1975

Neo-conservatism and Educational Excellence
1918-1970

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NEO-CONSERVATISM AND EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE
1918-1970

by
Norman R. Phillips

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

February
1975
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For their many helpful suggestions, the writer would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the dissertation committee. The members include Professor Gerald L. Gutek, chairman of the committee; Professor Rosemary V. Donatelli; Rev. Walter P. Krolikowski, S.J.; and Dean John M. Wozniak. This writer has benefited considerably from their advice and labors.
VITA

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CHAPTER I

THE RATIONALE

Much of contemporary American educational theory is dominated by liberal and progressive viewpoints which include several varieties of unmodified and unmodified experimentalism, social reconstructionism, and current versions of Rousseauistic naturalism. Educational conservatism is today very much on the defensive. This situation makes an examination of the educational implications of conservatism an especially valuable exercise. A consideration of conservative educational theory may aid in broadening the range of alternatives available to educators in dealing with educational problems. At the same time, it may enable them to see the regnant educational philosophies in greater perspective. Since both the assumptions and implications of conservatism differ from those of liberalism and progressivism, the conclusions based upon those assumptions should also be different. Additional creative possibilities would thereby presumably become apparent.

Specifically, this study seeks to ascertain the implications of neo-conservatism, the dominant contemporary form of conservative thought, with respect to educational values and methods of imparting these values. For the purposes of this study, values will be construed to mean goods which can act as guides and goals of human endeavor. We will be especially concerned with intellectual and moral values and with those criteria of values which neo-conservatives employ to evaluate educational outcomes. We will also consider the neo-conservative
recommendations that are designed to bring educational procedures in
closer conformity with these standards.

Essentially, this study examines the writings of representative
neo-conservative writers in historical perspective. As such, it is a
work of intellectual history. By analyzing neo-conservative thought,
the conclusions we will reach will be based on the literature of the
major theorists rather than on mere conjectures. By relating our
conclusions to the various historical trends of the twentieth century,
we can make important inferences concerning the causes and significance
of neo-conservatism as a movement. To explain the method to be utilized,
it seems advisable to first depict the author's conception of intellec-
tual history.

Intellectual history is, to begin with, a branch of history. The
latter subject has usually been defined in terms of the study of the
human past. The subject should however be delimited further lest we
include such fields as cultural and physical anthropology within history.
More specifically, history pertains to the literate human past. It must
be so limited because, to a large extent, the historian is trained to
work with such written materials as documents, books, letters, diaries,
and inscriptions. Where non-written materials are concerned, we generally
rely on the services of archeologists, anthropologists, and other such
specialists.

Even more distinctive than the kind of material with which the
historian deals is the method which he pursues. The historian views
developments in relationship to the perspective of time. Thus, when
dealing with ideas, he does not consider them in vacuo but rather in
relationship to the attitudes and problems characteristic of the age in which the ideas exist. The constellation of ideas which constitute the New Deal viewpoint would, for example, be considered in relationship to the particular problems of the 1930's such as the Great Depression and its accompanying political unrest. A consideration of New Deal ideas in vacuo would not be considered history in the sense in which the writer has used the term because of the lack of such a time perspective.

Intellectual history can be briefly defined as the application of the historical method to the study and interpretation of ideas. Three methods of approaching intellectual history can be distinguished. The first of these is the study of the ideas and attitudes of the common people as revealed through popular magazines, newspapers, comic books, and memorabilia of all sorts. To do this work effectively, the historian must be a capable cultural anthropologist and sociologist as well as a competent historian. Second, there is the study of the attitudes and ideas of the dominant elites (in all the major areas of human endeavor) and of the rival minorities striving to displace them. Finally, we study those ideas which form part of the Weltanschauung of any well-educated person. To perform capably on either of the two latter levels, the historian should be acquainted with relevant branches of philosophy and sometimes with the arts as well. The first form of intellectual history is chiefly important because it pertains to matters which affect large numbers of people and through them the cultures to which the people belong. The second and third forms pertain to matters affecting the elites
which powerfully influence the destiny of man and nations.\textsuperscript{1}

The dissertation will deal with intellectual history in the latter two senses of the term. Since conservatism has been one of the major philosophies espoused by members of many of the dominant elites of history, it would qualify for consideration by those historians who adhere to intellectual history in the second sense of the term. Conservatism would also qualify for consideration by those who adhere to intellectual history in the third sense of the term; for an acquaintance-ship with conservative ideas has generally been deemed essential to an understanding of the political and social conflicts of the recent past.

No attempt will be made to analyze the popular usage of "conservatism" which has been confused and often very inconsistent in character. There apparently has not been a discernible common thread in the varied ways in which "conservative" has been applied. It is hoped that this dissertation will contribute to a more precise formulation of the meaning of conservatism.

This study will consider the educational implications of neo-conservative thought by surveying those conservative writers who have done a substantial analysis of educational issues to enable us to form some conception of their general educational viewpoint. In addition, only those writers will be discussed whose writings are on a level above

\textsuperscript{1}The classification of intellectual history given above is based on H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), pp. 9-10. I have however drastically modified his treatment.
that of invective, vituperation, and mere polemics. The following con-
servative writers will be treated in this study: Irving Babbitt, G. H.
Bantock, Bernard I. Bell, T. S. Eliot, and Russell Kirk. To judge by the
number of citations in works on conservatism, three of these writers,
Babbitt, Eliot, and Kirk, have had a greater influence on the neo-con-
servative movement than any other neo-conservative writer.

Since an essentially historical approach will be used, the ideas
to be analyzed will be viewed in relationship to the particular problems
of the age in which they were expounded -- both in respect to the causes
which led to the advocacy of these ideas and the significance thereof.
Where adequate material is available, the historical influences which
have been of importance in the formation of the views of neo-conservative
writers will be identified. To demarcate the boundaries of this inquiry,
it is necessary to define conservatism and to know how neo-conservatism
differs from other forms of conservatism.

To define a concept adequately, a writer should first give some
indication of his method for arriving at a definition. One could take
common usage as the basis for one's definition but this immediately leads
to difficulties. Most people do not possess the background needed to
formulate careful definitions nor to use concepts with precision and
care. There has been little consistency in the way the term "conserva-
tive" has been applied in common discourse. Alternative definitions may
be derived from the usage of persons trained in fields where conceptual
discrimination is important, but, as we will see shortly, such definitions
have generally been inadequate. A much more promising technique is to
examine the contextual usage of the term "conservative" and of cognate
terms by scholars to discover the logic behind their usage. Historical evidence will also be cited but since the meanings of general concepts tends to vary with the Zeitgeist, this evidence will not be emphasized.

The most common definition of conservatism used by scholars is the disposition to preserve whatever has been established. This common definition lacks discriminative value because if it is applied consistently, then the Marxist in Russia, the Fascist in Spain, and the liberal in the United States would all have to be labelled "conservative." Such imprecise usage tends to make conservatism synonymous with either conformity or opportunism. This is so contrary to the way political and social theorists generally use the conservative appellation that it scarcely merits serious consideration. In fact, contemporary conservatives in the United States are generally very dissatisfied with the general liberal character of American society. The ounce of truth in this definition relates to the conservative advocacy of tradition, but, as we shall see later, this traditionalism pertains only to those elements of the cultural heritage which have survived for many centuries and only when these elements harmonize with other aspects of conservatism.

Another definition which has gained wide currency was originally offered by Russell Kirk. Unfortunately, Professor Kirk did not give us an analytical definition but rather a list of symptoms of conservatism. By analyzing this definition, we should however be able to arrive at a more precise conception of the essence of conservatism; especially if we consider how widely his definition has been accepted by intellectuals. Kirk's definition consists of six planks which we will give in order and
(1) A belief in an order that is more than human which has im-
planted in man a character of mingled good and evil, susceptible
of improvement only by an inner working, not by mundane schemes
for perfectability. This conviction lies at the heart of American
respect for the past, as the record of Providential purpose. The
conservative mind is suffused with veneration. Men and nations,
the conservative believes, are governed by moral laws, and political
problems, at bottom, are moral and religious problems. An
eternal chain of duties links the generations that are dead, and
the generation that is living now, and the generations yet to be
born. We have no right, in this brief existence of ours, to alter
irrevocably the shape of things, in contempt of our ancestors and
of the rights of posterity. Politics is the art of apprehending
and applying the justice which stands above statutory law.
(2) An affection for variety and complexity and individuality,
even for singularity, which has exerted a powerful check upon the
political tendency toward that Tocqueville calls "democratic
despotism." Variety and complexity, in the opinion of conserva-
tives, are the high gifts of truly civilized society. The uni-
formity and standardization of liberal and radical planners would
be the death of vitality and freedom, a life-in-death, every man
precisely like his neighbor - and, like the damned of the Inferno,
forever deprived of hope.
(3) A conviction that justice properly defined, means "to each the
things that go with his own nature," not a levelling equality; and
joined with this is a correspondent respect for private property
of every sort. Civilized society requires distinctions of order,
wealth, and responsibility; it cannot exist without true leader-
ship. A free society will endeavor, indeed, to afford to men of
natural abilities every opportunity to rise by their own efforts,
but it will resist strenuously the radical delusion that exact
equality of station and wealth can benefit everyone. Society longs
for just leadership, and if people destroy natural distinctions
among men, presently some Bonaparte will fill the vacuum - or worse
than Bonaparte.
(4) A suspicion of concentrated power, and a consequent attach-
ment to our federal principle and to division and balancing of
authority at every level of government.
(5) A reliance upon private endeavor and sagacity in nearly every
walk of life, together with a contempt for the abstract designs
of the collectivistic reformer. But to this self-reliance in the
mind of the American conservative, is joined the conviction that
in matters beyond the scope of material endeavor and the present
moment, the individual tends to be foolish, but the species is
wise; therefore, we rely in great matters upon the wisdom of our
ancestors. History is an immense storehouse of knowledge. We pay
a decent respect to the moral traditions and immemorial customs of
mankind; for men who ignore the past are condemned to repeat it.
The conservative distrusts the radical visionary and the planner
who would chop society into pieces and mold it nearer to his
heart's desire. The conservative appeals beyond the fickle opinion of the hour to what Chesterton called "the democracy of the dead" - that is, the considered judgment of the wise men who died before our time. To presume that men can plan rationally the whole of existence is to expose mankind to a terrible danger from the collapse of existing institutions; for, conservatives know that most men are governed, on many occasions, more by emotion than by pure reason.

(6) A prejudice against organic change, a feeling that it is unwise to break radically with political prescription, an inclina-
tion to tolerate what abuses may exist in present institutions out of a practical acquaintanceship with the violent and unpredictable nature of doctrinaire reform.2

Although Kirk's definition contains much impassioned rhetoric and imprecision, it nevertheless reveals fundamental conservative attitudes. These attitudes become more evident when his six points are rearranged into two broad general categories: the first of which pertains to man's weakness and irrational nature and his consequent need for traditional authority; the second, to the desirability of an aristocratic, elitist social order. Points two and three relate to the second category; the other four points of Kirk's definition to the first category.

Concerning the first category, Kirk began his definition of conservatism with an expression of skepticism concerning schemes for the perfection of humanity. He felt that men could not plan rationally for the future of other men because of their own irrationality which he blamed on their alleged emotionalism. Because of this doubt, Kirk preferred to rely on private endeavor with respect to matters of limited scope, and on traditional wisdom, with regard to matters of greater scope. Evidently, because of this same basic distrust of human nature, he

advocated the division and balancing of political powers.

With regard to the second category, Kirk advocated the encouragement of variety because of his evident fear of a dead-level equalitarianism and advocated proportionate rather than equalitarian justice because of the need for true leadership. He felt that men must have leaders, and, if these are not selected consciously, leaders would arise anyway but a rather undesirable type.

It seems evident from the preceding analysis that the essential features of Kirk's conservatism were the advocacy of an aristocratic elitism and of traditional authority. In these respects, Kirk was typical of conservative thinkers as a group. Ultimately, the aristocratic side of conservatism was based upon a conception of the universe as rationally ordered in a hierarchical pattern of superordination and subordination. This conception was in fundamental accord with the British Tories' insistence that each individual should find the place in the social hierarchy most suitable to him and should be content with it. Traditional conservatism was based partially on an acute consciousness of the moral and intellectual limitations of the individual and partially upon a belief in the superiority of tradition as a standard of judgment based upon the collective experience of generations of human beings. These points will be discussed in greater detail in the second chapter where the conservative viewpoint will be analyzed and its implications developed.

Conservatism therefore should be considered to be that social philosophy whose advocates espouse an aristocratic elitism and also stress the value of traditional authority. The adjective, aristocratic,
refers in this instance both to a hierarchical conception of values and to a hierarchical conception of humanity. Because of this viewpoint, conservatism is elitist in the sense that conservatives traditionally have advocated rule by a select group and have stressed the importance of the careful selection and training of elite groups in all the major realms of human endeavor. Conservative traditionalism in turn has been based upon an acute consciousness of the limitations of the individual together with a belief in the value of the collective experience of peoples and nations. Ultimately, the most essential ingredient in the conservative constellation of beliefs is the hierarchical conception of reality. Not only is the aristocratic nature of conservatism based upon hierarchy but also, in part, the traditional as well. Has not the conservative's consciousness of human limitations been based to some extent on his conception of the place of humans in the hierarchy of the universe? Also, as we shall see later, traditional authority was considered to be a means whereby the fruits of excellence could be protected against the menace of revolution. The term "order" more than any other word symbolizes the uniqueness of conservatism. Order stands for the hierarchical arrangement of the universe and for the emphasis upon the importance of authority in human affairs.

It is important to distinguish conservatism from classical liberalism with which it is often confused. Indeed, classical liberalism is in many respects opposed to conservatism. It has become customary to equate classical liberalism with conservatism -- especially in the United States but also to a lesser degree in other countries. Such a confusion of labels can only lead to a neglect of the peculiar excellences of each of these philosophies. To the classical liberal, the primary objective
of government is the protection and enhancement of the liberties of the people. In contrast, although the conservative recognizes the value of freedom, he considers it to be secondary to the attainment and preservation of order in both senses of the term -- that is to say both the preservation of peace and the protection of the hierarchical order of society. In addition, the classical liberal is committed to the advocacy of a free market economy while the conservative would either favor such an economy, as in the case of Edmund Burke, or favor a considerable amount of government control, like Oswald Spengler. But, perhaps the most salient differences between classical liberals and conservatives relate to their attitudes toward tradition and toward the aristocratic viewpoint. While conservatives tend to be champions of traditional authority, classical liberals are more likely to advocate the removal of traditional barriers to the expansion of business enterprise. Furthermore, classical liberals tend to be democratic rather than aristocratic in their social philosophy. Even when they evince elitist tendencies, as in the case of the social Darwinians, they tend to have faith in the processes of natural selection in the recruitment of elites while conservatives have no such trust in natural processes. The latter are much more likely to favor selective education and the development of elite training schools. Finally, conservatives are more likely to favor the encouragement of organized religion while classical liberals either oppose such encouragement or keep their religious and political viewpoint separate from one another.

To a considerable extent, the differences between classical liberals and conservatives relate to their differing views of human
nature. Traditionally, the leading expositors of classical liberalism have tended to view man as essentially selfish but rational. Because of their selfishness, men could be depended upon to strive for their own self-interest. Because of their alleged rationality, they would be considered to be consistent in striving for this goal. Thus, if they were to be left alone to strive for their own selfish goods, the good of society as a whole would be advanced. On the other hand, because of human selfishness, governments must be limited in their powers for governments are made up of human beings, all of whom possess this type of character. In contrast, while the conservatives would agree that human beings are selfish, they would also maintain that most people, at least, are irrational. Hence, they would evince less faith in the automatic workings of a free society.

If classical liberals like Herbert Hoover and Barry Goldwater are today often confused with conservatives, this confusion is probably due to the fact that both groups have tended to unite on certain issues in common opposition to the doctrines espoused by adherents of doctrines of both the extreme and moderate Left. This unity is based upon the common opposition of both groups to schemes of collectivistic social reform. Classical liberals oppose these plans because they consider them to be meaneances to freedom; conservatives, because they consider them to be equalitarian in tendency.

Historically, conservatives and classical liberals were on opposing sides until well into the twentieth century. In fact, the term "conservative" acquired its present meaning in the early nineteenth century when it was used to designate those individuals and groups which
opposed the principles associated with the French Revolution. These conservatives were aristocratic, traditionalist, and generally favorable to the mercantilist economic principles that were still dominant in much of Europe. Their chief opponents were the liberals who at that time championed progressivism and laissez-faire. These liberals would now be regarded as adherents of classical liberalism in contradistinction to the adherents of the social democratic liberalism of today, who are prepared to accept a considerable amount of government control in the pursuit of their objectives. Conservatism is, of course, much older than the French Revolution for essentially the same principles were expounded by Pythagoras.³ It is of considerable significance that modern conservatism was originally directed primarily in opposition to classical liberalism, a philosophy with which conservatism has recently been frequently confused.

It is symptomatic of the confusion of terms that is so prevalent today that Michael Oakeshott has been frequently labeled a conservative. Yet, if we examine his interpretation of conservatism carefully, we cannot fail to notice how divergent it is from the views of the major expositors of conservatism and how similar it is to the views of classical liberal writers in general. As far as Oakeshott was concerned,

conservatism was purely a political doctrine without any entailments pertaining to the nature of man. This in itself would have astonished such distinguished conservatives as Edmund Burke, Prince Metternich, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Oakeshott placed the essence of conservatism in the belief that government should confine itself to keeping the peace and regulating the currency. It was not to indulge itself in social reform. As far as he was concerned, happiness could only come through the voluntary and free choices of the individual. On the basis of this position, Oakeshott should be classified as a classical liberal rather than a conservative. His paramount political value was obviously freedom rather than order. He should therefore be placed in the same ideological camp with Adam Smith and Friedrich Hayek rather than in the camp of Edmund Burke and Benjamin Disraeli. 4

To establish the precise parameters of this study, it is important to consider briefly other viewpoints which have sometimes been confused with conservatism. They include the views of Admiral Hyman Rickover whose educational elitism would link him to the conservative position but whose main concern has been to recruit academic talent suited to grapple with contemporary problems rather than to reassert the values of the past. In American educational history, there has also been a considerable number of influential thinkers who have espoused the values of a traditional liberal arts education and, at the same time, have rejected the aristocratic viewpoint which has traditionally been

4 For evidence of Michael Oakeshott's views on conservatism see his Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays (London: Methuen, 1962), especially pages 183, 189, 191. Incidentally, in spite of his denial, his political views most certainly entail certain definite views pertaining to both human nature and the nature of the universe.
associated with this kind of education. They include the rationalistic humanists, Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler. Hutchins, in particular, has publicly taken an anti-Burkean position and has attached T. S. Eliot because of the aristocratic proclivities of the latter. Russell Kirk was undoubtedly at least partially correct in viewing Hutchins as a democratic rationalist; for Hutchins has tended to emphasize critical independent thought combined with a strong faith in democratic values, both in politics and in education. Mortimer Adler has evinced a similar reliance upon democratic values in education in contradistinction to the aristocratic values espoused by conservatives, even to the extent of advocating mass college education. Neither individual has been commonly regarded by conservative intellectuals as representative of their viewpoint; for, like the classical liberals, the rationalistic humanists resemble the conservatives in some respects but differ greatly from them in other equally important ways. These two schools appear to be allied only when contrasted to those schools which are characterized by a more relativistic and less academic approach than either. In much the same manner, the similarities between conservatives and classical liberals become vividly apparent when contrasted with the

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5Russell Kirk has listed the writings by Hutchins in which these views were expressed in Kirk's Eliot and His Age (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 357-358.


socialists and other variants of the political Center and Left. But we must not let the similarities blind us to the differences lest we overlook the peculiar values of each viewpoint.

In addition to Hutchins and Adler, there have been many other writers on education who have eagerly espoused the benefits of an academic liberal arts education and, at the same time, have shied away from the aristocratic ethos with which such an education has been traditionally associated. This has been especially true of American writers. Such primary figures as William Chandler Bagley and Arthur Bestor have exhibited this combination of attitudes and, unlike Hutchins and Adler, they have also opposed traditionalism -- preferring to justify their educational programs on utilitarian grounds. In this respect, Bestor has not exhibited the same faith in the educability of the masses as has Bagley but his antipathy to traditionalistic concepts of education has been no less unequivocal. In general, the American cultural atmosphere has not been very conducive to the emergence of an aristocratic traditionalism; for a landed aristocracy that might have served as a model and support for this viewpoint has never become firmly established on American soil. In addition, in so new a nation, sufficient time has not elapsed for a strong traditionalism to become firmly established. Seen in such a light, the neo-conservative movement is a radical departure from the established American way of life.

Bagley's general position is generally familiar to students of his philosophy. For examples of Bestor's viewpoint see his The Restoration of Learning (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), pp. 48, 87, 94.
There has been at least as much confusion concerning the question of how neo-conservatism differs from conservatism proper as there has been over the meaning of conservatism itself. Some writers have failed to detect any difference and thus classify neo-conservatism as merely a revival of traditional conservatism. Others, including a number of writers on education, have drawn a distinction between the humanism of Irving Babbitt and his associates in contrast to the alleged "new conservatism" of the Council for Basic Education which in turn has been linked to the old theory of formal discipline. The humanists were allegedly exponents of ideals while the neo-conservatives were more interested in training mental faculties by emphasizing the most valuable courses of study. Actually, the facts do not support such a distinction. As we shall see later, humanist ideals are as important to contemporary neo-conservatives as these ideals were to Irving Babbitt and his supporters. Furthermore, instead of Babbitt's humanism being deemed to be separate from contemporary conservatism, it would be more correct to view both as part of one single movement in response to the same kind of pressures, the gap having been bridged through the existence of two short-lived but highly influential magazines: The American Review (1933-1937) and Measure (1949-1950). Furthermore, the Council on Basic Education has hardly been

9See for example Edward M. Burns and Philips L. Ralph, World Civilizations (2 vols. New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1968), Vol. 2, p. 699. In this generally excellent college text, the authors have also made the mistake of classifying the classical liberal economist, Friedrich Hayek as a conservative.

confined to conservatives but has actually included people representing a wide range of educational opinion, such as the disciples of William Bagley and of Admiral Hyman Rickover.

In actuality, the distinctiveness of the new conservatism does not consist of any new or unique doctrines but rather of a difference in emphasis as compared with traditional conservatism. In its modern form, conservatism arose in response to the excesses of the French Revolution. As the first influential spokesman of modern conservatism, Edmund Burke defended the status quo against what was primarily a political menace. In the twentieth century, conservatives can no longer defend the status quo for their principles no longer dominate any important Western society. Instead, they are the spokesmen of reform; -- but reform in a vastly different direction from what the liberals and radicals recommend. Furthermore, the neo-conservatives are today primarily concerned with educational and intellectual rather than political matters. They are therefore primarily cultural critics of the contemporary age. Two trends have particularly aroused their fears. One of these has been the gradual erosion of religious and moral beliefs in response to the apotheosis of science which became important in the nineteenth century and to the twentieth century trends toward metaphysical skepticism and moral relativism. The second tendency has been the gradual replacement of academic values and high standards of selective education by an increasing stress upon mass culture which has apparently, in itself, been a by-product of both the decline of tradition and the spread of democratic, as against aristocratic values, throughout the Western world. The latter trends have been most pronounced in the
United States, which factors in turn might explain the high proportion of Americans among neo-conservative writers. The high percentage of academics and intellectuals found within this group might well be an indication of their fear of trends which would undermine the status of intellectuals and of the values which they represent, for the disinterested pursuit of intellectual excellence is sometimes difficult to maintain in a milieu in which mass appeal is the touchstone.

Among contemporary conservative thinkers, the views of two writers on the causes of the perplexities of the contemporary age have been especially influential. One of these was the late Richard Weaver, a professor of English at the University of Chicago. He felt that the present decline in moral and intellectual standards began in the late fourteenth century when William of Ockham denied the reality of the Platonic universals. This rejection was to lead ultimately to the denial of the existence of a source of truth higher than man. The consequences have included the spread of ethical relativisms, metaphysical skepticism, and the concomitant repudiation of cultural standards. For Weaver, the problems of the contemporary period was that of enabling humans to perceive again an ordered hierarchy of values.

As evidenced by the spate of articles on both of these writers which have appeared in the past two decades in such conservative journals as Modern Age and The Intercollegiate Review. A Richard M. Weaver Fellowship Awards Program has been established by the right-wing Intercollegiate Studies Institute.

An especially outspoken critic of contemporary thought was Eric Voegelin, who has been Director of the Institute for Political Science at the University of Munich. Central to Voegelin's approach to contemporary problems, as shown in his previous publications, has been the contrast he made between the political "science" of Plato and Aristotle and the so-called gnostic approach of recent writers. Plato and Aristotle were characterized as engaged in the search for the order of being while the "gnostics" were seen as dissatisfied with this order. The latter have therefore sought to replace the order of being with a man-centered one, thereby implicitly denying the existence of a transcendent source of being and order. Among the movements which Voegelin characterized as being gnostic were national socialism, fascism, Marxism, Freudianism, progressivism, and positivism. The adherents of all of these movements had in effect denied the validity of faith, preferring to rely on their own special brands of "knowledge" and on earthly forms of salvation. The remedy that he recommended was to somehow restore faith in a transcendent order of being.13

In spite of their obvious differences in approach, both Weaver and Voegelin saw the ills of the modern world as due fundamentally to the repudiation of the existence of a hierarchical order of goods and the remedy thereof in the revival of belief in such an order, although neither writer was very explicit on how this was to be attained. The

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writings of both of these men provides an insight into the neo-conservative approach to contemporary problems. In their hopes and fears, Weaver and Voegelin were typical of many neo-conservative writers.

In brief, our task will be to analyze the writings of those neo-conservatives who have written extensive and serious expositions of their educational views and who have had some influence on other conservatives. The purpose will be to uncover the educational values of the neo-conservative movement. By treating this matter historically, on the basis of past writings in relationship to the Zeitgeist, it is hoped that a better understanding will be obtained of the ultimate significance of neo-conservative educational thought. Before we can deal directly with this matter, we should, however, first analyze the fundamental theoretical assumptions of neo-conservative writers concerning the nature of the universe and of man's place therein.

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14 By influence is meant the power of producing an effect upon another person. In the sense in which this writer has used the term, he has reference to effects produced on the political, social, and educational ideas of others. The primary criterion for measuring this influence are citations by those who have been affected -- both by specific references in footnotes and in the texts of writings of those presumably influenced. The work of all the figures selected for study have been cited in the writings of other influential authors. In addition, figures like Babbitt, Eliot, and Kirk are generally familiar to educated laymen while Bell and Bantock are well-known to those who have done research on the progressive education movement and its critics; for the reputation of the figures involved, while not necessarily an indication of outstanding ability, certainly bears some relationship to the amount of influence exerted. An unknown is generally unlikely to exert much influence. To a historian, influence must be important consideration due to his interest in the Zeitgeist.
CHAPTER II

FOUNDATIONS OF NEO-CONSERVATISM

In essence, neo-conservatism should be considered a social philosophy in the broadest sense of the term. It is a philosophy which describes the nature of society including man's place therein and also prescribes certain policies for the good of man and of society. It also implies a characteristic viewpoint pertaining to the nature of being and of the universe. This chapter will explore the fundamental neo-conservative concepts pertaining to the nature of the universe, man, and society as a means of preparing a foundation for the explication of the neo-conservative educational viewpoint to follow. Since, as was pointed out in the first chapter, neo-conservatism differs from traditional conservatism only in emphasis, the basic doctrinal assumptions of both are identical. Therefore, the terms "conservatism" and "neo-conservatism" will be used interchangeably.

Perhaps the most fundamental concept for understanding the conservative metaphysics is hierarchy; for the conservative tends to conceive of the universe in terms of a gradual unilinear graduation in contrast to both the single-level equalitarian viewpoint and the two-layer elite-mass dichotomy. Historically, the conservative concept of hierarchy, as employed by writers belonging to Occidental cultures, was largely derived from and stated in the terminology of Aristotle. Through two British Aristotelians, Richard Hooker and Edmund Burke, this concept became fundamental to the conservatism of the English-speaking countries. It
is therefore important to discuss Aristotle's views on hierarchy.

Although Aristotle has given us several systems of gradation, the one which most fundamentally influenced Western thought pertained to the powers of the soul. All living things were considered to have nutritive powers. In addition to these powers, animals also possessed the abilities of movement and of sensation. Such cognitive powers as imagination and memory were considered outgrowths of the sensitive soul. Finally, humans possessed, in addition to all the powers characteristic of plants and animals, the faculty of reason. All living things, with the exception of God, were characterized as being imperfect in the sense that none fully actualized all the potentialities of all living things. Aristotle believed, however, that living things belonged to several different levels of development in accordance with the degree to which they actualized all the potentialities displayed by living things. Finally, happiness for each living thing was deemed to consist of performing well the characteristic function by which it was distinguished from the other creatures in the scale of nature.¹

Not all conservatives have, of course, accepted Aristotle's precise classification of the powers of the soul. Yet, the basic outlook which this classification symbolized has become an essential feature of the conservative viewpoint. Conservatives today conceive of hierarchy in the same functional manner as did Aristotle -- in accordance with the powers of the psyche. Furthermore, there is a strong tendency to

view the scale of nature in accordance with the degrees of perfection of the creatures involved. Finally, there is the same stress on the diversity of means in achieving happiness in accordance with the nature of the individual creature.

Among the many implications of the concept of hierarchy is that of a rationally ordered universe in which an ascending gradation ordered in terms of the superordination and subordination of its inhabitants clearly suggests the existence of universal purpose and of a rational agent to bring that purpose to fruition. Order implies rationality and rationality implies purpose. This viewpoint is quite congruent with the acceptance and espousal of religious beliefs and values. Therefore, while conservatives undoubtedly have a tendency to be pessimistic about human nature, their essential metaphysical viewpoint implies a strong confidence in the meaningfulness and ultimate goodness of the cosmos.

In addition, since hierarchy implies diversity and since such diversity is accepted as part of some great overall plan, then diversity itself must be good and every effort should be made to encourage it. Furthermore, since the universe contains beings at various stages of perfection, this implies that they are also at various stages of imperfection. Implicit in such a view is a theodicy; for evil as well as good are thereby necessary to the fulfillment of the universal plan.

Metaphysical materialism is fundamentally antithetical to the general hierarchical viewpoint; for the concept of a universe as consisting of matter in motion implies either a tychist or a mechanistic view of causation -- both of which would exclude purpose as an integral feature of the cosmos. The inclusion of final causation as an ultimate explanation
of universal phenomena would clearly imply the existence of factors transcending the operations of the physical universe. It is therefore hardly surprising that conservative thinkers have generally been quite hostile to materialism and the other forms of metaphysical naturalism. In this particular, their attitude has been consistent with their basic metaphysical assumptions.

With regard to education, a quotation from the writings of Paul Elmer More, a literary critic and associate of Irving Babbitt, should give us a vivid comprehension of the viewpoint of the conservative intellectual.

The scheme of the humanist might be described as the disciplining of the higher imagination to the end that the student may behold in one sublime vision, the whole scale of being in its range from the lowest to the highest under the divine decree of order and subordination, without losing sight of the immutable veracity at the heart of all development which is only the praise and surname of virtue.²

In more commonplace language, More was in effect advocating that the student learn to discriminate between the higher and the lower, the better and the worse, utilizing the great universal hierarchy as the foundation of values. As to the "praise and surname of virtue," More explained this as being synonomous with the quality of nobility.³

In more general terms, an emphasis upon hierarchy would obviously lead to a stress upon human differences, with different kinds of training offered in accordance with differences in the abilities and interests

³Ibid., p. 54.
of the students involved. Furthermore, the view of the believers in hierarchy that the nature of happiness varies with the faculties and functions of the individuals under consideration would apparently strengthen the position of those who believe that a considerable amount of formal education is not necessary for the happiness of all.

Hierarchical views are also conducive to aristocratic conceptions of education. Since all creatures are not of equal potentialities, there should presumably be a tendency to stress the education of those with the greatest manifest potentiality on the ground that to do otherwise would result in the neglect of those most able to contribute to civilization. The emphasis upon unequal potentialities is crucial in this respect; for one could acknowledge that men are not equal in actuality but still maintain that all or most men are equal in potentiality. Such an individual could then easily advocate mass education through the college level with attention focused on the development of students of only average manifest academic potentiality. Once one accepts the existence of important differences in potentialities between students, one is almost certain to advocate selective education with emphasis upon the training of the superior.

The religious implications of the concept of hierarchy should be encouraging to those concerned with religious and moral training in the schools. Also, the fact that conservatives tend to ground their values in certain characteristics of nature would apparently lead to an approach wherein the natural sciences would be studied before the student begins to study religion and ethics. As has already been observed, an essential aim of education would be the development of the ability of the students
to discriminate between the relative worth of the different constituent parts of the universe in terms of their position in the universal hierarchy. This acknowledgment of differences in intrinsic worth would obviously lead to a stress on philosophy, especially on those branches which pertain to value -- such as ethics and aesthetics. In addition, since hierarchy is a relational concept which implies the existence of an integrated universal order, the educator who accepts such a viewpoint should tend to emphasize the enhancement of the ability of his students to interrelate the facts that they learn. This emphasis would clearly imply the utilization of those kinds of tests whereby a criterion of student performance would be the ability to integrate facts into coherent and orderly whole.

The educational counselor who accepts the validity of the concept of hierarchy would deem it to be one of his major functions to guide students toward finding their proper positions in the human hierarchy with regard to vocation, avocations, and recreations. Hence, such a counselor would emphasize the importance of differential psychology together with such tools as tests and other forms of measurement in an effort to clarify the proper role of the student in relationship to society. Furthermore, the counselor would be very unlikely to expound universal conceptions of the satisfactory adjustment of students to society. Each student would presumably be evaluated in accordance with his own distinctive characteristics, to the degree that the counselor understands the nature of these characteristics.

An important consequence of acceptance of the view of the universe as an orderly rational system is the advocacy of natural law, a doctrine
which was of immense importance in the history of Occidental thought. In essence, the advocates of natural law ground the rules of moral obligation either in the structural and functional characteristics of the individuals involved or of the world in which they live. There are various conceptions of natural law. In the past, natural law theories were propounded which were based on such diverse criteria as human reason, the moral sentiments of the individual, the conditions of human survival, and the Darwinian theory of evolution. There is, however, only one kind of natural law theory which has in the past appealed to conservatives -- the theory by which natural law is grounded on the concept of universal metaphysical order. By this theory, the good of each thing is conceived of in terms of the fulfillment of its function in the universal hierarchy. This theory contrasts sharply with other theories by which natural law is based on the existence of single faculties and those which stress natural rights to the neglect of duties.

It is today a well recognized fact that the dominant influence in the development of metaphysically-based natural theories originated with Cicero, although Plato and Aristotle have expounded similar opinions. Cicero's views were subsequently enlarged and made much more explicit through the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas and Richard Hooker. As thus reinterpreted, these ideas have strongly influenced the thinking of more

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recent conservative writers such as Edmund Burke and Leo Strauss. One of Cicero's most important contributions was to popularize the concept of "right reason" by which he meant reasoning in accordance with natural law for the purpose of distinguishing between right and wrong conduct. This is an essentially practical ability, although based upon metaphysical principles. Through this doctrine, adherents of traditional natural law doctrines have implicitly emphasized the importance of reason as the means of comprehending what was for them an essentially rational universe.

From the seventeenth century, metaphysical conceptions of natural law, based upon assumptions of the existence and knowability of a rationally ordered universe, have been under continuous attack by adherents of other views. During the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, human nature replaced the order of the universe as the primary touchstone of natural law doctrines. Either basic human drives were stressed as in the writings of Thomas Hobbes or the alleged nature of early man as in the writings of John Locke and of Jean Jacques Rousseau. Finally, in the nineteenth century, advocates of hedonistic utilitarianism and positive law attacked natural law itself. The deliquescence of natural law reflected the diminution of belief in traditional and metaphysical doctrines which has been a dominant feature of recent Western intellectual history. Needless to say, conservatives have consistently opposed this trend.

Implicit in the acceptance of natural law based upon a hierarchical conception of the universe is the existence of a system of values whereby the universe is ordered. These values possess ontic status because they exist independently of the mind of the observer as part of
the intrinsic character of the universe. Since such an order is conceived of in objective rather than subjective terms, it is generally held to be absolute -- that is to say possessed of universal validity independent of relative circumstances. Although the precise criteria for the ranking of values vary with the individual thinker, such standards as scope, complexity, and effectiveness are accepted quite generally by writers advocating the validity of the hierarchical concept of nature.

The educational implications of the conservative viewpoint on natural law are much the same as those entailed by acceptance of the conservative viewpoint on hierarchy since the concept of hierarchy is the essential foundation of the conservative interpretation of the nature of natural law. Yet the fact that conservatives believe that an entire system of moral obligation can be derived from the objective nature of the universe would tend to lend great urgency to one of the previously noticed educational consequences of conservatism -- the stress upon developing in students a comprehension of the axiological order of the universe. One of the primary problems of educational counseling and teaching from the conservative perspective pertains to the need to develop in students a comprehension of the meaning of their lives in relationship to the universal design. This might well transcend in importance the other main function of the conservative counselor -- the guidance of students toward their proper places in the human hierarchy.

Conservatives tend to view men as being weak and imperfect. Men are inclined to be dominated by their emotions rather than their reason. It is only by the exercise of considerable self-restraint that men are able to act constructively. In fact, Burke attributed most of the
miseries which humans have inflicted upon themselves to such attitudes and passions as "pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, lust, sedition, hypocrisy, ungoverned zeal" and all the other "disorderly appetites" which trouble the lives of people. Both the selfishness and the emotionalism of men must be curbed by the civilizing influences of society if they are not to revert to barbarism.

In writing of the decline of chivalry, Burke exemplified this attitude in a famous quotation;

But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions which made power gentle and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns and the understanding ratifies as necessary to cover the defects of our naked, shivering nature and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.

The preceding quotation contains the essence of the fundamental conservative view of human nature; for Burke viewed human problems from the perspective of one who wonders how institutions can restrain men from manifesting their intrinsic animality. The answer that Burke gave was in terms of appeal to the insights obtained through intuition as ratified by reason for he felt that reason alone was insufficient since the stock of reason in each man was limited. He especially emphasized the

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6 Ibid., p. 87.
importance of the moral imagination, a concept which was to play an
important role in the thinking of Irving Babbitt and of Paul Elmer More.
By imagination, Burke meant the power of mentally reproducing the images
of things and of combining them.\(^7\) By moral imagination, he evidently
referred to the power of combining images in terms of moral ideals. In
other words, it apparently was conceived in terms of the ability to view
things in ethical perspective. Like many other conservatives, Burke
considered man a creature whose actions were dominated by his imagination.
As such, he viewed the mind of man as not simply a \textit{tabula rasa} at birth
but rather as an active and creative instrument. In this view, as in so
much else, Burke presaged the dominant attitudes of conservatives in both
the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

Although conservatives have been slow to recognize it, a strong
linkage exists between the conservatives' viewpoint and the inheritance
theory of human development. Specifically, the problem of how much of
the variability of humans can be attributed to nature as against nurture
is one that is pregnant with political implications. It has been common
practice to assert that the factors of heredity and environment are so
closely intertwined that it is impossible to separate the two. Regardless
of the problem of the validity of that assertion, writers have
tended in practice to stress one or the other of these factors. Liberals
have emphasized environmental causation since at least as far back as the

\(^7\)Burke had defined imagination in his \textit{On the Sublime and Beautiful}
(New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1937), p. 16. His was, of course, the
traditional definition of the term dating back at least to the time of
Aristotle.
time of John Locke. While the conservative position on this matter has been less clear, most of the prominent eugenicists have advocated essentially conservative views. Certainly, the inheritance theory has been more in accord with the conservative view of the rigidity of human nature than with the confidence in social reform generally characteristic of the social-democratic liberals and the radicals. Furthermore, an emphasis upon heredity is more consonant with the aristocratic dimension of conservative thought than environmentalism for once the assumption is made that most of the important differences between individuals are the products of external causes, a basic obstacle is removed from the advocacy of equalitarian policies.8

Although, as we have seen, the aristocratic aspect of conservatism is congruent with a stress upon biological factors in explicating the causes of human differences, it also leads to an emphasis upon the social factor as well in the sense of the orientation of people toward group life. The hierarchical ontology implicitly involves a stress upon interrelationships. The individual in a hierarchical structure acquires his essential significance by standing in a certain relationship to others in what is regarded as a single scale of being. Conservatives similarly regard society as a single unified organism in which they believe that one of the basic problems of the individual is to find his proper place in accordance with his general level of being. Hence, when conservatives discourse on politics, they are likely to view problems from the perspective of society as a whole rather than in terms of the particular

8 For an extended discussion of this entire question see my paper "Genetics and Political Conservatism," The Western Political Quarterly, 12 (September, 1959), 753-762.
goods of separate groups within the social organism.

Another important cause of the social emphasis of conservatives was the influence of Aristotle's *Politics*. As previously noted, Aristotle's writings have exercised considerable influence upon conservative thought. Aristotle believed that humans were gregarious in nature and could therefore find their good only as members of communities. The state was deemed to be a positive good rather than a necessary evil. It was believed to be an outgrowth of the family. As such, it was conceived of as existing not simply to provide police protection but more broadly for the purpose of contributing to the virtue and well-being of its inhabitants. It is therefore not surprising that while individual conservatives like Burke may have been advocates of laissez-faire, the general tendency of conservatives has been to accept a considerable amount of state control. The shock of many Americans in viewing the number of controls that British conservatives are willing to accept is thus explicable. Most American "conservatives" are, as we have seen, classical liberals with a confidence in the self-reliance and self-sufficiency of people which is conspicuously lacking among authentic conservatives. The differences between these two groups regarding the extent and desirability of state controls is therefore ultimately reducible to dissimilar conceptions of human nature.

Conservatives have been for quite some time disturbed about the increasing alienation of individuals from society. Three forms of alienation have been of special concern: alienation from moral and religious values; from cultural values; and from meaningful interpersonal relationships. The sense of alienation from moral and religious
values was widely attributed to the growing skepticism of anything which could not be demonstrated within the narrow confines of the laboratory. The result has been a lack of sense of direction among large numbers of people combined with a concomitant sense of the meaningless nature of life. With regard to cultural values, Eric and Mary Josephson have expressed the situation concisely and well:

Although mass society is a political as well as a cultural phenomenon, many of its critics, among them Ortega y Gasset and T. S. Eliot, have concentrated their attack chiefly against what they regard as its vulgar values, its sameness, its threat to "high" culture. While one may share their concern about the danger of standardized tastes, or about the threat which mass behavior in politics or in culture poses for individual expression, there is far more to the problem than this - indeed, far more than many aristocratically inclined critics of mass society (and of democracy) want to see.9

The Josephsons then went on to describe the atomization of society from meaningful social relationships, but they were quite wrong in their contention that the aristocratically inclined have not been aware of this situation as we shall see later.10 The Josephsons were however correct in their view that the basis of the aristocratic opposition to mass culture was the threat posed by this type of culture to individual creativeness. Mass culture appeals fundamentally to a composite average. While to a certain extent, it satisfies the tastes of most individuals, it does not really satisfy anyone's tastes completely. The tendency of


10See especially the discussion of R. A. Nisbet in this chapter and of Russell Kirk in the next chapter.
the mass media has been to routinize culture while reducing its appeal to a fairly low common denominator.

The third type of alienation to arouse conservatives is the alienation of the individual from society. The most primary and ubiquitous social associations have been the family, the community and the church. It has been within these institutions that individuals have largely sought the satisfaction of their needs for affection, friendship, and a sense of purposefulness. Yet the functions of these institutions have been gradually eroded through the expansion of mass large-scale institutions, especially that of the state. The transformation of the family is an example of this process. The educational functions have been largely taken over by the public schools; the vocational functions, by factories and offices; the entertainment formerly provided through the cooperation of members of the family, by television and other mass media. The problem now existing centers on how the family can efficiently discharge its functions when these other activities have largely been taken away from it. Some of these trends have of course been unavoidable but to admit this does not in itself mitigate the deleteriousness of many of the consequences.

The sociologist, Robert A. Nisbet, has probably written more extensively on the social implications of conservatism than any other conservative writer. In common with many other conservatives, Nisbet believed that one of the gravest dangers confronting Western culture has been the emergence of a mass of fundamentally rootless individuals, bereft of those social and cultural relationships through which humans obtain their sense of community with others and with society as a
whole. He attributed this consequence to a long chain of historical events. The strong emphasis upon individualism at the time of the Reformation led to the relative neglect of man's social nature. Furthermore, the rise of modern capitalism with its implicit stress upon competition in preference to cooperation, and upon workers as economic commodities to be bought and sold on an open market has greatly exacerbated the trend toward the atomization of the individual. Since the outbreak of the French Revolution, the state has added steadily to its powers thereby undermining those intermediate associations, such as guilds and the charitable associations, through which people have sought companionship and a sense of unity with society as a whole. In common with a number of other sociologists, both conservative and non-conservative, Nisbet has attributed to the state the primary role in bringing about the atomization of society; for the state has in addition to a monopoly of force, control over education; supervision over the family; power over property; and even some measure of control over personal habits. In fact, Nisbet has characterized the fundamental conflict in modern history as being not between the state and the individual but between the state and the social group. The contrast between Nisbet's view and classical liberalism can be most clearly brought out by considering the following


12 Ibid., p. 108.
I cannot help thinking that what we need above all else in this age is a new philosophy of laissez faire. The old laissez faire failed because it was based on erroneous premises regarding human behavior. As a theory it failed because it mistook for ineradicable characteristics of individuals qualities that were in fact inseparable from social groups. As a policy it failed because its atomistic propositions were inevitably unavailing against the reality of enlarging masses of insecure individuals. Far from proving a check upon the growth of the omnicompetent state, the old laissez faire actually accelerated this growth. Its indifference to every form of community and association left the State as the sole area of reform and security. . . . To create the conditions within which the autonomous individuals could prosper, could be emancipated from the binding ties of kinship, class, and community, was the objective of the older laissez faire. To create conditions within which autonomous groups may prosper must be, I believe, the prime objective of the new laissez faire.13

The foregoing quotation not only serves as an illustration of a concrete application of the conservative philosophy of human nature but also highlights the fact that while conservatives generally prefer that the powers of the state extend well beyond the narrow confines of law and order advocated by laissez-faire liberals, they believe that state powers have become much too broad in scope.

The social philosophy of conservatives has been based upon a conception of human nature as lacking in autonomy and self-sufficiency. As is well-known, such conservatives as Nisbet and Russell Kirk have viewed humans as creatures constantly beset by anxiety. The fundamental human needs are considered to be security, status, and meaning. The first two categories, and to a lesser extent, the third as well, relate to

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13Ibid., p. 278
that must be satisfied in society rather than in individual isolation. Neuroses are not viewed as fundamentally outcomes of early childhood experiences nor of conflicts between human emotions and repressions but rather much more frequently as the results of disturbed relations between the individual and his social environment. To conservatives, humans are not adventurous souls ready to cast asunder all the ties binding them to their companions but are rather weak beings, constantly in need of emotional reassurance. To contemporary neo-conservatives, the most pathetic of all human types is the rootless proletarian, bereft of all the familiar ties of religion, class, and community. Marxists attribute alienation to largely economic factors; Freudians, to repressions; liberals, to social institutions; but to conservatives, the fundamental root of contemporary alienation is contained within the confines of the emotional nature of man.

It was partly because they viewed human nature as being weak and emotional in character that conservatives from Edmund Burke to Russell Kirk have strongly emphasized the value and importance of tradition. In the commonly accepted meaning of the term, tradition designates the process of transmission from generation to generation of knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes as well as the content of that inheritance. To conservatives, it has more particularly designated the inherited political, moral, religious, and intellectual values of a culture that are the products of centuries of collective experience. When the weakness and irrationality of the individual is contrasted with the time tested experience of the race, conservatives contend that unless the evidence is overwhelmingly to the contrary, tradition should prevail. A
quotation from the writings of Edmund Burke, perhaps the most vigorous exponent of tradition, should make this position abundantly clear.

You see, Sir, that in this enlightened age I am bold enough to confess that we are generally men of untaught feelings, that instead of casting away all our old prejudices, we cherish them to a very considerable degree, and, to take more shame to ourselves, we cherish them because they are prejudices; and the longer they have lasted and the more generally they have prevailed, the more we cherish them. We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason, because we suspect that this stock in each man is small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages. Many of our men of speculation, instead of exploding general prejudices, employ their sagacity to discover the latent wisdom which prevails in them. If they find what they seek, and they seldom fail, they think it more wise to continue the prejudice, with the reason involved, than to cast away the coat of prejudice and to leave nothing but the naked reason; because prejudice with its reason, has a motive to give action to that reason and an affection which will give it permanence. 14

Burke believed that tradition should be based upon the long-term experience of the race communicated over countless generations; for the ultimate consequences of events seemed to him to be seldom immediately apparent. It was this attitude which prevented Burke's defense of tradition from becoming an apology for either opportunism or for the passive acceptance of whatever short-term traditions there might be which were in the ascendent. Burke has confidence that, given sufficient time, all traditions would tend to conform with conservative standards.

The science of constructing a commonwealth or renovating it or reforming it, is, like every other experimental science, not to be taught a priori. Nor is it a short experience that can instruct us in that practical science, because the real effects of moral causes are not always immediate; but that which in the first instance is prejudicial may be excellent in its remoter operation, and its excellence may arise even from the ill effects it produces.

in the beginning. The reverse also happens: and very plausible schemes with very pleasing commencements have often shameful and lamentable conclusions. In states there are often some obscure and almost latent causes, things which appear at first view of little moment, on which a very great part of its prosperity or adversity may most essentially depend. The science of government being therefore so practical in itself and intended for such practical purposes — a matter which requires experience and even more experience than any person can gain in his whole life, however sagacious and observing he may be — it is with infinite caution that any man ought to venture upon pulling down an edifice which has answered in any tolerable degree for ages the common purposes of society, or on building it up again without having models and patterns of approved unity before his eyes. 15

In addition to this essentially empirical justification of tradition, tradition also inspired respect for authority; for through tradition the values of a culture are transmitted to the people. Given the essential conservative attitude of the selfish and irrational nature of mankind, the upholding of tradition could be considered an important means whereby civilization could be protected against the weaknesses of human nature. Burke has expressed this point of view very vividly;

Who would insure a tender and delicate sense of honor to beat almost with the first impulses of the heart when no man could know what would be the test of honor in a nation continually varying the standard of its coin? No part of life would retain its acquisitions. Barbarism with regard to science and literature, unskillfulness with regard to art and manufactures, would infallibly succeed to the want of a steady education and settled principle; and thus the commonwealth itself would, in a few generations, crumble away, be disconnected into the dust and powder of individuality, and at length dispersed to all the winds of heaven. 16

Tradition is, after all, the means whereby the religious, moral and cultural values of mankind, accumulated through millennia of effort and

15Ibid., pp. 69-70.
16Ibid., p. 109.
experience, are communicated from generation to generation. To advocate and emphasize the value and importance of past experience is ultimately to stress the importance of history and at the same time to evince skepticism in the ability of human reason, unaided by experience to effectively order human affairs. Thus, while conservatives stress the importance of metaphysical principles, in the application of these principles, they also believe in the importance of experience because they have an acute consciousness of human limitations.

The educational implications of the conservative conception of human nature are on the whole congruent with the implications of the conservative conception of the universe. The emphasis upon heredity would, for example, lead to the same concentration upon the education of the gifted and the same stress upon different kinds of curricula in accordance with differences in the intrinsic natures of students. Selective education, at least beyond the level of instruction needed for minimal vocational functioning in our complex society, would be a logical consequence of the stress on the importance of the innate genetic potentialities of students; for if students do not possess the needed potentialities, efforts to significantly elevate their abilities through education would in the end prove fruitless and would presumably detract from attention to the gifted.

The conservative belief in the emotional and selfish nature of mankind clearly implies an educational approach characterized by a strong emphasis upon discipline and obedience to authority. It would hardly be wise to leave students to their own devices if they were not to be trusted. Furthermore, if one believes that men are essentially
irrational, it would seem to follow that the curriculum that one would find acceptable would consist of required rather than elective courses, both because of a lack of confidence in the ability of individuals to make rational choices and of a desire to expose them to material which would presumably give them the needed guidance in order to enhance the rational elements of their natures. In addition, the freedom to teach students whatever one desires would hardly be promoted by adherence to an essentially irrationalist psychology. Consistent conservatives might well be reluctant to teach anything which might undermine the morality of their students except possibly where student bodies are highly select; the confidence that the students themselves would be able to correct any wrong impressions which the material might convey would very likely be absent.

Yet the conservative conception of education is not quite as teacher-centered as the foregoing might indicate. As we have seen earlier, the conservative view of the student as a learner is one of an active and creative individual. This viewpoint is clearly implicit not only in the conservative stress on the moral imagination but also in the emphasis upon the innate pattern of abilities which each individual student is believed to possess by virtue of his heredity. From the conservative viewpoint, the teacher must uphold authority and at the same time guide students because of his presumably superior competence. In addition, he should adjust his educational procedure to take account of the uniqueness of each pupil. Therefore, the conservative conception of education would be neither of an active nor of a passive nature but rather would properly be interactive in character. There would ideally
be a constant interchange between educators and their charges. 17

If, as conservatives believe, men are dominated by an anxiety for companionship and status among their associates, it would seem to follow that school counselors of conservative views would be anxious to provide students with the means to satisfy these emotional needs. The means would presumably include extra-curricular social activities involving students of compatible tastes and interests. In addition, the importance of man's emotional nature implies attention to the aesthetic as well as the strictly academic subjects; for it cannot be denied that one of the several aims of aesthetic endeavor pertains to the feelings of both the artist and the audience. The importance of training the feelings is clearly implicit upon a recognition of the paramount importance of the emotional aspect of human nature.

The advocacy of tradition as a means of overcoming some of the imperfections of human nature also involves important educational entailments. One of the arguments offered by conservatives in the past was, as we have seen, that long-term traditions represent the distilled wisdom of countless generations. It would appear to follow that traditionalist educators would tend to emphasize the teaching of those works which have survived the test of time. In addition, such subjects as history and literature, which consist in large part of content which reflects past experience, would be stressed. These fields would presumably be taught

17This conclusion was reached on the basis of the logical entailments of conservative thought. We shall see later whether the thought of individual conservative writers will enable us to substantiate this generalization.
in such a manner as to convey the moral and intellectual values which are products of past experience; for another of the major arguments used by conservatives to justify traditionalism was that tradition was a superior means for the transmission of these values. Imitation has certainly been a major means whereby traditions have been transmitted. It is therefore to be expected that in their teaching conservatives would utilize the lives of great personages as well as the great classics as models for imitation, although conservatives would presumably adapt this technique to the nature of the children involved.

The conservative approach to man and the universe has in the past been primarily an ontological approach, based upon an essentially hierarchical conception of being. The fundamental method was to seek the rational principles which determine the nature of being. Although conservatives have utilized experience as an important auxiliary determinant, their basic approach has been primarily metaphysical. In this connection, the conservative distrust of human nature has been based as much on the irrationality as on the selfishness of mankind. This attitude is the key to much of conservative educational theory; for many of the characteristics mentioned in this chapter as educational consequences of conservatism are actually means rather than ends. These consequences include the emphasis upon discipline, selectivity, interaction, human differences, imitation, and other such features. The foregoing are essentially methods of increasing the efficiency of instruction. The fundamental end of conservatism in view of the hierarchical metaphysics basic to conservative thought is the training of potential leadership through the nurture of their reasoning abilities so that they might discern the
rational design of the universe. By this means, it is hoped that they can acquire the ability to discriminate between the noble and the petty, the refined and the vulgar, the right and the wrong, the sacred and the profane, the intelligent and the stupid. To put it somewhat differently, education from the conservative point of view is essentially a matter of understanding the nature of the universal hierarchy for the purpose of realizing the axiological significance thereof. Education would therefore be ultimately instruction in value discrimination in accordance with the concept of a universal value hierarchy.

In this chapter, the fundamental assumptions of conservative educational theory have been discussed together with their educational entailments. In the following three chapters, historical evidence will be examined to determine the actual educational effects of the acceptance of the conservative viewpoint. If some of the consequences that have been named in this chapter are not supported by evidence from the writers that we will discuss, this would not, of course, necessarily imply that the inferences made are incorrect but that quite possibly these entailments may be real but unrecognized. If, on the other hand, these writers do provide us with evidence for the characteristics named, this material should make us more certain of the generalizations made. In addition, unforeseen consequences may also become apparent.

In the next three chapters, neo-conservative writers on education will be divided into three schools: those who have combined humanism with traditionalism; those humanists who while favorable to traditionalism have not made it a major element in their systems; and finally those who have a basically religious approach to educational problems.
As examples of these three schools of thought, T. S. Eliot and Russell Kirk will represent the first school; Irving Babbitt and G. H. Bantock, the second; and Bernard Iddings Bell, the third. We will begin with traditional humanism because, although Babbitt's neo-humanism may have been the first of the neo-conservative movements to appear, traditional humanism is the closest neo-conservative approximation to the original form of modern conservatism -- the Burkean conservatism of the eighteenth century.
CHAPTER III

TRADITIONALIST HUMANISM

Classical humanism has historically been an important influence on the development of Western education. As we shall see later, a high proportion of neo-conservative writers still apply humanistic standards in expressing their views on educational and cultural issues. It is therefore important to define what is meant by humanism as a doctrine or viewpoint. This will be accomplished by focusing on those characteristics which the various classical humanistic movements of the past had in common.

The ultimate aim of the classical humanists was the improvement of the individual person.1 Instead of attempting to elevate men collectively, the humanists preferred to work on an individual basis. In general, humanists did not believe that men were completely perfectible but they had confidence in the improvability of mankind.

The means that humanists advocated for attaining this goal of improving the individual were predicated upon the value of harmony. By harmony, they had reference to the ideal of the perfect articulation and integration of parts to produce an agreeable whole. This involved a combination of symmetry, balance, and proportion. As such, it was fundamentally an aesthetic ideal. Humanists have therefore stressed the value

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of the study of literature and the fine arts for, among other reasons, the development of a sense of harmony. More broadly, they have aimed at the development of the versatile individual in whom the various academic and personal excellences would be blended into a decorous and harmonious whole.²

Historically, the humanistic viewpoint was developed in ancient Greece. Such ancient Greek and Roman writers as Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, Cicero, and Quintilian laid the foundations of the movement. Humanism was also an important intellectual influence during the Italian Renaissance. In addition, classical humanism influenced the development of the traditional liberal arts education of Europe. Contemporary humanism can be divided into two schools: one which is elitist in character; the other, more democratic in orientation.³ The more democratic school is exemplified in the writings of Mark Van Doren, Gilbert Highet, and Jacques Barzun. This school of thought is obviously not conservative in any discriminating sense of the term because of the absence of the fundamental aristocratic dimension of conservatism. It is therefore aristocratic or elitist humanism that will command our attention.

Those neo-conservatives who have a humanistic approach to education can be divided into two groups. One group has combined humanism with the espousal of the value and importance of cultural traditionalism. The second group, while favorable to traditionalism, has not given it the same degree of attention as the first group. The members of the second

²Ibid., p. 41.
group have preferred to state their position in more modernistic terms. The most influential neo-conservative writers on education to adhere to the first view of cultural traditionalism were T.S. Eliot and Russell Kirk; to the second or more modern view, Irving Babbitt and G. H. Bantock. This chapter will analyze the views of the cultural traditional neo-conservatives. The following chapter will deal with the more modernist group.

The approach of the traditionalistic humanists was partially socio-cultural and partially aesthetic since they were concerned with preserving the unique values of their culture and society -- especially with regard to the traditional way of life of the people. This was combined with the aesthetic emphasis characteristic of humanism which implies the importance of culture in another sense of the term -- aesthetic and intellectual cultivation. A prime example of this combination is T. S. Eliot.

The Work of T. S. Eliot

Eliot has probably been one of the more influential poets of the twentieth century. His influence as a social and cultural critic has also been considerable. It is his role as a critic that will be of prime concern to us for the influence that he has exerted on neo-conservatives stemmed primarily from his role as a critic of the times.

Eliot was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on September 26, 1888, the scion of a prominent and cultured family. His grandfather, a Unitarian minister, was the founder and later chancellor of the George Washington University of St. Louis. T. S. Eliot's father was the president of a brick manufacturing company and a patron of the arts. The poet's mother, Charlotte Champe Stearns Eliot, was a writer and poetess herself. It
can be assumed that T. S. Eliot had, as a child, the inestimable advantage of growing up in a highly cultivated household.

Eliot received a traditional classical education in the preparatory department of Washington University and later at Milton Academy, affiliated at that time with Harvard University. He entered Harvard in 1906 where his studies consisted primarily of courses in literature and philosophy. Eliot received the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1909 and the Master of Arts degree in English literature from Harvard in 1910. Before returning to Harvard for further study, Eliot spent a delightful year in Paris, studying French literature and philosophy. In 1911, Eliot began his work toward the Ph.D. degree. Partially under the influence of one of his Harvard professors, Irving Babbitt, Eliot enrolled in Indic studies but later switched to philosophy. The poet did not complete the requirements for the doctorate since other concerns overshadowed his academic plans. He did complete his dissertation which pertained to a conservatively-inclined philosopher, F. H. Bradley. Eliot planned to present his dissertation to his committee but, at the time that his thesis was completed, he was living in England and missed the boat back to the United States. One cannot help wondering why he did not board another ship. In any case, it was evident that by this time some very fundamental changes had occurred in Eliot's way of life.

teaching to be very strenuous and especially disliked the task of main-
taining discipline. He left teaching for a position in the Foreign and
Colonial Department at Lloyd's Bank while working during evenings and
weekends on his poetry. In 1925, Eliot met Geoffrey Faber who was
interested in hiring a writer with a reputation who could attract young
writers to work for Faber's publishing company. Eliot eventually became
a director of Faber and Faber and utilized his position to encourage
individuals with strong poetic talents. In 1948, Eliot was awarded the
Nobel prize in literature. In 1957, long after the death of his first
wife, Eliot married his secretary, Valerie Fletcher. He found the
happiness in his second marriage which had eluded him during his first
marriage. Eliot died in London on January 4, 1965. As is well-known
Eliot announced his conversion from the Unitarian to the Anglo-Catholic
faith in 1928. At the same time, he proclaimed himself a classicist in
literature and a royalist in politics.

Eliot was primarily a philosophical poet. His two most influential
poems were probably The Waste Land (1922) and Ash Wednesday (1930). The
earlier poem dealt with the spiritual aridity of the twentieth century;
the later poem with the Christian answer to the problems of the age.
Both of these poems were highly abstract and symbolic in nature and
helped to stimulate revolutionary changes in twentieth-century poetry.

During the last half of his life, Eliot developed a considerable
concern regarding sociological and cultural problems. His most
influential work in this area was Notes Towards the Definition of Culture
(1949) which examined the meanings of the term "culture" and the conditions
needed for cultural creativity. Only slightly less influential was
The Idea of a Christian Society (1940) in which he dealt with what he
believed to be the desirable structure and aims of a society based upon Christian values. Although other works will be used in examining Eliot's social and cultural thought, these two works probably contain a greater amount of relevant material than any of the other publications of Eliot; so that our analysis will be based largely on these works.

While we can speculate on the nature of the influences upon Eliot, it is certainly safer to rely on Eliot's own testimony as to the individuals who influenced him in the writing of these two important works. In the writing of the Notes, Eliot has indicated that he was influenced primarily by the writings of Canon V. A. Demant, Mr. Christopher Dawson, Professor Karl Mannheim, and Mr. Dwight McDonald.\(^5\) Canon Demant and Christopher Dawson were well-known writers on the social implications of religious thought. Karl Mannheim was of course the famous sociologist whose views on elite and class were of particular importance to Eliot. Dwight McDonald is known primarily as a critic of mass culture. Among those who influenced Eliot with regard to the views expressed in The Idea of a Christian Society were Canon Demant, Dawson, Middleton Murry, and Jacques Maritain.\(^6\) Both Murry and Maritain were vigorous advocates of social reconstruction based upon Christian principles. In general, most of the writers who influenced Eliot as a social and cultural critic

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were either Roman Catholic, Anglican, or secularist writers with aristocratic tendencies. Curiously, Eliot did not mention his former teacher, Irving Babbitt, with whom he shared many opinions.

The central concept of Eliot's entire social theory is "culture" which is considerably broader in scope than the political context of much existing social theory. Culture is also a more fundamental concept than "society" which is based upon culture rather than the reverse. It is therefore of considerable importance to inquire into Eliot's meaning and use of the term "culture."

To begin with, Eliot veered back and forth between two general meanings of culture. One meaning pertained to the general way of life of a people. The following is an example of this usage:

Taking now the point of view of identification, the reader must remind himself, as the author has constantly to do, of how much is here embraced by the term culture. It includes all the characteristic activities and interests of a people: Derby Day, Henley Regatta, Cowes, the twelfth of August, a cup final, the dog races, the pin table, the dart board, Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage cut into sections, beetroot in vinegar, nineteenth century Gothic churches and the music of Elgar. The reader can make his own list.7

In addition, Eliot also sometimes employed culture to mean what has generally become known as cultivation. In the following quotation, he gave a detailed account of this type of culture.

There are several kinds of attainment which we may have in mind in different contexts. We may be thinking of refinement of manners -- or urbanity and civility: if so, we shall think first of a social class, and of the superior individual as representative of the best of that class. We may be thinking of learning and a close acquaintance with the accumulated wisdom of the past: if so our man is the scholar. We may be thinking of philosophy in the widest sense -- an interest in and some ability to manipulate abstract

7Notes, p. 104.
ideas: if so, we may mean the intellectual (recognizing the fact that this term is now used very loosely, to comprehend many persons not conspicuous for strength of intellect). Or we may be thinking of the arts: if so, we mean the artist and the amateur or dilettante. But what we seldom have in mind is all of these things at the same time.8

Eliot reconciled these two meanings of the term culture as a general way of life and as cultivation by viewing them as different aspects of one phenomenon. Cultivation referred to the culture of the individual and, to some extent, of the group or class. However, the culture of the individual and the culture of the class both reflect to a considerable extent the general way of life or, in other words, the culture of the whole society. In fact, cultivation refers to aspects of the whole culture. Realizing this, Eliot criticized Matthew Arnold for giving attention in Culture and Anarchy to the individual and class aspects of culture to the utter neglect of the societal aspect. In this respect, Eliot exhibited the emphasis on the group which has been characteristic of conservative thinkers in contrast to the stress on the individual of the classical liberals.

In addition to defining the meaning of culture, Eliot was also interested in the problem of what conditions would be essential for maximum cultural creativity. He believed that there were at least three such conditions: the existence of social classes, cultural regionalism, and a balance between unity and diversity in religion.9 Before the writer explains each of these conditions in detail, it should be emphasized that all of the conditions which Eliot named were based upon the assumption that balance is of the utmost value in encouraging intellectual

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8Ibid., pp. 94-95. 
9Ibid., pp. 87-88.
and aesthetic achievement. By balance, Eliot had in mind combinations of unity with diversity and of harmony with dissonance. The following discussion of these conditions is designed to explain Eliot's view.

To Eliot, each social class represented a distinct way of life. In fact, he considered the chief function of each class to be that of passing its culture, strengthened and revitalized, to future generations. The primary agency for transmitting this social class heritage was the family which Eliot thought more important than the school in transmitting culture as a whole. An especially vital function of the family was its transmission of a standard of civility and manners.¹⁰

When intellectuals such as Karl Mannheim advocated the dominance of elites who possessed outstanding abilities, Eliot believed that they overlooked the equally vital role of social classes since the cultural heritage consisted of much more than facts and techniques. Instead, Eliot favored a combination of elites and social classes, which were to be internally arranged in a hierarchical pattern. In describing this hierarchy, Eliot wrote:

What I have advanced is not a "defense of aristocracy" - an emphasis upon the importance of one organ of society. Rather it is a plea on behalf of a form of society in which there will be, from "top" to "bottom," a continuous gradation of cultural levels: it is important to remember that we should not consider the upper levels as possessing more culture than the lower, but as representing a more conscious culture and a greater specialization of culture. I incline to believe that no true democracy can maintain itself unless it maintains these different levels of culture.¹¹

Eliot believed that a people should be neither too united nor too

¹⁰Ibid., p. 115.
¹¹Ibid., p. 121.
divided if culture is to flourish. Either extreme could lead to tyranny. On the one hand, a graded social hierarchy is desirable. On the other hand, members of different classes should possess a community of common culture which would enable them to mix freely. In other words, classes should exist but should not become rigidly stratified into castes. 12

Eliot also favored the encouragement and preservation of local regional cultures since he believed that cultural diversity enriches the cultures of the world. On the one hand, cultures need to attract each other to affect one another; on the other hand, a certain degree of repulsion is also needed for particular cultures to survive. An example of what he desired is the "satellite culture." He felt that this was well exemplified by the cultures of the Irish, the Scots, and the Welsh which he regarded as satellites of the allegedly more dominant English culture. As satellites, these cultures have greatly enriched English culture and, by the same token, have played a greater role in the world than would have been true had they preserved their cultural independence. By using the English language, Irish, Welsh, and Scottish writers have reached a larger audience than if they had written in the languages which once were their native vernaculars. The range of thought and feeling represented in English literature has been greatly enlarged not only because these writers used English, but also because many of these writers have chosen to express and reflect the distinctive characteristics of their native cultures. To reduce all the cultures of Great Britain to one would, in Eliot's view, have restricted the range of

12 Ibid., p. 123.
literary achievement.\textsuperscript{13}

The same combination of unity and diversity was characteristic of Eliot's position on the relationship of religion to culture. He believed that those religions were most culturally stimulating which were capable of winning acceptance by people of widely diverse cultures. Such religions provided a pattern of common belief which stimulated cultural interchanges between peoples. On the other side, religious diversity was needed to avoid petrification which would, depending on the natures of the peoples affected, lead to either torpor or chaos. In fact, he feared that a reunion of Christian churches might result in a general lowering of the cultural level through the disappearance of much religious diversity.\textsuperscript{14}

A constant struggle between the centripetal and the centrifugal forces of religious unity and diversity was deemed by Eliot to be highly desirable for without such a struggle, no balance could be maintained. Christendom should, he felt, be one but, within it, there should be an endless conflict of ideas; for truth is clarified and enlarged by intellectual struggle.\textsuperscript{15}

Eliot's emphasis upon variety and diversity was, as we have seen, consistent with the general direction of conservative thought.\textsuperscript{16} He had, however, a confidence in the eventual triumph of truth through discussion and struggle which far exceeded what has been usual among conservatives.

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 128-129.

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 144-146.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 157.

\textsuperscript{16}See page 24 of this study.
The conservative view of men as being irrational by nature would tend to mitigate such confidence. Evidently, Eliot's view of human nature was somewhat more hopeful than the views of his philosophical allies.

Eliot's emphasis upon diversity obviously implied the cultivation and encouragement of cultural diversities in the schools. Freedom of discussion was also clearly implied; for rigorous censorship tends to undermine diversity by restricting the range of individual exposure to diverse views. The emphasis upon the encouragement and retention of a class differentiated society also entailed a multi-track system of education with different types of education available to suit individuals of correspondingly varied social backgrounds; for the existence of different social classes clearly implies a difference in functions which entails a need for different kinds of training to fulfill those functions.

To Eliot, social issues were clearly subordinate to cultural questions. When discussing different types of society, he distinguished between them on the basis of the cultural ideals which they exemplified. He believed that there existed three significant kinds of society in the contemporary world. The Christian society was characterized as the type of society where behavior was regulated in accordance with Christian principles. The pagan society was described in terms antithetical to Christian ideals. While Eliot was not very specific concerning the attitudes inculcated by pagan societies, he cited Fascist countries as examples of paganism.

18Ibid., p. 15.
The third type of society was the one in which Eliot believed himself to be living — the negative society. This type of society has not been guided by any ideal — unless one could consider liberalism to be an ideal. He considered liberalism to be a movement defined by its starting point more than by ends. Eliot believed liberalism to constitute a trend away from rather than towards something definite. What he possibly meant was that liberalism was essentially the emphasis upon freedom, which should not be considered an end but only a means to an end. Eliot did not attempt to explain his assertion at all, but the interpretation we have given seems to be the only meaningful one.

Eliot felt that the inefficiency of liberal society would lead to its eventual disappearance and replacement by a society that would be either Christian or pagan. Eliot commented on the malaise of liberalism:

By destroying traditional social habits of the people, by dissolving their natural collective consciousness into individual constituents, by licensing the opinions of the most foolish, by substituting instruction for education, by encouraging cleverness rather than wisdom, the upstart rather than the qualified, by fostering a notion of getting on to which the alternative is a hopeless apathy, Liberalism can prepare the way for that which is its own negation: the artificial, mechanised, or brutalized control which is a desperate remedy for its chaos.20

As is evident, Eliot viewed liberalism as a movement characterized by equalitarianism, an excessive emphasis upon freedom, and a hopeless absence of standards. Unless replaced by a Christian society, liberalism could only lead to tyranny. In presenting his views about the Christian society, Eliot was not concerned either with the means of bringing it

19Ibid., p. 12
20Ibid., p. 12.
into existence nor about defending it. He wanted primarily to show how it would differ from the negative, liberal society in which he lived. Of special concern to him was its "idea" or ends.

The aims of a Christian society would be the virtue and well-being of the people and the attainment of beatitude for those who would be capable of it. A Christian society would consist of two basic elements: the masses and the elite "Community of Christians." The Community of Christians would consist of those clergy and laity who possess sufficient spiritual and intellectual development to understand Christian doctrines and to live consciously by them. As for the masses, their adherence to Christianity would be largely behavioral and would be expressed both in their behavior towards their neighbors and in customary religious observances. Eliot believed that the masses had only a minimal capacity for reflecting on the objects of faith. Instead of attempting to inculcate an understanding among them of the most abstruse concerns of theology, it was far more important to convey to them a realization of how far their lives fell short of the Christian ideal. This position clearly implied that beyond a certain minimal level of attainment formal education should be selective in applicability. If the differences in intellectual understanding were, as Eliot apparently assumed, largely due to differences in innate potentialities, there was

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21 Ibid., p. 6.
22 Ibid., p. 27.
23 Ibid., p. 34.
24 Ibid., p. 23.
little use in attempting to train individuals beyond the limits of their abilities.

Eliot believed that a nation's educational system was far more important than its government. In attempting to delineate the outline of his Christian society, Eliot devoted some attention to schooling as a means of bringing about the conditions needed for the smooth functioning of that society. The primary aim of education in such a society would be to train people to think in Christian categories. Eliot considered such Christian thought to be more important than the encouragement of the outward manifestations of Christian piety which was not necessarily a reliable indicator of the possession of Christian faith. The beliefs of the rulers of a nation were, to Eliot, of less significance than the beliefs of the population over which they ruled since the practical necessities of political life necessitated their conformity to the ideals of the citizenry of their country.25

Eliot believed it to be essential that there exist a certain cultural uniformity based upon agreement concerning what everyone should know. This uniformity was considered necessary to provide cultural continuity and to promote communication. In a Christian society, the content of education would in large part be determined by Christian principles. In the United States, according to Eliot, there was such pervasive permissiveness that one could not assume that any two undergraduates had read the same books or taken the same courses unless they had attended the same school and had studied with the same teacher at

25Ibid., p. 22.
the same time. To Eliot, education differed from instruction in that there was some principle of selection of the knowledge which any educated person should possess. In a negative society, the ideal of wisdom was displaced by uncontrolled experimentation and permissiveness. In his opposition to the elective system of education, Eliot typified conservative opinion. The conservative assumption of the existence of a natural hierarchy of value clearly implies the existence of a hierarchy of subjects which embody these values. It follows that the selection of subjects to be studied should be based on this hierarchy rather than on the personal desires of the students involved. Eliot did not make clear his reasons for opposing the elective system, but his stand is consistent with his general educational position.

As to his views concerning education in the democratic, secularist society in which he found himself, Eliot took a different approach; for he was confronted by a different set of questions than when he concerned himself with the structuring of a Christian society. On the whole, Eliot found himself in sympathy with C. E. M. Joad's statement of the purposes of education. Joad believed that education should prepare people to earn a livelihood, to become good citizens, and to develop and use their

26 Ibid., pp. 32-33.

27 Joad was a British philosopher and a contemporary of Eliot. He is known today for his conversion from religious skepticism to religious traditionalism which occurred during his old age. See Eliot's discussion of Joad's educational ideas in Eliot's To Criticize the Critic and Other Essays (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1965), pp. 69-70.
abilities. Although generally sympathetic to Joad's educational views, Eliot would have preferred the implementation of somewhat different objectives. To Eliot, one of the most important purposes of education was "to preserve the class and to select the elite." While Eliot did not specify a particular program of preservation and selection, it is possible to extrapolate on these matters from his general philosophy. Education was to be a means whereby the cultures of the various classes would be transmitted to future generations. It would also be a means of selecting the intellectual elite. In an article on T. S. Eliot's views on education, Robert M. Hutchins expressed the opinion that the existence of class and elite were irrelevant to human improvement because members of social classes could be both wicked and stupid while members of the elite could be wicked but apparently not stupid. For his position to possess much cogency, Hutchins would have to show why men would not be more wicked or more stupid without classes or elites; for to argue convincingly against the existence or encouragement of classes and elites, one would have to prove that they do at least as much harm as good. To say that classes and elites have not attained perfection is not equivalent to a denial that they do some good. Eliot did not maintain that classes and elites would make men perfect. In fact, Eliot wanted to improve classes and elites by appropriate educational reforms. He would probably view Hutchin's strictures as indicative of the need of improving the education of members of social classes and elites -- not for ignoring these groups.

28Eliot, Notes, p. 177.
In any case, Eliot wished to diminish the occurrence of both wickedness and stupidity. In addition to the function assigned to education with respect to class and elite, Eliot believed in the importance of schooling as an agency both for cultural continuity and the development of the moral and intellectual faculties of mankind. In fact, he considered cultural continuity to be a major factor in the elevation of those faculties. The subjects which Eliot believed to be of special value in fostering cultural continuity were history and foreign languages. Among the languages, Eliot believed that Latin and Greek were of special importance; for much of the Western Christian heritage was originally communicated through these languages. In essence, Eliot sought to justify traditional humanistic education.

Like most other conservative writers on education, Eliot believed that general education was more important than vocational training. Before one can become a good citizen, one must learn how to be a good man. Learning should be primarily for the purpose of acquiring wisdom. Other considerations should be secondary. Even when pursuing other purposes, it was vital that students concentrated on the strictly academic subjects. To become a good citizen, for example, Eliot

30 Eliot, To Criticize the Critic, p. 119.
32 Eliot, To Criticize the Critic, p. 85.
33 Eliot, Notes, p. 175.
recommended the study of history, economics, and government. History was to be studied not primarily as a foundation for the acquisition of familiarity with the technical aspects of government but rather as a means of developing critical thinking and ethical consciousness.\textsuperscript{34}

Eliot was especially concerned with what he regarded as the headlong rush to educate everyone. He believed that mass education would inevitably lead to the lowering of academic standards and to the abandoning of those subjects which transmitted the essence of culture.\textsuperscript{35} Presumably, the latter consequence would result from the pressure to simplify education to enable the masses to understand what they are asked to study. Eliot believed that to educate above the level of the student's abilities would be disastrous by both creating discontent and mental strain.\textsuperscript{36} In answer to Eliot, Hutchins denied that men could have too much education; for if wisdom is a major aim of education, who could question the position that men should have as much wisdom as possible?\textsuperscript{37} The obvious reply from Eliot's point of view would be that if a man is not capable of absorbing with some understanding the educational material meted out to him, than he would be getting too much education for his abilities. Ultimately, this difference in viewpoint between Eliot and Hutchins was

\textsuperscript{34}Eliot, \textit{To Criticize the Critic}, p. 89.

\textsuperscript{35}Eliot, \textit{Notes}, p. 185.

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., p. 176.

\textsuperscript{37}Hutchins, "T. S. Eliot on Education," p. 2.
apparently based upon a strong difference of opinion pertaining to the educational potentialities of the masses. This difference might possibly be based upon differences in judgment concerning the relative efficacy of environment as against heredity. Unfortunately, Hutchins was not very explicit in stating his views so that it is difficult to untangle his assumptions. Also, Eliot might have been somewhat more explicit as well.

Eliot devoted considerable attention in his educational writings to the "equality of education" argument which he believed was based upon three erroneous assumptions: (1) superiority is always superiority of intellect; (2) there is an infallible method of detecting intellect; (3) it is possible to devise a system that could infallibly nourish intellect. From these false assumptions, there has arisen the ideal of an educational system that would sort out everyone according to his intellect.38

Eliot's usage of the concept of equality of opportunity was more applicable to British than to American conditions. During the twentieth century, especially since World War II, there has been a concerted effort to replace Britain's class system of education by a meritocracy. This replacement has been done in the name of "equality of opportunity." In the United States during the late nineteenth century and continuing into the early part of the twentieth century, equality of opportunity had the same connotations as the present British usage. It commonly meant the opportunity of the poor and disadvantaged individual to rise in the social and occupational hierarchy through a combination of ability, energy, hard work, and good moral conduct. The stress was at that time upon opportunity rather than upon equality, although no such concerted effort

38Eliot, Notes, pp. 177-179.
was made to put it into effect as in present-day Britain. Today, the stress in the United States is upon equality including the utilization of racial and ethnic quota systems and the relaxing of educational standards. This would probably have alarmed Eliot more than the British usage; for an equalitarian education is obviously more antithetical to conservative ideals than a meritocracy. The essential conservative stress upon hierarchy is in direct opposition to the current American trend. The difference in attitudes toward opportunity is one of many possible illustrations of the fact that despite the alleged socialism of the British economic system, its educational system is more conservative than the American counterpart.

Although Eliot thought that the exceptional individual should have the opportunity to rise in the social scale, the aim of sorting out everyone in accordance with his or her abilities was unattainable and would disorganize society by the substitution of elites of intellect for classes. He believed that tests were not necessarily accurate indicators of the most important abilities. Rigid conformity to the educational system might actually be the real criterion of selection instead of intellectual ability. The education of everyone capable of receiving a higher education must, he thought, lead inevitably to a lowering of academic standards through the concomitant overcrowding of the schools. Mass education would also enlarge the powers of the state since it would acquire control over the means of selection which control would ultimately lead to making the ends of the state the most important consideration in higher education. Eliot believed that education could function best when
there existed some balance between privilege and opportunity.39

Eliot's fear of overcrowding as a consequence of providing higher education for all those capable of receiving it was apparently based upon the assumption that admission standards would be sufficiently generous so that massive enrollment would be an inevitable outcome. This does not, however, necessarily follow. Standards might be set at a sufficiently high level to avoid that outcome. Perhaps, Eliot thought that political pressures would militate against raising standards, but the truth of this assumption would depend on the degree of political supervision over the agencies that would regulate academic admissions standards. In any case, the level at which individuals are deemed to be capable of profiting from a university education is to some degree relative to the standards of judgment so that some leeway is possible.

To understand the full significance of Eliot's viewpoints, it is important to view his entire philosophy from a broad perspective. He was, as we have seen, reacting primarily against two contemporary trends. One of these was the decline of Christian influences together with the concomitant rise of the negative society, bereft of dedication either to religious faith or to moral standards. The other was the pressure to lower academic standards. He believed that the latter trend was the result of both pressure from the educational equalitarians and from the advocates of an educational meritocracy.

Eliot's reaction to these trends was largely the consequence of his belief in the importance of cultural creativity and of religious belief.

39Ibid., pp. 177-178. See also Eliot, To Criticize the Critic, p. 103.
He felt that the negative society would undermine cultural activity by destroying the traditional social habits of the people and by undermining the class structure of society. He was also fearful of the consequence of mass education -- especially, the pressure to lower academic standards and to neglect those subjects which he considered most important for cultural creativity. He also believed that the negative society was a symptom of growing religious and moral skepticism which, if not arrested, would lead to the growth of an aggressively pagan society.

Eliot's educational concerns were directly related to his general socio-cultural viewpoint. One of the major aims of education, as conceived by Eliot was cultural transmission; for he believed that cultural creativeness would decline if the various cultures of the world were to lose their individuality. Another of his aims, wisdom, pertained to the transmission of the insights of the past. This aim could likewise be considered as a kind of cultural transmission; for Eliot conceived of culture in such a way as to unite the anthropological and aesthetic senses of the term. The intellectual and aesthetic cultivation of the intelligentsia was, to him, only a more conscious form of the basic culture of society. In addition, he was concerned with education as an instrument for training in citizenship and for class and elite recruitment. The last function was an expression of his basically aristocratic orientation. In general, Eliot's views can be characterized as expressions of a combination of cultural and religious concerns.
The Views of Russell Kirk

One of the most famous figures in the neo-conservative movement is Russell W. Kirk, who has written many well-known works on conservatism and was one of the founders of both Modern Age and the National Review, perhaps the two most influential magazines published in the United States which are devoted to matters of interest to conservatives. Professor Kirk is a graduate of Michigan State University (1940). He subsequently received the M. A. degree from Duke University (1941) and the doctorate from St. Andrews University in Scotland (1952). From 1946 until 1953, he taught history of civilization at Michigan State. From 1957 to 1969, he was Research Professor of Politics at C. W. Post College. During the same period, he also was University Professor at Long Island University. He writes and lectures extensively and makes his home, as befits a true conservative, at the domicile of his ancestors, Mecosta, Michigan. To judge by the academic posts that he has occupied, Kirk's chief academic interests are apparently history and political science.

His best known works are probably The Conservative Mind (1953), A Program for Conservatives (1954), Academic Freedom (1955), and Eliot and His Age (1971). The Conservative Mind is a history of Anglo-American writings on conservatism from Burke to Santayana which, in the revised edition, was extended to include the writings of T. S. Eliot.40

40The propriety of including Santayana as a conservative is highly questionable. Santayana did not adhere to the hierarchical metaphysics characteristic of conservatives, but exhibited instead strong materialistic tendencies.
In A Program for Conservatives, Kirk sought to show how conservative principles can be applied to the social, educational, and political problems which concern us. The title, Academic Freedom, is self-explanatory. Eliot and His Age is devoted to the life of T. S. Eliot and to the people and ideas which influenced Eliot. As a writer, Kirk is undoubtedly an accomplished literary artist, although quite neglectful of the systematic and sustained argumentation characteristic of the skilled philosopher. As is well-known, Kirk derived the essentials of his conservative viewpoint largely from the writings of Edmund Burke. 41

In what is perhaps the most explicit statement of Kirk's general philosophy, A Program for Conservatives, Kirk has named what he considered to be the ten most crucial problems which should concern the people of the United States. As will soon be evident, these are long term problems, not evanescent in character, and were stated in Burkean terms. In viewing these questions, we can obtain a clear understanding of the nature of the Burkean approach to contemporary American problems.

The problem of the heart is one of these. Specifically, Kirk meant the question of how to enable the will to again act in accordance with ethical and spiritual precepts. 42 By "spiritual," he was evidently referring to religion; for his prescription involved both the restoration of belief in intrinsic moral values and in religious faith. The basic reason for the existence of the problem of the heart was deemed to be the decline of tradition. The fundamental criterion and source of values was


considered to be the universal order of nature, established by a means "more than human." 43 Kirk had in effect grounded rightness of will on the natural law doctrine of "right reason" -- obedience to the values derived from a nature conceived to be rationally ordered and therefore understandable by reason. In essence, this view implied the subordination of will to reason.

Kirk identified the spread of boredom among the masses as another problem. The causes for this problem were multiple. The decline of religion undermined the faith of the people in meaningful ends and purposes. This problem was exacerbated by industrialization which led to a wide-spread intoxication with machinery and to an insatiable desire for sensations. Add to these factors the undermining of individual and family responsibilities by the steady extension of the powers of the state, and the individual was thus condemned to an empty and rudderless existence. 44

Kirk exhibited little confidence in the ability of the masses to find satisfactory substitutes for religious faith and a sense of individual responsibility. His remedies were closely tied in with the causes stipulated. He believed that religion must be revived and that individual self-reliance must be restored if existence was to recover its significance. Through religion, the individual would acquire the sense of purpose needed to make life meaningful, while by the experience obtained through the exercise of individual responsibility, additional meaning would be procured. 45 To Kirk, the primary exemplification of boredom was the rootless man, dispossessed of both traditional supports and

44 Ibid., pp. 105-107. 45 Ibid., pp. 120-121.
Kirk clearly linked boredom to the related problem of the decline of the community spirit which referred to the loss of the feeling of identity with the groups to which one belongs. The communal spirit was deemed to be highly desirable both for the sense of personal security and comradeship which it produced among individuals, and because of the relatively unselfish striving for the common good which was a consequent. Causes for the decline of communal spirit were, according to Kirk, the gradual subversion of the autonomy of local groups through the diffusion of the powers of the state and the modern overvaluation of the importance of economic factors in contributing to human contentment. Kirk recommended the revival of autonomous groups and institutions. He especially insisted upon encouraging private schooling for he felt that public education was becoming much too dominant, thereby undermining the variety and independence of the schools.46

Several implicit assumptions supported Kirk's position. An obvious one was that humans as social animals find their happiness in groups. For communal loyalties to be meaningful, they must focus on local groups rather than on some abstract concept such as "humanity" or "world peace." Kirk was obviously very much aware of the limitations of human nature, not the least of which was the strong need for emotional security.

When we turn to Kirk's discussion of the problem of social justice, we are confronted by a question of a somewhat different character. As far as Kirk was concerned, the model for social justice was a hierarchical society in which each individual would be found in the place

46Ibid., pp. 155-161-162.
best suited to his intrinsic nature. The chief obstacle to social justice was believed to be rooted in the widespread resentment of excellence which Kirk considered a meance to both culture and society.47 Thus, when dealing with the concept of social justice, Kirk was concerned primarily with differentiation in contrast to the stress on identity implicit in his concept of community. To Kirk, the ideal society must possess the right balance between identity and differentiation. In their proper contexts, both factors were deemed to be important.

Kirk's concept of social justice can be contrasted with the view that equates social justice with equality. The contrasts in the views of social justice can be stated in terms of divergent conceptions of human nature and of human welfare. For the conservative, men are innately unequal. For the equalitarian, men should be considered equal in at least the most important aspects of their nature. For the conservative, the uplift of the most able is most important for progress; but for the equalitarian, it is the uplift of the masses. The conservative educator is therefore strongly inclined to concentrate on developing the talents of his most gifted students; the more equalitarian, on raising the average level of his class.

To Kirk, the fundamental cause of the pervasiveness of the resentment against excellence was the increasing dominance of the mass mind and the consequent pandering of the purveyors of culture to mediocrity. He also indicted the universities for subordinating liberal learning to the aims of utility and of sociability. To achieve social justice, in

47Ibid., p. 175.
Kirk's sense of the term, there must, he thought, be an elevation of the standards of achievement. Kirk's prescription seems, to this writer, to be grossly inadequate. If resentment against excellence is to be reduced, a respect for excellence must be created. This would involve an inculcation of a sense of qualitative excellence through an emphasis upon developing the tastes of young people, both in the schools and in their homes.

The problem of wants is closely related to that of social justice. Specifically, the problem is how to enable people to want the right things from the standpoint of justice. The excessive stress on material wants to the neglect of spiritual needs implicitly involves the problems of excellence and of the inversion of values. By spiritual values, Kirk meant moral values and the ideal of qualitative excellence. His remedies included a revival of such traditional goods as justice, mercy, honor, charity, and fine craftsmanship. Decentralized industry was believed to be an important means of stimulating more people to engage in creative and responsible activity.

The next problem to engage Kirk's attention, that of order, is just barely distinguishable from that of social justice, for both pertain to the concept of hierarchy. Social justice, as conceived by Kirk, pertained to the attainment of an ideal condition in which each individual would occupy the place proper to his nature. Order, as such, referred to the harmony and balance which were believed to be consequences of the

48 Ibid., pp. 175-176, 180.
attainment of social justice. Kirk believed that the harmonious arrangement of functions and ideals would guard justice. He did not directly explain the connection between harmony and justice, but he presumably meant that the spirit of harmony would produce the tranquility which would limit the development and exercise of envy. The decay of order was attributed to the decline of the spirit of community which was essential to developing social harmony since identification with the social good presumably lessens individual presumption. \(^{50}\) The cure was obviously implicit in the cause -- the revival of community by application of the suggestions previously made. \(^{51}\)

The decline in social order was, according to Kirk, paralleled by a similar decline in the sense of order between the various subjects offered in the curricula of educational institutions -- especially those concerned with higher education. According to Kirk, most university administrators have accepted the view that all studies were of equal value. For example, a class in fly-casting might be considered as equal in value to one in Greek. A consequences has been a shift in emphasis from the thorough mastery of a few subjects to a superficial acquaintance with many. Kirk's own rating of the fields of study will be discussed after an analysis of his general views on education. \(^{52}\)

Kirk viewed the problem of power in terms of the restraint of might by "right reason." As a concept, power had, to Kirk, negative

\(^{50}\)The speculation on how community contributes to order is my own based upon inferences from Kirk's line of thinking.

\(^{51}\)Kirk, A Program for Conservatives, pp. 229-233.

\(^{52}\)Ibid., p. 229.
implications; for it denoted the absence of restrictions on arbitrary human actions, and his primary concern was with limiting power out of solicitude for the preservation of traditional moral values. He also justified the restriction of power by pointing to the rise of the dictators and the two world wars as political and military consequences of the arbitrary human actions of the past. The remedy prescribed was to limit and decentralize power, although one might well wonder how the holders of power could be persuaded to part with some of that precious commodity. 53

Perhaps part of the answer can be found in Kirk's discussion of the next problem which pertained to loyalty. The decline of loyalty to the nation and to the family was attributed to a combination of factors such as the decline of faith in religious and moral values, the general neglect of liberal education, the rise of the "gutter" press (Kirk did not explain what he meant by that), and the rise of equalitarianism. Our chief concern in this regard is with Kirk's strictures on schools and the press since newspapers are obviously educational agencies. The decline of liberal education helped to undermine loyalty since with it came a neglect of history, especially the history of one's own country. Concurrently, the literature enshrining loyalty to family and nation, such as moralistic writings and biographies of respected national figures, was also neglected. Regarding the press, Kirk may have had reference to the critical attitudes of many journalists toward traditional American values.

53 Ibid., pp. 17, 251, 255-256.
In any case, his use of the term "gutter" indicates a strong emotional reaction. Kirk's suggestions for the revival of loyalty included the increased teaching and study of history and a greater stress upon religious values. Furthermore, Kirk would prefer to see a nation of people characterized by civility of manners, a political system where justice is fairly administered, and safe conditions so that citizens are secure against criminals. It is difficult to love a nation whose people are not lovable. Therefore, the need to elevate the manners of the people can be as pressing as the need to obtain inspiration from the American past.54

One of the primary problems mentioned by Kirk pertained to the need for the revival of tradition. The need was justified on several grounds. Like Burke, Kirk maintained that the principal source of our social wisdom was the experience of the race as forged through triumph and tragedy over thousands of years. Tradition was deemed to be far superior to the wisdom that any one human being could accumulate on his own; for it involved the accumulated experiences of untold numbers of people in diverse situations, confronting a fantastic range of problems. Furthermore, our moral values have traditional roots, and Kirk was convinced that these values could be much more effectively communicated through such traditional institutions as the family and the church than through formal classroom instruction. Although traditions were deemed to be in need of periodic revisions, Kirk warned that these revisions should not

54On his views concerning loyalty, see *ibid.*, pp. 17, 282, 290.
be undertaken heedlessly or too boldly. The presumption must always be in favor of tradition unless the case to the contrary is overwhelming.

Implicit in this position is a distrust of the sole or predominant reliance upon abstract reason in the apprehension and solution of human problems. Educationally, this distrust of the exclusive reliance on reason would encourage the non-intellectual aspects of human nature—such as the aesthetic and the experimental—not to replace the intellectual but to add to it. It also implies an emphasis upon those fields of study which can serve as vehicles for tradition—such as religion, history, and literature. To Kirk, the methods of the more abstract and intellectualized studies were not universally applicable. For him, there was no universal model of general applicability. Epistemology was in truth a multifaceted study.55

Lastly, we come to the problem of the mind, the problem most closely related to educational concerns. Kirk viewed this problem in terms of redeeming intellectual life from the "sterility and uniformity of the mass-age."56 We can discern his meaning by examining the charges which he leveled against current educational and cultural practices that neglected manners and morals in favor of an unmitigated sensuality and emphasized mediocrity at the expense of the naturally talented in academic and cultural areas. Kirk's opposition to the stressing of mediocrity rested upon his contention that only the few were capable of absorbing the liberal arts with full comprehension and that future social

55On tradition, see Kirk ibid., pp. 298-299; 303-305.

56Ibid., p. 16.
progress would depend largely on the development of leadership. In specific reference to education, Kirk saw the current pressure to lower academic standards as an instance of the confusion of quantity with quality.

As a remedy, Kirk proposed that ethical sensibility be cultivated by the study and imitation of the lives of great individuals and by examples of elevated human character depicted in the writings of such authors as Plutarch, Dante, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Burke, and Ruskin, so that the student could acquire a sense of moral and intellectual excellence. The values attained would in turn be based upon the hierarchical order which Kirk believed to prevail throughout the universe.\(^{57}\) In addition, Kirk stressed a liberal education, with high standards of selective excellence applied to all who sought to undertake such a program. To Kirk, the essential basis for the existence of schools was to attain and disseminate the truth -- not to mollify the community. Anything which might interfere with this goal was to be condemned.\(^{58}\)

The basic aim of the dissemination of truth, as Kirk conceived it, can best be given in Kirk's own words.

By the spirit of a gentleman, Burke and Newman did not mean simply the deportment of superior rank. They meant, rather, that elevation of mind and temper, that generosity and courage of mind, which are the property of every person whose intelligence and character have been humanely disciplined. They meant that liberal education

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\(^{57}\)Ibid., pp. 59-61.

and that habit of acting upon principles which rise superior to immediate advantage and private interest, which distinguish the free man from the servile man.... Lacking this, Burke says, all the schooling in the world is of no avail.59

To Kirk, a humane education therefore had primarily a moral significance. In fact, he conceived of humanitas as a whole in terms of ethical discipline. The virtues which he identified are primarily aristocratic virtues -- those that have been traditionally associated with the nobility.

In considering educational questions, Kirk has devoted considerable attention to the meaning of academic freedom. He adopted W. T. Couch's definition of academic freedom as the protection of teachers from any hazards that would prevent teachers from fulfilling their obligation to pursue the truth.60 The pursuit of truth involved the freedom of both teachers and students to express their views but excluded attempts to indoctrinate students. Kirk did not define indoctrination, but presumably he meant the systematic attempt to convert students to a particular ideology regardless of the truth of particular statements made in pursuing that objective. It would have been of considerable aid in understanding how he differentiated between freedom of expression and indoctrination had he explained his meaning of "indoctrination."

To Kirk, academic freedom pertained both to the finding and to the limited dissemination of the truth. Kirk's adherence to freedom was sharply mitigated by his lack of confidence in the old liberal view that


truth would eventually prevail in competition with falsehood on the open market. He believed that this view had been based on the "foolish" conviction of the goodness and the rationality of men. In fact, Kirk believed that the ordinary citizen was often unable to distinguish between what was beneficial and what was harmful. Kirk's adherence to freedom was therefore limited and qualified. For example, he felt that communists should be tolerated for the time being because they did not constitute a major threat, and because more harm would be done by censorship than by permitting them to freely express their views. He added, however, that changing circumstances could alter his stand on the matter. He did advocate the censorship of pornography because he believed that pornographic literature undermined the tastes and morals of the community. In subscribing to these views, Kirk was being quite consistent with his general conservative position on human nature. Since he favored curbing freedom in general, it may be very likely that his view of academic freedom was similarly limited.

It is important that we consider the general significance of his selection and treatment of the problems confronting conservatives. First, his choices of problems are interesting. The questions he asked were all of a long-term character -- not ephemeral problems such as those which


63 Ibid., pp. 127-128.
usually interest journalists. Furthermore, the problems chosen were not basically of a financial or economic character but were rather questions which pertained to the human needs for emotional security, responsible activity, and acceptance of a set of cogent values. To Kirk, man was a creature driven primarily by the needs of the spirit -- not by economic needs nor by biological urges. In agreement with Sigmund Freud, Kirk depicted man as weak, but unlike Freud, Kirk has viewed human problems in a spiritual rather than a physical context. Furthermore, Kirk considered human nature to be an amalgam of good and evil, although he emphasized aspects of human nature which some people would regard as signs of evil but which he preferred to view as signs of weakness. To Freud, man was unequivocally evil in the sense that he conceived of man as guided primarily by selfish emotional needs. In Kirk's opinion, humans were governed more by their appetites than by their reason but he exhibited more confidence in their improvability than had Freud. Through guidance and the cultivation of a sense of emotional security, Kirk believed that men might obtain the strengths so conspicuously lacking in their nature.64

Of the ten problems specified by Kirk, every one with the exceptions of social justice, order, and tradition was directly based upon and was an expression of the need for moral and religious values to provide the needed guidance. Indirectly, even the three problems excepted were linked to this basic need. Two of these problems, social justice and order, were based upon the need for a clearly defined hierarchy in which each individual would find his proper place. Can it be

64Kirk, A Program for Conservatives, p. 191.
denied that a just hierarchy must be based on a system of ordered values? Furthermore, the other problem excepted, tradition, pertained to what was in essence a means for the inculcation of values.

The causes named by Kirk for the problems confronting mankind can be reduced to four: the rise of equalitarianism, the decline of belief in moral and religious values, the extension of the power of the state, and industrialization. From a broader perspective, equalitarianism could be considered a manifestation of an implicit denial of the reality of objective values, at least with regard to the qualities of human beings. If such values exist, humans must differ in their approximation to those values; for the existence of values implies the existence of disvalues. Otherwise, we could not be aware that these values exist. If all men are equal, this implies that valuational judgments pertaining to them cannot be valid, beyond our own purely subjective preferences. This viewpoint, if valid, would also weaken the case for the existence of objective values in general. The power of the state might well be viewed as a consequence of the decline of the integrity of statesmen; the deleterious effects of industrialization might well be considered one of the contributing causes of the decline of values, with the stress on sensations, characteristic of industrialized countries, blurring the efficacy of values.

Kirk's suggested remedies can likewise be reduced to a few essential ones -- the revival of faith in religious and moral values, the elevation of the standards of human achievement, and a greater reliance upon individual initiative in contrast to the present emphasis upon the state. The emphasis upon the individual would be expressed not only in greater personal responsibility but also in the encouragement of local groups and
private institutions. On the whole, he was not very specific as to how to implement these remedies. Perhaps this vagueness was intentional, but at the very least a systematic discussion of the precise values which he had in mind would have been helpful. Nevertheless, Kirk's viewpoint is clear in its general purport; an emphasis upon the principle of objectively ordered moral and intellectual values, apprehended primarily through traditional usage.

Kirk's views on social problems were certainly consistent with his general metaphysical position. Though Kirk's metaphysical views were given only in fragments, it is clear that he believed in the existence of an orderly universe based upon divine foundations. He thereby implicitly assumed the existence of a dichotomy between nature and convention, with the former conceived of as universal order and the latter conceived of in terms of violation of that natural order.\(^{65}\)

To Kirk, the major purpose of education was, as we have seen, ethical in character. This purpose was to be achieved through the inculcation of understanding of the moral and intellectual order of the universe as set forth primarily in the great literary classics of the past. Such an education would presumably be based upon the coherence theory of truth since Kirk believed in the existence of an ordered interrelated universe. The student would presumably be expected to show the logical coherence and consistency of facts in relationship to one another; for order implies coherence and consistency. With regard to the organization of the curriculum, it would seem to follow that this would be based upon a prescriptive rather than an elective ordering of choices; for Kirk believed in the existence of objective values, over

\(^{65}\)Ibid., pp. 41-42, 59; Kirk, Academic Freedom, p. 4.
and beyond the personal preferences of the students involved. By application of these values, the curriculum would be determined.  

Before stipulating the specific subjects to be comprised in the curriculum, we should give some attention to the illative sense, a concept which Kirk borrowed from the writings of John Henry Cardinal Newman. The illative sense was described as the product of the interaction of intuition, instinct, imagination, and experience as sifted by critical reasoning. This sense, when properly exercised, contributed insights into first principles and into the ultimate foundations of authority. Kirk valued the illative sense even more highly than reason; for through its use, one could attain insight, a means of apprehension which he believed to exceed in depth the products of reason alone. This view obviously implied a stress upon those subjects through which insight could be obtained such as the arts, literature, and the drama. History could likewise provide the student with insightful experiences, especially when events are viewed in relationship to the general principles determining human conduct and their consequences. With regard to methods, imitation was of importance; for many insights cannot be adequately communicated through formal instruction.  

Kirk recommended that on the primary and secondary levels of education, students should concentrate on learning the techniques by which knowledge is acquired and by which the mind is prepared to reason

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66 The content of this paragraph was based upon direct inferences from Kirk's writing rather than explicit formulations by Kirk himself.

logically. Although some attention would be given to content subjects, the emphasis would be on the acquisition of skills. When students reach the university level, he felt that they should concentrate upon the study of the liberal arts; for the education of the whole man was considered to be of greater importance than the training of the specialist. Overall, Kirk was intensely interested in the imposition of higher standards of academic performance on all levels of academic instruction; for he believed that educators have tended to emphasize mediocrity and inferiority at the expense of superiority.68

Typical of the reactions of the critics of Kirk's views were those found in the comments of Gordon K. Lewis of Brandeis University and C. Wright Mills of Columbia University. Both writers questioned the practicality of Kirk's suggestions. Lewis maintained that the difficulties inherent in attempting to bring a viable conservatism into existence in a non-traditional society like that of the United States would be virtually insurmountable. Besides, to Lewis, arguments based upon tradition seemed to be mere disguises for privilege.69 Mills believed that conservatism was irrelevant to American problems; for the United States had no aristocracy. He doubted whether one could be created.70 He maintained


that the American elite lacked the cultivation and the moral elevation of a true aristocracy. According to Mills, the dominant value of the American elite was predatory success.  

Both Lewis and Mills repudiated conservatism on practical grounds, although Lewis also had strong doubts concerning conservative principles. As we have noted, to Lewis, conservatism was an apology for privilege whereas Mills saw several points of tension between the conservatives and the actual elite of the United States. It is evident that for Kirk to procure a sympathetic response from the American intelligentsia, he would at the very least have to specify in detail just how conservative ideals would be put into operation in a largely non-traditional society. With the exceptions of a few vague indications, he has not done this. He might well protest that he was concerned more with theory than with practice and that therefore these objections are irrelevant. This argument does not, however, change the fact that he is much more likely to see his ideals effectuated if he would deign to enter the arena of prudence and practice.

Eliot and Kirk: A Comparison

Both Eliot and Kirk have reacted to the same fundamental historical trends: the decline in religious faith and in moral standards combined with the existence of strong pressures to lower academic and cultural standards. In seeking to counter these trends, both Eliot and Kirk implicitly accepted a conception of personality development based upon the importance of the interaction of the individual with society. Neither writer accepted the classical liberal faith in the autonomy of

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71 Ibid.
the individual. The individual must look to society as the source of his standards of behavior as well as the chief course of whatever emotional satisfactions that the individual would ever attain.

In seeking to counter what they viewed as the deleterious trends characteristic of their times, Eliot and Kirk utilized somewhat different approaches. Eliot stressed the basic anthropological concept, culture, while Kirk emphasized the basic sociological concept, society. Eliot wanted to know what conditions would be conducive to cultural continuity and creativity. He also wanted to uncover the aims and some of the characteristics of a Christian culture which he conceived as a society guided by Christian ideals. Kirk was intent upon dealing with the major ills which plague contemporary society. He defined most of these ills in terms of the alienation of the individual from society. Eliot and Kirk were both, however, in agreement in stressing the importance of human collectivities rather than the isolated individual.

Both Eliot and Kirk espoused traditionalism. In both cases, the traditions emphasized were primarily related to the culture and the social institutions of the group. Eliot justified tradition primarily in terms of cultural creativity; Kirk, in terms of wisdom and the inculcation of values. Both writers believed in the importance of cultural continuity as a function of education. Both writers also believed in the importance of education as an instrument for the inculcation of moral values. They emphasized the special value of humanistic studies in the inculcation of both cultural and moral values.

Both Eliot and Kirk adhered to humanism, but they expressed their adherence in somewhat different ways. Eliot stressed the humanistic
ideal of balance and applied it chiefly to cultural concerns. He also stressed literary culture which stress was quite consistent with his aesthetic emphasis. Kirk also stressed the importance of literature, but in addition accorded an important place to intuitive insight as a function of literary studies, as evidenced by his vigorous advocacy of the existence and importance of Newman's illative sense. As a poet, Eliot undoubtedly recognized the importance of insight but scarcely alluded to it in his writings on cultural and social issues.

Both writers were concerned about the trend of educators to concentrate on the education of students of mediocre ability. Eliot and Kirk opposed this trend because of their belief in the limited potentialities of these students. Neither writer favored an easing of academic standards to bring higher education within the range of more students. They were both implicitly interested primarily in achievements rather than in the gratification of desires. Anything that might tend to reduce educational achievements would be liable to arouse their disapproval.

The conservative school counselor, imbued with the ideals of Eliot and Kirk, would encourage students to acquire a set of moral and religious values so that they could achieve a sense of emotional security and so that they might be better able to solve their own personal problems. He would also give special attention to the problem of providing adequate social integration for his charges. Finally, he would seek to guide the students along varied educational and vocational paths in accordance with their interests and abilities.

We will next turn to another branch of neo-conservatism, the
positive humanists. A contrast between them and their more tradition­
alistic colleagues should be of some interest.
CHAPTER IV

POSITIVE HUMANISM

Among influential neo-conservative thinkers, several have espoused humanistic doctrines without a corresponding emphasis upon traditionalism. In general, these writers have favored tradition and have encouraged it whenever and wherever they believed that people could still be significantly influenced by it. They have, however, preferred to rely on other means of improving society; apparently on the assumption that Western civilization has proceeded too far in the direction of the repudiation of tradition to make any large-scale reversal of the trend possible.

The positive humanists have been concerned with the problem of finding a satisfactory means of transmitting the values generally associated with tradition which would possess the cogency that was once associated with the various cultural traditions of the world. This writer has borrowed the term, positive, from the writings of Irving Babbitt who utilized it to designate the reliance upon critical reasoning which has generally characterized the representatives of this school of thought. The most influential neo-conservative writers on education who have utilized the positive humanist approach have been Irving Babbitt and G. H. Bantock. In fact, there can be little doubt that Babbitt has been one of the most influential neo-conservative writers on social and cultural issues in general.

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The Views of Irving Babbitt

Irving Babbitt has occupied an enigmatic place in American thought. On the one hand, he has urged what has amounted to a return to the traditional American puritan ethic; on the other hand, he has vigorously opposed those American traits which have commonly been considered to be outcomes of the acceptance of the puritan outlook, i.e., the emphasis upon commercial success and business values. In his attitudes toward religion, Babbitt also exhibited conflicting tendencies. He was sympathetic with religious goals but skeptical of the knowability of absolutes. To examine these various positions, we will consider both Babbitt's life and viewpoint. In a sense, Babbitt was both a traditionalist and a revolutionary -- albeit an aristocratic right-wing revolutionary. What he rebelled against were certain characteristics of American culture. Babbitt was anything but a conformist although the biographical material can give us only a few hints as to the origins of that non-conformity.

Babbitt was born in the summer of 1865 in the middle-western city of Dayton, Ohio, the son of Dr. Edwin Dwight Babbitt and Augusta Darling Babbitt. At the time of his son's birth, Dr. Babbitt was a partner in a business school. The elder Babbitt associated with friends of decidedly radical views. Irving later came to detest these friends of his father. One cannot help wondering whether Babbitt's subsequent hostility toward vocational education and commercialism might not have had its roots within his family. Mrs. Babbitt died when Irving was eleven years of age. His father subsequently remarried and moved to
Cincinnati where Irving and a younger sister were raised.  

At the age of twenty, Irving entered Harvard University where, with the exception of one year at the University of Paris, he spent his entire university student career. At the University of Paris, he studied Sanskrit and Pali with the distinguished Indic scholar, Sylvain Levi. Pali was the language in which the early Buddhist sacred writings were written. In his general viewpoint, Babbitt was to be strongly influenced by Buddhist thought, especially the emphasis upon the Middle Path between asceticism and indulgence and by the Buddhist espousal of the doctrine of non-attachment to material goods.

After teaching in several colleges, Babbitt settled down to a permanent position at Harvard University. He eventually became a professor of French and comparative literature and held that position until his death in 1933. Babbitt's most famous works include Literature and the American College (1908) which examines problems of American education; Rousseau and Romanticism (1919) which is essentially a work of literary criticism, and Democracy and Leadership (1924) which is a work on political theory. The same basic themes can be found in all his major works. A group of distinguished associates and disciples including Paul Elmer More, Norman Foerster, Stuart P. Sherman, and W. C. Brownell have diligently propagated the views that Babbitt espoused. These people, known collectively as the neo-humanists, exercised an important influence

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2 See the account given by Dora Babbitt in Frederick manchester and Odeil Shepherd, eds. Irving Babbitt: Man and Teacher (New York: Putnam's, 1941), pp. ix and x. The entire book is a gold mine of information on Irving Babbitt.

3 Perhaps the most influential work produced by members of this group was Paul Elmer More's Aristocracy and Justice (1915).
upon American thought during the first half of the twentieth century.

With regard to the intellectual influences which affected Babbitt, we can obtain an intimation of what these were by recalling that the four personages whom Babbitt named as espousing the wisdom of the ages were Aristotle, Confucius, Buddha, and Christ. Of these great sages, it is highly probable that Aristotle exercised the greatest influence upon Babbitt since Aristotelian ideas closely resembled his own views. Babbitt adopted such Aristotelian views as the conception of morality as the disciplining of the passions and appetites by reason as well as Aristotle's conceptions of the golden mean and of contemplation. In fact, these Aristotelian views were central to Babbitt's entire philosophical approach.

Historically, Babbitt's philosophy represented a reaction against certain widespread American characteristics which were important during the early twentieth century and in some respects are even more significant today. He believed that the American people suffered from a lack of standards in some instances and, in other instances, from the confusion and inversion of standards. Babbitt attributed this situation to the American repudiation of tradition. Babbitt viewed tradition as valuable since it was a means of transmitting certain vital intellectual and moral values.

The American aversion to traditionalism led to certain moral consequences which Babbitt thought to be highly undesirable. These

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5 Ibid., pp. 240-241.
consequences included the general spread of luxury, self-indulgence, and the increasing selfishness and avarice of special interest groups. He especially denounced the American adulation of the business community. This adulation was much more widespread before than after the Great Depression but is obviously still evident. To Babbitt, commercial avarice and cupidity undermined both intellectual and moral values.\(^6\) The negative attitude of Babbitt and many other conservative thinkers might well surprise most Americans, many of whom have regarded conservatives as being especially favorable to commercial values but, as we have seen earlier, this widespread view was the result of confusing classical liberalism with conservatism.

Babbitt believed that the prevailing emphasis on commercial success had deleteriously affected American colleges. The tendency toward an aristocracy of money must, he felt, be counteracted by the development of an elite of wisdom and character. Yet college administrators seemed to be more interested in developing a leadership dedicated only to service and power.\(^7\) He was also alarmed about the lack of selectivity of students in American colleges in comparison to their European counterparts.\(^8\) He believed that this could only detract from developing what he felt the democracies needed most of all -- a superior quality of leadership.

\(^6\)Ibid., pp. 19, 272.
\(^8\)Ibid., pp. 53, 71.
The America in which Babbitt lived was already beginning to repudiate
the puritanical traditions of its past in favor of an increasing permis-
siveness. He felt that this nation was in dire need of standards or
criteria of action if its ethical and intellectual integrity was to be
salvaged. Since traditions no longer had the force that they once
commanded, he believed that standards must be arrived at critically and on
the basis of human experience. His concern to establish such standards
was the fundamental motivation for his writing. His writings were ad-
dressed primarily to those who have broken with traditional forms but felt
themselves still very much in need of standards. Babbitt believed that
the Classical and the Christian traditions were our only visible sources
of standards; but in view of the predominant skepticism of the twentieth
century, he reluctantly felt that these standards must be arrived at
critically to be convincing today.

Babbitt considered the infinite to be beyond the grasp of man.
The realms of being and becoming are so inextricably mixed that humans
could not isolate one from the other. However, he implicitly recog-
nized the existence of the Absolute even though he denied that we could
know its nature. His metaphysics, skeptical as it was, necessitated an

9Babbitt, Democracy and Leadership, p. 34.
10Irving Babbitt, Criticism in America: Its Function and Status
11Irving Babbitt, On Being Creative (Boston: Houghton Mifflin
emphasis upon psychological rather than ontological factors, if his quest for standards was to be fulfilled.

The most important distinction that we should consider in arriving at a clear understanding of Babbitt's philosophy is that between the natural self of man, which he defined in terms of impulse, and the human self, which consists of those factors which act to control impulsiveness. These factors were described in terms of separate mental faculties which were clearly indicative of Babbitt's acceptance, in at least a muted form, of faculty psychology. Babbitt believed that to arrive at a condition of effective self-control, the individual should be directed by the "higher imagination" which is the faculty whereby one seizes likenesses and forms conceptions. This faculty is in contrast to the "lower imagination" which is synonymous with sense perception. By means of the higher imagination, the individual can view his experiences against a backdrop of ethical values. These impressions are then tested critically through the utilization of analytical reason. The combination of the higher imagination and reason was collectively termed "insight" -- a form of cognition which Babbitt rated as superior to unaided reason just as the latter was rated superior to the automatic operations of the instinctive faculty. By the


13 For the nature of the higher imagination see Babbitt, Democracy and Leadership, p. 10; on the nature of insight see Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, p. 47.
employment of insight, values are discriminated through reference to those constants of human history and experience which have proven themselves by their consequences.\textsuperscript{14} The "higher will" then imposes limits on one's desires so that the insights attained can be acted upon. In contrast to the higher will, the lower will acts in accordance with desires and impulses.\textsuperscript{15} The violation of these insights must, Babbitt maintained, eventually bring on retribution.

A basic assumption underlying his voluntaristic emphasis was that man possesses freedom of will. Otherwise, Babbitt's strictures concerning the importance of self-control would be meaningless. An important implication of his stress on personal insight into experience as the criterion for evaluation was an emphasis upon the study of history and literature, with special attention to the normative aspects of those subjects. According to this view, history is the record of the collective experience of the human species and literature consists of the imaginative reconstruction of that experience. Finally, Babbitt's faculty psychology entails a stress upon the training and discipline of one's faculties. Before we can verify these implications, we should inquire into the nature of the values which Babbitt believed that experience discloses.

Babbitt believed that the virtues of moderation, decency, and common sense worked best.\textsuperscript{16} Fundamentally, these virtues were all characterized by Babbitt as manifestations of what he regarded as the supreme humanistic

\textsuperscript{14}Babbitt, \textbf{On Being Creative}, p. xxxviii.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, p. xix.

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, p. xxx.
virtue, decorum -- the disciplining of impulses to the proportions discerned by the ethical imagination. These proportions would be obtained in turn by reflection upon past human experiences.

In political affairs, the supreme virtue was considered to be justice which Babbitt defined in terms of rendering to each individual what was due him in accordance with the amount and the quality of his endeavor. This is essentially a proportionate or relational concept of justice which is based on the assumption that men contribute unequally to the welfare of society. In addition, an implied assumption seems to be present that equality is undesirable or unattainable. To Babbitt, it seemed obvious that justice could not be attained until people learn to act in accordance with standards for determining how things should be apportioned. Humility was therefore considered to be the root of justice and all other virtues; for humility, as Babbitt employed the term, consisted of the willingness to look up to and to imitate standards. In this regard, he had great respect for religious creeds and religious institutions. To Babbitt, the chief virtue of the churches was the peace that they instilled in their congregations through teaching the submission to a higher will. Thus, Babbitt, an ardent skeptic, approached the Christian conception of Grace. As to the end of moral behavior, Babbitt posited no

17Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, p. 162.
18Babbitt, Democracy and Leadership, pp. 196-197.
19Ibid., pp. 163, 257-258.
supernaturalistic goal since this would be inconsistent with his epistemological skepticism. He posited instead the limited goal of temporal happiness. Unfortunately, he did not define happiness. Since he held that happiness could only be obtained by the disciplining of the impulses, we can assume that he referred to the Aristotelian conception of happiness: a sense of satisfaction obtained by doing one's work well. As is well-known, Aristotle meant by doing one's work well activity of the soul in accordance with moral and intellectual virtue which in the case of man pertained to the activity of reason. Hence, happiness for human beings would consist ultimately of living in accordance with reason. To live in this way, it is essential that feelings and impulses be kept under control.

In Babbitt's opinion, primitivism, the arch-enemy of humanism, was especially exemplified by the works of Jean Jacques Rousseau. Babbitt equated primitivism with spontaneity which he considered to be the antithesis of discipline. Babbitt's attitude toward spontaneity is exemplified by his classification of the forms of knowledge which were distinguished in terms of the psychological faculties involved. Babbitt rated instinct, which pertained to impulse and feeling, below reason which was deemed to be primarily an analytical faculty. Both instinct and reason were rated below insight which pertained to the immediate apprehension of reality. This apprehension was attributed to the imagination which ideally worked in collaboration with reason, the latter faculty being

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20 Whether Rousseau actually was a primitivist has of course been disputed.

21 Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, p. 44.
employed to scrutinize the apprehensions obtained. Since Babbitt con­
sidered the imagination to be the faculty which governs mankind, he
believed it to be vitally important that the imagination agree with
reason rather than with the expansive desires. He believed that the
latter situation caused most of the evil existing in the world. In
spite of his disclaimers, it can be argued that Babbitt was really a
disguised rationalist. For reason should, according to Babbitt, act as
the final judge regarding the truth of our ethical perceptions. To
Babbitt, instinct was associated with primitivism, and reason without
imagination was linked to a pedantic rationalism. For educational
theorists, one of the most important implications of Babbitt's general
position was his anxiety to avoid confusing the planes of being. He
was especially concerned about the primitivists' confusion of instinct
with insight which had, Babbitt thought, resulted in their most grievous
errors, such as the equation of beauty with lust and of awe with wonder.
As we shall see later, Babbitt was vitally concerned with developing the
powers of discrimination of college students so that they could avoid this
confusion.

For Babbitt, the primitivistic dichotomy between the individuals'
natural goodness and the repressiveness of society was erroneous. Like
Aristotle, Babbitt believed that the individual reaches his perfection in
society. Because of his skepticism concerning the natural goodness and
wisdom of the individual, he condemned the child-centered curriculum so
eagerly propounded by the educational naturalists and their allies. He

22Ibid., p. 145; Babbitt, Democracy and Leadership, p. 10.
maintained that instead of being guided by youthful whims, the educational process should be directed toward the super-personal goals of wisdom and character—wisdom, in the sense of standards of moral and intellectual value; character as expressed in the will to act in accordance with those standards. In common with the Buddhists, Babbitt believed that human nature was not so much depraved as lazy. Give the individual the power to determine the nature of the curriculum, and then see how many elect the least demanding courses. In his opinion, no satisfactory substitute existed for the imposition of the disciplinary activity of the higher will upon the recalcitrant desires of youth.

Babbitt was most concerned with collegiate instruction. It was at the level that, he felt, the essential effort should be undertaken to develop the discriminatory powers of the individual student. In contrast, the function of the lower schools was to transmit knowledge and the graduate school was to be devoted to productive scholarship. Hence, Babbitt would certainly have been hostile toward the recurring suggestion that the American college be abolished by integrating the first two years with the high school and the last two years with the graduate school. To Babbitt, the college had a unique function which transcended in importance the services of both the secondary school and the university. In such a perspective, the abolition of the college would obviously be a major tragedy.

To Babbitt, the college had to be selective in its admissions

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23Babbitt, Literature and the American College, p. 46.
24Ibid., pp. 35-36. 25Ibid., p. 69.
policies if it were to perform properly its function. The expertise of relating ideas well is rare, and wastefulness would be the consequence of attempting to educate individuals of insufficient potential. Implicit in this position is the assumption that the cultivation of leadership is of greater importance than the uplift of the masses. Where the interests of the two conflict, those of the individuals who exhibit the greatest potentiality must be held paramount. To Babbitt, the development of superior leadership was of crucial importance; for upon this process depended the future welfare of society. When considering the aims of the college, Babbitt was quite explicit:

Even though the whole world seem (sic) bent on living the quantitative life, the college should remember that its business is to make of the graduates men of quality in the real and not the conventional meaning of the term. In this way it will do its share toward creating that aristocracy of character and intelligence that is needed in a community like ours to take the place of an aristocracy of birth, and to counteract the tendency toward an aristocracy of money. A great deal is said nowadays about the democratic spirit that should pervade our colleges. This is true if it means that the college should be in profound sympathy with what is best in democracy. It is false if it means, as it often does, that the college should level down and suit itself to the point of view of the average individual.... But from the standpoint of the college one thoroughly cultivated person should be more to the purpose than a hundred persons who are only partly cultivated.26

Regarding his views on the college curriculum, it is important to emphasize that Babbitt rejected the elective system that was so enthusiastically championed by Charles Eliot, President of Harvard University where Babbitt taught. To Babbitt, the notion that all subjects are of

26Ibid., p. 71.
equal value was anathema. Furthermore, unlike his superior at Harvard, Babbitt had little confidence in the ability of late adolescents to make judicious choices. Instead, as we have previously noted, he felt that the native human indolence of the teen-ager would assert itself in the selection of courses to the detriment of academic standards.\(^27\) In this respect, Babbitt consistently applied his general views on human nature to an important educational issue. Yet, on this as on so many other issues, Babbitt was exceedingly vague. He neglected to specify in detail the studies that he would require. We can, however, obtain a few indications by examining his arguments for the teaching of the Greek and Roman classics.

Perhaps the most important justification given by Babbitt for the study of the classics was that ancient Greco-Roman literature represented the most perfect fusion of reason with imagination and therefore appealed to what is the most universal and eternal in human nature.\(^28\) What he meant by this remark can be grasped by reference to his general philosophical position. Babbitt desired the fusion of reason with imagination for the purpose of discerning the ethical universals and their influence upon human nature. As was previously observed, this viewpoint leads implicitly to a stress upon the study of history and literature with special emphasis upon the general normative principles inferred therefrom. To Babbitt, the primary criterion for the selection of courses of study was their value in bringing to students a knowledge of those constants of human experience which have proven to be of the greatest worth as guideposts of human conduct. Therefore, the teacher imbued with the ideals of Babbitt would stress the importance of general ideas and would treat historical events

\(^{27}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 35-36, 47.} \quad ^{28}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 120-121.}\)
and great works of literature in relationship to normative principles.

It might occasion some surprise to find that another justification given by Babbitt for the study of classical literature was that it exhibited greater objectivity than modern writings; for Babbitt's prescriptions appear to sanction subjectivity. Yet, when Babbitt's value theory is fully comprehended, this justification no longer seems to be inconsistent with other statements made by Babbitt for he felt that ethical standards should be arrived at by a dispassionate and critical consideration of human experience. The important consideration pertaining to academic objectivity was the means whereby the teacher reached his conclusions, not whether a partisan view was presented to his class, for Babbitt implicitly sanctioned the latter.

To Babbitt, modern literature was marred by the indulgence of its practitioners in "sentimental and romantic revery rather than in a resolute and manly grappling with the plain facts of existence." In contrast, classical literature was valued for its ethical insights, supposedly arrived at by the cooperation of the higher reason with the imagination. What Babbitt meant by the "higher reason" was the analytical faculty which acted upon the imagination. It is quite evident that to Babbitt the axiological aspects of education were paramount.

Of nearly equal importance among Babbitt's motivations for emphasizing classical literature was the disciplinary value derived from mastering the precise meanings of the words of the ancients. This process promotes the

29 Ibid., p. 116.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
habit of serious intellectual effort while the drill in style obtained from translating classical writings was felt to be a superior means of mastering English. This stress upon discipline and drill is congruent with Babbitt's basic psychology which was based upon the assumption of the existence of distinct faculties which had implicitly to be trained to function well. Therefore, Babbitt emphasized the value of the classics for the skills which they engendered as well as for the ethical insights which they conveyed.

Finally, by viewing contemporary events in the perspective of the distant past, the individual could become more sensitive to the dangers of the present. In particular, the fatuous optimism which still pervaded America during most of the duration of Babbitt's life might thereby be corrected. By the stress upon the value of the study of the classics in viewing the present, Babbitt probably had in mind that phase of Roman history when the Roman republic was being transformed into the tyranny of the Caesars. It is common knowledge that conservative writers have been concerned about a possible reoccurrence of this trend through such tendencies as the mounting disrespect for law and the spread of socialism. Liberals and radicals have on the whole been much more sanguine about the future. The differences which exist on this issue stem from basically different assumptions concerning the flexibility of human nature.

Babbitt characterized his general position by contrasting it with the two chief antithetical viewpoints: those of the "philologists" and

32 Ibid., pp. 108, 163.
33 Ibid., p. 114.
of the "dilettantes." The former delight in the minute accumulation of facts with little or no concern for their significance. The latter stress the thrill obtained through cultivating aesthetic sensations and sanction a kind of emotional indolence. Babbitt believed that the philologists constituted the most serious menace because they dominated the departments of history and literature in American colleges. In contrast to both these groups, he mentioned the "humanists" whom he characterized as the advocates of disciplining students in the intelligent utilization of ideas -- especially, of the relationships between literary concepts and normative values. As an example, he esteemed the French doctorate as the embodiment of humanistic ideals in contrast to the American doctorate which, according to Babbitt, fundamentally embodied philological values. Only by the adoption of standards on a par with the French doctorate or the Oxford first-class honors degree could American higher education have a constructive impact upon contemporary problems.

Babbitt was fundamentally a very repetitious writer, dealing with the same themes in book after book with minor differences in expansiveness and in sequence. His writing is studded with brilliant insights but is highly unsystematic in character. In particular, he had the annoying habit of making assertions without expanding upon them, either by careful formulation of definitions or by sustained step by step argumentation.

34 Ibid., pp. 85, 88-89.
35 Ibid., p. 90.
These practices have resulted in a widespread misunderstanding of his basic thesis. This misunderstanding has been most unfortunate; for he had focused on one of the most important problems confronting American education today -- the need to develop and inculcate standards of moral and intellectual evaluation. He has also realized that if standards are to be living realities, there must be discipline and selectivity in accordance with these standards. Whether his prescriptions are adequate is another question; but his ability to focus on the central problem and to free himself from the effects of the indoctrination which Americans generally undergo from their early youth make him, in the opinion of this writer, a highly significant figure even though his writings may not be models of systematic scholarship.

In his general educational position, Irving Babbitt was more than anything else a humanist. For him the fundamental goal of education was to develop among students the ability to discriminate among moral and intellectual values in terms of their varying degrees of excellence and to thereby achieve a sense of harmony and proportion. His concern was even more with the ethical than with the intellectual although his standards for judging the ethical were both aesthetic and rational. His stress upon harmony and proportion was fundamentally aesthetic while the role that he assigned to reason as the final arbitrator of the insights established by the ethical imagination mark Babbitt as a rationalist, even though he considered himself to be primarily a voluntarist.

Babbitt's view of man as primarily guided by the imagination is very significant; for it indicates that he believed that human knowledge originates, either primarily or exclusively, from sense perception. As
earlier noted, he defined imagination as sense perception (the lower imagination) or as the faculty which stores and relates sense perceptions (the higher imagination). This is an educationally significant position; for it implies that the classroom teacher should begin instruction with concrete materials, even when he is dealing with abstract concepts. Babbitt's emphasis upon literature in the teaching of normative concepts is easily explainable from this viewpoint as providing the needed concrete exemplifications to form a basis for value judgments. In contrast, the teacher who believes that normative judgments are based primarily upon innate ideas, would be more likely to convey the nature of normative judgments in the form of abstract principles. One would thus be more likely to teach normative judgments directly rather than through literature.

In his emphasis upon literature and the imagination as well as in his stress upon harmony and proportion, Babbitt was most definitely a humanist. He was also humanistic in his emphasis upon the development of the individual rather than the group. The major problem here is how to reconcile this position with the fact that like most other conservatives Babbitt considered the individual to be fundamentally a social creature and not an autonomous entity. Although, as far as this writer is aware, Babbitt has not dealt with this problem, it can be resolved easily on the basis of Babbitt's general philosophical position and that of Aristotle, the fundamental source upon whom Babbitt apparently relied in the formulation of his viewpoint. Man is a social animal in that he requires society in order to reach his perfection. However, the fundamental problems which interfere with the happiness of the individual are primarily individual
rather than social in character. The individual must first accept a standard of values and then abide by them before he can contribute meaningfully to the solution of social problems. In essence, Babbitt's criterion of individual excellence pertained to the individuals' willingness to view things in ethical perspective and to act on the basis of the insights obtained. To do this intelligently, the individual needed to acquire the competency of discriminating between values with facility and dexterity. After he accomplished this task, he could then worry about his own adjustment to society and about the improvement of society.

Although Babbitt viewed tradition favorably, he felt, as we have seen, that Americans had moved too far from their traditional roots to resort to tradition on any but the most limited basis. Instead, he preferred to rely upon the development of an elite characterized by the understanding and application of standards of critical judgment. He believed that such an elite could provide the reliable value standards that had once been provided through tradition.

The general reaction to the ideas of Babbitt and his colleagues mirrored the prevalent climate of opinion among the intellectuals of the period between the two world wars. Although Babbitt had been writing for several decades previously, his work was not subjected to widespread written criticism until about 1930. Some critics, such as Allan Tate and T.S. Eliot were generally sympathetic to his views but they felt that the values which Babbitt espoused required a religious orientation to be convincing. They were thus questioning the cogency of combining Babbitt's
ethical humanism with his well-known religious skepticism. Other critics, such as Edmund Wilson and Malcolm Cowley, reacted against Babbitt's constant emphasis upon the will to refrain from and to control the passions. Both Wilson and Cowley found this viewpoint to be lacking in warmth and compassion. Cowley, in particular, typified those writers who rejected what they felt to be the aristocratic snobbery and priggish moralism of Babbitt and his allies.

The most frequent reaction of Babbitt's critics was to reject his philosophy on the ground of Babbitt's hostility toward scientific naturalism. As is well-known, Babbitt had insisted on a sharp separation between humans and the lower animals on the ground that humans possessed the ability to control their impulses. Because of this position, Babbitt maintained that the methods of the physical and the biological sciences were not fully applicable to human beings. Such famous writers as Lewis Mumford, Henry Hazlitt, and C. Hartley Grattan were outspokenly hostile toward Babbitt's separation of humanity from the other aspects of nature. Lewis Mumford felt that Babbitt's emphasis upon "the will to refrain" was really an attempt to protect people from vigilence and responsibility by dodging the risks involved in expressing one's emotions.


38 Ibid., p. 346.
that the ability to control one's impulses was something peculiarly human. He also denied that humans could separate themselves absolutely from other creatures in their ordinary habits of life. Hazlitt maintained that a man cannot be even a humanist unless he has recently done something so bestial as eating a meal.\(^39\) Grattan denied the cogency of Babbitt's separation of humans from other forms of animal life on the ground that the mind, presumably the basis of human acts, was a biological organ.\(^40\) Grattan had evidently confused the mind with the brain. The brain is certainly a biological organ but the mind, insofar as it differs from the brain, is obviously not a biological organ. To make his argument convincing, Grattan would have to prove that the mind and the brain are synonymous. Beyond making an assertion of their equivalency, Grattan has not even attempted to prove this point. In any case, it is evident that naturalism dominated the thinking of most of Babbitt's critics. It is also evident that few of them presented reasoned arguments against Babbitt's views. Reactions, such as those of Wilson and Cowley, seem to this writer to be at least as emotional as intellectual. To say that Babbitt was cold or snobbish really amounts to mere name-calling unless the namers specify precisely what they mean, give evidence to substantiate their charges, and show why such traits are undesirable.

Roman Catholic writers and scholars were one group that came to Babbitt's defense. The ideas of Babbitt that had antagonized so many intellectuals elicited a sympathetic response among many Roman Catholics who were attracted by Babbitt's condemnation of naturalism and his belief

\(^{39}\text{Ibid., pp. 97-100.}\)

\(^{40}\text{Ibid., p. 23.}\)
in absolute moral standards. There were some strong affinities that existed between some of Babbitt's views and those of the Thomists. Babbitt shared the same Aristotelian heritage as did St. Thomas. However, Babbitt was apparently more influenced by Buddhism and by religious skepticism than by Christianity. In spite of the wide divergence between Babbitt and the Thomists on religious beliefs, striking similarities can be found in the dimension of values such as the common emphasis of both on temperance and humility. However, Thomists ultimately grounded values on supernatural foundations while Babbitt utilized a basically positivistic approach.

The marked tendency of educational writers to distinguish between Babbitt and contemporary neo-conservatives has no basis in fact. Babbitt was reacting against the same fundamental tendencies which have alarmed contemporary conservative intellectuals: the undermining of traditional standards and the spread of equalitarianism. The educational and social reforms advocated by Babbitt would also generally have the assent of present-day conservatives. The period in which Babbitt wrote was not really very different from the present period of history. The basic problems, such as the spread of moral and religious skepticism and of equalitarianism, are today much the same as they were fifty years ago but with the important difference that today they are much more pressing. The problems that Irving Babbitt concerned himself with are still very much with us.

The Views of G. H. Bantock

Like Babbitt, the British educational philosopher, G. H. Bantock exemplifies the same basic combination of the humanist with so-called "positive" ideas. As will be indicated later, there were some basic differences between the views expressed by Bantock and Babbitt.

A faculty member of the University of Leicester in England, G. H. Bantock was originally trained in philosophy and literature. He has attributed his close attention to the intricacies of language to his training in those disciplines. A prolific writer on educational problems, his best known works include Freedom and Authority in Education (1955), Education in an Industrial Society (1963), Education and Values (1965), and Education, Culture, and the Emotions (1967).

The particular historical trends which most influenced G. H. Bantock were similar to those which have had an impact on other neo-conservative writers. He believed that the most serious educational and social problem was the need for an authority that would give meaning to life. He maintained that since World War I there has been a concerted effort to substitute individual desires for objective moral values. The latter were transmitted by tradition while the movement to undermine these values was basically a reaction against the war. While we might quarrel with Bantock's chronology and rationale for the existence of this trend, there is little doubt that such a tendency exists and that it became especially widespread after World War I.


Bantock was also alarmed by the spread of both meritocracy and equalitarianism. As we pointed out previously, the trend toward meritocracy, or the policy of providing responsible positions and advanced schooling solely on the basis of evidences of competency, has been much more widespread in Great Britain than in the United States where educational equalitarianism has had a greater impact. Bantock objected to meritocracy since it led to the apotheosis of the narrow specialist type and to the consequent decline of the broadly educated and highly cultivated gentleman.\(^4^4\) This has led directly to the lowering of the tone of society and to the decline of noblesse oblige.\(^4^5\)

Alongside the trend to meritocracy and often confused with it has been the tendency toward educational equalitarianism. Universal literacy was, Babbitt believed, one of the basic causes of equalitarianism since it created an enormous mass culture. The consumers and students in a mass society include a large proportion with little intellectual ability and interest. The combined pressure of the intellectually unqualified has tended to lower cultural skills.\(^4^6\) The spread of progressive education, the comprehensive secondary school, and other related movements have, Bantock believed, shifted the emphasis in education from the encouragement and fostering of excellence to the encouragement of mediocrity. Bantock had thereby implicitly taken the position that the education of the academically talented was more important than the education of the relatively untalented. He had also implied that the intellectual uplift


\(^4^5\)Ibid., p. 84.

\(^4^6\)Ibid., p. 77.
of the masses to a level where they would appreciate and contribute to high culture was either impossible or could be accomplished only by an enormous expenditure of effort.

In his reaction against these trends, Bantock was influenced strongly by the writings of Cardinal Newman, Matthew Arnold, D. H. Lawrence, and especially, T. S. Eliot. He has written brief studies of Cardinal Newman and of Matthew Arnold. He especially praised Cardinal Newman for his emphasis on the importance of objective values and Matthew Arnold for his attack on the degeneration of standards caused by the impact of mechanistic and materialistic philosophies. The means whereby Bantock was influenced by the two twentieth century aesthetes, Lawrence and Eliot, can be gleaned from the comments of Bantock himself. For example, Bantock praised Lawrence's emphasis on affective education and emphasized the same aspect himself. Bantock also praised and was influenced by Eliot's emphasis upon education as a cultural rather than a political phenomenon. In his general methodology, Bantock was also influenced by two British literary critics, I. A. Richards and F. R. Leavis, from whom he learned to be suspicious of abstractions divorced from the concrete realities of "the human situation." In general, the

47 Bantock pointed out these influences in a letter to the writer dated August 7th, 1974.

48 Bantock, Freedom and Authority, pp. 86-88, 130.


50 This information was obtained from Bantock's letter to the writer previously mentioned.
sources cited by Bantock consisted chiefly of British conservatives with a great concern for educational and cultural quality. Most of these writers were critical of both the philosophical and common forms of materialism.

In identifying the aims of education, Bantock used a basically cultural approach. He began by defining the nature of culture which he conceived of as the social, emotional, and intellectual "structures" inherited from the past. These structures, transmitted in the forms of conventions, patterns, and models, function to enhance the opportunities for expression and to make explicit what is permissible so as to inhibit "exhausting hankerings and time-absorbing aspirations." Bantock's terminology is significant; for it indicates his desire to order both academic learning and affective experiences so that students could learn to perceive the underlying patterns. The emphasis upon patterns indicates that Bantock probably accepted a coherence theory of truth; for the essence of this theory is consistency which implies an integration of parts with one another (pattern).

In the most general terms, Bantock defined the School as an agency whose primary function was cognitive in character. The test of the excellence of the school was considered to be the degree to which it increased the knowledge and understanding of the students. Since he viewed feeling as an avenue of cognition, his attention to emotional education was not in conflict with his primary concern. To Bantock,


the school was essentially a cultural institution whose primary function was to release thought and thus facilitate individual expression. In the performance of these functions the school has to impose constraints upon individual freedom. These constraints were however justified as necessary if the school was to perform efficiently the specific tasks of imparting understandings, developing important skills, and cultivating "some refined modes of feeling." 53

To demarcate the functions of the school more clearly, it is essential to discuss Bantock's opposition to those who have sought to overextend the area of academic endeavor. He especially resented the efforts of educators who sought to include mental hygiene among the functions of the teacher since he believed that teachers are generally incompetent to practice psychological therapy. Furthermore, mental therapists are primarily concerned with the pathological while teachers should be more concerned with the problems of children in the real world. Even more disturbing to Bantock was the tendency toward permissiveness which has resulted from confusing the roles of the teacher and the therapist. Like Eliot and other conservative writers, Bantock believed that tension is a positive and desirable state in maximizing achievement. Therapists are concerned with the problem of reducing tension, but, when teachers attempt to do the same thing by reducing academic requirements, the consequence is to lower the quality of scholastic endeavor. He admitted, however, that equalitarian and anti-authoritarian factors have also undermined

53 Bantock, Education, Culture, and the Emotions, p. 15.
Some American college professors have invoked the mental health of the student as a justification for avoiding the awarding of low grades to students who would otherwise have received them. The usual explanation given is that students would suffer unnecessarily from the receipt of low grades. On Bantock's principles, this argument would be fallacious since not only are most educators unqualified to render such judgments, but they also undermine an important incentive to achievement and actually contribute to the current erosion of academic standards. The difference between Bantock and those that have disagreed with his position can to a large extent be attributed to differing views as to what motivates most students to achieve academically. Furthermore, to Bantock and other conservatives, achievement is more important than contentment. In fact, achievement often brings contentment.

Bantock did not, however, repudiate the utilization of emotions in the classroom. Quite the contrary! He wanted a greater emphasis upon emotional education but definitely not in the manner of the Rousseauistic naturalists. What Bantock wanted as not spontaneous self-expression but rather "a mode of structuring, a means to order, an elaboration and a

54 See Bantock's discussion on mental therapy in ibid., pp. 34-35.

55 The writer of this study based this characterization on discussions with college faculty members when he was on the admissions and standards committee of a college.
making" with the emphasis placed upon the product rather than the self. 56

To comprehend just exactly what Bantock meant, it is important to understand his conception of the nature of the emotions; for he viewed them not just as passive states but rather as active acts of conscience. To Bantock, emotions were outward expressions of one's assessments of situations. There, therefore existed both correct and incorrect responses to a situation. Bantock merged the emotional with the cognitive and by so doing implied that emotional problems could, at least to some degree, be dealt with academically. 57

The teacher's role in the education of the emotions was to instruct students to discriminate between the various kinds of emotion. 58 The teacher would do this partly by example through refraining from indulging in coarse or vulgar emotions. Furthermore, students would learn to discriminate between different kinds of feeling by the study of literature and the fine arts. In fact, Bantock felt that literature and the arts are more important than the sciences since they are concerned with values and passions -- matters which are more basic than those which pertain to the sciences. He recommended that some acquaintanceship with literature and the arts be required of all educated men but that the only scientific knowledge that educated laymen really needed pertained to the scientific method. 59

56 Bantock, Education and Values, p. 22.
57 Bantock, Education, Culture, and the Emotions, pp. 72-73.
58 Ibid., pp. 82-83.
59 Bantock, Education in an Industrial Society, pp. 174-175.
Bantock's attitudes toward the emotions are very significant in exemplifying the essential contrast between educational conservatives and Rousseauistic naturalists on the scope of formal schooling. To assert as many writers have, that conservatives favor an exclusively academic type of schooling while their opponents place greater stress upon non-intellectual factors is to overstate the difference that actually exists on this matter. Every conservative thinker that we have dealt with in this study has been concerned not only with formal academic education but also with the broader implications and functions of the educational process. Conservatives do obviously stress academic education to a greater extent than do either the adherents of the naturalistic wing or the experimentalist wing of the progressive movement. However, affective education also concerns them. The true contrast is between an emphasis upon a highly structured academic situation and one in which spontaneity is emphasized. As a group, conservatives have no wish either to extirpate or to ignore emotions. Their concern is with disciplining and ordering emotions to the values discerned by the intellect. They are quite willing to deal with emotional problems but only to the degree that these problems can be handled cognitively. They have no wish to broaden the scope of formal education to include therapeutic functions of the kind which are normally performed by psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychiatric social workers. Some progressives believe that greater spontaneity would be highly desirable in education. Conservatives emphatically disagree with this view. They look upon the stress on spontaneity as tending toward permissiveness. As a group, they feel that there is far too much permissiveness in education already for the good of either the student or the
larger community of which he is a member.

In common with many other conservatives, Bantock has expressed strong disapproval of the child-centered concept of learning. He believed that this concept rests upon the assumption of the natural goodness of man when left to develop uncontaminated by society. He criticized this view on two grounds: that isolation of the individual from social pressures is not possible and that children are not competent to make the important decisions needed to determine the methods and content of academic instruction. In determining what to teach children, their powers and potential should be considered, but most children are not fully aware of what potentialities they do possess, nor do they have a clear idea of how these powers can be utilized by society. The individual child should be nurtured to broaden the range of his experience and to quiet his rebellious nature. In Bantock's view, interest should not be an important consideration. A task in which a child might not be interested might prove to be very interesting once the child begins to do it. The teacher should definitely be the expert and the guide. Nevertheless, the powers and potentialities of the individual child should be taken into account so that in substance Bantock was urging not a one-sided teacher centered system but rather interaction between teacher and students.60

Bantock felt that the educational progressives have been so zealous in promoting the happiness of children that they have overlooked the value and importance of academic learning. In contrast, Bantock has expressed a preference for achievement over immediate happiness.61

60 For Bantock's views on this subject, see his works, Education, Culture, and the Emotions, p. 138, and Freedom and Authority, p. 120.

61 Bantock, Education, Culture, and the Emotions, p. 139.
In the end, he confidently believed that achievement will prove to be more satisfying than immediate gratification. Like Aristotle, Bantock believed that reason is the supreme characteristic of man and that life lived in rational terms is necessary for the best life. To the charge that control over children would undermine their freedom, he opposed a positive conception of freedom as the following quotation clearly indicates:

Just, then, as social freedom springs out of the acceptance of the moral law, so the freedom to perform various skills and to make sense of the world around us so that we can move about it, springs from the acceptance of and submission to the authority inherent in the various bodies of human learning. And it is a fact of human experience that the "subjects" within which, in the course of time, we learn to move with the greatest assurance and freedom are not necessarily those which we are at first most 'interested' by or "enjoy."

Bantock, therefore, viewed freedom not simply as the absence of controls but rather as the ability to perform a wide variety of tasks. For this, restraint is required rather than permissiveness. In addition, the foregoing quotation is also indicative of Bantock's acceptance of the traditional subject-matter boundaries in preference to the more integrated approaches advocated by the educational progressives. Elsewhere, he defended subject-matter delimitations as imposed by the nature of the material although he did not enlarge very much on this bare assertion.

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62 Ibid., p. 140.
63 Bantock, Education and Values, pp. 98-99.
64 Ibid., p. 100.
65 Bantock, Freedom and Authority, p. 198.
Although Bantock tended to emphasize the cognitive functions of education even when dealing with affective approaches, he did not feel that a single set of educational aims should be applied throughout the educational system. He believed that the level of intelligence and the degree of motivation varies too much to render a single set of educational aims practical. Apparently, he assumed that efforts to change intellectual and motivational levels to any significant degree would be doomed to failure. Presumably, this doubt was based on both the influences of heredity and early home upbringing. The educator must, therefore, study the nature of his students and adjust his teaching accordingly. The utopian hopes of some educational thinkers would evidently seem to those inspired by Bantock's ideas to be visionary and impractical.

Unlike such other conservatives as Irving Babbitt and T. S. Eliot, Bantock devoted special attention to the education of the less gifted. Other conservatives had, by not prescribing any special academic program for the less academically inclined, tacitly assumed that beyond the level of basic literacy, the needs of these children could best be met by practical experience. As a group, conservatives most definitely favored selective admissions policies on the higher, and, in some instances, even the secondary level of education. Bantock certainly agreed with his fellow conservatives that access to the universities and to academic curricula in general should be restricted to the academically gifted and

66 Bantock, Education in an Industrial Society, pp. 119-120; 185-186.

67 In his book, T. S. Eliot and Education, Bantock was quite explicit on the importance of early cultural upbringing. See page 111 thereof.
motivated. On the other hand, he believed that classroom teaching could be meaningful for the less gifted provided that ample provision is made for taking into account the intellectual characteristics of these children. In general, this approach seems quite different from that of the educational equalitarians who are now especially influential in American education. The latter believe that the masses have the capacity for understanding and profiting from an academic type of education and that their relatively poor performance is due either to poor teaching, deficient early cultural upbringing, or discrimination. Therefore, they have developed various different kinds of plans to equalize educational opportunity through providing special attention for the "culturally deprived." It is common knowledge among educators that children have shown some improvement as a result of special teaching, but there is considerable doubt concerning the permanence of the changes made. The conservative contention in this regard is that the effort, time, and money expended would have produced greater and more lasting dividends if greater attention had been given to the academically promising. In essence, this difference in attitude is based upon a striking difference of opinion pertaining to the relative flexibility of human nature.

Bantock believed that efforts made to transform the less gifted into intellectuals were doomed to failure; for the non-academic child lives in a different world from his more scholarly counterpart. The crux of the

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difference pertains to the degree of ability and understanding manifested in the utilization of abstract concepts and the written word. From the point of view of Bantock, the less able child was believed to be living in a predominantly oral world. The interests of this child were believed to lie in matters relating to his local environment and the marvelous. When the child reads, it is for the story and not for either self-improvement or explanation.

The kind of education suitable for this type of child should differ fundamentally from that of the academically gifted child. On the secondary level, the education of the less able forty percent, excluding the "sub-normal," must be centered on the practical and the concrete if it is to be meaningful. Such academic subjects as foreign languages, formal history, and geography should be dropped from the course of study that this type of child should pursue. In addition, the amount of time devoted to mathematics would be diminished. English would be taught as well as good citizenship but the latter would be learned by cooperative activity rather than through formal instruction. What history and geography that Bantock would retain would be incidental to the teaching of other subjects.

The non-academic child would learn art by proceeding from the study of "pop" culture to more academic matters. The study of music might begin with calypso; of the visual arts, with the study of films. The chief purpose of teaching art and music to the non-academic children would be to enable them to employ their leisure constructively.

A large portion of the time spent by these children in school would be devoted to vocational purposes. The boys would learn such tasks as plumbing, paper-hanging, boot mending, and gardening while the girls
would study dietetics, mothercraft, cooking, needlework, and kindred subjects. In other words, Bantock felt that the school should prepare these children for the vocations that they would be most likely to pursue later in life.69

In general, Bantock had recommended that many of the practices associated with progressive and vocational education be applied to the needs of the less gifted children. Where he differed with John Dewey was in the latter's insistence that an essentially practical type of education be given to children on all levels of ability. Bantock was highly critical of Dewey's emphasis on the practical; for one's immediate needs tend to be fleeting, and Dewey had apparently forgotten that the detection of a problem is dependent on anterior assumptions which are often non-empirical in character.70 Bantock did not therefore prefer practical education but felt compelled to advocate it for the less gifted because of the educational limitations of the latter.

With regard to children on the high-average level of academic development, Bantock recommended the pursuance of a technical education although some general education courses would also be included. The latter would pertain essentially to literature and the arts.71 Students, on the higher levels of academic ability, would attend training colleges.

69 For Bantock's views on the education of the less gifted, see his Education in an Industrial Society, pp. 212, 216-220.

70 See Bantock's views on Dewey in ibid., pp. 37, 47-48.

71 Ibid., p. 199.
if they lack motivation while those who possess both motivation and ability would be prepared for entrance into the universities. The training colleges would differ from the universities in that the former would devote themselves exclusively to teaching without the research function of the university.\textsuperscript{72}

In essence, Bantock advocated a class system of education but one which was not based on the class affiliations of the families of the students but rather on the academic capabilities and the motivations of the individuals involved. Yet, he was not really advocating a pure meritocracy; for elsewhere in his writings one finds that he deplored the rise to power of individuals of high intelligence without cultivated manners and refined morals.\textsuperscript{73} In any case, he recommended, in substance, that the schools serve as agencies of selection for the various occupational levels of society. This position clearly implies the prime importance of academic ability as the selective factor. Those who possess the requisite amount of this ability would qualify for the most prestigious positions. Others would be prepared for less demanding positions based on their relative performance on various measures of academic ability and motivation. One might well wonder whether these other occupations do not demand special talents as well for the efficient performance of duties. An academic incompetent is not necessarily mechanically competent.

\textsuperscript{72}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 185-186. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{73}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 180, 195.
Both Babbitt and Bantock were reacting primarily in opposition both to the decline of traditional authority and the permeation of contemporary culture by equalitarianism. Of the two, Babbitt showed a hostility toward business values which Bantock failed to exhibit. This contrast may reflect differences between the British and American social climates; for business values have generally been more widely influential in the United States than in the United Kingdom.

Both of the protagonists of positive humanism believed that traditional values could be restored through an educational system in which the most important aim would be to teach students to discriminate between values. Bantock emphasized in particular the discrimination between the passions in terms of the values which they exemplified.

As humanists, both Babbitt and Bantock emphasized literature and the importance of imaginative insight. In addition, Babbitt stressed the worth of harmony and proportion as social ideals. Both men recognized the value of tension. Bantock openly espoused this characteristic as a value while it was an implicit assumption of Babbitt's stress on voluntaristic discipline. Both writers were definitely achievement oriented. The striking similarities which existed between Babbitt and Bantock clearly indicate how artificial is the separation by educational writers of Babbitt's neo-humanists from the neo-conservatives of today.
An important variant of neo-conservatism can be designated as "religious traditionalism" which is characterized by the view that the fundamental problems of contemporary education are primarily axiological and can only be solved by a belief in God and dedication to religion.\(^1\)

While neo-conservative thinkers have generally recognized the value and importance of religion, they have not given it the centrality of position that it occupies in the thinking of the religious traditionalists. For the latter, religious concerns are primary while the aesthetic emphases of the humanists occupies a merely secondary position. A writer closely identified with the predominantly religious strain of neo-conservative thought was Canon Bernard Iddings Bell (1886-1958).

An American adherent of High Church Episcopalianism, Canon Bell was ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church in 1910. After serving in a variety of clerical capacities, he became president of St. Stephens College at the age of thirty-four. He served in this position for fourteen years. When St. Stephens was absorbed into Columbia University,

\(^1\)"Religious traditionalism" is my term for this movement. The term was chosen because adherents of this position believe in the primary importance of returning to the religious traditions of the past as a remedy for the ills of contemporary society.
he severed his connection with the college out of disagreement with the liberal educational ideas prevalent at Columbia. From 1930 to 1933, he did serve however as a professor of religion at Columbia University. He later acted as counselor to Episcopal students at the University of Chicago. Subsequently, he was afflicted with blindness but continued to lead a productive existence as a canon attached to the Episcopal Cathedral of Chicago. During his most productive years, he wrote a considerable number of works on religion and also two books of interest to educators. Crisis in Education (1949) pertains to educational problems not only concerning the school but also the home and the church. In Crowd Culture (1952), Canon Bell concerned himself with both educational and religious problems.²

The primary problem identified by Canon Bell in his educational writings was the immature and emotionally impulsive nature of the American people. To a far greater extent than other peoples and than Americans of an earlier time, the people of the United States suffered from an inversion of values. The primary interest of most Americans was to make money to provide themselves with pleasure and entertainment. Pleasure consisted of enjoying the use of a large and ornate house, a motorcar, expensive clothes, and other material possessions. Entertainment included reading literary "trash" which described acts of brutality

²Since the details of Canon Bell's life are not generally known, the reader is referred to the introduction by Russell Kirk to the paperback edition of Bernard Iddings Bell, Crowd Culture (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1956), pp. xi-xvi.
and lust as well as listening to or viewing similar material on radio and television. The average American, suffering from religious impoverishment, had long ago lost the concomitant sense of moral dedication which could give life meaning.\(^3\)

If the average American is to obtain happiness, Bell believed that work rather than pleasure must become the center of attention. When pleasure is long pursued, it becomes boring. Unless Americans learn the joys of work, they will "remain petulant children, dangerous, predatory."\(^4\)

Work should not be considered an unpleasant burden but rather as an opportunity for creativeness and service to others. Every man is made to give others understanding, tolerance, and clemency. Only through constructive work and moral dedication can men find peace.\(^5\)

According to Bell, that which distinguishes the gentleman from the common man is not money since not all gentlemen are rich nor are all common men poor. What the gentleman has which the common man lacks is a liberal education. By "liberal education," Bell meant an education through which students could learn to discriminate between values and to identify the true ends of living. According to Bell, the common man has received an essentially utilitarian and vocational type of education. As a direct consequent, the common man has shown himself to be incapable of ruling himself or society. Yet, in spite of his evident incapacity to

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\(^3\)On the nature of the American people, see Bernard Iddings Bell, Crisis in Education (New York: Whittlesey House, 1949), pp. 12-24.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 23.

\(^5\)Ibid., pp. 22-23.
rule, the common man has been given the authority and prerogatives which once belonged to the gentleman. Is it any wonder that the common man is immature? While lacking the wisdom that he might have procured through a liberal education, the common man has responsibilities far exceeding his accomplishments.

If the causes of this inversion of values were believed to be educational, the remedies were also believed to be educational. Bell believed that the major emphasis should be placed on reforming elementary education since, by the time children reached high school, their characters have already been shaped. To accomplish the task of educating the child, the resources not only of the school but also of the home and the church as well should be enlisted. Children should be taught decent manners, the value of craftsmanship, some knowledge of the basic wisdom of the species, religion, and skill in handling the tools of education. Manners were considered important because a courtesy was deemed essential to the safety and welfare of civilization. Manners should be taught primarily in the home but with the assistance of both the church and the school. Craftsmanship was essential to happiness; for to be happy humans must take pride in their work. Craftsmanship would also be taught primarily in the home. Wisdom was needed to enable people to conduct their lives intelligently. Religion was considered to be the essential foundation of morality as well as indispensable if people are to face up to the frustrations of life. Finally, children should learn how to use the educational tools of reading, writing, listening, and speaking if there is to be a competent interchange of ideas.

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6Ibid., pp. 25-26.  
7Ibid., pp. 31-35.
In general, Bell viewed American problems in fundamentally axiological terms. Americans were emotionally and intellectually immature because they suffered from an inversion of values. The fundamental task of American education was to be a combination of the inculcation of values and of the ability to discriminate between values. The most important function of education was to be the moral one. By this function, Bell meant that through education the individual should learn how to live with himself which knowledge involved learning how to live with others (manners). To learn these things, it was considered necessary that the individual be trained in the nature and application of values. As we shall see later, Bell believed religion to be the indispensible foundation of morality so that ultimately religion was of central importance in Bell's educational philosophy.8

The most important traits needed by the student to fulfill his role in Bell's educational plan was intelligence. The term "intelligence" was derived from the words inter (between) and legere (to choose). Intelligence properly pertained to the ability to discriminate or to differentiate between the permanent and the transitory, the good and the bad, the valuable and the worthless, the beautiful and the ugly. Intelligence was therefore applicable to intellectual, moral, aesthetic, and prudential judgments.

The possession of high intelligence would not necessarily make the possessor rich, popular, or happy. On the contrary, he might be hated.

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8For Bell's definitions of morals and manners, see ibid., p. 83; with regard to the role of religion, see ibid., pp. 227-228.
and envied by others. Yet intelligence was essential if proper choices were to be made to enable our civilization to be "safe and free."  

While Bell considered intelligence to be basically an innate ability, he believed that education was needed for the full development of this power. While everyone should be taught to discriminate values to the fullest extent to which he or she is capable, it would be unreasonable to expect much from most people. Instead, educators should stress the training and selection of the few who exhibited superior reasoning abilities. From this superior group would come the nation's leaders. According to Bell's conception of intelligence, the elite would be identified by the possession of a considerable degree of analytical and synthetical reasoning abilities -- especially with regard to the ability to understand the natures of values and concepts and to discriminate between them. By exposure to a judicious curriculum, characterized by a focus on the liberal arts, the humanities and religion, those who have the potentialities would presumably be enabled to develop to the point where they would be able to give sapient guidance to the nation. This goal of national service was far more valuable than the treasuring of learning for its own sake which Bell regarded as the dominant goal of American higher education. Bell emphasized ideas rather than facts; reasoning rather than memory.  

Bell believed that the most serious deficiency in American life was the absence of any generally accepted ethical standard. American

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9Ibid., p. 62.

10On the nature and purpose of intelligence, see ibid., pp. 59-67.
society lacked a generally accepted definition of the nature and purpose of man. Although some theorists might seek to arrive at such a definition by appealing to the will of the majority, Bell rejected this approach as contributing to blind conformity and mediocrity. He also rejected the uncritical acceptance of the traditions of the past as deadly to critical and creative thinking. On the other hand, the rejection of the whole of tradition would lead to foolish behavior. If people are to find meaning in life, they must look to what is beyond man which means that "religion is involved, primarily involved, inseparably involved in education."  

To Bell, the essence of religion consisted of contact with and adoration of God. Without the foundation of belief in God, morality is liable to degenerate into mere expediency and finally into blind obedience to those who use force. Belief in God is of central importance to moral education. To a considerable extent, moral education is coterminous with religious education.  

Bell's view of the nature of religious education was largely based upon Alfred North Whitehead's interpretation of the historical development of the higher religions. According to Bell's account of Whitehead's views, the various religions had originated as rituals which were designed to stimulate emotions that were deemed to be beneficial to the group. Later, people sought to explain rituals in terms of stories. As worshippers continued to perform rituals and to expound the stories linked to their observances, faith was born. When faith was formalized into words, a creed was created. Finally the creed was correlated with other

11Ibid., p. 228.  
12Ibid., pp. 127-128.  
13Ibid., pp. 139-140.
facets of human experience.14

Religious instruction should likewise begin with ritual since abstract concepts are too difficult for comprehension by the very young and even by most adults. As soon as the child is old enough, he should learn the stories associated with his religious tradition. When the child reaches the period between ten and fifteen years of age, the ritual should be transformed from a formal into a vital element of his life. By then, the stories would become more significant by being interpreted in the light of the child's growing fund of experience. By insight, the child would become aware of interrelationships between ideas and things that he previously considered separately. Thus faith would emerge. When this stage had been attained, the creed associated with the faith of the child would become meaningful to him.15

In the teaching of religion as in the teaching of morals and manners, the home should be the primary locus of learning although there would also exist ancillary activities in both church and school. While considering it neither possible nor necessary to teach the beliefs of any particular denomination in the public schools, Bell believed the respect for the Absolute and some knowledge of the various faiths should be

14Ibid., pp. 128-130. This reference should be contrasted with the original account by Alfred North Whitehead, Religion in the Making (New York: Macmillan, 1926), pp. 18, 23. According to Bell, the four stages of religious development of Whitehead were ritual, myth, belief, and rationalization. In this characterization, Bell was in error. Whitehead's stages were ritual, emotion, belief, and rationalization.

15Bell, Crisis in Education, pp. 130-135.
imparted in the classroom. With regard to moral instruction, it would be based on "supernatural demands and rest on supernatural sanctions."\textsuperscript{16}

It is significant that Bell's views on religious education made the psychological nature of the child an important consideration. The particular mode of progression recommended was from the concrete to the abstract in accordance with the child's growth in experience. With regard to his views concerning human nature, Bell did not believe that people were infinitely flexible. Educational content must be congruent with the native abilities of those being educated. The child should not be introduced to the abstract concepts associated with the various religious creeds until his abilities have matured sufficiently so that he would be able to grasp these concepts. As we have seen, Bell doubted whether most adults would be able to grasp such concepts. Seemingly implicit in this position was the view that heredity was more important than environment in explaining human differences. A staunch environmentalist might well be expected to exhibit confidence that the ability to grasp abstractions could be developed under the proper environmental conditions.

With regard to the various stages of formal education, Bell believed that too much time was being spent in schooling children. He felt it to be both unreasonable and wasteful to engage so many people for such a long time in formal preparation for life. Instead of the conventional eight years of elementary education, Bell recommended a program of six years which would encompass all that was being customarily covered in eight years. Elementary education would be followed by four years of

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., p. 145. See also ibid., pp. 35, 83.
secondary schooling and then three years of college. Graduate or professional training would consume four additional years of study.\textsuperscript{17}

Bell's apparent assumption that an equal amount of education is necessary for competent performance in all the professions is somewhat surprising considering the wide variation which exists in the kind of abilities required for excellence in the various professions. An even more important question is: how would Bell guard against the use of his recommendation for reduction in the length of formal education by educational administrators to lower academic standards to expand enrollments? For the answer to this question, Bell's views on the content of education at the various levels of instruction will be examined.

Although some attention should be given to content, Bell felt that the primary function of elementary education should be to cultivate the basic educational skills that developed the competency to read, write, speak, listen, compute, and handle. The purpose of elementary education was to give youngsters the tools needed for mental growth. This was expressed graphically by Bell in the following quotation:

Most Americans cannot read anything more difficult than a picture paper or a pulp magazine; they cannot write a letter and make their meaning plain; they rarely speak except in cliches; they are unable to follow an argument put in the simplest words, to understand what a speaker is driving at. What chance have people to mature when there is no competent interchange of ideas? Our lower schools may be ever so good at conducting classes in "citizenship" and "nature study," though there are those who doubt it when they look at the product; but their main business is and will remain teaching boys and girls how to read, write, speak, listen, figure, and handle things. Unless the lower schools can do a far better job of work on these basic necessities, there will be less and less growing up among Americans.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., pp. 205-209. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{18}Ibid., pp. 32-33.
At the high school level, Bell recommended that there should be additional teaching of the basic educational skills but on a more advanced level than in elementary school. Specifically, he suggested a revival of the trivium and the quadrivium for the purpose of inculcating habits of "sound thinking" among the students. In addition to training in the basic skills and the liberal arts, vocational training would be taught in tandem with the liberal arts. In view of his concept of intelligence and his thoughts on the kind of elite that would be best for the nation, it is obvious that Bell held education in the liberal arts in higher esteem than vocational education.

Bell believed that the primary responsibility for the weaknesses of American education rested with the secondary schools. They have failed to provide their students with the basic skills needed for intellectual achievement. Because of the vast numbers of the academically incompetent that yearly enter the secondary schools of the nation, it apparently was decided to lower academic standards to make things easy for the students. The consequence has been a neglect of drill in the basic academic skills. The typical college entrant in the United States was therefore characterized as "mostly an untried young cub" while his counterparts in England and on the European continent were fully prepared for college instruction.

To Bell, the pressure to extend the alleged benefits of mass education to the college level was exceedingly unwise. At the time when he wrote Crisis in Education, the colleges were burgeoning with students as

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19 Ibid., pp. 70-71.  
20 Ibid., p. 52.  
21 Ibid., p. 47; Bell, Crowd Culture p. 36.
a result of the enactment of the "G. I. Bill of Rights." Bell was fearful of the educational consequences of the enactment of this bill. To expand the facilities of the colleges to accommodate a flood of new students would entail an increase in the numbers of faculty and other college personnel far beyond the competently trained supply. Furthermore, concentrating on providing education and facilities for huge masses of students constituted a grave danger that the colleges and universities would neglect the individual student -- especially the student of superior academic potential who was precisely the kind of student that Bell thought the colleges should make the center of their attention.\(^22\) His opposition to mass college education was however much broader in scope than his reaction to one congressional bill. As we have seen previously, Bell believed that the chief purpose of higher education should be the training of an elite of ratiocinative intelligence. To admit a mass of poorly prepared students would defeat the main purpose of college and would create an irresistible pressure to lower academic standards and to simplify instruction. To produce a worthy intellectual elite, it was essential that the members of this elite be recruited from those of superior innate intelligence and that those aspiring to membership in the elite be required to survive a challenging program of academic studies.\(^23\)

Bell thought that in college everything should be studied which would throw light on man and his behavior. He specifically mentioned the social sciences, psychology, literature, history, the fine arts, and philosophy. Through the study of these disciplines, it was hoped that the

\(^22\)Ball, *Crisis in Education*, pp. 4-5, 65.

\(^23\)Ibid., pp. 66-67.
student would learn the causes of human failure and would learn to emulate those human successes worthy of emulation. In essence, Bell valued these disciplines for their value in encouraging students to lead moral and successful lives. Bell's conception of success pertained obviously to happiness rather than money or fame. For him education therefore, had essentially practical aims but not in the crass materialistic sense of "practical." 24

Religion should also be studied on the college level so that the student might come to know and adore the Infinite and thereby acquire humility. Bell felt that the student of superior native endowment and education was especially prone to develop the undesirable traits of pride, insolence, and effrontery. Such an individual might have the intellectual qualifications for leadership, but his deficiencies of character would be so serious as to render him positively harmful in any leadership role that he might undertake. To guard against this, it is important that the student learn to look up to what is immeasurably superior to him. 25

To illustrate what he felt to be important in higher education, Bell recalled that in 1903, when he entered the University of Chicago, he attended an orientation session for incoming freshmen at which the president of the university, Dr. William Rainey Harper, spoke. As Bell recalled it, Dr. Harper said:

24 Ibid., p. 21.
25 Ibid., p. 72.
Young gentlemen, you have come here in hope of furthering your education. If you are to do this it would be well for you to have some idea of what an educated human being is. Then you will know what to aim at here, what this institution exists to assist you to become. An educated man is a man who by the time he is twenty-five years old has a clear theory, formed in the light of human experience down the ages of what constitutes a satisfying life, a significant life, and who by the age of thirty has a moral philosophy consonant with racial experience. If a man reaches these ages without having arrived at such a theory, such a philosophy, then no matter how many facts he has learned or how many processes he has mastered, that man is an ignoramus and a fool, unhappy, probably dangerous. That is all. Good afternoon.  

Bell's conception of higher education embraced study in the liberal arts, the humanities, and religion. In his view, vocational education had no place in the college and the university with the exception of professional study. The fact that he prescribed the same selection of studies for all college students clearly implies that he did not favor reliance upon the elective method of course selection, at least with regard to higher education.  

In contrast to Bell's emphasis upon skill instruction in the lower schools, he stressed content quite heavily in his conception of the desirable college curriculum. College courses were not, however, to be taught primarily for their factual content but rather for their value in helping people to lead happier and more worthy lives. To accomplish this aim, it was necessary to discriminate wisely between values and to know the true ends of life. This view of the purposes of higher education was both moral and intellectual in nature since it involved both the understanding of value concepts and their application to human conduct.  

Bell believed that the chief enemy of education was the state.  

26Ibid., pp. 57-58.
This menace took the form of an attack on academic freedom to produce conformity so that whatever class happens to control the state shall be kept firmly in power. In the United States, this class was characterized as consisting of "the managerial manipulators for the upper bourgeoisie" and might well include in the future the leaders of organized labor.\textsuperscript{27}

Bell believed that the power of the state over education was due to the fact that the state was the sole taxing agency. This power has resulted in the situation where the state had become the dominant financial entity in education. State control could only expand the tyranny of centralized power. It was folly to think it possible for men to wield great power without tyranny as the ultimate consequence.\textsuperscript{28}

The general significance of Bernard Iddings Bell as an exponent of neo-conservatism can be viewed from the uniqueness of his approach to contemporary educational problems. Unlike other neo-conservative writers, he did not proceed from a feeling of dissatisfaction with the undermining of certain cherished values such as selectivity or traditionalism but rather from the outcomes of such undermining -- the production of a population characterized by immaturity and discontent. The remedy for this situation lay in an education wherein the stress would be on the discrimination of purposes and values. Such an educational system would produce an elite capable of guiding others to a meaningful existence.

In view of the fact that Bell emphasized moral and especially religious concerns, he could hardly be correctly described as a humanist. The aesthetic and literary aspects of education did not have in his

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., p. 181.

\textsuperscript{28}Ibid., pp. 187, 191.
philosophy the dominating importance that they had for the genuine hu-
manists. Yet, in spite of this fact, education was to Bell as to the
most intense humanists that we have surveyed, primarily a matter of taste.
But the tastes that he wished to cultivate were based fundamentally on
religious rather than aesthetic foundations.

In the end, he believed that people should strive for happiness. Al-
though he neglected to explain precisely his conception of the nature
of happiness, it is plain from the way he used the term that he had in
mind the sense of satisfaction which is a consequence of a life that has
been lived in accordance with moral and ultimately religious values. In
the end, man must find his salvation in religion or not at all.
CHAPTER VI

THE NEO-CONSERVATIVE THEORY OF EDUCATION

Chapter II, "Foundations of Neo-Conservatism," was devoted to an analysis of the basic philosophical foundations of neo-conservatism and to its educational implications. Chapter VI will examine the general characteristics of neo-conservative educational thought and will compare them with the inferences made in chapter II. The conclusions should be of some significance since they are based on the ideas of the neo-conservative writers whose works were analyzed earlier; for such theorists as T. S. Eliot, Irving Babbitt, and Russell Kirk have been among the most influential of all the writers who have been active proponents of neo-conservatism.

Specifically, the present chapter will be devoted to bringing together and relating the findings that we have made with regard to individual neo-conservative writers on education with the purpose of giving the general educational characteristics and implications of the neo-conservative movement. We will begin with a summary of our findings pertaining to the historical influences upon neo-conservative educational thought. This analysis will be followed by a consideration of the nature of neo-conservative values as such. We will then consider in order the aims and content of education; methods of instruction and learning theory; and the agencies that should be involved in education -- all of these topics to be viewed from the perspective of the neo-conservative standpoint. A comparison will then be made with the inferences given in the
second chapter and then certain general conclusions will be reached. In essence, this chapter will be devoted to a summary and integration of the material presented in all the foregoing chapters of this study related to educational thought.

Neo-conservative educational thought has derived many of its characteristics from the historical period in which it flourished. The contemporary period, which in its essential intellectual characteristics began shortly after the end of World War I, represents an advanced stage in the decline of belief in traditional moral and cultural standards. Without exception, the neo-conservative writers, whose works were discussed earlier, have viewed the problems of the contemporary era as fundamentally axiological in nature. These writers have protested against what they have considered to be a condition that has arisen from a combination of a lack of standards in some areas of endeavor and an inversion of standards in other areas. Two trends have been particularly disturbing to neo-conservatives: the decline of belief in objective moral standards and the spread of cultural and educational equalitarianism. From the neo-conservative perspective, the rejection of objective moral standards was a symptom of the decline of standards; equalitarianism was a result of the inversion of standards. To restore a climate of intellectual and moral integrity, neo-conservatives called for the reversal of these trends. The primary means for reversing these trends was considered to be educational.

Contrary to popular opinion, the writing of Edmund Burke was not the primary source of inspiration for the views of the neo-conservative writers under consideration. Of the writers surveyed, we have sufficient
data to reach conclusions on the sources of inspiration of all of them
with the single exception of Bernard Iddings Bell. These writers include
the three most frequently mentioned neo-conservative writers in American
and British literature on conservatism -- Babbitt, Eliot, and Kirk. Of
the writers surveyed, only Russell Kirk looked to Edmund Burke as the
chief inspiration for his work. The influences upon the other writers,
including Babbitt, Bantock, and Eliot, were so varied as to discourage
any meaningful generalizations beyond the bare fact that these influences
were chiefly conservative in nature. While neo-conservative writers on
education generally agreed with the views of Edmund Burke, they apparent­
ly did not derive their views directly from his writings.

A more fruitful means of ascertaining the historical influences
upon the neo-conservatives would be to compare the views of the neo­
conservatives with the various preceding schools of educational thought.
From this historical perspective, contemporary conservative educational
thought has clearly been predominantly humanistic in nature.¹ With the
exception of Bell, all the writers whose works have been analyzed have
exhibited the aesthetic emphasis characteristic of humanism. Babbitt,
Bantock, Eliot, and Kirk shared a common emphasis upon the study of
Literature. Babbitt, Bantock, and Kirk also believed in the superior
efficacy of insight -- an ability which was based to a considerable ex­
tent upon imagination which was a faculty commonly stressed by the

¹For the sense in which we are using the term "humanism" see pages
48-49 of this study.
humanists. Since T. S. Eliot was an imaginative poet, it is probable that he, too, believed in the importance of insight even though he was not very explicit on this topic in his educational writings. In addition, both Babbitt and Eliot stressed the aesthetic ideals of harmony and proportion. Babbitt, Eliot, and Kirk also exhibited a common emphasis upon the importance of ancient Greco-Roman literature.

In general, neo-conservative educational thought can be considered an outgrowth of a tradition which began with the aesthetic aspects of the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle and was continued and further developed through the work of such individuals as Isocrates, Cicero, Quintilian, John of Salisbury, and numerous personalities of the Renaissance. In addition, several neo-conservative writers, especially Eliot and Bell, were also strongly influenced by Christian ideals. In historical perspective, neo-conservatism, at least in its educational aspects, can be considered as a reaction against contemporary nihilism and equalitarianism and as a re-emphasis upon the humanistic and sometimes the Christian ideals of the past. On the whole, neo-conservatism represents an elitist type of humanism.

The particular values which neo-conservatives have stressed were moral, intellectual, and religious in character. Economic values and those values which are generally associated with physical comfort and well-being were generally ignored. A strong achievement orientation was common to the thought of the neo-conservatives. As a group, the neo-conservatives were quite willing to sacrifice a considerable degree of psychological freedom in favor of the discipline and of the restraints which they believed necessary for individual achievement. The ideals of craftsmanship and cultural achievement were strongly emphasized in the
writings of Babbitt, Bantock, Bell, Eliot, and Kirk. In general, the neo-conservatives espoused an ethical perfectionism in which spiritual or non-material, non-physical aspects of excellence were strongly emphasized. This perfectionism was presented in terms of the development of the individual rather than the uplift of society as a whole. The various values emphasized by the neo-conservatives can be linked together through the implicit ideal of the highly cultivated gentleman characterized by the qualities of discretion, restraint, intelligence, refinement, and good taste. This ideal is in accord with the basic humanistic virtues of harmony and proportion; for restraint and discretion are obviously conducive to harmony, and good taste involves the ability to perceive what is proportionate and harmonious.

The fundamental aim of education, as perceived by the neo-conservatives, was deemed to be the development of an elite characterized by the ability to discriminate between ideas and between values in terms both of the nature and relative worth of the concepts and values involved. This elite would be distinguished by the possession of a high degree of analytical and synthetical reasoning powers. To be able to grasp the nature and interrelationships of general concepts, it is obvious that one must be able to analyze and combine ideas intelligently. Therefore, the emphasis would be on those subjects, such as the humanities and the social sciences, which relate to general ideas and values.

To a certain extent, admission to an academic education would be based on a person's intellectual abilities. As a group, the neo-conservatives believed that the ratiocinative potentialities of the vast majority of people were very limited. For this reason, the neo-conserv-
atives advocated selective education on the college and university levels. They generally felt that mass higher education would result inevitably in the lowering of educational standards since colleges would be forced to simplify instruction and expand their facilities far beyond the limits that could be considered qualitatively desirable. These consequences would tend to deflect the colleges from developing an intelligent and discriminating student body which might help to form the basis of a cultivated elite.

To understand what is at issue pertaining to the conservative advocacy of selectivity in education, it is helpful to survey the arguments that have been employed by the advocates of mass higher education. These arguments have generally been based on grounds of either individual excellence or of good citizenship. On individual grounds, mass college education has been justified as enabling people to improve their abilities, to enhance their occupational efficiency and to lead happier lives. On political grounds, mass education has been defended as being essential to enable the electorate to exercise the duties of citizenship intelligently. For example, the President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947-1948, used both the individual and political arguments to recommend that American college courses be made less verbal and less intellectual in order to bring them within the range of more people. To

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2 For the arguments in favor of mass higher education see Gail Kennedy, ed., *Education for Democracy* (Boston: Heath, 1952), pp. 78-80.

3 The Kennedy anthology contains, among other selections, the report of the President's Commission. For pertinent passages, see *ibid.*, pp. 8, 13.
a conservative, this recommendation is a clear illustration of how the advocacy of mass education can lead to a demand for the lowering of standards. Of course, it is doubtful that the members of the President's Commission would concur with the view that their recommendation would lead to a lowering of standards.

The essential crux of the controversy between the advocates of selective education and those of mass college education deals with the ability of the masses of people to benefit from higher education. The benefits cited by the proponents of mass higher education could not, for the most part, be obtained by students unless they possessed the ability to understand and utilize the knowledge conveyed by their professors. The neo-conservatives have evinced a lack of confidence in the ability of the majority to grasp the understandings conveyed in colleges and universities in their full implications. As we have just seen, the conservative criterion of academic competence pertained primarily to the ability to analyze and interrelate ideas and values. In other words, neo-conservatives regard a good student as one who can comprehend the pattern of abstract concepts in relationship to one another. Academic achievement is not simply a matter of absorbing information but rather of structuring knowledge; for to the neo-conservatives, information is not truly knowledge unless it has been integrated with other information into a patterned structure so that interrelationships are apparent. Neo-conservatives have been skeptical of the educational efficacy of attempting to instruct those individuals who have evinced little interest and competence in intellectual areas. This skepticism seems to be based on the assumption that heredity or early upbringing have been more important than educational and other environmental efforts to alter the academic
ompetencies of students. Had the neo-conservatives looked upon education as basically a process of passively absorbing information rather than of understanding and structuring it, they might have been more sanguine concerning the potentialities of students since the mere learning of isolated facts is probably easier than the integration of those facts into a meaningful whole. Those opposed to conservative educational views have not all necessarily considered education as a matter of learning facts, but they have generally stressed the importance of the environment in explaining human differences.

The advocates and opponents of selective admissions policies in higher education disagree on the primary focus of education on the college level. The opponents of selective education are concerned with the uplifting of the vast majority of students while the proponents of a selective policy wish to devote their efforts to those of the greatest intellectual potential. When the President's Commission on Higher Education recommended that higher education be made less verbal and less intellectual, it revealed a propensity to alter the nature of higher education to make it available to a greater number of people. It is highly probable that some of the members of this group had implicitly assumed that the common welfare depended more on raising the average level of academic attainment than on the development of highly competent leadership. On the other hand, the neo-conservatives assumed that the welfare of the nation was more dependent on the development of an elite of wisdom and character. One of the reasons for this disagreement rested on a difference of opinion concerning the academic potentialities of the

\(^\text{4Ibid.}, \text{p. 13.}\)
majority of students. Another possible basis for disagreement might have been a difference of historical interpretation concerning the role of selective leadership in contrast to the power of mass movements in shaping the course of history.

Neo-conservatives have generally emphasized the transmission of the wisdom of the past to present and future generations. Implicitly assumed in this emphasis on cultural transmission was the existence of certain verities which would not alter with historical change. In contrast with John Dewey and other pragmatist educators, the neo-conservatives did not stress change but rather focused on what they regarded as the eternal values.

Neo-conservatives have agreed on the desirability of transmitting the traditional social values. They have generally argued that tradition is an efficacious and worthwhile vehicle for the transmission of values since it contains the funded wisdom of the past. In contrast to writers such as Hutchins and Adler who have advocated only the imparting of the wisdom of famous authors and scholars, the neo-conservatives have also advocated the transmission of the values of the various folk cultures of the world. Certain neo-conservatives, such as T. S. Eliot and Russell Kirk, have emphasized the importance of tradition as a remedy for the ills of the twentieth century; other neo-conservative writers such as Irving Babbitt and G. H. Bantock, have emphasized other remedies in addition to acknowledging the value of tradition.

Concerning the content of education, the neo-conservatives have all quite clearly stressed the importance of the liberal arts. Neo-conservatives have especially emphasized the importance of instruction in literature which they have valued primarily as the means whereby
students learn the nature and use of ethical values. Of the two qualities emphasized by the neo-conservatives, wisdom and virtue, virtue was generally considered to be primary. By focusing on literature as the major means of moral instruction, the neo-conservatives implicitly relied upon the utilization of concrete situations rather than on abstract principles as the preferred method of approach. Their method therefore tended to be more inductive than deductive. One exception to the general advocacy of the literary method of value instruction was the position of Bernard Iddings Bell who espoused a fundamentally religious approach.

As a group, the neo-conservatives preferred a prescribed curriculum to the elective principle of selection. The most common reasons given for opposing the elective principle were that young people lacked the needed competences to make sensible selections and that studies differed from one another in intrinsic value. Conservatives preferred to prescribe subjects on a hierarchical basis with those subjects believed to embody moral, religious, and intellectual values placed at the summit. For the purpose of contrast, the widely known defense of the elective principle by Charles W. Eliot, former president of Harvard University, can be cited. Eliot was confident that all studies if pursued with vigor and efficiency would be of equal value. Motivation was deemed to be an important factor in determining how efficiently studies would be pursued. Therefore, Eliot felt that students should have the opportunity to select the subjects of the greatest interest to them. The mature student was, he believed, competent to make wise choices.

In general, the neo-conservatives did not stress the importance of interest as much as Charles Eliot. They felt it to be more important to
choose subjects of intrinsic worth than to minister to the desires of the students. The neo-conservatives were not so confident of the competency of even mature students nor of the purity of their motives in choosing subjects. As we have seen, Irving Babbitt exemplified this skepticism when he suspected that indolence might prove to be more important than interest as a guide to the selection of subjects. The neo-conservative attitude toward the elective principle resembled their view of mass higher education. On both issues, a strong consciousness of human limitations was manifested.

Regarding the views of neo-conservatives concerning teaching methods, instructional procedures are ultimately based upon learning theories. We must therefore inquire into the learning theory which underlies the neo-conservative view of education. Since none of the neo-conservative writers considered in this study was an educational psychologist, it is hardly surprising that no one of these writers has given us a systematic theory of learning. We do however have certain indications of their fundamental attitudes and from these instances should be able to extrapolate the outline of a learning theory.

To this writer, the most striking fact about neo-conservative attitudes toward learning is their strong resemblance to Gestalt views of learning. Like the Gestalt psychologists, neo-conservative writers have viewed learning as primarily an interactive process in which both the teacher and the student play important roles. In accordance with the

conservative principle of respect for authority, neo-conservatives have emphasized the role of the teacher as the leader and guide in the classroom. In addition, neo-conservatives have also stressed the importance of considering the abilities of the child. When directing a class, the teacher should, therefore, modify his own plans to suit the nature of the students before him.6

Like the Gestalt psychologists, the neo-conservatives also stress the importance of insight. With the exception of T. S. Eliot, all the neo-conservative writer considered in this study underscored the educational importance of insight regardless of whether they termed it the "illative sense," "seeing patterns," or simply "intuition." Generally, they conceived of insight as the power to integrate separate details into meaningful wholes. Insight was generally considered to be the product of a combination of the functions of the faculties of the imagination and reason although Kirk, following Newman, included other faculties as well. Generally, reason was to be employed by the individual as the final judge of the generalities arrived at through the use of the imagination. Of particular concern to the neo-conservatives was the utilization of insight to abstract and interrelate general ideas and values.

What method should a teacher employ to teach insightfully? The neo-conservatives have not given us a clear answer to this question but enough experiments have been performed by Gestalt psychologists to give

6The view of the Gestalt psychologists regarding the role of the students was similar to that of the neo-conservatives. The former tended however to view teachers more as guides than leaders. See ibid. for further details.
us some important clues. Since insight is a process which occurs largely in the mind of the student, it would seem to be obvious that the teacher would have to rely on the discussion method rather than on telling the student the answer to a problem. It is important that the discussion take place in a structured situation where the teacher leads the student sequentially to the attainment of the particular insight that the teacher is seeking to convey. This sequential procedure would presumably begin with a review of all relevant material because insight is fundamentally the power to integrate what has previously been learned into a structured whole. The teacher would then presumably ask the student questions designed to focus attention on those aspects of the whole which are relevant to the attainment of the desired insight. The Socratic method of questioning has frequently been utilized for eliciting insights.

To the neo-conservatives, learning at its best pertained to understandings more than to factual information and skills. The basic academic skills were to be acquired in the lower schools in preparation for the integrated understandings to be obtained in the colleges. The neo-conservatives have therefore emphasized the content of learning. The techniques were considered important primarily as instruments for the acquisition of the understandings. In this respect, they diverged from the mental disciplinarians who stressed learning skills more than content and from the educational realists who placed greater stress on factual information.

In general, the neo-conservatives advocated a primarily academic program of instruction since their concern was largely with ideas and values although they were, as we have seen, quite ready to utilize

7Ibid. The Gestalt psychologists were of course not necessarily conservative themselves but they shared the conservative's emphasis on insight.
aesthetic and affective approaches to education for their cognitive value. With regard to those individuals who did not exhibit superior academic talent, most neo-conservatives believed that after these students have acquired enough formal education to function usefully in the non-academic world, they should be permitted and indeed encouraged to pursue their education through practical experience. Bantock differed from the others in that he had greater confidence that these students would benefit from further instruction which would be primarily practical rather than academic in nature. Nevertheless, the neo-conservatives as a whole emphasized the importance of human differences in ability in planning learning programs.

With regard to the agencies to be utilized in the educational process, the neo-conservatives agreed that while the major function of the school should be educational, other institutions should also play their parts. The family was especially emphasized as an agency ideally suited to convey instruction in morals, manners, and in the cultural traditions of society. The church was also considered important for supplying the basic religious instruction which all the neo-conservative writers under consideration so strongly emphasized, including even the skeptic, Irving Babbitt. They were also concerned about the educational effects of such tools of popular culture as books, magazines, paintings, and musical compositions. This concern was especially evident in the writings of T. S. Eliot and B. I. Bell but was to some extent true of all the writers under discussion. Although the school was considered to be the primary agency of formal education, other agencies of both formal and informal education were also therefore deemed to be important.

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8See page 101 of this study.
As proponents of the unique value of tradition, conservative writers would be expected to stress the educational importance of those agencies which have been the primary conduits of tradition -- especially the family and the church. In this respect, the neo-conservatives were being consistent with their basic philosophical viewpoint.

In the second chapter, the basic philosophical presuppositions of neo-conservatism were given and certain educational implications were inferred. On the whole, the exponents of neo-conservative educational thought have fulfilled our expectations concerning the educational entailments of the conservative viewpoint. There is however one major area which they have neglected. Our inferences concerning the attitudes and methods of approach of the conservative school counselor have not been confirmed by our study of neo-conservative writers because the neo-conservatives have largely neglected the whole area of school counseling. Yet this is an important area of educational endeavor. By the study of the implications of neo-conservatism concerning school counseling, we can infer the general neo-conservative attitude on the nature of the individual student and his fundamental needs; for the counselor is concerned to a considerable extent with the personal desires and problems of the student.

As was pointed out in the second chapter, the conservative view of human nature has been characterized by an emphasis upon the weakness and irrationality of mankind.\(^9\) Humans were not considered to be free and autonomous but were pictured as continually beset by anxieties.

\(^9\)See pages 39-40 of this study.
Their needs for security, status, and meaning were believed to be especially strong. Most of these needs could only be satisfied by satisfactory relationships between the individual and society. These anxieties have been increased during the twentieth century by the steady undermining of the traditional institutions of society. The neo-conservatives have been especially concerned by the erosion of belief in traditional standards of value and by the rising tide of equalitarianism.

These views obviously have many ramifications with regard to school counseling. To the conservative school counselor, the importance of helping the student to find a meaningful philosophy of life which would enable the student to make satisfying choices cannot be gainsaid. This attitude is entirely consonant with the general neo-conservative stress upon the finding and discrimination of values.

In addition, the conservative counselor would be concerned with enabling the student to find his proper place in the vocational, intellectual, and social hierarchy. To a considerable extent, the work of the conservative counselor would be focused on helping the individual student to ascertain his vocational and educational assets and limitations including a realistic understanding of what the student should and should not strive to achieve. In this respect his position would be in sharp contrast to his more equalitarian counterparts whose confidence in

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10 The causes of this situation, as set forth by R. A. Nisbet, were analyzed on pages 37-38 of this study.

11 See in particular pages 27, 30, and 44 of this study.
the efficacy of environmental influences would tend to make them more responsive to the desires of the students than to their capabilities. If, for example, a student expresses interest in a profession apparently unsuited to his abilities, the more equalitarian type of counselor would be inclined to try to overcome the deficiencies of the student while the conservative counselor would be more inclined to suggest that the student change his goal. This difference in approach is based on a difference in estimation of the effectiveness of environmental influences.

In view of the importance that the neo-conservatives have imputed to the relationships of the individual to society, it would seem to follow that the conservative counselor would seek to involve students in cooperative social endeavor as a means of relieving the anxieties that might interfere with schoolwork. This practice should not however, be interpreted as implying that the conservative would necessarily prefer cooperation to competition. The strong achievement orientation of the conservative would presumably militate against an indiscriminate acceptance of cooperation as a desirable value; for the conservative stress on selective excellence entails a certain amount of competition to meet standards of excellence if selection is to be an effective device for enhancing excellence. Other things being equal, whether competition or cooperation would be acceptable would depend upon which practice in a given situation would most enhance achievement. With regard to the school, cognitive achievements would be emphasized by the neo-conservatives.

12See the discussion on pages 44-45 of this treatise.
In general, the values which the conservative school counselor would seek to effectuate would not be permissive in character but would include the harder virtues which have figured so prominently in conservative educational thought such as discipline and restraint. The conservative view of happiness has not been couched in terms of pleasure and relaxation but rather in terms of challenge and achievement. Yet the conservative ideal of happiness was not completely individualistic in nature; for while the individual was considered to be in need of striving for achievement, he was also deemed to be in need of sociability with his fellows. Above all, the individual was considered to be in need of a coherent philosophy of life.

The two greatest deficiencies in neo-conservative educational thought are probably the absence of a systematic presentation of the educational dimensions of conservatism, and the absence of speculation pertaining to the implications of neo-conservatism with regard to guidance and counseling. It is hoped that this study will contribute toward alleviating these deficiencies.

The greatest deficiency which exists in neo-conservative thought considered as a general whole is probably the absence of a detailed integration of conservative metaphysical thought with the findings of modern science. The importance of this task is obvious; for the conservative remedy for the perplexities of the contemporary age in the last analysis may be the truly viable one -- an emphasis upon the eternal verities and upon high standards of personal and social achievement.
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The concluding task of this study will be a general overview of the structure of the study with attention to be given to some of the more salient highlights. By this means it is hoped that we may obtain a retrospective insight into the nature of conservatism in general and of neo-conservative educational theory in particular.

In the first chapter, the general design of this study was given and the parameters thereof were clearly indicated. The need for a clear definition of conservatism was established. A definition was formulated based upon an analysis of scholarly usage of "conservatism" and cognate terms. The essential elements of conservatism were identified as the advocacy of an aristocratic elitism and of the value of traditional authority. Both positions were seen to be ultimately based upon a hierarchical conception of values and of the nature of humanity. The conservative position therefore was predicated upon both the existence of and the desirability of hierarchy.¹

In the subsequent section of the first chapter, the conservative position was contrasted with related views with which it has frequently been confused. The probable cause for this confusion was the lack of a clear conception of the nature of conservatism. Finally, near the end

¹See pages 9-10 of this study.
of the chapter, the distinctive nature of neo-conservatism was discussed. The distinguishing characteristic of neo-conservatism was seen to consist not in the espousal of any unique doctrines not previously adhered to by other conservatives, but rather in an emphasis upon cultural (including both educational and intellectual) concerns in strong contrast to the primarily political concerns of eighteenth century conservatives. This change of emphasis was seen to be a response to the decline of belief in religious and moral values and to the rise of mass culture. 2

The second chapter was devoted to an analysis of the fundamental neo-conservative concepts pertaining to the nature of the universe, man, and society as a means of explaining the basic reasons for the positions taken by neo-conservatives on educational and other issues. It was considered important to establish the neo-conservative position on these issues because some writers have chosen to deny that there was a general conservative philosophy. 3 In this study, an effort was made to extrapolate the educational consequences of acceptance of the conservative viewpoint which would, it was hoped, be confirmed by the historical survey to follow. Such basic conservative concepts as hierarchy, natural law, and the inheritance theory of human development were brought into the discussion as well as the conservative view of the psychological nature of humanity. 4

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2See pages 16-20 of this study.

3See for example the reference to Michael Oakeshott on page of this treatise.

4It should not be inferred that the writer was implying that only conservatives necessarily held each of these positions.
In the following three chapters, the neo-conservative writers on education were divided into three schools, those who have combined humanism with traditionalism; those humanists who while favorable to humanism have not made it a major element in their systems; and the basically religious approach to educational problems. T. S. Eliot and Russell Kirk represented the first school; Irving Babbitt and G. H. Bantock, the second; and Bernard Iddings Bell, the third school. The third, fourth, and fifth chapters were devoted respectively to these divisions of neo-conservative opinion. An analysis was undertaken in each of these chapters of the views and the historical significance of the writers who exhibited the characteristics of the three wings of neo-conservative educational thought.

In general, this classification of the subdivisions of neo-conservatism was based upon the particular values which were emphasized by the writers in question. Most of these writers espoused classical humanism but some of these writers combined it with an equally marked emphasis upon traditionalism while other writers, although favorable to traditionalism, tended to emphasize more contemporary approaches. In the case of Bernard Iddings Bell, the approach was traditionalist without being especially humanistic in character. The particular traditions which Bell emphasized were religious in character, while Eliot and Kirk emphasized the traditions of the various cultures of the world as well as the intellectual and religious wisdom of the past. On the whole, the neo-conservative writers agreed as to the value of traditions that have been passed on through many generations, although they were far from agreement as to the efficacy of traditionalism in the contemporary
world.

The sixth chapter was devoted to a summary and integration of the material presented in the preceding chapters relating to neo-conservative educational thought. To put it more broadly, an effort was made to present the basic characteristics of neo-conservatism as a distinct school of educational thought. This overview was based upon an integration of historical, philosophical, and psychological methods of approach.

Historically, neo-conservative educational thought represented a reaction against two marked trends of Western civilization in the twentieth century -- the decline of belief in objective moral standards and the spread of cultural and educational equalitarianism. Contrary to the popular impression, Edmund Burke was not the primary source of inspiration of the neo-conservative educational writers. Instead, the influences upon the neo-conservatives were varied in character although, among all the preceding schools of educational thought, that of the cultural humanists exhibited the strongest affinities to the thinking of the neo-conservatives. In fact, at least with regard to their educational thinking, the neo-conservatives can be regarded as representing a predominantly elitist type of cultural humanism.

The major aim of education from the neo-conservative standpoint was the development of an elite characterized by the ability to discriminate between ideas and between values in terms of their nature and their worth. Such an aim implied the stressing of the analytical and synthetical reasoning abilities in the educational process. Also implicit was the emphasis upon the study of those subjects which most closely pertained to ideas and values - the humanities and the social sciences.
The neo-conservatives were also concerned about the transmission of traditional values. Tradition was considered to be a superior means of transmitting values, and long-term traditions were believed to embody a superior wisdom as the end products of the experiences of many generations. The neo-conservative advocacy of tradition not only covered the wisdom of the thinkers and writers of the past, but also included the values associated with the various folk cultures.

To the neo-conservatives, learning was an interactive process which the teacher directed but in which the abilities of the students were among the determining influences. The attainment of insight was strongly emphasized. Insight was conceived of as primarily an integrative competency whereby, through what was generally considered to be the cooperation of the reason with the imagination, the individual would be able to "see" facts in relationship to a general holistic pattern. To induce the attainment of an insight, a teaching method which, in many of its characteristics, is similar to the Socratic method of discourse is clearly implied. With regard to the implementation of such a method, a considerable degree of student participation would obviously be necessary.

In the implementation of conservative educational aims, the neo-conservatives felt that the existence of high selective standards of admission and promotion, at least with regard to higher education, was essential. This attitude was based primarily upon the conviction that the ratiocinative potentialities of most individuals was too limited to make any attempt to train a mass population of sages very practical. To attempt to do so would inevitably lower educational standards; thereby resulting in the neglect of the training of competent leadership.
An attempt was also made in the sixth chapter to depict the aims of the neo-conservative school counselor. On the basis of general conservative principles, it was believed that the counselor would have three basic aims: to help students to find a meaningful philosophy of life; to aid them in finding their proper places in the social, intellectual, and vocational hierarchy; to promote cooperative social activities among students. In general, the conservative counselor and teacher would both show an orientation to achievement values. Happiness would be considered more a matter of challenge and endeavor than of pleasure and relaxation. To the neo-conservatives, the value of creative tension far exceeded that of bland contentment.

In the conventional history of educational thought, there has been a strong tendency to divide the educational right into the perennialist and the essentialist schools. One might well wonder if neo-conservatism can be fitted into either of these two categories. The answer must be in the negative. Aside from the fact that most of the prominent advocates of both perennialism and essentialism fail to exhibit the aristocratic tendencies of the neo-conservatives, there are other reasons for this conclusion. The perennialists certainly emphasize the wisdom of the intellectuals and aesthetes of the past, but do not exhibit the emphasis upon the traditions of the various folk cultures of the world characteristic of the neo-conservatives. Furthermore, the essentialist emphasis upon adaptation to the contemporary world does not find a counterpart in neo-conservative thought. While, in neo-conservative philosophy, there is some stress upon adaptation, as there is in most educational philosophies, it is not emphasized as much as adherence to values and ideas because of
their own intrinsic worth. In fact, the neo-conservatives seem to be more interested in reconstructing society in a conservative direction than in adapting to it. To this writer it seems evident that neo-conservatism should be considered a distinct school of educational thought in its own right. To do any less would be to overlook the distinctive characteristics of the neo-conservative movement.
SELECTED

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12/3/74

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