indeed, the Calvinistic theology stemming from the Reformation may have been a needed remedy to the felt excesses of the Renaissance with its emphasis on man rather than God. Nevertheless, to an Enlightenment thinker like Rousseau, steeped in Deism, it proved a nemesis. For, as with so many other reactions, the Calvinistic doctrines that had risen to combat the Renaissance tradition of the classics had, by the Enlightenment, become a theological nightmare. And, as

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Babbitt says, "Rousseau's discovery that man is naturally good is to be understood largely as an extreme recoil from the theological nightmare."\(^{23}\)

With all that seemed awry in society, it is not difficult to see why Rousseau took the position that man's woes stemmed, not from his own innate evilness, but from the evil of society. To rectify this situation, Rousseau spoke of the development of the "natural man." In the *Emile*\(^{24}\) Rousseau speaks of developing man's "natural goodness" to purge society of its evils. We have here the use of "nature" and "natural." And, what meaning do they hold for us relative to Rousseau's writings? To understand the connotation of "nature" and the "natural man" is, as we shall posit, to understand the meaning of Rousseau's educational thought.

In the *Emile*, Rousseau speaks of the development of Emile in an asocial environment to fit him for the society in which he must live. One may comment that this is a distinct inconsistency in the writing of Rousseau in that preparation for a social environment within an asocial environment cannot produce effective results. Further, as we read *Emile*, the thought of implementing this singular education to the many in society seems both impractical and improbable. But is it? It is here that we will explore the meaning of Rousseau for education.

Many educational reformers of the nineteenth century including Pestalozzi and Froebel felt that the critical and most basic unit of society was the family.

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\(^{23}\) *Ibid.*

To destroy it through the social organization of society that fed upon and inflamed man's self-love was evil. The restoration of the family was crucial for Rousseau. Further, if the family, as the basic unit of society, could not be educated in selflessness, society would continue to perpetrate its evils upon man.

In his book The New Heloise, Rousseau asserts that the only "natural" social unit of importance is the family. It is from the natural family that the natural man will come. What is being suggested here is the idea that "natural" as found in the works of Rousseau is synonymous with "family." We can see a further allusion to this in the last book of Emile. Emile indicates to his tutor that he will not have a tutor for his own son, but will provide the needed education himself.

One can further hypothesize that Rousseau, in suggesting a tutor for Emile, sought to return education to the security of the family. Further, the properly educated family would then eradicate the evils of society through its example.

But how, one asks, will the family within society be in a position to act upon the whole of society? To answer this question involves a consideration of Rousseau's contribution of the Social Contract. By way of the Social Contract,

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the family could become a part of society without jeopardising its own security. Also, as a social agency, it would assist society in cleansing itself of its evils, for the family was "naturally good."

The Social Contract is, in this writer's opinion, a treatise on civil unity. It is Rousseau's method of allowing the family to cope within society. According to the Contract, men entered into an agreement or association with each other for the common good. The family, as it passes into society, loses any individuality for its members that it may have had previously. The family, to act in accord with the general will and civil unity, must abandon any ideas of asserting itself in contradistinction to the whole of society. A notion not unlike that of the Polis found in ancient Greece.

Stanley E. Ballinger writing in The Educated Man states that:

There is no defensible place in Rousseau's thought for the individual considered by himself. The individual cannot deny the unitary character--viewed in moral perspective--of the community of which he is a part, the best interests of which he is bound to promote, and, in a rightly ordered situation, he wants of his own free will to promote.27

Man's security or self-development, therefore, passes from the family to the society and its general will through the Social Contract.

The "natural man" referred to previously continues in his development but now through society. The development of the natural man, Rousseau's aim,

is little more than the perfectibility of man's potential as he passes from one stage of development to another. It seems somewhat ironic that the society so criticized by Rousseau as leading man to corruptness now becomes, through the *Social Contract*, the avenue through which man will continue to grow and develop his potential.

It must be understood that the natural man who could not act in harmony with his nature in a corrupt society can now do so. This because, as Rousseau has said, man has returned to the laws of nature (thing), having shed the laws of man. He has cleansed himself of the corruptibility of society in the process and has gained the security and revitalization of the basic unity of society; namely, the family. The natural man returns to society, born anew, and ready to abide by the agreed upon societal laws that will promote the common good.

It can be reasoned from the foregoing that individuality becomes secondary to the general will. Or, to place this within the context of our purpose, humanism with its critical emphasis on the duality of the individual had fallen sway to a position which denies a duality within man. It can be further posited that the positions outlined above can do little more than remind the reader that the family is essential to our very existence as a nation. The political application of the family to society is also challenged on the basis that if Rousseau's position on man's continued development of his natural potential via the *Social Contract* and consensus were viable, most of our societal ills would have by now been eradicated. It is safe to say that this has not occurred.
A philosophy such as that espoused by Rousseau emphasizing the subjugation of the individual self to the whole is not the solution to our educational problems but the crux of our problem. Lack of individuality leads to mediocrity. For if it is the responsibility of the whole of society to remedy the ills of mankind, it is no one's responsibility.

Now, what we have been referring to here is one aspect of naturalism; indeed for Babbitt, the most significant aspect. Nevertheless, there remains for our consideration another form of naturalism; that of Scientific Naturalism. And, we have reference here to the scientific naturalism of Francis Bacon.

Babbitt comments that Bacon was led to neglect the "human law" by emphasizing the natural law; in seeking to gain dominion over things, he lost dominion over himself. He is an example of how man may be dethroned when overmastered by the naturalistic temper and unduly fascinated by power and success.

Babbitt portrays Bacon as a scientific positivist seeking to achieve results through quantitative means. Yet, Babbitt is quick to add that Bacon remained, in part, a humanist in that he held disdain for the multitude. However true this may be, Bacon's naturalism was premised upon the progress of mankind through scientific investigation and discovery.

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28 Babbitt, "Speech Delivered to Chinese Students," pp. 4-7. Babbitt, in discussing the humanitarian movement, indicates that "the modern utilitarian movement already has its prophet in Francis Bacon. You may know its notions by their pleas for organization and efficiency and in general by their confidence in machinery. And, as concerns Rousseau, Babbitt says that this side of the humanitarian movement puts its main emphasis on emotional expansion. Either of these extremes, Babbitt continues, aims at a philosophy of life in the idea of progress, which in some form or other is the true religion of our Occidental expansionists."

Perhaps the essential argument espoused by Babbitt against the utilitarian notions of Bacon is the one which accuses Bacon of being more concerned with the one-sided development of man than with attempting to develop man to his fullness. Or, put another way, Babbitt was critical of Bacon's emphasis on the "law for thing" and his exclusion of the "law for man."

What is being argued here is a basic difference in the philosophies of these two men. Babbitt and Bacon would both agree that it is impossible for man to know all there is to know. But, it is from this point that both begin to disagree. Babbitt holds that if man cannot know all things, then it is his responsibility as an individual to apply to the enormous mass of things to be known some human principle of selection, and in the search for this principle to fortify his individual insight by the experience of the race. 30

Man's search for knowledge then is an individual one that seeks to eventuate in a well-rounded personality. Yet Bacon concludes that man cannot attain a wholeness of personality in this manner of individual searching. He posits that what is important is that man develop into an efficient member of society. If this means that a person is one-sided in his personality, but can perform a skill that will lead to social efficiency, then so be it—a position not unlike that of John Dewey.

Babbitt has similar disdain for the naturalistic position preferred by Rousseau. Babbitt asserts that Rousseau purports a doctrine of excessive liberty stemming from man's indolence. For Rousseau seeks not a regulated liberty, but

30 Ibid., p. 44.
rather an escape from all that requires duty. The slightest duties become
unendurable; a word to utter, a visit to make, as soon as they are obligatory
are torments for Rousseau. 31

What causes the reader difficulty in supporting Rousseau's notions on
following the dictates of one's heart and avoiding obligation is the notion that
man, because he is human, will not always seek that which is best for him. Yet,
if we are truly Rousseau's followers we will quickly add that since man is in-
nately good, and not depraved or deprived, so long as man follows the dictates
of nature he will seek that which is good.

Babbitt indicates that Rousseau asserts that man's strongest passion,
next to that of self-preservation, is to do nothing at all. 32 It is precisely
this indolence that becomes a curse for Babbitt and the apex for Rousseau. To
understand this difference is to understand both men's position on human nature.

We have already stated that Rousseau felt that man left in the state of
nature, with no duties imposed upon him, would in his own time learn that which
is good from nature. Only when man entered society would his goodness be challenged
by the evils of institutions. Yet, according to Rousseau, by the time man would
enter society he would be properly girded to avoid its evils. And this social
preparation, curiously enough, would be done, at least initially, in an asocial
environment.

31 Ibid., p. 51. 32 Ibid., p. 54.
It was mentioned earlier that Babbitt was very much at home with Buddhist teachings. It was, in all probability, the result of his religious beliefs that led him to view man's nature in a far different manner than did Rousseau. Babbitt believed that the greatest evil that could befall man was sloth. To counter this vice, man must constantly strive, through his active will, to awaken his senses. Man cannot be a mere force of nature. He must be able to act upon himself; he must possess an essence distinct from nature. Man is tested not only by what he does, but equally by what he refuses to do. 33

From the foregoing we can draw another distinction between Rousseau and Babbitt vis-à-vis man's nature; and it is simply that Rousseau denies that men have free wills. Babbitt, on the other hand, asserts just the opposite; namely, that man's humanist character is strengthened by the internal conflict that occurs in the active will. The will, for Babbitt, as we have seen, is paramount to his position.

In summary we can say that Irving Babbitt presented a united humanistic front against the humanitarian values of the naturalists. Babbitt felt that our present-day civilization would soon deteriorate if the romantic naturalism of Rousseau and the scientific naturalism of Bacon were allowed to hold sway. Science and romanticism, said Babbitt, do little but feed the Frankenstein of mass culture, the myth of progress, and the idea of the perfectibility of man. 34

33 Ibid., p. 56.
34 Karier, Man, Society, and Education, p. 187.
As was mentioned earlier in this work, Babbitt's philosophical position stresses moderation. Rejecting life styles regulated by either scientific or romantic naturalism, Babbitt sought a way of life directed by internal discipline. The humanistic position, espousing discipline as its hallmark, would free man from the naturalistic instability and the external discipline of religion. If men were allowed to continue vacillating between the utilitarian notions of Bacon and the unbridled imagination of Rousseau, what would become of the Western world? The answer, said Babbitt, was the naturalistic destruction of Western man.

The solution to this impending disaster rested in a revival of humanism. As was pointed out earlier, humanism seeks to perfect the individual through discipline while at the same time rendering judgmental sympathy to one's fellow man.

Philosophically, what we are approaching here is the basic difference between Rousseau and Babbitt. We have explained, at great length, the major tenets of Babbitt's philosophical position. We have also stated that this philosophy is built upon the premise of man's dual nature. It may be posited that the duality in man, seeking moderation between appetite and control, is similar to Aristotle's idea that there exists the "law for thing" and the "law for man." The "law for thing" connotes appetite and expansionist tendencies in man; the "law for man" on the other hand, suggest a will of control.
Babbitt indicates that Rousseau and the humanitarian movement is governed by the "law for thing." And, it will prove beneficial to our understanding of the dichotomy which exists between Rousseau and Babbitt if we examine the meanings inherent in the "law for thing" and the "law for man." For it is posited that an understanding of any theory, be it educational or otherwise, is grounded in a philosophic understanding of how man's nature is viewed.

The basic difference between the "law for thing" and the "law for man" as related to Babbitt and Rousseau, is summed-up admirably by Russell Kirk:

The disciplinary arts of humanitas—that exercise of Will which distinguishes man from beast—are dying of neglect in this era; contemptuous of the realm of spirit which Buddha and Plato alike describe, modern man is corrupted by a gross naturalism, reducing all things to a single sensate level. If man forgets the dual nature of existence, he stifles his higher self, which is ruled by the law for man, as contrasted with the law for thing which governs the senses . . . . Having destroyed his higher self, a man dooms his lower self too, for without the directing power of Will, he tumbles into the anarchy of the beasts.

We have here, in summary form, the entire argument between Babbitt and Rousseau. Man's nature, suggests Rousseau, is innately good. And, the continuance of its goodness rests upon its supinely following the dictates of nature. There is no need for control in men; only acquiescence to the desires of the sensate world.

35 Babbitt, in discussing romanticism, refers to it as humanitarianism. Henceforth in this work, we shall use the term humanitarianism to refer to the movements characterized as: "Naturalism," "Romantic Naturalism," and "Progressive."

Now, we have suggested elsewhere that, according to the philosophy of critical humanism, man's senses reside in the abyss of change and flux. But, for Rousseau, this is inconceivable since man is not dichotomized according to a duality of higher and lower natures. He has but one nature. And, it is in need of no upbraiding.

Kirk indicates, and this is consistent with Babbitt's position, that to view man as sensate reduces him to the level of the "beasts." Man's sensate level, then, must be considered as synonymous with the "law for thing." And to this Babbitt adds:

Now anyone who thus identifies man with phenomenal nature, whether scientifically /Bacon/ or sentimentally /Rousseau/, is almost inevitably led to value only the virtues of expansion; for according to natural law, to grow is to expand.37

Yet, as Babbitt has already said, there is both a "law for man" and a "law for thing." Further, "if man as a natural phenomenon grows by expanding, man as man grows by concentrating."38 And, by concentration, Babbitt has reference to that quality of will, the Higher Will, which sets man apart from other natural phenomenon. Further, man's activity of concentration referred to here as that which comprises the "law for man" sets man "above nature, not so much by his power to act, as by his power to refrain from acting."39

Now, what we are suggesting here is that the notion of the "law for man" with its emphasis on man's duality and its distinguishing characteristic of

38 Ibid., p. 201. 39 Ibid.
concentration, eventuates in man's judgmental function. And this function of judgment is precisely what Babbitt is saying that the humanitarians do not exercise. A philosophy based on the "law for thing" which stresses the imagination seeking gratification apart from reason and man's Higher Will is anything but critical or judgmental. It must be, in short, expansive and excessive.

It has been suggested that man's judgmental function is the capstone of the "law for man." But judgmental of what? It seems necessary to Babbitt's position of dualism that man evolve into a critically thinking being. One capable of curbing the expansionist tendencies of his appetites and impulses. Or, put within the philosophical framework of Babbitt's position, one capable of utilizing reason and will to check the imagination of man's sensate nature--"law for thing." All of this implies decision and/or choice. And, it must be remembered, choice is a function of man's Higher Will.

Babbitt seems to be saying that man is constantly faced with situations that require choice; whether to act in one way or another or to not act at all. Now, "to select rightly a man must have right standards, and to have right standards means in practice that he must constantly set bounds to his own impulses." Man, continues Babbitt, "grows in the perfection proper to his own nature in almost direct ratio to his growth in restraint and self-control." 40

The neo-classicists were correct in stressing the "law for man." However, as we pointed out, they erred in allowing the judgmental function of man--concentration--to become merely an imitation of the past, replete with excessive formalism.

The romantics, in ridding the world of the formalism of the neo-classicists erred in equally a grave manner by reacting in an extreme way. Since man'sjudgmental function was associated with the "law for man" and the neo-classicists' position, and this was considered to be at the crux of man's problems as viewed by the romantics, it was an easy matter to postulate a position that rid man of the necessity to be judgmental. All that was necessary for the romantic, then, was to follow the "law for thing." And the naturalist would live as none had lived before him. And, in his attempt to remain purely expansive, try to set up things that are below the reason as a substitute for the things that are above it.

To be judgmental implies discipline. And the discipline to which we have reference here is the discipline of man's imagination. Now, all of this, judgment as well as discipline, implies the tracing of cause and effect. But, as Babbitt says, the cause and effect relationship found within the judgmental process is based on the "law for man" and not the "law for thing." And Babbitt continues:

The romantic idealist looks with suspicion on a cause-and-effect philosophy and the keen analysis by which it can be established; but any other than a cause-and-effect philosophy is likely to fall into sheer unreality; inasmuch as reality means practically the reality of law, and law in turn means that as a matter of positive observation there is a constant association between certain phenomena either in time or space—an association that exists quite apart from the desires or opinions of the individual.

41Ibid., p. 203. See also: Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, pp. ix-x.

42Babbitt, Democracy and Leadership, p. 234.
Now, the humanitarian, contends Babbitt, is not concerned with cause-and-effect relationships nor with man's judgmental function. Only with the idea of service; that is, men coming together on the level of emotion or expansionist desires for the good of their fellowmen. But, Babbitt says:

if men can really come together only in humble obeisance to something set above their ordinary selves, it follows that the great temple to humanity that has been in process of erection for several generations past is the modern equivalent of the Tower of Babel... 43

Strong words indeed. However, they strike at the heart of the argument. For unbridled imagination set free from reason and acting in accord with the "law for thing" cannot but serve the vested interest of the individual. Service indeed! The humanitarians' credence to a position as outlined above is little more than a disservice to one's fellowman, for it connotes a position of total experimentation without regard for permanence.

On this matter of experimentalism we must pause for a moment. It is logical to assume that if Babbitt accused the humanitarians of being experimentalists, they in turn would argue, as did Mr. Grabo, that "Mr. Babbitt has small use for experiment." 44

Now, this seems to be not only simplistic, but reflective of a misunderstanding of Babbitt's position. From what we have already said, it seems inconceivable that Babbitt's position could be called non-experimental. Indeed, it may

43 Ibid., pp. 235-6.
44 Carl H. Grabo, "The Case of Mr. Babbitt," New Humanist, Vol. VI (1933), 34.
be labeled non-experimental in the humanitarian sense. Since, as we have seen, experimentation for them seems to evolve from natural inclinations that have little concern for the past. And, as Grabo states:

They /humanitarians/ are hospitable to experiment. By no means do they deny the value of tradition which is but experiment regarded in retrospect . . . 45

For Grabo, then, tradition is experimentation. And this is precisely the problem. For how can that which is "representative of a class" be derived from total experimentation? Is man's total heritage premised upon a "tradition which is but experiment regarded in retrospect?" Is there no permanence that has stood the test of time? Can man not seek values that transcend time and space?

To these questions Babbitt would surely answer yes. But, we must reiterate that to deny the notion of experimentation to Babbitt's position is a misreading. 46 For, how does one know the application of that which is "representative of a class" unless man's reason, the analytical power of man, applies the manifestation of the Higher Will; namely, the Higher Imagination and its ability to know the permanent and abiding (representative of a class) through experimentation.

45 Ibid.

46 For a re-statement of Babbitt's position on that which is experimental, see Chapter III, pp. 67-70. Essentially, Babbitt holds that to be experimental implies that one seeks to ground his principles or beliefs in the data of consciousness. And, it will be recalled that this is precisely the relationship that exists between man's reason and his higher imagination; namely, that the principles found in the higher imagination seek manifestation through the use of reason. Also, this position on what Babbitt terms experimental is consistent with what we have said before concerning the Socratic method of induction. It should be noted, however, that Babbitt's use of experimental varies from the naturalists' (Rousseau and Dewey) use of this term. Both of these individuals view experimentation from a monistic point of view that excludes man's higher imagination in favor of his reason. In short, Babbitt is experimental to the degree to which he allows man's reason to provide the data of consciousness necessary for the validation of existing principles in man's higher imagination.
Indeed, Babbitt's position is experimental—not to the extreme extent of the humanitarians—but, nonetheless, experimental. To call it otherwise would be to contradict the basic idea of critical humanism.

From that day in 1749 when Jean Jacques Rousseau, traveling the road from Paris to Vincennes, was said to have had a vision; a vision in which he learned that all men are naturally good and that evil in the world stems from society; the modern movement of humanitarianism began. 47

As a result of this apparition, the theological view of man's human nature, "with its insistence that man has fallen, not from nature as Rousseau asserts, but from God," was discredited. 48 The battle of good and evil that existed within man for generations was now transferred to the outer world. Or, put another way, the "law for man," deemed essential because of man's fallen nature, no longer held sway since man was not evil. Indeed, if man had fallen at all, it was from nature. Therefore, man must but follow the dictates of nature—"law for thing"—to attain happiness.

Now Babbitt asserts that Rousseau's notion of man's fallen nature from nature "does not correspond to anything real, but is a projection of the idyllic imagination." 49 And further, Babbitt states that if man is truly good, what need have we had for "traditional controls in the actual world."

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49 Ibid., p. 232. See also: Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, pp. 70-113. "According to this romantic conception [of the idyllic imagination], the imagination is to be free, not merely from outer formalistic constraint, but from all constraint whatever. This romantic emancipation of the imagination was accompanied by an equally extreme emancipation of the emotions."
As we have said elsewhere, Babbitt is a positivist. Therefore, he seeks to build his argument upon that in reality which is capable of being experienced. And, since it follows that man has had "traditional controls" placed upon him to curb his sensate desires, it may be concluded that there is a reason for controlling man; namely, that he is prone to excess and not innately good as Rousseau would have us believe.

Rousseau is pictured by Babbitt as an anti-intellectualist, having contempt for reason. Babbitt quotes Rousseau as saying "the man who thinks is a depraved animal." Rousseau, continues Babbitt, seeks to escape the scientific rationalism of Bacon "by the pathway of romantic spontaneity." What this means, says Babbitt is

\[\text{that he} \quad \text{is ready to surrender to the naturalistic flux in the hope of thus becoming 'creative.'} \]

Unfortunately this surrender involves a sacrifice of the standards and the conscious control that are needed to give to creation genuine human significance.

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50 While Babbitt is certainly not a positivist in the strict philosophical sense of the word—that all of man's knowledge of phenomena is relative and enters through the senses, he is nevertheless a positivist to the extent to which he relies on man's senses and reason to place the principles of the higher imagination in contact with the world of reality. See also: Chapter III, pp. 66-70 for a detailed discussion of the positivism of Irving Babbitt.

51 Ibid., p. 241.

52 Ibid.
We have spent much time discussing the positions of Babbitt and Rousseau concerning man's nature as well as their resultant philosophical positions. It would seem appropriate at this point to turn our attention to the application of these positions to the educational ideas that are grounded in these philosophical ideas.

Writing in the early twentieth century, Irving Babbitt rose to challenge the philosophical position taken by Rousseau. Fundamental to this challenge is the following quotation from Aristotle: "The end is the chief thing of all; the end of ends is happiness; happiness is a kind of working." Humanists and humanitarians both agree with Aristotle that the "end" toward which all strive is happiness. However, they do not agree as to the practical application of this philosophical position. The humanist indicates that one must seek happiness within himself by introspection. The humanitarian, on the other hand, seeks it elsewhere; that is, outside of himself. In seeking it elsewhere, it is safe to say that the connotation here refers to certain ameliorative aspects of the eighteenth century Enlightenment. The basic assumption of the humanitarian being that man's material efficiency toward happiness promoted by utilitarian effort will be used altruistically. It becomes sufficient for the humanitarian, therefore, to substitute service and training in the public interest as the goal of happiness rather than training for character and culture. One wonders here whether the humanitarian of the nineteenth and even the twentieth century really

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believes in the idea of the social progress of mankind. Evidence would seem to lend credence to this position in theory at least. However, the practical application of the humanitarian's "religion of service" may be viewed in some respects as hypocritical. In short, one may find in viewing our social ills today a contradiction in terms. One might be led to conclude that the amount of goodness generated by the decline of humanism and even religion has been exaggerated. Further, one may find evidence that a human nature that is neither mediatory nor meditative is likely to prove slothful.

If one follows the humanitarian notions of education, happiness which here is assumed to be the end toward which we all strive, becomes a relative thing. It becomes "service for mankind." A noble statement indeed; one not easily argued with today and against which one would stand to be criticized. Yet, it is relative. For what was service three decades ago is not service today. Or, what were problems three decades ago still remain as problems today; in a different set of circumstances perhaps, but nonetheless problems in spite of man's alleged service.

The question becomes then a source of consternation for the American college. Does one educate in the humanitarian tradition for service to mankind? If so, what does service to mankind mean? Is it an attempt at altruism to appease the social demands placed on our colleges? Further, when we speak of service to mankind, to which of mankind do we refer--the rich, the middle class,
the minorities? Indeed, if it be the minorities, it becomes painfully obvious that our colleges are not doing an adequate job. Or, at least it would appear so since the minorities and the treatment of the minorities is replete with criticism. 54

Schools reflect society, a basic idea upon which many of our educational institutions exist today. But, what is society and to whom within society should schools listen? Is it the consensus of the democratic way? Perhaps. Yet, one is prone to add that an education based on consensus is one that is fleeting and relative. One might hope that a higher education which is geared to serving mankind would use as its foundation the service of man. But, this service to mankind is not to be construed in the humanitarian sense; rather, it is to be construed in the humanistic sense of flexible standards capable of adjusting to change. But, as with all positions, how one implements the position is the point at which we have departure. Shall the implementation be based on present-day needs and consensus or must we look further for a foundation?

Babbitt suggests that we look further; or, specifically backward in history to the often maligned term of 'standards.' He asserts that civilizations

54 Various attempts at both changing the structure of higher education as well as seeking to admit more minorities to institutions of higher education have been initiated. For example, The Ford Foundation annually sponsors fellowship programs for minority students and the State of Illinois makes available scholarship assistance based on a family's "adjusted income." Colleges and universities have begun programs of remediation to enable minority students to compete. Other attempts, aimed primarily at restructuring the colleges, have centered about the "open university" idea or the "university without walls." These latter two concepts will be discussed in the last chapter of this work.
have survived because of the transmission and inculcation of standards to the young.\textsuperscript{55} Harking to Aristotle's statement that "the best laws will be of no avail unless the young are trained by habit and education in the spirit of the constitution," Babbitt applies the statement to education in the twentieth century. He states: "Assuming that what we wish to preserve is a federal and constitutional democracy, are we training-up a class of leaders whose ethos is in intimate accord with this type of government?\textsuperscript{56} Further, Babbitt points to the colleges of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as being reflective of conventions or standards that were both religiously and classically based. It is his opinion that such a college could flourish today and still adapt to the service of man. Its foundation would not, however, be based on consensus but on moral and traditional wisdom garnered from the ages.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{55}Babbitt, Speech Delivered to Chinese Students at Harvard University, 1921, pp. 45-46 and 52. Babbitt indicates that the "problem in the Orient as well as the Occident is that as education develops so too does society. And, the combination of the democratic \textit{utility} with the aristocratic and selective \textit{tradition} principle is one that we can scarcely be said to have solved in the Occident. Our democratic development has been largely won at the expense of standards; and yet without leaders who are disciplined to the best humanistic standards the whole democratic experiment is going in my judgment to prove impossible. \textit{Proper education should train for} sound leadership \textit{and} character. And this type of character itself has its roots in humility or in the Confucian phrase \textit{of submission to the Will of heaven." See also: Chapter III, pp. 86-87 for a complete definition of standards as defined by Babbitt.

\textsuperscript{56}Babbitt, \textit{Democracy and Leadership}, p. 302.

\textsuperscript{57}Babbitt, Speech Delivered to Chinese Students at Harvard University, 1921, pp. 58-59. Babbitt asserts that: "the wisdom of the ages" connotes the literatures of Greece and China "and constitute together what one may term the wisdom of the ages." See also: S. Earl Dubel, "He Searched the Past," \textit{The South Atlantic Quarterly}, Vol. XXXV, No. 1 (January, 1936), 50-61. Dubel indicates that "Babbitt urged that the conception of education which aims at efficiency \textit{be gotten from the} contemplation of the ideas one has gleaned from his study of the wisdom of the ages."
So as not to minimize service, it must be said that it supplies standards. But the standards supplied are based on the assumption that men will naturally seek each other's well being and that each individual has the right to develop freely. A philosophy of education such as this is truly humanitarian in nature. For it seeks not the wisdom of the ages but that which will prove useful as a solution to whatever dilemma confronts us. One might argue that man's natural inclination to help others and his freedom to develop could be contradictory.

The basic philosophical question being raised by Babbitt here is whether man left to his own devices will indeed seek first his own good and finally the good of society. To this, Babbitt would say the answer must be no. It is no not because men cannot do this; it is no because man has an indolent nature that seeks its own reward above all else. And, unless there is some mediation of the nature, i.e., between man's wills, there will be no standards.

What is here being referred to as relativism in the humanitarian sense by Babbitt may in the twentieth century be termed as that which is relevant.

Babbitt seems to sense that the traditions held to be of such importance and promulgated through the college curriculum were in danger due to the humanitarian and utilitarian emphasis of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Referring to the Harvard "elective system" instituted by President Charles Eliot, Babbitt says:

The humanitarian triumph in the college has weakened this humane restraint and selection [the mark of a humanist],
and as an offset has exalted, on the one hand, the principle of sympathy, and on the other, scientific method or discipline in the 'law for thing.'” 58

The college, Babbitt feared, would soon become little more than a bastion of utility where all could attain degrees. And on this subject Babbitt's feelings are clear:

There is a laudable desire in our colleges to give everybody a chance. Indeed the more humanitarian members of our faculties are ready to waste their energies in trying to elevate youths above the level to which they belong, not only by their birth, but by their capacity. 59

Strong words. Indeed, in our day and age, such a statement would be construed as tantamount to bigotry. For the spirit of our times seems to foster an egalitarianism that tends to fly in the face of tradition. And who is to say that the selective nature of Babbitt's critical humanism as applied to the American college as opposed to the humanitarian creed of egalitarianism is better. Even this writer has doubts about accepting Babbitt's educational position in its entirety. But before we draw any conclusions and judge Babbitt's educational position, let us pursue his thoughts on collegiate education.

Let us begin by stating that Babbitt never viewed the college as fostering egalitarianism. In fact, he states that "the purpose of the college is not to encourage the democratic spirit, but on the contrary to check the drift toward a pure democracy." 60 Here Babbitt seems to view a pure democracy as untenable.

58 Babbitt, Literature and the American College, p. 74.
59 Ibid., p. 76. 60 Ibid., p. 80.
And this is consistent with his philosophical position on man's dual nature. For a pure democracy is an ideal toward which man can work; that it can exist is doubtful. The notion of a pure democracy, in this writer's judgment, with its implicit stress on egalitarianism, presupposes man's basic goodness seeking fruition in the service of his fellowman. Since man, as Babbitt has said, is basically indolent, we cannot expect a pure democracy based on humanitarian standards, since as we have sought to demonstrate, standards tend to diminish with egalitarianism. The function of the college, therefore, "shall be to insist on the idea of quality." 61

But, is the notion of quality consistent solely with a position that tends to reserve a college education for only those deemed qualified? Or, can quality be attained through egalitarian methods of education? These two questions seem to strike at the heart of Babbitt's argument with the humanitarian and utilitarian trends found in twentieth century American higher education.

Now what must be understood here is the historical climate within which Babbitt's educational position grew. Most of his major writings appeared in the early twentieth century. We have reference here to the long-standing feud in American education between those who stressed the classical heritage and those who were more utilitarian.

The notions of an educated man found in New England and the Southern colonies during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries essentially reflected the Ciceronian model of education; namely, that of humanitas. The

61 Ibid., p. 81.
good man trained in Latin and Greek as a good public speaker was considered to be the educated man.

The position of the college during these centuries was that of perpetuator of the classical tradition. And, it should be noted, that the Latin Grammar School, that institution through which college-bound students passed, was also classical in orientation. The Latin Grammar School, then, served the interests of the college. And, both institutions reflected the felt needs of the society by producing graduates inculcated with the cultural heritage deemed essential for the continuation of the society.

Now, as most students of American educational history are aware, the thrust of the classical college and its feeder school, the Latin Grammar School, did not go unchallenged. We have reference here to the utilitarian influence of the Enlightenment on men such as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. Franklin, it will be remembered suggested as early as 1744 in his "Proposals Relating to the Educating of Youth in Pennsylvania" that education should be reflective of the needs of the people. And to Franklin, these needs were utilitarian and not classical. It should be kept in mind that Franklin was a Deist steeped in the Enlightenment notions of reason, natural law, and progress. And, these Enlightenment concepts tended to sway Franklin to the Baconian and Rousseauian naturalism found in eighteenth century France.

Also, it must be said that America during the eighteenth century was beginning to feel pangs of social conflict emanating from population growth, shifts in population from rural to urban areas, industrialization, and immigration. The masses of people beginning to swell in urban areas were little contented to view education in a classical sense. Education, to be responsive to the needs of the society, must of necessity change. And change it did.

While Franklin's notions on establishing a utilitarian Academy to replace the Latin Grammar School fell on deaf ears in the eighteenth century, they did not go unnoticed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While Franklin was a man perhaps one-hundred years ahead of his time, seeking to fight the classical traditions imbued in our institutions, his fight was not in vain. The rise of the Academies in the nineteenth century and the "elective system" for colleges was a culmination of the pursuits of men like Franklin.

If it can be said that urbanization, immigration, and industrialization were characteristic of nineteenth century America, how much more this is true in the twentieth century. The utilitarian demands of the American society were, then, reflected in its educational institutions. We see, for example, the growth of Common Schools in America during the nineteenth century and the growth and eclipse of the utilitarian Academy by the Comprehensive High School. All of these newly emerged institutions sought to provide a highly utilitarian society with the means of inculcating its offspring with the values deemed essential for societal participation. In short, for social mobility.
It should surprise no one that strides in mass education at the elementary and secondary levels should also bring about similar strides in higher education. The college in the nineteenth century still remained the bastion of the classical tradition.\textsuperscript{63} While elementary and secondary education had fallen sway to the utilitarian demands of a mobility conscious society, the colleges had continued to turn a deaf ear to public demand for a more useful education.

Rising to meet the challenge for utilitarian education at the college level, President Charles Eliot of Harvard University, under whose leadership Harvard grew in his forty year tenure (1869-1909), from a faculty of sixty to some six hundred and under whose administration Harvard was left with an endowment of some $20,000,000, inaugurated the elective system.

Students were no longer required to pursue the subject of the "noble dead." Subjects were offered in the social sciences along with the traditional humanities. And, students, while required to accumulate a number of courses, were no longer required to submit to a prescribed curriculum. The unprescribed curriculum was President Eliot's response to the utilitarian needs of society. And for the elective system proposed by Eliot, Babbitt had contempt.

Let us move, once again, having discussed the background, to the debate between the humanist position and that of the humanitarian.

\textsuperscript{63} Some strides toward utilitarian higher education were in evidence in the nineteenth century. Through the efforts of Justin Smith Morrill, the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 were enacted by the Congress of the United States to provide for agricultural and mechanical arts training at the college level.
Babbitt said of Eliot's position on the college curriculum that the Harvard President was not really the great leader and innovator of American higher education that many acclaimed him to be. Indeed, as one who merely went along with the needs of the times, he did not merit the praise he received. Further, Babbitt likened Eliot to Rousseau in that "President Eliot deserves to rank as our chief humanitarian idealist in the educational field, not because of any novelty in his views, but because of the consistency and unwavering conviction with which he applied them."\(^{64}\) And, finally, Babbitt said of the elective system, that it is a clash between "naturalistic philosophy and the wisdom of the ages; for nothing is more certain than that this wisdom has been neither utilitarian nor sentimental, but either religious or humanistic."\(^{65}\)

Now, let us return to our questions concerning quality education and egalitarian education. It would seem that President Eliot's position on the elective system at Harvard was responsive to the needs of society. But, like so many responses, it appears to be an extreme response. One rising to meet the present needs of society. And one which lays little claim to the traditions of the past.

Now, some may say that we are too harsh on Eliot; that he was not really seeking to destroy the classical tradition in favor of a utilitarian curriculum; that he acted as a mediator between the practical needs of society,


\(^{65}\)Ibid.
as he saw them, and the traditions of the past. For we must say that while Eliot introduced utility into the college curriculum, he did not abandon the traditional subjects. He merely left it to the students to select that which they felt to be more pertinent.

And it is here that we must take issue with Eliot. For, if we accept the philosophy of critical humanism, with its stress on a positivistic or experimental approach to wisdom that transcends time, from whence will come this wisdom if we undercut that part of the college curriculum that deals with the wisdom of the ages.

It must be made clear here that when we use the term "undercut," our meaning refers to the choice given students to make their own selection. For if we are true to Babbitt's position we will have to admit that man's lower nature will seek the most palatable approach, and not those aspects of the curriculum that deal with values to be garnered from the past. And yet, Babbitt insists, students must be made to appreciate the traditions of the past which will guide the higher imagination.

Surely we must be aware that the movement toward utilitarian higher education was not without its problems. Those of the classical tradition, having determined the course of American higher education for over three hundred years, were not about to acquiesce to the dictates of the moment.

And, this may have been part of the problem. For, very often, positions that arise under duress are as extreme as the positions they seek to displace.
This may indeed be true of the elective system as well as the subsequent utilitarian progress of American higher education.

But, it must be suggested that Babbitt may have been equally as guilty of extremism as Eliot when Babbitt indicates that the classics and the humanities must serve as the foundation for the proper formulation of man's higher will. If not these, Babbitt would say, then surely religion.

Babbitt and Eliot may both be victims of their time. Eliot in acquiescing to the utilitarian needs of society; Babbitt in staunchly defending the traditional heritage of the classics. Both may, therefore, be considered as extremists.

Now, it is not our intention here to deal in detail with the suggested extremism of President Eliot; only to suggest it. It is, however, our intention to deal with the notion of Babbitt as an educational extremist especially in light of what has been previously alluded to as his philosophical eclecticism.

Babbitt has been portrayed in the preceding pages as one who seeks a critical spirit in man. The ability in man to be judgmental of the present based on a value system arrived at through man's humility. We have demonstrated the use of man's reason as an instrument capable of placing man's higher imagination in contact with reality. And man's reason, acting to guide the principles found in the higher imagination to form a critical judgment of the situation at hand. It must be assumed that reason working in harmony with the higher imagination can produce sound judgment.
Our quarrel then is not with the "process" of Babbitt's philosophy. Our quarrel must of necessity rest with his notions of how one acquires the principles of the higher imagination; how man garners the wisdom of the ages; that which transcends time and space.

The principles to which we have reference here may be taken as almost religious in fervor. For just as a sectarian faith is built upon dogma and revealed religion, so to is Babbitt's humanism built upon a dogma and revelation of critical humanism. It is of interest to note that Babbitt's criticism of organized religion because of its dogmatism and lack of the critical spirit may indeed be leveled against his own critical humanism. For when one takes a position, as Babbitt does, that there can be only one form of education appropriate to the proper formation of the principles of the higher imagination, then this too must be termed as dogmatic.

For Babbitt, then, the acquisition of proper principles, values, or standards was the aim of the college curriculum. That it was failing in this mission is evidenced by Babbitt's attack on Eliot and his comparison of Eliot to the arch-naturalist Rousseau.

The notion we seem to arrive at is that Babbitt, in his attempt to apply his philosophy of critical humanism to education, is not consistent with the intent of his philosophy of eclecticism. Now some at this point may argue that this sort of statement is naive; that Babbitt's philosophical position cannot be understood, in any sense, as eclectic. That it is extreme and the educational concepts that emanate from it must of necessity be likewise extreme.
The criticism is valid, insofar as it is a form of self-expression. However, we must submit that a philosophical position based on principles, be it the critical humanism of Irving Babbitt or the revelation of the Roman Catholic Church, must allow for varying approaches by which these principles can be attained. To say, as does Babbitt, that the classics or the humanities are the only ways one can attain these principles to guide one's conduct is tantamount to deifying the classics and placing them on the same level as Christian revelation. And, it must be remembered that revelation is difficult enough for many to accept, let alone the notion of the classics. Perhaps, in Babbitt's attempt to free critically thinking men from the bondage of religious dogma, he has set-up his own dogma that is equally as extreme. 66

The notions we are discussing here must of necessity connote extremism. 67 For extremism implies the exclusion of other forms to the achievement of an end. Thus we stand firm in our assertion that Babbitt seems inconsistent with his philosophical position. And, we shall have further reference to this as we discuss specifically Babbitt's ideas on education.

66 Edmund Wilson, "Notes on Babbitt and More," The Critique of Humanism, ed. C. Hartley Grattan (New York: Books for Libraries, Inc., 1930), p. 47. Wilson says: "As a matter of fact, Professor Babbitt . . . has managed to exempt his own professional activities from . . . the obligation to refrain. He has made it plain that, in dealing with error we are no longer under the necessity of being moderate . . . ."

67 The term extremism refers to any position taken that does not allow for the consideration of its opposite position.
Babbitt speaks of education as the transmission of "habits to the young." And that civilization is contingent upon "the type of education on which it has agreed." And further, Babbitt indicates that "the older type of American college reflected faithfully enough the convention of its time." This being accomplished mainly by the subordination of the classics to the religious thrust of the college, "inasmuch as the leadership at which it aimed was to be lodged primarily in the clergy." Babbitt suggests then that there was a consistency of collegiate education with the conventions of society. The "new education," however, "can scarcely be said to have developed . . . from the old." It is rather, in Babbitt's opinion "a radical break with our traditional ethos."68

While the traditional education of the past suggested training for character and wisdom, the new education, contends Babbitt is merely "training for service and power." And while this new education of utility can supply man with the conventions of society, "it is not, in either the humanistic or religious sense, supplying us with standards." Rather, it tends to undermine standards. That education termed as "older aimed to produce leaders and, as it perceived, the basis of leadership is not commercial or industrial efficiency, but wisdom."69

We see here Babbitt position on education as a hardening--what he may have felt as a life and death struggle between the apostles of utility and the advocates of tradition. At stake, he felt, was the civilized world.

68 Babbitt, Democracy and Leadership, pp. 302-03.
69 Ibid., p. 304.
Now it should be clear why Babbitt struck-out at the utility of the early twentieth century college. For he could see in its curriculum the same elements he saw in the naturalism of Rousseau. Babbitt's dilemma over the proper inculcation of standards and habits to the young seems, however, to have rejected utilitarian education out-of-hand. From this writer's vantage point, which has the benefit of retrospect, this seems unfortunate. For as a result, Babbitt appears to be little more than a traditionalist barring the road to progress.

And, to some extent, this is true. However, his value educationally is to remind us that utility and service as ends in themselves serve little purpose. His approach, it must be admitted, was extreme. But, as we have so often commented, one extreme position is likely to bring about another.

Education, especially collegiate education, must, for Babbitt, be selective. He could not accept the notion that egalitarian measures in education would lead to the properly discerning man of judgment. The notion of quality education as espoused by Babbitt was, then, inconsistent with any trends toward democratization of education at the higher level. Indeed, Babbitt felt that to make the college curriculum other than reflective of the values and principles garnered from the humanities would be tantamount to insuring the demise of the Western world.

In terms of Babbitt's view of human nature: that man's active will is the guide to selection, gaining strength as it selects from opposites presented, we can posit that Babbitt's concept of education was selective. Specifically, he
did not espouse, as did Rousseau, a human nature in tune with nature, but rather a human nature that had become disciplined to refrain from action based on judgment. 70

What type of curriculum is required for Babbitt to attain this discipline? It is the study of the ancient classics in the original languages. Being a linguist, Babbitt insisted that to study the classics in other than the original language would be to jeopardize the finer esthetic shades of meaning so necessary for disciplining the active will.

If we accept the humanist notion of education outlined by Babbitt, implications derived therefrom are staggering. Indeed, we arrive at an elitist education since the vast majority of men will not and cannot study the ancient classics in the original languages. And yet, this does not seem to concern Babbitt. He would have the large mass of people educated in the humanitarian sense. As Babbitt put it:

Those who can receive the higher initiation into the Hellenic spirit will doubtless remain few in number, but these few will wield a potent influence for good, each in his own circle, if only from the ability they will thereby have acquired to escape from contemporary illusions. 71

70 Babbitt, Literature and the American College, p. 8. As concerns judgment, Babbitt says: "The humanist as opposed to the humanitarian, is interested in the perfecting of the end rather than in the schemes for the elevation of mankind as a whole; and although he allows largely for sympathy, he insists that it be disciplined and tempered by judgment."

71 Ibid., p. 180.
Continuing in this vain, Babbitt further asserts that in every social institution there are leaders and followers, and it behooves the American people to realize that what really rules is not a nebulous will of the people nor a popular majority but a small leadership minority. As is obvious from the foregoing, Babbitt held that the naturalistic education espoused by Rousseau and Eliot was undermining the traditional liberal arts education in the schools. Babbitt felt strongly about this since the liberal arts colleges had traditionally produced the leaders of society. He feared, therefore, that attempts at humanitarian education would eventuate in not only a decline in the number of leaders, but ultimately in the decline of the civilized world.

Other and newly emerging disciplines at the college level, especially sociology, education, and psychology were of little use to Babbitt. The whole of the social sciences were looked down upon since these fields presumed to be seeking answers to questions already answered by the humanists.

To the humanist, education was an art. It was an apprenticeship to be served and, in the process, created a man of taste and self-discipline. The man of taste, said Babbitt, must be one who can think for himself and be capable of rendering judgments very much akin to Cicero's orator whose "power will never be

72 Babbitt, Democracy and Leadership, p. 16.

able to effect its object by eloquence, unless in him who has obtained a thorough insight into the nature of mankind, and all the passions of humanity, and those causes by which our minds are either impelled or restrained."74 And the education appropriate for the educated man is

needed to recover in some form, traditional or critical, religious or humanistic, the truths of the inner life, which have been compromised by the Rousseauistic attempt to base ethics on expansive emotion. There should be less dabbling in behaviorism and other dubious psychology, less talk of conditioned reflexes, and more insistence on a type of training that has some recognizable relation to the ten commandments; there should also be an attempt to transmit to the young the humanist virtues—moderation, common sense, and common decency. These specifically human virtues may best be inculcated in connection with a study of the humanities.75

One detects strains of Thomas Jefferson's elitist notions of education within the foregoing. For Jefferson, like Babbitt, felt that education must select those most capable of providing leadership to the country. Further study indicates parallels between Babbitt's ideas on the education of a man of taste with Quintilian's ideas on the education of an orator. The essential difference being that Quintilian's educational preparation would produce the ideal orator while Babbitt's method would tend to produce a more contemplative, scholarly individual.

It should be noted that it is not this writer's position that Babbitt's notion of education as the study of the ancient classics in the original languages

74Karier, Man, Society, and Education, p. 195.

75Irving Babbitt. Handwritten Speech Given at Engelmann Hall, Atlantic City, November 5, 1927, "Rousseau and Modern Education," Harvard University Archives, HUC 1185.7.
should hold sway. In fact, to espouse this position today would be both impractical and untenable. What must be gleaned from Babbitt's ideas on the curriculum, however, is the notion that antiquity provides a fundamental base for transmission of values from one generation to another. To ignore this in favor of more immediate need will do little for education in the future and little to solve the problems of the day. The immediacy of problems confronting education today cannot detract from the need to view these problems through the perspective of the past.

What must be said here as concerns Babbitt's position on education is simply that it, like any other system built upon unrelenting principles, is doomed to failure. Babbitt's notions of the higher imagination and reason utilized to apply the principles garnered from the higher will is laudable. However, it does not seem consistent to allow reason to analyze the principles of the higher imagination, if we are not then able to modify these principles.

That man must have principles is a matter of little debate. As to what these principles shall be is another matter open to dispute. The question, then, centers upon the idea of enduring principles versus principles that can accommodate to the analytical power of reason. And, it is suggested, that the course of higher education may find the solution to many of its problems by adopting a stance consistent with the notions herein espoused; namely, flexible standards. For, if American higher education is to provide both quality and quantity education, then it must evolve a philosophical framework based on
adaptable values; that is, capable of assimilating tradition with change.

We shall return to this amalgamation of Babbitt's ideas on education with utilitarian trends when we discuss some of the problems confronting American higher education today. But, prior to the application of this position to present-day problems, let us examine the fruits of Babbitt's labors in educational practice. To do this, we must look to the work of Norman Foerster at the University of Iowa.
CHAPTER V

NORMAN FOERSTER'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL IDEAS OF IRVING BABBITT

With the death of Irving Babbitt in 1933, the challenge of applying the philosophy of critical humanism to American higher education passed to lesser lights. Perhaps the one most obedient to the philosophical and educational position of his mentor, at least initially, was Norman Foerster.

It will prove useful in our discussion of critical humanism to pursue the implementation of Babbitt's educational ideas by Foerster. For, as we shall see, Foerster provides us with a vehicle for not only interpreting Babbitt's position but also serves to bring Babbitt's position, albeit modified, into the context of the modern-day university. We shall attempt, then to trace Babbitt's notions on education as implemented by Foerster. And, in so doing, seek to determine whether the educational position of Irving Babbitt, initially espoused

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2Mercier, American Humanism and the New Age, p. 165. Mercier tells us that "Babbitt had no time to work out, and no opportunity to carry out, a complete plan of educational reform." His ideas, nevertheless, were to be fully exploited, "and in such a way that we may study the effects of the humanist revolt" by Norman Foerster.
at the turn of the nineteenth century, was indeed similar when Foerster com-
pleted the implementation of Babbitt's ideas at the University of Iowa during
the 1930's and early 1940's.

Norman Foerster was both a student and close friend of Irving Babbitt. He was, as Mercier points out, "the most persistent and productive disciple of
Irving Babbitt." 3 Foerster was born in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania on April 14,
1887. Foerster, now eighty-six years of age, resides in the State of California.

Foerster first met Irving Babbitt at Harvard and, according to Mercier, came "under the influence of Babbitt." 4 Receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree
in 1910, Foerster left Harvard to continue his academic career at the University
of Wisconsin, earning his Master of Arts degree in 1912.

From 1911 until 1951, Foerster was engaged in teaching college English
at various schools. We are told, for example, that he taught at the University
of Wisconsin, Madison Campus as an Instructor of English from 1911-14; at the
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill as an Associate Professor of English
from 1914-19; at the University of Iowa, Iowa City as Professor of English and
Director of the School of Letters from 1930-44; and at Duke University, Durham
as a Professor of English from 1948-51. 5

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3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 James M. Ethridge (ed.), Contemporary Authors (Michigan: Gale Research
Much of our discussion in the ensuing paragraphs will center upon Foerster's tenure as Director of the School of Letters at the University of Iowa. For it is posited that while Foerster held this administrative post he had the opportunity to implement Babbitt's philosophy with educational practice. Before we embark on this discussion, however, it will prove beneficial to establish Foerster's philosophical consistency with Babbitt. And we shall attempt this through a study of Foerster's published works prior to his taking the administrative appointment at Iowa in 1930.

One of Foerster's first literary essays appeared in 1927 and was reproduced in 1930 in his volume, Toward Standards. The essay entitled, "Humanism in the Twentieth Century" indicates Foerster's close philosophical allegiance with Babbitt. Referring to present-day literary critics, Foerster indicates that "they are living in the present and looking to a blank future." And Foerster continues that nearly all of them "are in revolt against a past they do not really know."

Now, Foerster having received his educational training as a literary critic seeks, as does Babbitt, to apply basic philosophical principles to the literary works of writers. Therefore, Foerster's criticism here refers to some

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7Foerster, Toward Standards, p. 139.
of the literary characters of his day; namely Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, and Sinclair Lewis, who, like Babbitt, rejected the romanticism of the nineteenth century. But, unlike Babbitt, they sought an alternative to romanticism through, as Foerster says, "the aims of realism" which were to Foerster, "impressionistic, expressionistic, sociological, and psychological." They did not seek a literary solution to romanticism through a philosophy conceived of as "broadly human" but one, says Foerster, that is reflective of:

self reliance rather than reliance upon the existence of the past; they are impelled by a mood of adventure more than by a will to reform with the aid of old standards.

Foerster, like Babbitt, seeks to view literature and its writers, as reflecting trends in American society. To men such as Foerster and Babbitt, then, literature is value laden; it is not to be approached as a factual analysis. And, if we are to have literature studied for its values or standards, then literature and its study must rest upon a philosophy grounded in principles and assumptions.

And the first of these assumptions, says Foerster is "that assumptions are inevitable, since every concept of life ultimately rests upon them." Literary naturalists, of whom we previously spoke, while seeming to abhor naturalism "patiently proceed to reduce everything in experience to a deterministic monism."
These men, Foerster contends, place absolute trust in "the final validity of reason, declaring their perfect faith in it, despite the testimony of the history of philosophy that faith in reason may lead to bewildering diverse doctrines." Such are the assumptions that underlie "our so-called realistic and naturalistic literature." Indeed, Foerster's criticism of these literary naturalists implies that their monism is based on no assumptions; "that reason is the only sure guide." Now, Foerster's criticism of the notion that naturalism rests on man's reason with its ability to explore reality and to explain away whatever in reality is in conflict with reason is consistent with Babbitt's view of reason as an organ of flux.

Foerster posits, and this is, once again, consistent with Babbitt's philosophical position, that humanism rests on the assumption "that the essential elements of human experience are precisely those which appear to conflict with the reality explored by naturalism." But, Foerster seems unwilling to totally condemn naturalism, for it has its value. The service of naturalism, continues Foerster, "has shown us the power of the natural man's impulses," which for Foerster only magnified the dilemma of values and standards. And further he

12*ibid.*
13*ibid.*, p. 165.
14*ibid.*, p. 159. We have reference here to the *elan vital* and *frein vital* as previously explained. See also: Foerster (ed.), *Humanism and America*, p. xiii.
states:

Nature, apparently blind and pitiless, indifferent to all that we value most, affords no light in our search for a modus vivendi in a state of society. In vain do we seek in her for standards of justice, self-restraint, moderation, gentleness; in vain for a principle of rational or spiritual guidance adequate for human life as we know it. The ethical problem [standards] cannot be illuminated by a naturalistic philosophy which merely affirms optimistically or pessimistically, that man is motivated by natural instinct, or informs us, at best, how his moral habits may be 'explained' by the process of evolution.15

The central philosophical issue expressed by Irving Babbitt; that of dualism versus monism and the standards or lack of standards, seems to be aptly portrayed here by Foerster.

Let us consider one final element of the philosophical consistency between Babbitt and Foerster. And this element revolves about Foerster's stated creed of humanism. Since these tenets are viewed as crucial to our position of the philosophic compatibility of Foerster with Babbitt, they are recorded in their entirety.

1. An adequate human standard calls for completeness; it demands the cultivation of every part of human nature, including 'natural' human nature. It suppresses nothing.

2. But it also calls for proportion: it demands the harmony of the parts with the whole. Instead of 'accepting life' indiscriminately, it imposes a scale of values.

3. This complete, proportinate standard may be said to consist of the normally or typically human. It is concerned

15 Ibid., p. 160.
with the central and the universal, not the eccentric and the idiosyncratic. It is concerned with a permanently valid ethos, not with any code of conventional society.

4. Although such an ethos has never existed, it has been approximated in the great ages of the past, to which humanism looks for guidance. It looks chiefly toward Greece . . . , also toward Rome . . . , toward the Orient . . . , toward moderns like Shakespeare, Milton, and Goethe. Selecting the 'constants' that appear to be worthy of preservation, humanism seeks to transcend the specialism that limits all ages in the past as well as the present age.

5. Unlike romanticism, which in its quest of a natural ethos repudiated the logical faculty, humanism is always true to its Hellenic origin in its faith in reason.

6. Unlike the conceptions of life that grow out of science, humanism seeks to press beyond reason by the use of intuition or imagination . . . . Humanism holds that, after reason has brought us before the veil that shrouds truth, a power above the reason is needed to cope with 'the illusion of a higher reality'. This power above reason is the human imagination.

7. The ultimate ethical principle is that of restraint or control . . . . There is a law for man and a law for thing . . . . It asserts that this inner law of concentration . . . is the true source of power, of character, of elevation, of happiness.

8. . . . Pure humanism is content to describe itself thus in physical terms, as an observed fact of experience; it hesitates to pass beyond its experimental knowledge to the dogmatic affirmations of any of the great religions.16

Foerster's interpretation of Babbitt's philosophy of critical humanism is, beyond any doubt, succinct and accurate. It is safe to say, therefore, that

the disciple has interpreted well the master's position. But, thus far we have established only that Foerster espoused a similar philosophy to that of Babbitt. And, very often, what is a theoretical or philosophical acceptance of a position is not precisely what one implements in practice. But, this assumption, as pertains to Foerster, awaits our demonstration. Let us, therefore, move to a consideration of Foerster's educational implementation of Babbitt's critical humanism.

One of Foerster's earliest attempts at interpreting trends in American higher education appeared in 1937 under the title: *The American State University*. When this work appeared, Foerster had been for some seven years the Director of the School of Letters at the University of Iowa. And, it is felt that by this time he had had sufficient time to codify his philosophical position into educational theory.

In applying Babbitt's philosophy to higher education in the twentieth century, Foerster equates the efforts of the nineteenth century agriculturalist Jonathan Baldwin Turner and other advocates of "people universities"; that is, university education for the masses, as reflections of "Jacksonian democracy and the humanitarian movement." Foerster feels that the forces seeking humanitarian education, did so, as the result of newer impulses such as the use of applied science to bring about material success and social mobility.  

17 Emphasis was no

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longer placed on the traditions of the past, nor on a Christian heritage. Rather, emphasis was placed:

upon the pressing claims of the present and / upon / a golden future in which the natural man, free, equal and fraternal, might at last fully express himself. 18

And, Foerster contends, it was left to "American collegiate education to train the natural man to fulfill his appointed task" of social and economic efficiency. 19

The contention outlined above is consistent with the rise of American higher education. The American college was born and nurtured in the classical traditions; it sought to emulate the noble traditions of the past so as to produce the educated man of poise and taste; above all, it sought to educate men capable of leadership.

As an institution of society, the college must be responsive to the needs of society. As one views the rapidity with which mass education grew and extended to the college, one must say that this growth was precipitated by certain trends within society. For example, we find that during the nineteenth century, America became industrialized; much of its population shifted from rural to urban areas; immigration, to a large extent, created class and social conflict within the newly emerging cities; a middle class evolved. All of these factors can be viewed as trends fostering mass education at all levels. And, it must be said that the classical education traditionally given in the colleges did not

18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., p. 60.
satisfy the needs of the newly emergent urban dweller. An education of utility was needed to meet the needs of these people. And so, as the Common Schools grew to meet the needs of industrial America; and, as the eighteenth and nineteenth century rural academies were eclipsed by the twentieth century urban comprehensive high schools; so too were the traditional and classical colleges overshadowed by the utilitarian colleges and universities of the twentieth century.

Colleges and universities of the early twentieth century reflected this utilitarian bent. Students came, says Foerster, "for a college diploma" which "they regarded as a means to economic advantage." And Foerster continues on a more caustic note: "which many of them . . . would gladly have purchased for ten dollars without wasting time on a college campus."20 The educational motto of the college bound student of the early twentieth century seems to have been: "You can't get anywhere nowadays without a college diploma."21 And, this writer might add that this motto seems to have held sway in American higher education through at least the mid-1960's. Colleges and universities of the 1920's and 1930's had lost sight of "the true business of education which was to prepare youth to live, and have fixed them upon something which is very subordinate, namely, how to prepare youth to make a living."22

20 ibid., p. 61.  
21 ibid., p. 62.  
22 ibid., p. 68.
The early twentieth century was an era when courses loosely termed as culturally oriented were considered to be "objects of ridicule." "It was an epoch," says Foerster, "when it was fashionable for young men and women to be 'red-blooded' or 'hard-boiled,' when men wished to be 'he-men' and women to possess 'it,' an epoch, in more philosophical parlance, of primitivistic materialism." It was an era in which those designated as "high-brow" were looked upon with disrepute.

The position of the college, according to Foerster, had by the 1930's swung full arc in its rebellion from the classical traditions. It seems to have grasped the momentum of the time and heeded little of the humanist warnings of the need for tradition and values. That education in our colleges and universities tended to rely more upon the social sciences and the empirical method than on the classics and humanities during the early twentieth century is a matter of little debate.

That this shift from the classical to utilitarian emphasis is a by-product of similar utilitarian thrusts within American society is precisely the notion we wish to emphasize. We have said throughout the pages of this work that schools reflect society. We have posited also that with technological change comes conflict between those institutions within society that hold the cultural heritage in esteem and those newly emerging institutions that seek, in the main, the

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23 Ibid., p. 77.

24 Ibid. "A term," says Foerster, "used to designate anyone who possessed standards of excellence markedly higher than those which satisfied his fellows."
immediate satisfaction of society's felt needs. Often, and this was borne out in the first chapter of this treatise, the institutions of tradition and the newly emerging institutions conflict.

And, this is precisely what may be said of American higher education in the late nineteenth century and for a good part of the twentieth century. Our classical and liberal arts institutions seemed too short-sighted to realize the thrust of the impending urban, industrial society that was soon to emerge in America. Rather than seeking some form of accommodation with utilitarian forms of higher education, the staid and traditional colleges seem to have attempted to become martyrs for their beliefs. And, this was unfortunate. For, it can be suggested that had our traditional institutions of American higher education sought some form of assimilation with the emergent utilitarian trends in American society, then higher education might not have become so fragmented. Further, since the battle between the traditionalists and utilitarians was never really resolved in terms of assimilation, it is posited that this problem still remains today and will, sooner or later, be waged on our campuses. We shall return to this discussion in the last chapter of this dissertation when we discuss the present trends in American higher education as they relate to critical humanism and humanitarianism.

Foerster continues his analysis of American higher education by indicating that the great utilitarian strides of society as well as its schools had not been able to forestall either World War I or the Depression of the 1930's.
The natural man's democracy, utilitarian science, and faith in progress, though they had apparently enabled society to create some sort of order, had prevented neither the greatest war in history nor the world chaos which followed the war and finally overtook America.\(^{25}\)

Further, these calamities brought to the fore not the solution of traditional versus utilitarian education—rather, a tacit admission that perhaps the stress placed on the Enlightenment ideology of progress leading to a better life was bankrupt. And, as Foerster said: "Indeed, the very word \(\textit{progress}\) is gradually passing out of ordinary currency, its place taken by the safer and cooler word change."\(^{26}\)

It is Foerster's contention that the ideology of progress became a scapegoat for the catastrophes visited upon America. Also, that a newer notion, that of change, became more palatable in academic circles. For, after all, who could argue that change does indeed occur?

Much criticism during the 1930's was leveled against American higher education for not providing the needed leadership necessary to avoid war and famine. And,

this charge could not easily be refuted by the state universities, which had frankly given their main energy to everything except the problem of leadership. Yet they had an answer, of a sort. They had faithfully

\(^{25}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 135.}\)

\(^{26}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 143.} \) For Foerster, change meant that individuals should "study the trends, and, allying ourselves with the strongest of them, secure the advantages at one and the same time of drift and mastery."
carried out their obvious function of giving the public, not what it needs, but what it wants.\textsuperscript{27}

And, Foerster continues, that the pattern of higher education in America really did not change much after the Depression. Granted, progress was belied for change. But this seemed more a facade than anything else. Emphasis seemed to shift from the social sciences to vocational training. Since the 1930's, universities have expanded curricula aimed at specific vocational preparation. The notion of change, which according to Foerster, replaced the concept of progress in American higher education really was little more than a continuation of the expansionist tendencies already present in higher education. And, it should be added that these tendencies were not grounded in the traditions of the past. Or, as Babbitt and Foerster might say, they were without foundation in the higher will.

Foerster's criticism of American higher education with its emphasis on utility, change, and satisfying public demands has not gone unnoticed. Discontent may still be heard today. However, it is an easy matter to criticize. What is important to criticism is the alternative suggested to remedy the abuse. And, here we shall make mention of Foerster's suggested alternative to the problems confronting higher education. "The time has come" Foerster begins,

when social prudence dictates, not the fixation of our inherited idea of a state university, but a free and creative reconsideration, conducted in view of the

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., p. 144.
permanent nature of man as well as the special concerns
of the time, of what should be the role of higher education
in a constitutional democracy.28

And on this matter of the role of American higher education, Foerster
seems at least initially as unwilling as Babbitt to allow all students the
privilege of higher education. As Foerster indicates:

If higher education is to deserve the name, it cannot
be brought within the reach of the ineducable and
the passively educable.

And Foerster continues:

No doubt the 'dumbest of us' do soak up something,
but it is patent that the good which they receive
is more than offset by the harm which they receive
and the harm which they do to their fellow students
by lowering the standard and the tone of the
institution.29

It is evident from the foregoing that Foerster sought a rationale of
selectivity for higher education. He was not content with what he termed the
"sentimentalism" of our institutions of higher education in their attempt at
egalitarianism. "So pervasive" he continues, "is this sentimentalism at times
that the very atmosphere of the university seems oppressive with the weight of
concern for hopeless inferiority, as if it were an intellectual sick-chamber."30

Foerster contends that the role of American higher education is not to
deal with these passive intellectual dullards. Rather, it is to deal with the

28 Ibid., p. 158. 29 Ibid., p. 184.
30 Ibid.
"fit," those capable of "enough liberal education to justify the effort." And, it should be obvious that Foerster does not consider those in college whose sole pursuits are utilitarian to be of much value. Like his mentor, Foerster contends that those individuals in our colleges who are there for a "liberal arts education" are those whom the college should serve.

We deal here with a position not at all dissimilar to that of Irving Babbitt. In fact, the exclusivity of the college, as indicated by Foerster, stands him in good stead with Babbitt. And on this matter of exclusiveness in higher education Foerster has this to say:

The college of liberal arts would then be enabled to serve the state by an unhampered development of the most valuable resources of the state, its more or less gifted citizens, upon whom the welfare of the state and nation finally depends.32

Now, Foerster's rationale as outlined above is based on several assumptions. And these assumptions seem to be a reaction to what Foerster terms the sentimental and egalitarian pursuits of American higher education. That American higher education was egalitarian in the 1930's is true; that it continues to be today and, some might say to a much greater degree, is also true; that it must continue to be will be, in this writer's judgment, the very strength of American higher education's future. For we shall contend in later pages that the vitality and growth of American higher education is contingent upon its very diversity.

31 Ibid., p. 185. 32 Ibid.
Foerster, then, having been trained by Babbitt, is alarmed at the utilitarian pursuits of American higher education. Indeed, he is alarmed to the point of striking out at those who would use the university to train individuals for our industrial society. Foerster seems to assume, therefore, that utilitarian education cannot be consistent with liberal arts education. And this is understandable only within the context of values being inculcated in man's higher will via the humanities and classics (wisdom of the ages). For Foerster, then, to dilute the liberal arts was to undercut the basic philosophical position espoused by Babbitt. And to do this was tantamount to destroying our Western culture.

In addition to assuming that the liberal arts were the only real vehicle for the formation of America's leadership, Foerster also assumes that many students in colleges and universities, whether they be in professional or liberal arts fields, had no real interest in their field other than the aim of economic security.

As with Foerster's position on the value of the liberal arts curriculum as opposed to the utilitarian aspects of the curriculum, this latter idea concerning the job consciousness of students attending college has some truth. Indeed, as viewed from Foerster's philosophical perspective, these factors posed a great threat to higher education as well as to America's continued existence. For it must be remembered that for both Foerster and Babbitt, the goal of higher
education was to produce future generations of leaders. And these leaders, it was felt, could best be trained through the value-laden disciplines of the liberal arts. Specialized and utilitarian disciplines could only detract from this goal and, ultimately, eventuate in a leaderless society. And, in the opinion of Foerster and Babbitt, this would be tantamount to insuring the decline of the Western heritage.

But, can we not assert that since Foerster's background was steeped in Babbitt's philosophy of critical humanism, he could not have viewed the milieu differently. Like Babbitt, Foerster seeks to bring to our attention the possibility of impending problems if we do not alter our ways. And it is in this way that we must understand Foerster: as one seeking to warn us of future woes. If we consider him as a true disciple of the future, then surely we will end-up with a rationale for higher education that is exclusive and not at all consistent with our notions of mass education. Individuals like Babbitt and Foerster must be heard. But, their positions must not be totally adhered to. The function of their positions must be to guide us in our pursuit of moderation.

Thus far our concern has been with Foerster's close philosophic allegiance with Babbitt and its impact on Foerster's view of American higher education. Let us now move to the specific manner in which Foerster sought to implement his philosophy and theory. We have reference here to the curriculum entailed in the liberal arts college.
The aim of American higher education for Foerster can be none other than the liberal and complete preparation of individuals. It cannot be mere mechanical preparation. Rather, it must be an education that stresses that "man is superior to the social organization--an affirmation which must rest fully upon a humanistic or religious basis." The education to which Foerster has reference "should make men and women resourceful, prepared to face with elasticity of mind whatever situations life may bring . . . ." And further:

those who are to be leaders must be trained for life in a world which does not exist. What today seems an education for efficiency may turn out to be merely fixation in maladjustment.

And finally,

Today . . . a narrow ad hoc education, enabling the individual to do one thing acceptably and disabling him from doing other things because the variety of his capacities has been stunted by neglect, is a grave disservice to our young men and women and a menace to the society in which they are to live.

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33 The Daily Loman, October 5, 1930, p. 1. Foerster refers here to the type of higher education that aims at developing a society composed of fragments rather than an education aimed at developing a society of persons. This former position rests on the naturalistic type of education espoused by Rousseau and asserts man's value only to the degree he benefits society.

34 Foerster, The American State University, p. 200.

35 Ibid., p. 201.
Foerster's educational ideal is liberal education. He discounts other forms of higher education, aiming at specialization, as possibly harmful to the harmonious development of the whole man. More importantly he views specialization and utility in the curriculum as possible causes of future woes within society.

This latter point is well taken. Indeed, it may be that some of our leaders in American higher education ought to consider seriously and ponder the notions expressed here. Especially in light of the specialization one finds in the college curriculum today and the corresponding uselessness of its products in the society. Perhaps the stress on utility, as evidenced by the core curriculum and universities without walls, may be viewed as attempts by our institutions of higher education to give the people what they want. A remedy that, as we have seen, proved disasterous in previous decades. This subject, which demands further treatment, will be taken up in the latter pages of this dissertation.

The notion of liberal education posited by Foerster is similar to that of Cardinal Newman. It is an education aimed at creating a man of judgment: one able to think, analyze and discriminate. The issue here is simply that one must be prepared in the art of judgment prior to seeking specialization. Foerster contends that an individual who has a broad base of knowledge and is capable of discerning alternatives is better able to apply his overall knowledge
to some area of specialization than is one who begins in an area of specialization. It is, therefore, from this basis that Foerster argues in defense of a liberal education to be the foundation upon which all other education must be built.

Now, if the crux of liberal education is judgment, it can be asserted that critical humanism with its stress on positivism can be viewed as:

a way by which we may carry out the full implications of the 'modern spirit' by being positive and critical in both the natural and the human realms, instead of continuing our one-sided absorption in scientific method and naturalistic speculation. To be fully modern, we need the two approaches to reality, the subjective and the objective, the inner life of the human spirit and the external observation of nature and of man as part of nature.36

What is important for our consideration here, and this is inherent in what has just been said, is the notion that a liberal education, with its foundation based upon the critical and humanistic spirit, does not abandon utility. It has its place for the humanist, since man's nature, as Foerster indicates, has its objective side based as it is on observation. However, the problem that arises between humanist and humanitarian centers upon the "place" given to subjects of utilitarian value in the curriculum. The humanitarian, it seems, wishes to give first place in the college curriculum to whatever

utilitarian subjects he feels can best meet the demands of the publics he serves. And, this is understandable since the humanitarian, like the humanist, has his point of view. However, where the difficulty often becomes irreconcilable is when the humanitarian abandons any attempts at recognizing the validity of the "human side" of man's nature as espoused by the humanists.

It seems that in man's attempt to be "modern" and "critical," at least from the humanist's point of view, he has really given up that which could truly make him "modern" and 'critical." He has fixed his gaze upon a methodology of inquiry, the scientific method, and claimed that it can guarantee the solutions to our ills. "We are done," the humanitarian might say to the humanist

with your inner life, your weak-kneed religion, your mystical humanism, your 'wisdom of the ages' your traditions, folkways, and prejudices, your common sense and guess work. The modern spirit is just the scientific spirit, the rational procedure of science, the way the mind works when it is honest . . . . We must go forward to ever greater light--not go back, defeated, to the darkness of the past. We must believe in strict observation, experiment, and measurement, in hypotheses and the testing of hypotheses; we must have faith in science, the lamp of human reason.37

One is quick to realize that the awkward stress upon man's one-sided development as expressed above is precisely what Babbitt and Foerster have been arguing against. "The proper study of mankind is still man." And this program

37 Ibid., pp. 232-33.
of study, says Foerster, "must have no hostility toward science, since the creation of science is one of the signs of man's humanity." Therefore, the curriculum of the college must manifest all that is properly human. Or, as Foerster indicates, it must manifest "man as known directly, in his inner life and its manifestations in social and political history, in literature and the arts, in philosophy, in religion." 38

Now, both the humanist and humanitarian stress the notion that education must lead to the ability to think. However, thinking for the humanitarian, at least in Foerster's judgment, is prescribed and while "the student may be given considerable range, should his mind wonder outside that pattern he is generally disregarded as hopeless or reproached for his prejudice." 39

The humanist like the humanitarian, seeks also to evolve man's ability to think. But to think for the humanist relates to "the domination of facts by principles, it is the process of reflecting, relating, weighing, and judging." And Foerster continues, "thoughtful assimilation must be the function of collegiate education." And by this Foerster means the critical ability of man (thinking) to view the past in relation to the present and having reference to the future. 40 Higher education for Foerster becomes, then, "progressive self-mastery," a process by which the student becomes "man thinking." 41

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38 Ibid., p. 243.  
39 Ibid., p. 246.  
40 Ibid., p. 247.  
If the aim of higher education is to create "man thinking," how, we may ask, is the university to accomplish this task? First of all, Foerster asserts that it is folly for universities to allow that all subjects of the curriculum are "free and equal" and "that one subject is as good as another, and that selection should, therefore, be relative to the student's 'individual differences.'" To allow such to occur abrogates the responsibility of the university with regard to standards of human excellence. In short, the university "that renounces its obligation to select subjects suited to the education of men and women gladly accepts its obligation to select subjects suited to the education of specialists." And, if we pursue the logic of Foerster's thought here, we must conclude that collegiate education aimed at specialization is not consistent with Babbitt's notions of man's harmonious development.

Now, what Foerster seeks in terms of higher education is a curriculum aimed at the harmonious, not one-sided, development of the "man thinking." And, as we have seen, Foerster contends that the foundation for this curriculum must be the liberal arts. What is left to our demonstration is "how" the liberal arts curriculum of the college shall meet this challenge. And, this will be taken up in the ensuing paragraphs.

Before doing so, however, it may be helpful to reflect upon the major thesis of this dissertation: that schools reflect society and seek to preserve,

\[42\text{Ibid.}\] \[43\text{Ibid., p. 250.}\]
purify, and transmit the cultural heritage of the society; that in this
process, there is conflict between tradition and utility; and that growth
must emanate from the reconciliation and assimilation of tradition and utility.

Now, if we accept the notion that schools seek to transmit our
cultural heritage, the question arises as to "how" our cultural heritage shall
be transmitted. Foerster's position seems to indicate that those seeking a
college curriculum based on utility and specialization tend to be, at least
philosophically, on the side of the naturalists with their stress on monism.
On the other hand, those who seek to transmit the cultural heritage by means
considered to be experiential; that is, in the sense of the critical humanist,
will wish to transmit man's cultural heritage based on a curriculum encompassing,
as Babbitt would say, "the wisdom of the ages."

We have then a basic conflict as to "how" the heritage shall be trans­
mitted. On the one hand the naturalists seek to "meet the demands" of the
people. For their demands seem to represent what is important enough for the
preservation of society's heritage. This utilitarian position is not at all
dissimilar to those previously referred to in Greece, Rome, the Medieval
Period, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment. We seem to be grappling with
the same problem in the twentieth century as was encountered in the fourth
century B.C. While circumstances surrounding the dilemma may have changed,
the issue still remains: the resolution of change within the context of
society's preservation.
We have, in preceding paragraphs, given some indication as to the humanist's view of the naturalist's attempt at the preservation of man's cultural heritage. It now becomes our task to present the alternative to this position. Or, what specifically does the liberal arts curriculum contain that makes it the humanist's choice for the preservation and transmission of man's cultural heritage?

That which shall serve this purpose is that which has survived the test of time and has come down to us as wisdom. It is that upon which Babbitt has rested the higher imagination in its search for standards; it is that which is truly human in the sense of having withstood man's scrutiny for generations and emerged as the "best." It is, as Foerster asserts,

the great human persons, and the great human works of literature, art, science, history, philosophy and religion that are competent to transmit to the future the knowledge and wisdom and beauty of the past and present.44

The curriculum of the liberal arts college for Foerster will, in the main, stress the natural sciences and the humanities.

It will offer, not hasty encyclopedic surveys . . . , but a rich and intimate knowledge and experience of the best that man has learned and said and done . . . . It will address the student, not as a future technician and specialist, but as a human being interested in understanding himself and his world.45

44 Ibid., p. 255.

45 Foerster, The Humanities and the Common Man, p. 44.
This curriculum will include the works of Homer, Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Galileo, Bacon, Hobbes, Moliere, Rousseau, Kant, Bentham, Marx, and other great thinkers.  

The curriculum proposed here by Foerster is not to be considered as the "old classical curriculum" found in American higher education during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, as we have said before, the curriculum as proposed is but the foundation for study. It does allow for specialization beyond the foundation stage. Moreover, the curriculum as proposed must be viewed as the fulfillment of the philosophical position espoused by Babbitt and Foerster. For if man is to be properly critical, he must have access to that which experience has shown to be wisdom. And this wisdom for Foerster, resides in the proper study of the liberal arts.

As with Babbitt, Foerster advocates that these major literary works be studied in their language of origin. And he says:

while it may suffice to read works of science or philosophy in translation, it does not suffice so to read works of imaginative literature.

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46 Foerster, The American State University, pp. 256-57. A complete listing of appropriate works may be found on these pages. The essential idea contained in Foerster's notion of the curriculum was that it must be devoted to the study of the liberal arts. He opposes specialization or utilitarian subjects being taught at the undergraduate level. He would not, however, oppose such educational pursuits at the graduate level.

47 Munson, The Dilemma of the Liberated, pp. 190-91 and 199-207.
And Foerster continues that it is not sufficient to read these works in translation, "even if translations were better than the original works." Since to read these works in other than their original languages would detract from the meanings implied by the authors.

But, one may ask, how is a student to attain such language proficiency so as to be sufficiently fluent to read the major works of literature in their various languages? To this question Foerster would answer that the student cannot be expected to master all of the languages required for this diverse and immense reading. Foerster does, however, assume that during the course of a student's secondary and collegiate training, he can master two languages. Foerster seems content to leave to the discretion of the college the appropriate selection of masterpieces that would fit the language preparation of its students. It, therefore, falls upon the college to maintain a curriculum capable of educational excellence.

Now, aside from students, the college is composed of faculty and administration. And, since Foerster indicates that it shall be the responsibility of these factions of the college to determine the appropriate curriculum, some attention should be given to their role in this process.

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48 Foerster, The American State University, p. 261.

49 Ibid. Foerster states that besides English, most literature appears in the languages of Greek, Latin, Italian, French, Spanish, and German. This distinction in language emphasis between Babbitt, who favored Latin and Greek as essential to the college curriculum, and Foerster who adopts a more Western attitude toward language study, may stem from the demands placed upon the university by society to become more egalitarian.
Foerster states that "the arrangement of a curriculum is itself a form of teaching."\textsuperscript{50} For the curriculum reflects a point of view; a consensus by faculty and administration as to what it considers to be essential for the education of its students. This consensus or, as some may call it, philosophy is no better or worse than the individuals who prescribe it. And this is precisely the point that Babbitt and Foerster have argued. Namely, that the consensus which governs the curriculum must not be solely reflective of the dictates of society. For if the curriculum becomes little more than what the society wants, then the perspective of the past will be lost. Both Babbitt and Foerster contend, then, that the consensus of society is basically utilitarian. And, the university, if it is to train future leaders, must be more than utilitarian in its dimension. It must, in short, give credence to the past wisdom of the ages so as to provide the values necessary for leadership.

Now, it would seem that some credence should be given to the notion that faculty shape the curriculum of the college. It is posited, therefore, that one's philosophical frame of reference or, as Babbitt has said, one's philosophy of life, can proscribe the college curriculum regardless of what direction it was intended to take. The only way to improve the curriculum, says Foerster, "is to improve the faculty which designs the curriculum."\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{50}Ibid., p. 266. Foerster's notion of the curriculum may be found on p. 183 of this chapter.

\textsuperscript{51}Foerster, \textit{The Humanities and the Common Man}, p. 45.

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid.
Foerster indicates that the majority of university faculties fall into three groups: pedants, dilettanti, and career-builders. While the pedants are more interested in trifling with facts and techniques and often attain their promotions based on "the number of pages . . . published, the dilettanti are the "charmers, entertainers, showmen, even clowns." The career-builders, says Foerster, are the "most successful" of all three types. The career-builders are very often Machiavellian in approach: "ready, when the need arises, to cut the throat of a fellow go-getter who gets in the way." Others of this group, Foerster indicates, are much more "passive yes-men, who, suppressing inner dissent, seek to advance themselves by appeasement."53

Among these faculties there are "admirable exceptions . . . who have learned that life without principle is not really life."54

In every university faculty there is a minority of dedicated scholars and teachers, who have not permitted their specialties to rob them of their manhood, who are persons as well as instruments, who are devoted to whatsoever things are true and elevated and just, who are laboring in behalf of liberal education and humane scholarship in the hostile environment of a materialistic institution.55

These individuals, contends Foerster, are examples of "man thinking." "They have the independent mind, the critical spirit, being above their knowledge not beneath it."56

53 Ibid., p. 47. See also: Foerster, The American Scholar, pp. 52-56.
54 Ibid., p. 48. 55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
It is Foerster's contention that a truly human university will seek through its administration—from president to department chairman—to acquire more of these faculty members who aspire to a philosophy of life based on critical thinking. To acquire the "man thinking" would, in Foerster's judgment, insure the continued existence of the liberal arts as the foundation of the college curriculum.

A faculty whose aim is the total and harmonious development of man's capabilities is essential. These individuals should speak out in their departments and on curriculum committees in favor of the liberal arts.

As universities have grown in size, with more and more students seeking a collegiate education, departments of universities have become fractionated. They often plan their curriculum around the needs and interests of their own faculty with little or no forethought given to how their courses mesh with those of allied disciplines. One wonders whether the problem of the one and the many, as expressed by Babbitt, would not be precisely the problem here.

It is, therefore, the responsibility of the faculty and administration to plan a constructive and human curriculum. And, what shall this curriculum contain? We have stated elsewhere some general notions of the foundations of the liberal arts curriculum in terms of studying great men, masterpieces, and the like. It now becomes our task to be more specific and to recommend within the traditional four-year college curriculum, an appropriate plan of action.
To accomplish this task, we will have reference to Norman Foerster. Foerster asserts that the four-year undergraduate curriculum must be devoid of specialization. Presently, we find that most colleges required a basic core of liberal arts courses for the first two-years of the college curriculum. When the student has passed to his junior year, specialization takes precedence over areas of general knowledge. And this curriculum, says Foerster, is due in large measure to the dictates of graduate schools expecting and requiring specialization prior to one's being admitted for an advanced degree.

Now, specifically, Foerster's call for reform means: that the course in which a book like Plato's Republic is taught—in history, or political science, or philosophy, or religion, or education, or Greek in the original or in English, or in all of these at once—is far less important than whether it is studied and how thoroughly it is studied. It means that, in general, a course is desirable in proportion to the number of first-rate books which could constitute the center of attention in the course. It means that most of the courses now existing would either become liberally respectable by a stiffening of their content or would disappear altogether ....

And continuing, Foerster says:

It means that, since many of the great books are old books, the past would be studied morelargely than has recently been fashionable. It means that the student would recognize the fact that human nature is in all times and places of recorded history fundamentally the same and that it will not be changed tommorrow.57

Foerster, therefore, urges our colleges and universities to abandon specialization at the undergraduate level of instruction and to introduce courses in "history, philosophy, science, and language and literature."\(^{58}\) These courses of study, encompassing as they do the great thinkers and their masterpieces—the wisdom of the ages—will go far toward achieving the critical spirit desired by the humanist.

To conclude our discussion of the liberal arts curriculum we have reference to one of Foerster's works entitled, *The Future of the Liberal College*. In ringing style Foerster is quick to say that "the mind and will of twentieth-century man are sick." And, "it behooves us . . . to seek to cure the disease." And the disease of which Foerster speaks is the same disease to which Babbitt had reference; namely, the chaos existing in the world.\(^{59}\) Continuing, Foerster states: "Its symptoms are bewilderment, drifting, loss of standards, loss of appetite for life." The remedy to these symptoms "is the adoption of a humanistic or religious working philosophy . . ." garnered from a study of the liberal arts.\(^{60}\)

Thus far we have made much of Foerster's philosophic consistency with Irving Babbitt. Further, we have, in our sketch of Foerster's notions of the liberal arts curriculum, asserted that it can be viewed as an extension of both

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\(^{58}\)Foerster, *The American Scholar*, p. 58.

\(^{59}\)Foerster, *The Future of the Liberal College*, p. 73.

\(^{60}\)Ibid.
men's philosophical position--the vehicle for its manifestation. However, what needs to be examined at this point, and this has been alluded to before, is precisely the degree to which Foerster's notions of education really paralleled those of Babbitt.

In a previous section we have accused Babbitt of being too selective in determining who shall be educated in our colleges. We have said that Babbitt's educational position may have even been inconsistent with his philosophic position stressing moderation. We have, in short, posited that Babbitt may have been an extremist in his educational view.

Now, Norman Foerster seems to have been following the pattern of educational thought previously espoused by Babbitt. Yet, one is struck by certain aspects of Foerster's ideas on education that may indeed place him counter to Babbitt's position. We have, for example, shown in Foerster's schema for the liberal arts curriculum that he did not maintain it was essential to read the "wisdom of the ages" in their original languages as did Babbitt. While he did stress language study, he seems more taken with the social milieu in which he was living. And, it is posited that no matter how much influence Babbitt may have had in shaping Foerster's ideas, the "tenor of the times" seems equally influential.

Foerster seems more to be an eclectic in the matter of education than Babbitt. Foerster, while seeking to maintain standards and reenforce the liberal arts curriculum, seems in his later works to be less interested in the notion
that higher education should be the exclusive domain of a select few. Higher education's "most distinctive duty" says Foerster:

is to enable the common man to enter into his cultural heritage, to develop his own humanity by means of it, to learn to face life with a sense of relative values, to prepare for his part in dealing wisely with the desperate problems of the next half century.61

And further, Foerster continues:

The very word humanities should remind us that they concern all humankind, are not exclusive, not for any class, not for an artificial aristocracy of birth or wealth, not for a natural aristocracy of intelligence, but for all men and women.62

There is in Foerster's position a certain amount of satisfaction and hope. While his educational position can certainly be judged by some as extreme, since it does heavily stress the liberal arts; nevertheless, it is certainly not extreme in the exclusive sense of Irving Babbitt. Further, while Foerster, as Babbitt, sought to inculcate the humanities as value-laden subjects for study, it was Foerster who said:

Values derived from the humanities can be grasped on many levels . . . . To say that what is great is for the few is to insult the common man, to deny the element of greatness in his nature.63

61 Foerster, The Humanities and the Common Man, p. v.

62 Ibid., pp. vi-vii.

63 Ibid., p. viii. See also: Karier, Man, Society and Education, pp. 196-205.
We have asserted elsewhere that Babbitt's philosophical position was sound. Indeed, we have gone so far as to posit that within the framework of our basic thesis; that problems arising between traditionalists and utilitarians must seek their reconciliation in accommodation, the philosophical notion of critical humanism seeking as it does, moderation, could be viewed as a solution to the dilemma. Further, this thesis statement must also be considered within the framework of schools reflecting society. And, in this regard; that is, in the practical application of the basic philosophical position of critical humanism to the school curriculum, we have said that Babbitt's notions of critical humanism were found to be lacking.

When we turn to Foerster, we find a definite continuation of Babbitt's philosophical position of critical humanism. However, its educational significance derives not from its exclusivity but from its universal application. In short, then, the philosophical position of Babbitt was adhered to by Foerster. The educational position espoused by Babbitt, however, was greatly modified by Foerster to meet the egalitarian pressures being asserted on institutions of higher education. Foerster's educational position, underpinned by Babbitt's philosophy of critical humanism, can be viewed as a solution to the debate that often racks our society between tradition and utility.
In the foregoing pages we have discussed the philosophic and educational implications of critical humanism through the first half of the twentieth century. It would seem appropriate to our goal of a complete exposition of critical humanism to continue our discussion of the philosophic and educational implications of critical humanism as they relate to current trends in American higher education. To this end we shall now concentrate our efforts.
CHAPTER VI

HUMANISM IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

A CONTEMPORARY VIEW

Much of our discussion in the previous pages has dealt with the philosophy and educational theory attributed to Irving Babbitt. We have suggested that Norman Foerster, being one of the main disciples of Babbitt, interpreted, with modification, Babbitt's position of critical humanism as he applied it in educational practice. We have also indicated that there were others involved in the humanist revolt within American higher education. And, while their efforts are worthy of note, it is not within the scope of this study to treat their contributions individually or collectively. What we shall, therefore, attempt to do within the confines of this chapter is to treat, in general, some of the trends in American higher education during the 1950's, 1960's, and early 1970's. Within this framework of educational development will be played the humanist theme.

Specifically, what we shall attempt to deal with in this chapter is the extremism attributed to Babbitt's educational position of providing a leadership elite. We shall also comment on the eclecticism of his philosophy of critical humanism. Within this milieu will be presented some of the trends found in American higher education during the last thirty years. And, we shall, of course, attempt to view these trends from Babbitt's perspective. Finally, we
will suggest that the modification of Babbitt's educational position by Foerster, as applied to contemporary American higher education, may indeed be a key factor in the continued growth of our institutions of advanced study.

Babbitt's notion of higher education as a selective form of education to be utilized for the inculcation of values and standards seems to have changed considerably in the forty years since his death in 1933. We have only to read the works of Foerster to determine that the continued growth of American higher education with its emphasis on utility soon caused the thrust of American higher education to change. Where once the emphasis was on the liberal arts and humanities as tools to train-up thinkers and men of values, the trend in the 1950's grew all the more diversified and utilitarian.

Now, if we are to be consistent with our basic position concerning schools as reflecting society, we must posit that American higher education grew to its present state of utility because society too became more concerned with social efficiency. The American society, premised on the free enterprise system, has always accorded prestige and status to certain outward manifestations of achievement. Witness for example the attainment of a collegiate education. Between 1949 and 1964, college enrollments in the United States doubled from 2,245,000 to 4,988,000.\(^1\) While it took some fifteen years for the college population to double between 1949 and 1964, it took only six years for the college population to double again to 8,580,887 in 1970.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Gerald L. Gutek, *An Historical Introduction to American Education*, p. 112.
Students flocked to our colleges during the 1950's and 1960's for various reasons. However, it is felt that one of the principal reasons for the growth of the college was the status and prestige placed on the attainment of a collegiate education by society. Many students sought a college education because of this and its consequence; namely, the ability to obtain a well-paying job in a society whose values stressed the utilitarian preparation given by our colleges.

We have asserted that American society is quite concerned with social efficiency and indices of status. Now, if this assumption is true, then it would stand to reason that the more our colleges and universities become reflective of this position, the more they will continue to grow in enrollments as well as esteem from the society. And, it would seem, from our previously cited enrollment figures that this notion is borne out.

However, there may be a danger here. There is little doubt that the 1950's, 1960's, and early 1970's have been years of immense growth for America. The knowledge explosion has affected virtually every field of endeavor from medicine to science and technology down to the most mundane pursuits. However, it may be in all of this growth that we have been riding the crest of expansiveness with little or no direction as to where we are heading. Or, as Babbitt might say, the expansive tendencies of our colleges toward unbridled and egalitarian growth may indeed eventuate in a surplus of college trained individuals. We may, in short, produce many trained graduates. But, because
of the less selective nature of our institutions of higher education in admitting students, fewer leaders will emerge. That this may be so, is attested to by the position of our college graduates seeking to obtain employment today.

Whereas the college trained student of the 1950's and 1960's had almost no problem in gaining employment commensurate with his educational attainment, the same collegiate graduate of the 1970's has a far different prospective facing him. No longer is the attainment of a degree entree to the professional world of work. Indeed, the degree may prove to be a hinderence to employment, as some employers are reluctant to hire overly qualified graduates.3

What has happened to the great American dream of families scrimping to provide an education for their children so that they might have a "better" life? What has happened in our colleges and universities that has brought them to the brink of financial disaster? What has happened within our society that has changed its view of American higher education and its role?

The answers to these questions may reside in the proper understanding and application of critical humanism to American higher education. They may reside elsewhere as well--in a religious rebirth. But one thing is certain, the answers to the dilemma confronting American higher education and society today reside in values and; after all, the focal point of Babbitt's philosophical and educational position revolves about the inculcation of values--wisdom that has transcended time.

Let us then pursue our questions as we review some of the events in American higher education during the period 1950-73. Let us seek to determine whether the issues raised, the problems posed and the solutions rendered are really suggestive of a satisfactory conclusion. Let us seek to determine whether or not the basic issue underlying the problems confronting society and education is little more than the age-old problem of tradition versus utility.

It can be suggested that American higher education today may have become too reflective of society and its needs. For, as society has continued to demand expertise in virtually every field, our colleges and universities have labored admirably to fill these needs. Colleges have grown, added immense physical plants, hired faculties and granted them tenure, and increased their supportive staffs. Society and education seem to have, therefore, grown as an amorphous of disconcerted acts. There seems, in short, not to have been any real planning involved to identify areas within the society for which the schools should prepare students. The result of this aimless growth seems to be a certain dissatisfaction on the part of all concerned.

Whereas the colleges and universities of Babbitt's time were once looked upon with esteem by virtually all segments of society, they seem now to be viewed with suspicion. Whereas the society was once looked upon by the college and university as a source of student supply, financial assistance, as well as ideas for future investigation, the colleges now seem to view the society
with an equal amount of suspicion. Many of our colleges and universities have been financially crippled as a result of their expansive growth. As society seems to reach its optimal number of college-educated students, it seems to have little compassion for the future needs of its schools.

When, for example, the United States public was outraged in the late 1950's with the Soviet Union's Sputnik space probe, our schools, at all levels, were accused of "soft pedagogy"; of not producing graduates sufficiently qualified to maintain the aura of power often associated with the United States. What is peculiar about this sudden reversal of opinion in the late 1950's is that the same society had some twenty years earlier accused our schools of being too dogmatic and had lauded the efforts of the Progressive Movement and John Dewey.

The emphasis in our schools after the Soviet space probe centered upon science, mathematics and technology as well as on foreign language study. To this end, the federal government became quite supportive of higher education through the National Defense Education Act of 1958.4 Millions of dollars were

4James W. Noll and Sam P. Kelly, *Foundations of Education in America*, pp. 427-28. The National Defense Education Act of 1958 contained eleven titles. A listing of areas of study funded under these Titles as well as other information concerning the provisions of this Act may be found on the pages cited.
given to institutions of higher education for the support of education that was viewed as supportive of national needs.\footnote{Federal Support to Universities, Colleges, and Selected Nonprofit Institutions, Fiscal Year 1969, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970), pp. 12-13 and 143. For example, the total fiscal obligation of the federal government to all institutions of higher education for Fiscal Year 1969 was $149,525,300. The significance of this figure is represented by the fact that this is only a two percent increase in federal expenditures for higher education over fiscal 1968. We can assert that, while this dollar figure of $149,525,300 does represent an increase in expenditure, it certainly does not match the previous percentage gains recorded for the period 1963-67. For during this period the average annual growth of federal assistance to institutions of higher education ranged from seventeen to thirty-six percent. We can, therefore, suggest that by Fiscal Year 1969, the federal government was already beginning to curtail its investment in higher education.} And our schools, being submissive to the will of societal consensus, complied by emphasizing those elements of the curriculum stressed by the society.

Now, what we wish to suggest here is that our basic issue of concern is simply that of working-out a proper dichotomy between the needs of the society and how these needs are reflected by the schools. If our schools are expected to alter the curriculum everytime the societal consensus moves from point A to point B, there most certainly will be a continued disorganization and a plethora of educated people within our society.

It would seem that the situation as outlined here is quite similar, at least philosophically, to Babbitt's notions on the dichotomy which exists between man's reason and his higher imagination. The needs of society are real needs, as are the school's. Nevertheless, the satisfaction of these needs seems to emanate solely from man's rational pursuits. And, as we have said...
before, the preservation, codification, and transmission of a society's cultural heritage cannot, in Babbitt's opinion, be accomplished strictly through the use of man's reason. For reason, as we have indicated, is an organ of flux and can but view the situation in its present context. What is essential, then, to the dilemma of societal continuance is the utilization of man's higher imagination: that faculty within man that can provide the historical perspective essential to the future aims and goals of education as well as society.

But let us be specific here. The federal government's involvement after 1958 in higher education was enormous. Millions upon millions of dollars were given to universities for the maintenance of subject disciplines commensurate with the felt national needs. Since universities had grown in size, and tuition as well as alumni contributions could not really sustain the rising costs of faculty salaries, administrative costs and physical upkeep, universities, in general, seemed quite pleased to accept the monetary assistance given by the federal government. With these monies, faculty were hired, facilities built and students recruited.

All seemed rather placid, at least on the surface. The funds received from the federal government enabled institutions of American higher education to sustain themselves financially. While they may have had to alter the direction of some departments' growth, in particular those in the liberal arts, this seemed a small price to pay for financial solvency.
The period between 1958 and 1968 were years of growth for higher education in America. Students abounded in large numbers; even the less funded and less utilitarian liberal arts departments were able to survive through a sort of financial "halo effect."\(^6\) Faculty salaries continued to grow, keeping pace with the inflationary trends in American society. Colleges and universities built bigger and better laboratories and libraries, not to mention dormitories and classroom buildings.

In retrospect, one must say that as an organization charged with preparing future leaders of our society, our leaders in American higher education were indeed naive and shortsighted. They seem to have been more interested in expanding their own spheres of influence and concentrating on the financial security of their own institutions than upon their obligation of preserving and transmitting the cultural heritage. In short, they seem to have been less interested in humanistic mediation and more concerned with Rousseauian expansiveness.

It would soon become obvious to our institutions of higher education that in fulfilling the dictates of society; that is, in preparing students in the fields of science, technology and college teaching, they had created a situation of financial crisis far worse than had they not become involved with

\(^6\)While many of the university departments were funded through government sources, others like the liberal arts and humanities received funding from the universities themselves--money that may have otherwise been in short supply were it not for federal funds.
the pecuniary returns associated with fulfilling the dictates of society.

That colleges and universities grew in an unprecedented manner during the 1950's and 1960's has already been demonstrated. That this growth was detrimental to their own continued existence is precisely what we wish to argue here. We have, for example, indicated that colleges and universities recruited large amounts of students during the 1950's and 1960's; we have also said that these same institutions hired faculties, built facilities and increased their supportive staffs. The colleges and universities did all of this based, it is asserted, on the felt needs of the society for "skilled" and "professional" graduates who would, through their expertise, enable the society to grow into a more formidable force in the world.

And for this obedience to society, what did our colleges and universities receive in return? Granted, they received the esteem of society for some ten years; they received, too, much needed money to support the apparatus necessary to meet the needs of society. In short, at least superficially, they held the gratitude and esteem of most men.

And yet, did they really receive the gratitude of society? This

7While the use of the term society may imply a certain amount of ambiguity, as it seems difficult to truly define society; nevertheless, our meaning of society here can best be typified as that group of individuals charged with the responsibility of education. This would entail, generally, the white, upper-middle and lower-upper classes whose values, it is posited, are essentially based on the Protestant Ethic or utilitarianism.
writer can well remember attending a symposium held by the National Science
Foundation in 1968 at the Sheraton Hotel in Chicago, Illinois.\(^8\) Like so many
other individuals involved in the practice of higher educational administration,
this commentator felt quite proud and successful that our colleges and
universities were achieving the goals set-forth by society in terms of producing
graduates trained in science, technology, and teacher preparation. We were
astounded to learn at this meeting, however, that so far as the government was
concerned, the optimal number of university trained Ph.D.'s in the sciences
had been achieved. Further, that other fields of endeavor, especially the
liberal arts, also had an over-abundance of trained individuals.

To many of those present at this meeting, these words came as a bolt
of lightning from the blue. They were astounded and baffled. Many felt that
they had done well the bidding of society; they had produced the trained
individuals to man our leadership posts in science. And, in return, they felt
rebuffed for their efforts. And rebuffed they were.

College and university programs supported by the government under the
National Defense Education Act were curtailed. Schools receiving assistance
under the National Defense Act Student Loan Program as well as Title IV\(^9\) of this

\(^8\)Invitations to this symposium were sent by letter from the National
Science Foundation. Only University National Science Foundation Coordinators
or their designated representatives were invited. No printed program was provided.

\(^9\)Title IV of the NDEA was supportive of graduate education. It provided
three years of support (stipend, tuition, fees and dependency allowance) for
those qualified students seeking the Ph.D. in government approved university
disciplines.
Act were systematically cut-back in funds.

Program administrators in the sciences that had once enjoyed financial and social security now felt that they had been "sold-out." They had done well the bidding of the government and, indirectly, of society. And for this, they now faced the dilemma of fewer students entering their programs, optimal numbers of tenured faculties, and facilities going unused. Small thanks indeed.

It must be said that colleges and universities will, in general, experience decreasing numbers of students in their scientific programs so long as the job-market remains depressed. And, it should be obvious that most of the education supported by the government was that which would eventuate in employment. With the dismal prospects for employment in the science areas today, colleges and universities can take little solace in the fact that they served well the society.

We have to a large degree concentrated our efforts in the preceding paragraphs on depicting trends in American higher education as they relate to government funding. Now, there is also an entire area of the university that remained relatively free of government support; the liberal arts. And yet, we find upon careful examination that those students seeking liberal arts degrees at the bachelors, masters, and doctoral levels have as equally a difficult task in securing employment upon graduation as their counterparts in the sciences.

This situation would seem unlikely based upon what we have previously said concerning the government's involvement in higher education. That is,
since the liberal arts and the humanities were left relatively unaffected by the huge amounts of money given to the colleges and universities, it would seem that they should be thriving. And yet, it is not so.

College and university departments offering coursework in the liberal arts seem to face similar problems of declining enrollments because of the paucity of jobs available to those with liberal arts credentials. Whereas once one could easily obtain a job based on his having procured the needed A.B. or B.S. degree; and yes, even the A.M. or M.S. or Ph.D. degree, there seems to be so great an overabundance of these college trained people today that our educational methods of limitless and expansive proliferation seem to fly back in our faces.

While liberal arts departments could have taken positive steps during the 1960's to forestall the proliferation of their graduates. And by positive steps, we have reference here to the more selective criteria previously discussed concerning the humanistic notions of Babbitt--however, not to the same degree of extremism as Babbitt might have suggested, but rather, perhaps, to the extent that certain standards of excellence would have been maintained regardless of the large numbers of students seeking a collegiate education. For it is suggested that while the science disciplines erred in acquiescing to government support, the liberal arts departments erred in an equally grave manner by allowing egalitarianism to dictate the direction of the curriculum.
Now what must be said here is that egalitarianism like any other "ism" has its extremes and its point of mediation. It is suggested that the expansive tendencies of our liberal arts colleges to fulfill the dictates of society; to provide more education for more people can be construed as an extreme form of egalitarianism. And, it is posited, that this form of egalitarianism can lead to a lessening of the quality of education given in our colleges as well as to a proliferation of individuals holding a credential that no longer has much "marketability" due to the fact that so many possess it.

We do not wish to speak against the notions of egalitarianism here. We only seek to point out, as does Foerster, that within the confines of this "ism" one must use discretion. If more and more individuals are desirous of a collegiate education in the arts, then what purpose does the college serve by allowing the masses to attain this education if the education itself must be diluted and if the resultant proliferation of individuals cannot obtain employment commensurate with their training?

This we submit is essentially the dilemma found in American higher education today. Colleges and universities have always been reflective of the needs of society. In so doing, they have been victimized by the society they sought to serve. Perhaps at no other point in our history is this more true than it is today.

Now, we have stated that the notion of egalitarianism does have a moderate aspect to it. And, it is suggested that perhaps this moderate form
of egalitarianism is precisely what American higher education should be seeking. Further, that the philosophy of critical humanism espoused by Babbitt and interpreted by Foerster may indeed be a form of moderate egalitarianism.\footnote{The term "moderate egalitarianism" is taken to mean a synthesis between the aristocratic and elitist educational position espoused by Babbitt and the modification of this position by Foerster in his attempt to provide quality education for more individuals--not necessarily the masses. Implicit in the definition of this term, however, is the conviction that Babbitt's philosophical position of critical humanism--apart from his educational position--does indeed provide us with the vehicle for this synthesis.} And, finally, that the answer to our dilemma in American higher education may resolve itself in this moderation. We shall pursue this notion of moderate egalitarianism in the last pages of this treatise.

We have asserted that the crux of the problem for our colleges and universities as concerns its growth may indeed by, in Babbitt's words, its "unbridled expansion," or its extreme form of egalitarianism or utilitarianism. Colleges and universities, even in colonial America, prepared students for certain vocations: the ministry and political life. As we have seen, the colleges and universities being reflective of society's needs throughout history have, as the society has changed, changed too. They became, as did society, more utilitarian in pursuit, preparing students to be employable within the society.

Readers should note that throughout this chapter there has been a constant reference to the college and university as producers of employable individuals. As our society grew, it needed more and more qualified people...
to fill newly created positions. Or did it? Perhaps, except for a few highly specialized areas, our competitive and status conscious society used our institutions of higher education to perpetrate the biggest hoax in history: simply, that those individuals possessing college degrees, regardless of discipline, were more qualified and, therefore, more actively sought after than those with a lesser education.

This myth of which we speak may not really be as far-fetched as some may think. In a recent issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* a summary appeared of the Carnegie Commission's latest findings on "Graduates and Jobs." The report projects that seventy-five percent of our college graduates during the 1970's and 1980's entering the labor market will take jobs normally filled by college graduates, replacing college-educated persons withdrawing from the labor force or finding work in expanding occupations that traditionally rely on college-trained people.11

Now, the prediction that seventy-five percent of our graduates will find employment "normally filled by college graduates" is heartening. However, there remains for our consideration the other twenty-five percent—or some 2.5 million individuals. These individuals, the report suggests, encompass the real dilemma. And the Commission's findings indicate that:

About half of the 2.5 million will find jobs that have been upgraded to make use of a college education

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or that can be. The other half \( \frac{1}{2} \) million to 1.5 million will have to take jobs that do not lend themselves to such upgrading.\(^{12}\)

And the report continues that:

Nearly thirty percent of male graduates of four-year colleges are now in blue-collar, sales, or clerical jobs, which often don't make full use of their education.\(^{13}\)

As concerns the future employability of college graduates, the report has much to say about trends. For example:

1. Prospects are dim for those seeking to become elementary and secondary school teachers or college faculty members, largely because demographic trends indicate a fall-off in enrollments . . . . The job market for school teachers is worse this year than in 1972 and has become progressively worse since about 1969. This trend is expected to continue unless federal and state funds allow improvements in faculty-student ratios in ghetto schools and expansion of day-care centers . . . . events that are favored by the commission but seem unlikely in today's cost-cutting climate.

2. The job-market for Ph.D.'s is apt to be 'increasingly unfavorable' during the 1970's, probably resulting in 'a surplus that will reach sizable proportions by 1980 . . . .' The surplus will be most serious in such fields as the humanities, where the vast majority of graduates are employed in academic institutions; on the other hand, shortages might reappear in engineering and some of the physical sciences before long. The prospects . . . are particularly 'dismal' for white male Ph.D.'s, not

\(^{12}\)Ibid. \(^{13}\)Ibid.
only because of the high supply of Ph.D.'s and the low demand for them, but also because of current efforts to hire women and members of minority groups. The report concludes that majority-group male Ph.D.'s constitute a special potential crisis situation that will result in massive disappointments in the later years of the 1970's and the early 1980's. This is the most serious single problem area we see ahead.

3. Prospects are 'bright' for persons entering health-care occupations and the professions largely because the health-care system enjoyed a sharp increase in financing under Medicare and Medicaid . . . . The commission warns that there are 'serious shortages' of nurses and allied health workers.

4. Prospects are also favorable in salaried managerial positions in private industry, in public and non-profit agencies, and in accounting.

5. Women will have fewer teaching opportunities than in the past, but more opportunities in health care. College educated black women will be eagerly sought, as employers try to place more members of minorities on their payrolls.14

And on this matter of the proliferation of degreed individuals, we must harken to Babbitt's previous warnings concerning the egalitarian and utilitarian thrust of American higher education. While it must be admitted that Babbitt would not have been overly concerned with the marketability of a college graduate, nevertheless, we can assume that since he never felt that higher education should be for large numbers of individuals, he would have viewed this proliferation and dearth of jobs as a direct result of the unbridled

14 Ibid.
self-indulgence of our leaders in higher education to adhere to the utilitarian wants of society. If Babbitt were a current commentator on American higher education he might suggest that the unrestricted nature of our colleges and universities, with their diversified curricula, could not but culminate in a situation resulting in a glut of persons holding degrees in the economic marketplace.

Now, when we began this long recitation of the conclusions of the Carnegie Commission, we asserted that the notion of attaining a college degree has been associated with occupational preparation. We also indicated that this may indeed be one of the biggest myths perpetrated upon our institutions of higher education.

Witness, if you will, the summary above. The Commission states that out of some ten million college graduates, 2.5 million will have difficulty finding jobs that utilize their educational training. When dealing with large figures, 2.5 million may not seem like a significant figure, especially when it is projected over a ten year period. However, it is disturbing to realize that these individuals can so readily be relegated to positions in society that do not require any particular advanced educational skills. Further, the statement that:

this enlarged pool of talent will enable the nation to make progress in such areas as health, the environment, poverty, justice, and the arts15

may be naive.

15 Ibid., p. 1.
Not only can it be construed to be naive but, more importantly, it may be symptomatic of the future ills that may plague America's institutions of higher education. We seem so intent on satisfying our society that once we have fulfilled one set of its needs, as we did in the 1950's and 1960's by producing college educated scientists and teachers, we readily move to the next set of needs. In this case, we seem willing to move into the areas of "health," "justice," and "poverty."

It seems as though our leadership in higher education is suffering from a form of incurable myopia. They seem not to have learned their lesson from the 1960's when their highly sophisticated science and college teacher preparation programs were financially abandoned by the government. They seem now to be willing, once again, to embark on new ventures deemed important for society. Our colleges and universities will, in all probability, prepare students to occupy positions of leadership in these now important areas of health and poverty. And, in return, in some ten to fifteen years, our institutions of higher education will saturate the market with degree holders in these areas. And, in all probability, we shall have new and more demanding needs by that time for which the government and/or foundations will be willing to pay sizable amounts of money to our institutions of higher education to produce the needed individuals in these new areas.

And so the cycle goes. It may be, too, that our educational leadership is not myopic as we have suggested. Many may wish their schools to grow with
the needs of society--expanding and contracting with the pulse of supply and demand. Others may feel that costs for higher education in America have reached such staggering heights that their institutions will not continue to grow without federal and foundation assistance.

While it is only a supposition, the latter point is perhaps most true. Our schools have become so complex and expensive that it is feared that standards are readily sacrificed to maintain their operational capability. And, this is indeed unfortunate. For, if we are correct in this assumption, then future trends in American higher education will continue to show expansive growth with little or no attention being given to what its own goals may really be. We may face a situation in which it is more important to keep operating than to be concerned with what we really stand for.

And against aimless growth, both Babbitt and Foerster stand as stalwarts, providing us with a philosophical and educational position worthy of implementation, a position that stresses standards. And these standards, they would say, are more crucial than the fleeting lists of priorities given by governmental agencies or even agencies like the Carnegie Commission. Standards that lead to critical thinking--to critical humanism--can provide us with educated individuals who are worthy persons for any time, for any season.

Now, we do not wish to be misconstrued in what we are saying here. We are not against American higher education's involvement in areas such as
science, teacher preparation, poverty, justice and health related areas. Indeed, these are important to our nation. But, we are against the manner in which these areas are exploited.

We seem more concerned with producing numbers of students in these areas than with what the end-product will be and what he or she will do. Our institutions of higher education seem to have truly earned the label of diploma mills. And this statement may be applied to all levels of American higher education including the once sacro-sanct Ph.D. degree. We seem to have become little more than factories producing products to be utilized by society. When our products no longer are marketable, we rush to the next product-discipline which we feel can be marketed. This aimless growth and vacillating may lead ultimately to the downfall of our institutions of American higher education--if not to their downfall, then certainly to an enlarging of the already present credibility gap.

Yet we find that in the face of this expansiveness, the Carnegie Commission remains optimistic:

The report predicts that, while there will be 'temporary and specific crises' in certain areas of employment, there will be no 'major overall crises--at least for a long time to come.' It also contends that the projected 'surpluses' of college graduates should be considered an 'enormous national asset' rather than a liability.16

While the Commission may see no impending crises for quite some time, it seems

16Ibid.
naive to discount the twenty-five percent of our college population who will not be able to utilize their acquired skills. Further, it seems unforgivable to produce individuals with Ph.D.'s, our highest academic degree, who remain and, according to the Commission, will remain for sometime, jobless. And, more importantly, whose talents and specialized training are virtually wasted.

The situation as outlined above borders on being irrational. How we can continue to squander our educational resources and continue to survive continues to mystify this writer, among others. In our attempt to be all things to all people we, in higher education, have called into question our own credibility.

Indeed, as the Carnegie Commission says, there may be no real crises in American higher education for some years to come. However, in the future, we may be faced with declining enrollments and apathy from society. And why? Because we have given society exactly what it wants; not what it needs. Our institutions of higher education have heeded well the utilitarian demands of society. And, in so doing, have become equally as efficient in production as many other business enterprises.

History does not record the optimal number of skilled and professional people needed by society. It may never record this number. However, it is suggested that in the short history of the United States, we have never really achieved a surplus of highly trained and educated individuals. We may, however, be approaching the time in our history when more planning time must be spent
in determining the future direction of America's institutions of higher education. We may also be rapidly approaching the time when society will have to re-evaluate its position on the utilization of college educated individuals. We may be reaching the time when there will be so many individuals possessing higher degrees, that the degree itself will mean nothing. We may also be nearing the time when our colleges and universities will no longer be interested in producing large numbers of graduates that are "job-oriented" but, rather, who are oriented to a truly humanistic life-style of moderation based on the ability to think critically: to become as Foerster has said, "man thinking," not a skilled and technocratic appendage who can see no farther than his own area of expertise.

In the brief span if this chapter we have endeavored to depict some of the basic trends occurring in American higher education during the period 1950-73. The picture portrayed, while seemingly bleak, is, nevertheless, in the humanistic sense, accurate.

In the opening paragraphs of this dissertation we asserted that within society there resides conflict between those seeking to maintain the status quo and those seeking change; that within this conflict we find the school, an institution of this society, mirroring the general conflict between tradition and change. And as an institution of society, the school must reflect the general consensus of the society of which it is a part. And, we may say that our schools, especially our institutions of higher education, have become
primarily reflective of the utilitarian segment of our society. Further, we may suggest that our institutions of higher education have in effect abandoned that aspect of society seeking to maintain the status quo.

Now, it has never been the position of this writer that our schools should reflect the status quo over the utilitarian needs of society. But, by the same token, it has likewise not been our opinion that tradition should be abandoned in favor of utility. Indeed, the notion that must be sought here is a merging of utility and tradition to insure an orderly growth.

When we discussed Babbitt's philosophical rationale for critical humanism, it was asserted that his position provided us with an excellent model for the assimilation of tradition and utility. The use of man's reason as a guide for the higher imagination to apply its universal principles to the world of reality was viewed as a means of coalescing utility with tradition. For reason may be likened to flux and change, while man's higher imagination may be considered synonymous with tradition. And, a philosophy that seeks to accommodate these disparate elements should eventuate in an orderly growth that insures the future as well as protects the past.

We have also seen that Babbitt's appeal to the higher will for the universal principles--the wisdom of the ages--to guide the higher imagination was a sound rationale. Our difficulty with Babbitt's philosophy of critical humanism, however, eventuated from his dogmatic insistence that only the classics and the humanities studied in their original languages could serve as the
foundation for the universal principles needed by the higher imagination. As we have said, this insistence by Babbitt on the classics as the foundation for knowledge does not bode well with a society that seems to be more utilitarian than traditional. It is also questionable whether the practical application of Babbitt's philosophy of critical humanism could do more than insure the permanence of the status quo, since the number who could be educated in such a classical-humanistic manner would be small indeed.

When we discussed the interpretation of Babbitt's position by Norman Foerster, we saw that Foerster eventually became more utilitarian in his educational application of Babbitt's philosophy of critical humanism. While Foerster certainly championed the liberal arts as the foundation of the college curriculum and the higher will, he also seemed more interested in seeking to bring more individuals into contact with the liberal arts. In short, he seemed less interested in training-up a leadership elite than Babbitt.

Foerster, then, seems to have taken the philosophy espoused by Babbitt and applied it in a more universal manner than his mentor would have liked. In this attempt at egalitarianism, we find in Foerster a partial solution to the unbridled growth in American higher education. In his attempt to provide a more universal form of higher education, Foerster, like Babbitt, adhered to a dualistic conceptualization of man's nature. However, Foerster's notions of what areas of study were essential to the foundation of man's higher will were less exclusive than Babbitt would have liked.
In Foerster, then, we may see an earnest attempt to bridge the gap that so often exists between tradition and utility. For Foerster sought to maintain the traditions of the past and utilize them as the foundations of learning. He was, however, astute enough to realize that the traditions of the past were insufficient to a rapidly expanding and technological society. In his attempt to provide higher education for more individuals, Foerster sought to mediate the extremes of tradition and utility within society by providing a balanced curriculum that would take into account both extremes and, hopefully, produce the critical man—the man thinking.

The problems which confront American higher education today, while circumstantially different from those which confronted Babbitt and Foerster, still remain basically the same: utility versus tradition. What we must assert then is that the possible solution to the dilemma confronting American higher education is the proper implementation of Babbitt's philosophical position of critical humanism as modified by Norman Foerster.

We have devoted much space to an exposition of Babbitt's and Foerster's positions. We have also indicated in broad form some of the current trends in American higher education. Further, we have in this chapter asserted that a possible solution to the problems confronting American higher education may reside in a modified interpretation of Babbitt's critical humanism. It is now
our task to demonstrate, in a practical manner, how our notions of critical humanism may be seen as an answer to these problems, and, in this exposition, to hopefully suggest an avenue for the future development of American higher education. To this end we shall now concentrate our efforts.
CHAPTER VII

CRITICAL HUMANISM AND THE FUTURE OF
AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

The final pages of this dissertation will center upon a synthesis
of the educational implications of critical humanism as applied to some of
the main ideas concerning the future of American higher education. Unlike
the previous commentary which was theoretical in posture, this chapter will
attempt to utilize the theory and apply it to the practice of higher education.
And, finally, we shall suggest some future avenues for humanistic educational
study that could emanate from this work.

Throughout this dissertation there has been a dominant theme. The
thesis that schools reflect societal consensus and, as a result, are charged
with preserving, purifying, and transmitting the cultural heritage to insure
the continued survival and growth of the society has been fundamental to our
discussion. We have also demonstrated that as society changes from rural to
urban and from traditional to utilitarian that conflict arises between those
proponents within society who favor the traditions of the past, often referred
to as those seeking to maintain the status quo, and those within society who
favor growth at the expense of tradition--expansionists. This conflict has
been reflected by our schools throughout history. The form of education, as
we have shown, in the days of pre-commercial Greece and during the rise of
commercialism in Greece is a case in point. Further, as we view history in retrospect, we can see similar dichotomies existent in Rome during the Republic and during the period of Empire.

Like patterns of societal conflict between tradition and utility are recorded during the Medieval Period and Middle Ages, this period of history being, as we have said, a traditional reaction to the rational humanism of Rome. To this emphasis on tradition found in the Middle Ages we found the opposite reaction of the Renaissance. And to the Renaissance emphasis on a classical rebirth, we saw that the Reformation posed a theistic counterthrust. And, finally, the Enlightenment with its stress on sense knowledge, reason, natural law and progress, offered to man a monism that coalesced his own nature with God and Nature.

Now, in all of this historical shifting between tradition and utility, we have asserted that education, being reflective of the dominant consensus of society, shifted too. And, it is felt that this position is in need of no further elaboration.

When Irving Babbitt attempted to meet the challenge of naturalism associated with the Enlightenment ideologies of Jean Jacques Rousseau, we indicated that Rousseau's notions of naturalism as a societal and educational position expressing monism were countered by a classical position reasserting the basic dualism of man's nature. In discussing Babbitt's reaction to the naturalism of Rousseau, we evolved the basic philosophy of critical humanism.
In so doing, we indicated that this philosophy with its emphasis on mediation could resolve some of the educational difficulties resultant from the conflict within society between those factions advocating the status quo and those seeking solely utilitarian growth.

As a philosophical position, we stated that Babbitt's critical humanism with its emphasis on reason as a faculty to guide the principles of the higher imagination was indeed laudable. And, it was posited that it could even be viewed as a mechanism to bridge the chasm between tradition and utility. For we asserted that man's reason could be equated with utility since its scope of operation was confined to the flux of reality; further, that man's higher imagination could be equated with tradition since its concern was with the principles garnered from the higher will. And, that a proper mediation of these two faculties could produce the desired results in mediating conflict and lead to an ordered growth that discounts neither tradition nor utility.

We expressed deep concern, however, over Babbitt's insistence that man's higher will—that faculty which could possess the wisdom of the ages—used as the foundation for its knowledge the classics. More specifically, the values and standards derived from a study of the classics by the higher will would be derived by studying the classics and humanities in their original languages. As a result of the foregoing, we asserted that Babbitt's philosophical position as applied to educational practice; that is, in terms of its evolution into a curriculum centering about the classics studied in their original languages,
was elitist and could not, in this writer's opinion, be viewed as a means of mediating the educational conflict between tradition and utility. Indeed, critical humanism seems in its practical application to be little more than a re-statement of tradition maintaining a dominant position over utility. Further, our adherence to Babbitt's philosophy of critical humanism in its practical application to higher educational methodology would undoubtedly produce an elite since most students would be incapable of coping with the type of curriculum espoused by Babbitt. And, it can be posited, that the result of this would not mediate the extremes of tradition versus utility, but further aggravate these conditions.

When we discussed Norman Foerster's interpretation of Babbitt's position, we showed the close philosophical allegiance of Foerster to Babbitt. We also gave evidence to indicate that Foerster, while advocating essentially a liberal arts curriculum as did Babbitt, sought to encompass more individuals with his educational reforms than did Babbitt. Foerster may well have been more egalitarian than Babbitt simply because of the increasing numbers of students flocking to America's colleges. It is, therefore, felt that Foerster may have appeared more egalitarian than Babbitt in the sense that Foerster's application of Babbitt's philosophy of critical humanism in educational practice enveloped more individuals and, thus, attempted to extend the humanist creed on a less selective basis; nevertheless, Foerster's position, that which we have previously termed "moderate egalitarianism," seems not to have been readily adopted in American higher education.
Indeed, as we have pointed out, the trends in American higher education during the period 1950-73 appear to have continued along utilitarian lines of development. As the American society continued to develop technologically, so too did our institutions of higher education vie to supply the needed expertise to meet the demands of society.

The purpose of this brief summary has been to synthesize the complexity of the foregoing materials and to place the application of the philosophy of critical humanism to present-day American higher education squarely in perspective. This being done, we are left with the task of drawing-together many of the philosophical ideas expressed and applying them to several of the problems confronting higher education today. Let us, then, proceed.

It is felt that much of the practice of higher educational leadership in America today is just that, practice. It is not particularly well-grounded in one or another philosophy. Further, it can be suggested, that based on some of the trends in American higher education previously expressed, the closest notion of a philosophical base for decision making that seems to be utilized by our leaders in American higher education is the philosophy of utility. And, as might be expected, it is felt that such a posture is erroneous for it does not achieve mediation but aimless growth.

But, this position is not totally erroneous. For, as we have already said, one aspect of any of the problems confronting American higher education may be traced to utility while the other may be viewed as traditional. What is
needed, it is felt, is a coalescing of these two diverse positions. If this can be achieved, it may be that decision-making in American higher education may indeed become responsive to what society truly needs and not merely to what some feel it wants.

Now, the notion expressed above seems rather simple and may seem to pose no serious problem in its implementation. However, we cannot be naive and assume that all people will view the situation as we have, or will seek to term the utilitarian growth in American higher education as expansive. And, this is understood. For we must remember in proferring any solution to any problem that individuals' values and experiences will vary; and, as a result, will dictate their response to any situation. However, we seek not to proselytize anyone who may be at variance with the position we seek to propose. We ask only that it be given a fair reading. At least to the extent that this writer has recognized the fact that other and unlike positions may conflict with our notions.

In attempting to put-forth our possible solutions to some of the dilemmas confronting American higher education, we shall adopt a problem-solving approach grounded in the philosophical base of the critical humanism of Irving Babbitt. And we shall posit that regardless of which problem one attempts to solve, the common denominator to which the problem may be reduced is the conflict between tradition and utility. And, further, that the desired goal of those seeking either tradition or utility is to preserve and transmit
the cultural heritage of the society; though in entirely different ways.

In the previous chapter we suggested that the prospective college graduate may find that securing a job in today's market will prove frustrating. This due, mainly, to the vast numbers of individuals being graduated who are competing for like positions. Implicit in this situation is the notion that higher education has sought to accommodate more and more individuals. And, this may be viewed simply as an attempt to provide egalitarian or quantity education to the masses of people.

There are those in American higher education who would certainly say that the ability of our institutions of higher education to provide mass education to the increasing numbers of students seeking collegiate training is laudable. Indeed, some may wish to suggest that the very vitality of the college or university is determined by the disparate elements which it encompasses. On the other hand, there are those within the milieu of American higher education who contend that to provide a collegiate education to the masses of people seeking it will only diminish the quality of the education as well as lessen the stature of the credential in the job-market.

What we are posing here is a real dilemma. There are those in higher education today who feel strongly that to allow the masses to gain a college degree could prove ruinous to our system of higher education as well as to our economy. And, within this dilemma, these individuals could best be termed as traditionalists; those seeking to maintain the standards and traditions with which they have become imbued.
They would argue that the entire concept of higher education is changing. As little as ten years ago, the attainment of a bachelor's degree was looked upon with esteem; a master's degree or doctor's degree was reserved for only the most qualified. Today, the position of the bachelor's degree in our colleges, at least insofar as it may be viewed as a marketable commodity, seems to have become almost synonymous in value to a high school diploma. Where once a high school diploma was the minimum requisite for entry into the world of work; the undergraduate degree, because of its possession by more individuals, seems to be nearing the point where it will replace the high school diploma as the basic requisite for a job. The value, therefore, of the college degree seems to be diminishing and may continue to diminish in proportion to the number possessing the credential. Similarly, master's and doctor's degrees have been awarded in increasing numbers.

It is not difficult to project, based on the foregoing, that in the near future we may be confronted with a society of "highly educated" individuals; that is, individuals possessing bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees who have little hope of utilizing the skills attained in their degree programs. The time may be coming when, as a result of mass education at all levels of higher education, we may be faced with the situation of having to devise new and different programs of study beyond the doctorate. And, this may not be as far-fetched as it may seem. For, if we follow the dilemma as the traditionalist would have us do, then we must conclude that within our status-oriented society,
the value of any commodity decreases in proportion to the number possessing it. And, if this be so, then it seems only logical that the future leadership in American higher education may very well propose the implementation of the "super Ph.D." or some other such innocuous title.

On the other end of the spectrum we find those individuals within American higher education seeking to do away with any notions of elitism that may exist. Their position may be reduced to one of providing as much education for as many people as possible.

Now, within this group of utility-oriented practitioners we can discern a wide range of methodologies. There are those who may feel that our colleges have an obligation to provide an education to all that seek it. And, if we must lessen our entrance requirements, course standards, and the quality of work expected, then, so be it. For it is more important to our democratic ideal of freedom for all to allow for mass education than to be overly concerned about the quality of the programs through which these individuals will pass.

Also, there are those within this group of utilitarians who seek to provide mass collegiate education on a more selective basis. These individuals would suggest that programs of remediation should be a part of collegiate education at all levels. Such programs would be utilized to train-up those students found to be lacking in needed preparation to compete in college. While the basic notion here seems sound, it nevertheless, has its drawbacks. For example, it is felt that programs of remediation carry with them a certain
stigma that may cause students to either shy-away from them or to approach them with guarded caution. Further, programs like this are costly. And, with today's colleges and universities facing the unhappy prospect of having to draw-upon their endowments to meet expenses, the likelihood of extensive programs of remediation seems only a remote possibility.

It is felt that those individuals fostering this position of mass education would be termed as expansionists by the traditional element within American higher education. Likewise, those individuals seeking to maintain the "selective and restrictive" components within American higher education, would be termed by the utilitarians as seekers of the status quo.

Both groups of individuals are seeking to preserve, codify, and transmit the cultural heritage of our society. Of course, both seek to do it in different ways. One might suggest that the traditionalist, like his historical counterpart in pre-commercial Greece, in the Roman Republic, in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Reformation, wishes to foster the cultural heritage with little regard for change. We might suggest also that, we we have shown elsewhere, this notion of transmitting the cultural heritage based on the past traditions with little or no credence given to opposite positions stressing utilitarian methods for fostering the cultural heritage may indeed be the cause of the dichotomy that exists and has existed between traditionalist and utilitarian.

Similarly, utilitarians seeking to meet the needs of society as they see them with little or no credence given to the traditions of the past may be
equally as guilty of causing the dilemma between tradition and utility in the preservation of our cultural heritage.

We have spent considerable space in outlining, in a problematic manner, the idea that the dilemma of mass education at the collegiate level may be deduced to a dichotomy between those seeking to solve the problem in a traditional manner and those who would solve it at the expense of tradition. Now, there remains for our consideration a possible solution to the dilemma based on the critical humanism of Irving Babbitt.

When we discussed the philosophic notions of Babbitt's critical humanism, it was suggested that this position could be viewed as a mediating force to cope with disparate elements within most dichotomies. We suggested that man's use of reason, though a faculty of flux, is capable of placing man within the ebb and flow of reality; that through reason, man is capable of experiencing problematic situations in the real world. We further suggested that since man's reason was part of the flux of reality, it was incapable of grasping any permanence that may exist in reality.

The situation as outlined here may be viewed in direct contradistinction to the Progressive Movement and John Dewey. Since Dewey reduces all of reality to man's reasoning and experiential ability, he essentially rejects any notions of permanence in man or reality. Like Heraclitus and the Sophists, Dewey

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1 The use of the phrase "Progressive Movement" within the remaining pages of this dissertation refers to the philosophic position of Pragmatism/Experimentalism.

2 Heraclitus (540-470 B.C.) was a Greek philosopher known to us mainly through the writings of Aristotle and Plato. His importance here stems from his view of reality as flux and change.
views reality as a continuum of flux that confronts man. And, to the degree to which man, who is distinguishable but not distinct from reality, can solve the problems that confront him in reality, it is to that degree that he develops his own self-hood and identity.

Now, such a philosophical position as just espoused would certainly, as we have previously suggested, fit well with Rousseau's notions of natural education. But, for the critical humanist of Babbitt's persuasion, such a position is alien. This type of position is viewed as one-sided, for it takes into account only flux and change. It has no recourse to any permanency that may exist in man. Further, the philosophical position espoused by Dewey and Rousseau seeks to solve problems and direct our educational ventures based on solving the problems of the moment. While this may seem laudable, it is not so viewed by this writer, for it does not seek to utilize any past traditions as an aid in the problem-solving approach. It has reference only to a gradual building of the individual's experiences so that he may be better prepared to meet the needs of the moment. And all of this rests on a foundation of reason, a faculty, as we have said, that is itself a part of flux.

It is posited that a philosophical position whose foundation rests on change and flux will reject much of the traditions of the past. For in their attempt to solve problems, the Progressives and Naturalists foreshake man's basic dualism for a monism that fosters the social efficiency of the individual to the exclusion of his permanent nature.
Now, the critical humanist would argue that the Naturalist and Progressive have utilized only one part of man's nature to cope with problems; namely, his reason. There exists for the humanist, however, that aspect of man's nature that is concerned with the permanence found in reality. While it is acknowledged that men like Rousseau and Dewey find no permanence in reality, the humanist does indeed find permanence. In fact, it is upon the permanence found in reality that the humanist bases his problem-solving mechanism.

Unlike the Naturalist or Progressive who seeks to solve problems strictly on a rational level, the critical humanist, while utilizing man's reason, also appeals to principles and standards that have withstood the test of time. These standards, as we have previously suggested, derive from man's higher imagination and, ultimately from man's higher will.

The effect of this philosophical position of critical humanism is that in a problem-solving situation, such as we have outlined above, it allows for both extremes of the problem. Through man's reason, the critical humanist would suggest that as a faculty of the world of change, it can view those elements of the problem associated with utility. For example, in the problem cited of providing mass education at the higher level, man's reason should be capable of grasping the positive aspects of the utilitarian position. On the other hand, since man is also possessed of a higher imagination whose principles are derived from his higher will, he should further be capable of viewing the problem of mass education from the traditionalist's point of view.
The benefit of such a philosophical system is that it can enable men charged with the future direction of our institutions of higher education to view both sides of the dilemma. More importantly, it may allow for the solution to the problem by seeking to mediate the extremes through a merging of tradition and utility. The end result being an orderly growth that takes into account both traditional and utilitarian arguments.

As a philosophy, then, it is felt that the critical humanism of Irving Babbitt has much to offer as a means of mediating problems. However, it should be noted that the methods by which the principles and standards are imbued in man's higher imagination may cause a variance of opinion. And, we have already noted this problem when we discussed Babbitt's notions on education and the study of the classics. We also indicated that, through the work of Norman Foerster, some modification of this methodology was suggested.

It is the opinion of this writer that Foerster's educational contribution to Babbitt's philosophy of critical humanism may indeed hold the answer to the problem of adopting principles for man's higher imagination that can, with the use of man's reason, realistically cope with the problems confronting not only American higher education but also society. For the adoption of the philosophy of critical humanism with its educational modification suggested by Foerster can maintain the needed standards necessary to the continuance of American higher education as well as the society it seeks to preserve.
We can further hypothesize from the foregoing that a philosophical and educational rationale as espoused by Babbitt and modified by Foerster, can be used to mediate virtually any problem confronting American higher education. In matters concerning collective bargaining of faculty with universities, in matters concerning the admission of minority group students to institutions of higher education, in matters concerning the curriculum of our institutions of higher education. In all of these problems, it is posited that there will evolve positions that deduce to tradition and utility. And, while the representatives of these two groups will seek to preserve and transmit the cultural heritage in the best manner they can, they, nevertheless, will be working from a biased point of view that does not allow for the other's position. The application of our basic problem-solving rationale as evolved from this dissertation may go a long way in settling these types of dilemmas.

Having evolved a plausible methodology for solving problems based on the critical humanism of Irving Babbitt, there remains for our consideration some suggestions as to how the work undertaken in this dissertation may serve as a foundation for further studies. These suggestions are listed below:

1. While this study has attempted to depict Babbitt's philosophical and educational position as counter to the Naturalism of Rousseau, it would seem appropriate to carry-forth this contrast between humanism and naturalism through the Progressive Movement. A study, therefore, that would contrast the critical humanism of Irving Babbitt with the naturalist evolution into the
the pragmatism of John Dewey would be useful in elaborating upon the foundations set-forth in this work.

2. From the foregoing research, it would seem that the modified version of Babbitt's educational position could serve as the foundation for future work in the field of curriculum. Specifically, this study could serve as a guide to establishing curriculum revisions in institutions of higher education.

3. It is suggested that based on the research presented here, there is sufficient evidence to warrant the preparation of a grant proposal for further study into the problems of mass education in higher education as it relates to the society and the job market. It is felt that such a study would seek to determine the real needs of those elements within the society that the university seeks to serve. In addition, the university itself will have an opportunity to review its own basic needs and goals. And, it is suggested, that this type of study be undertaken from the perspective put-forth in this dissertation; that is, from the framework of tradition versus utility.

4. A study of Norman Foerster most certainly should be undertaken. It is felt that his egalitarian and humanistic tendencies based on Babbitt's philosophical position of critical humanism may prove beneficial to American higher education not only from the perspective of problem solving, but also from the standpoint of curricular revision. As a corollary to this study, it would prove useful to trace the humanist tradition beyond Foerster through the works of some of the lesser known humanists referred to previously.
Irving Babbitt's Undergraduate Courses at Harvard University

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<th>1885-86</th>
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<tr>
<td>Greek I</td>
<td>93</td>
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<td>Greek E</td>
<td>96</td>
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<tr>
<td>English A</td>
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<td>Professor Hill, Assistant Professor Briggs, and Mr. Cummings</td>
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<tr>
<td>English 7 (extra course)</td>
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<td>Greek 8</td>
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<td>Professor Wright</td>
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<td>Latin 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>English 2</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>French 4</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Mr. Kittredge</td>
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<td>Mathematics D (extra course)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Mr. Savin</td>
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*No grades given

Absent. During this year, Babbitt walked throughout Europe.

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<td>C-</td>
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<td>French 4</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>Mathematics D (extra course)</td>
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<td>Thesis (classics)</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Assistant Professor Royce and Messrs. Conant and Baker</td>
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*No grades given
Irving Babbitt's Graduate Courses at Harvard University

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<td>Professor Lanman**</td>
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<tr>
<td>English 2</td>
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<td>Professor Child and Assistant Professor Kittridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>English 11</td>
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<td>Professor Child and Assistant Professor Kittridge</td>
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<td>German 4</td>
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<td>Assistant Professor Fronke</td>
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<td>French 10</td>
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<td>Professor Bocher and Assistant Professor de Sumichrast</td>
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<td>Italian 4</td>
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<td>Professor Norton</td>
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*No grades given

**Professor Lanman notes that he distinguishes between A middle (Am), A high (Ah), and A low (Al).
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The dissertation submitted by Joseph Aldo Barney has been read and approved by the following Committee:

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Professor, Departments of History and Educational Foundations

Dr. Rosemary V. Donatelli
Associate Professor and Chairman, Department of Educational Foundations

Dr. John Wozniak
Professor of Educational Foundations and Dean, School of Education

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December 18, 1973
Date

Gerald Lee Gutek
Director's Signature