15. Robert Paul Wolf, *The Ideal of the University*, pp 1-57.

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PART ONE

Four Models of a University

In the opening pages of his famous lecture on "Politics as a Vocation," Max Weber undertakes to develop a sociological definition of the state. Setting himself against an old tradition, he specifically refuses to attempt a definition in terms of the ends or purposes of the state, for he says, "there is scarcely any task that some political association has not taken in hand, and there is no task that one could say has always been exclusive and peculiar to those associations which are designated as political ones." Instead, Weber offers a definition in terms of the *means* by which all states have pursued their ends, namely, physical force.

If we were interested here in developing a sociological definition of the university, in discovering the common and defining marks of the social institutions which actually go by the name of "university" in America today, we would be equally ill-advised to focus upon ends and purposes. Universities have been founded for all manner of reasons: to preserve an old faith, to proselytize a new one, to train skilled workers, to raise the standards of the professions, to expand the frontiers of knowledge, and even to educate the young. Were we to seize upon some one of the many purposes of American universities as *the* purpose, we would be in the uncomfortable position of appearing to claim that most of the so-called universities in the country are not "really" universities at all. There is not a great deal of illumination to be gained from such a course.

But since we are concerned with the *ideal* of the university, with the way it should be rather than with the way it is, there is for us no better course than to attend to ends and purposes. Without a coherent notion of what a university is for—some idea of what it should be and do—we cannot possibly evaluate existing universities; nor can we make rational proposals for university

reform unless we have already decided on the direction in which we think the institution ought to move.

Confronted with a task so obviously value laden, some students of American education will want to shrink into a more "objective" study, such as an investigation of the educational ideals which the founders and governors of universities have themselves actually cherished. There is much to be said for such a study, but it won't solve our problem, for even after we know what American educators have sought to accomplish in their universities, we must still decide whether they were *right*. In the end, empirical data about the character and direction of American universities, as well as information about the guiding ideals of their administrators, will be less important to us than the philosophical arguments which can be advanced in support of those ideals.

I shall begin our investigation by sketching four models of a university. Each model is a picture of an imaginary university which embodies one particular set of ideals and is organized on an appropriate principle of internal authority. Needless to say, these models are not intended to be representations of actual institutions. Indeed, they are not even really intended as accounts of possible institutions. Rather, they are what Weber called "ideal types"—thought-experiments by means of which we can trace out some of the connections between a particular conception of university education and the institutional arrangements, social conditions, entrance requirements, and purposes which naturally follow from it.

Several of these models have long lived in the minds of university teachers and administrators, and they have thus been partial causes of the universities which now flourish in America. Other models are urged upon us by partisans of university reform, and hence they play a role in current debates. My purpose in beginning with a series of abstract models is threefold: First, as I have indicated, I wish to trace out the connections between the ideals themselves and the institutional arrangements which might embody them. Secondly, I want to clarify somewhat the confused reality of university education by showing how conflicting ideals have become intertwined in strange institutional combinations.

For example, the practice of beginning a college education with one or two years of general education, and completing it with the writing of a very professional-looking honors thesis, makes no sense at all until we see that it grows out of a compromise between two antithetical ideals of undergraduate education. Finally, and most important, I want to confront the various ideals as ideals, and try to decide which of them really *should* dominate American higher education. In thus making the normative question central, I reflect the domination of practical over theoretical concerns in my own mind.

The four models to be discussed are:

The University as a Sanctuary of Scholarship
The University as a Training Camp for the Professions
The University as a Social Service Station
The University as an Assembly Line for Establishment Man

The first model is drawn from the history of the university; the second model reflects its present character; the third is a projection of present trends and thus is a prediction of the shape of the university to come; and the fourth is a radical critique of the university, an anti-model, as it were. None of them, I might say, perfectly embodies my ideals and preferences. That must wait for Part Three and the Conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE

The University as a Sanctuary of Scholarship

The most familiar image of the university is the ivory tower, symbol of the sanctuary within which the scholar quietly pursues his bookish calling. The scholar is the man of learning, the *Gelehrte*, the reader of languages ancient and modern, who laboriously masters the literature of the great humanistic tradition together with the commentaries which his predecessors have made upon it, and then carries that tradition a step forward with

his own original contribution. The scholarly life is removed from the immediate affairs of the social order. Quiet, contemplative, frequently celibate, it is enlivened by bookish disputes of remarkable virulence in which a footnote can wound as deeply as a sword and a book review crush with fatal force. The truly great scholars are men of enormous stature within the world of the university. Unprepossessing though they may be in personal appearance and address, an aura surrounds them like that which descends upon the winner of a Nobel Prize. Every member of the academic world carries within himself some image of a professor who is, for him, the embodiment of the ideal of scholarship. Mine is of the great Harvard medievalist Harry Austyn Wolfson.

The activity of scholarship has its historical roots in at least three older activities, from which it derives its characteristic norms and style. Most ancient, is the study of religious texts which flourished in the Hebrew, Christian, and Islamic tradition of the ancient and medieval world. The object of study was not the world—neither of ideas nor of men—but a body of writings divinely inspired, together with the steadily accumulating commentaries of previous scholars. The intense, minute concentration upon every syllable and nuance of the text was justified by its Godly origin. No mortal product could sustain so many centuries of interpretation! Obviously, this activity of scholarly exegesis demanded a mastery of the text together with the accretion of commentary. It called for encyclopedic knowledge, precision, completeness, and a self-effacing impersonality. After all, if I make so bold as to comment upon the word of God, it is not I who should be the center of attention.

To this activity of textual commentary was added a second sort of study of texts during the Renaissance of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. The appearance in the West of new versions of the ancient religious writings, together with a new and more critical attitude toward the received texts, stimulated a widespread attempt at the rectification of the Old and New Testaments. The Latin Vulgate of St. Jerome was seen to embody countless textual corruptions and mistranslations from the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Implausible as the connection may

seem, one can trace a line of historical ancestry from Erasmus's attempts to establish the precise wording of God's revelations to man, to the present-day attempts of the Modern Language Association to provide definitive editions of the works of American novelists.

At roughly the same time, Italian scholars, poets, and artists rediscovered the literature and art of the ancient world. The rebirth of classical culture stimulated an enormous scholarly search for Roman and Greek literature. Significantly, this body of writings was secular, not divine. It would seem natural therefore not to place such great emphasis on the correction of the text, for it could scarcely be a matter of transcendent importance if some ancient poet's words were misconstrued or even lost entirely.

Nevertheless, a devotion equal to that with which religious texts had been studied was dedicated to the literary remains of classical antiquity, with consequences which are still felt in centers of humanistic study today.

Thus the activity of scholarship is in the first instance a religious and literary activity, directed toward a given corpus of texts, either divine or secular, around which a literature of commentary has accumulated. The corpus is finite, clearly defined, growing slowly as each stage in the progress of Western civilization deposits its masterpieces in the Great Tradition. Though the tradition may contain pregnant, emotionally powerful commentaries upon life and men's affairs, the scholar's concern is with the textual world, not with the world about which the text speaks. At its best, scholarship develops a refined sensibility and a wise appreciation of the complexities and ironies of the ways of God and man; at its worst, scholarship hardens into a stultifying pedantry which lacks the wit and creative genius of those who wrote the great texts.

Scholarship, in this central role of the transmission and commentary upon a divine or secular corpus, is preeminently an activity of what today is called the Humanities. Quite obviously it is antithetical to the spirit of the theoretical or experimental sciences. A physics which confined itself to commentaries on the original texts of Ptolemy, Aristotle, and Archimedes would indeed grace the halls of scholarship, but it would hardly succeed

in explaining the behavior of falling bodies, let alone making an airplane that could fly. (Indeed, in most colleges and universities today, the study of the classic texts of science is left to those students who fail to exhibit any aptitude for science itself. Imagine relegating Donne and Shakespeare to the unpoetical undergraduate!) Nor does the ideal of scholarship truly flourish in the social sciences. There have been men of great learning, such as Max Weber; but society itself, not a body of texts, is the object of the social scientist's attention.

The ideal of scholarship has spawned a curious pedagogical offspring in the undergraduate curriculum. The conception of a defined textual corpus is broadened somewhat to become the familiar image of a great cultural tradition, and the theory of General Education emerges. According to this conception, Western civilization is a millennia-long dialogue among great thinkers, whose debates over the eternal questions are embodied in a number of transcendentally great works of literature and philosophy. Rising in the ancient Mediterranean and in the Near East, the two tributaries of Judeo-Christian and Graeco-Roman thought flow into a mighty cultural river, which rolls down through the Middle Ages to modern times.

This tradition is the intellectual heritage of Western man. The fundamental purpose of a college education is to initiate the student into the dialogue, acquaint him with the great ideas in these various literary embodiments, and develop that sensitivity and responsiveness which will allow him to share the tradition with fellow initiates.

The scholars whose careful work preserves the great texts are also educated men, conversant with the major works across the entire breadth of the tradition. A university which embodies this ideal is thus a community of scholars and students who converse about a common literature. Even though the subtleties of advanced scholarship may be appreciated by only a few specialists, nevertheless every member of the community can at least serve as an informed audience for the several experts.

Once the ideal of scholarship is laid out, we can easily enough infer the institutional arrangements in which it will find its most

natural embodiment. The university will be a self-governing company of scholars, joined by a number of apprentice-scholars whose studies are guided by the senior professors under whom they work. The university as a community will be small, informally organized, heavy with tradition, and governed in large measure by the commitment of its members to the life of scholarship. It will have little to do in a regular way with the larger society, keeping very much to its own affairs and judging its activities by the internal norms of scholarship rather than by social norms of productivity or usefulness.

I take it there is very little real opposition to the ideals and activity of the sort of scholarship I have been describing. Even the most enthusiastic partisans of scientific research or social service commonly pay at least passing homage to the world of genuine scholarship. Many have decried the pedantry of false scholarship, and some have fought to free the social sciences from the grip of inappropriate scholarly ideals; but, save in present-day China, where the opposition to scholarship has a special political significance, there is widespread—and, I believe, justified—agreement that humanistic scholars must retain a place in any plan for the ideal university.

There is, unfortunately, rather less agreement on the companion proposition that scholarship cannot be the *sole* occupant of the university. Even in this age of science, there are traditionalists who would drive out of the university all those who study life instead of books or substitute experiments for footnotes. My favorite example of this extraordinary narrowness of vision comes, of course, from the University of Chicago, where devotion to the great tradition, particularly as it flows from Aristotle, for a time became frozen in curricula, reading lists, and degree requirements. Some while ago, the question was raised in a meeting of the Chicago College Faculty whether history should be added to the contents of the general education program. A dedicated acolyte of the Tradition rose to argue against the proposal. In support of his position, with characteristic medieval deference to authority, he quoted the passage in the *Poetics* in which Aristotle argues that history is an inferior discipline because it deals only with partic-

ulars whereas poetry deals with universals. What is striking is not that this argument carried the day—in fact it lost, and history took its place alongside poetry and philosophy in the general education curriculum—but simply that those present considered it a perfectly respectable and relevant argument! It is roughly as though Henry Ford II were to try to dissuade Walter Reuther from demanding a pay raise by appeal to the medieval doctrine of the just wage!

Whatever else we include in our utopian model, a place must be assured to Harry Wolfson, Moses Hadas, Erich Auerbach, Paul Kristeller, and all the other great *Gelehrten*. And I for one will break a lance for the theory of the great tradition at least as *one element* in an undergraduate curriculum. We deal here in matters of intellectual taste, about which there is much disputing, but no deciding. I cannot truthfully claim that men are inevitably spiritually crippled by their unfamiliarity with the great tradition, nor is initiation into its subtleties a precondition for the creation of new works of intellect. Certainly no one of my leftish leanings would see any *political* merit in a cultural tradition which has so often served as an armory of reaction. There is much to be said for the childlike innocence of those antitraditionalists who, in Michael Oakeshott's lovely phrase, strive to live each day as though it were their first. Still, I confess that I *like* a cultivated man or woman, on whom allusion is not lost, in whose discourse there echo earlier voices, one capable of that special sort of irony which comes from the awareness that one's most precious thoughts have been anticipated.

So in *my* ideal university, though not perhaps in yours, a quiet quadrangle will be set aside for the scholar; and I shall accord him thus a deference which I would not show to merely rich or powerful men.

CHAPTER TWO

The University as a Training Camp for the Professions

A more recent conception with quite different implications for the process of education is the ideal of the university as a training camp for the professions. The universities founded in Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries consisted of faculties of law, medicine, and theology; and the first two of these at least remain the leading professional faculties of the present-day university. In the American experience, it was the need for clergymen that prompted the establishment of colleges in the colonial period. Only later in the nineteenth century did institutions of higher education begin to accumulate the penumbra of professional faculties to which we now attach the distinctive title, "university."*

The ideal of the professional school presupposes the existence of a number of socially defined occupational roles or categories whose characteristics correspond roughly to what we customarily mean by a "profession."** Such occupational roles are organized as self-regulating, self-certifying groups of men and women who

* For a first-rate discussion of the growth and present condition of professional schools in America, see *The Academic Revolution*, by Christopher Jencks and David Riesman (New York: Doubleday, 1968), especially Chapter 5. Although my discussion here deals with somewhat different questions, I have benefited enormously from their encyclopedic knowledge and sociological analysis.

** The terms "profession" and "calling" have etymological implications which have been pretty much lost in recent years. It may be that a doctor or lawyer or college teacher *ought* to "profess" something, or ought to be "called" to his position as a minister was once said to be called by God, but if so, that is now clearly a prescription and hardly a description. It may still be the case that God calls many and chooses few, but the statistics on admissions to professional schools are not nearly so discouraging.

possess and exercise a special skill or body of technical knowledge. Characteristically, a *professional* submits his work for evaluation to other members of the profession rather than to his clients, over whom he asserts an authority born of expertise. Professions vary, of course, and a lawyer is typically less independent of his client than a doctor, more independent than an architect. Nevertheless, the essential and defining mark of the professional is his dependence upon other professionals for his certification in the profession. A businessman need not persuade other businessmen of his competence before he launches a company, nor must a steelworker pass tests set by other steelworkers. But a lawyer must be certified by lawyers, a minister by ministers, a doctor by doctors, and a teacher by teachers. Much of the high social status of the professions in American society derives from this autonomy of certification, for it is a kind of power which confers dignity on its wielders. Rich men have been known to buy mayors, governors, even United States senators, but H. L. Hunt himself could not purchase certification from Harvard Medical School or a doctorate in art history from Columbia University.

The high status (and correspondingly elevated incomes) of the professions serves as a permanent spur to professionalization of the most diverse occupational roles. To the traditional quartet of law, medicine, theology, and philosophy (in the old sense of systematic rational investigation of man and the universe—what was once called Moral Philosophy and Natural Philosophy) have been added such job categories as architecture, primary- and secondary-school teaching, urban planning, business administration, diplomacy, landscape gardening, undertaking, warfare, social work, and even the performing arts. In each case, the same moves are made: first, it is claimed that the activity rests upon a body of knowledge and technique which is capable of being formulated in principles and taught in the classroom; then, the natural conclusion is drawn that only an expert practitioner can teach the activity to others and *judge whether the student has mastered it*; from this, it follows that professional schools should be established, entrance requirements fixed, degrees granted, and state-appointed boards of certification set up so that only those qualified

to practice the profession will be legally permitted to do so. In some cases, the very highest level of professionalization is achieved: the practitioners reserve to themselves the role of judging what *ends* their clients should aim at, as well as what *means* they should employ. Thus, we need expert doctors to tell us not only how to achieve the physical condition we desire, but even what physical condition we *ought* to desire. Lawyers, on the other hand, are not expected to set goals for their clients, but simply to facilitate whatever plans are already projected.

Roughly speaking, a profession comes pretty close to what Plato called a *techné* in the *Republic* and the *Gorgias*. Plato saw quite clearly that the notion of *techné*, resting as it did on an objective theory of the good for man, was deeply antidemocratic. He had contempt, as we do, for the medical quack who sought to make his patient feel good momentarily without really curing his illness; but Plato took the natural next step from which we shrink, and concluded that the rules of a state had a similar obligation to minister to the true health of the body politic, rather than merely pandering to its ignorant craving for flattery. We echo this aristocratic ideal in our use of the term "statesman" to describe the proposer of unpopular measures. In the end, however, we give our hearts to the panderers who get elected, thus proving that in America today, politics is not yet a profession.

The transformation of occupational roles into professions can be rationalized at least in part by the steady increase in the technical or theoretical component of modern work, although it is surely obvious that a number of the most recently established "professions" are merely ordinary jobs putting on airs. But there is no argument save historical accident for the practice of locating these professions institutionally in universities. The advantage to the new profession is obvious. If undertakers can persuade the state university to establish a degree—a *graduate* degree, yet!—in Mortuary Science, then they can wrap themselves quite literally in the robes of the academy, to the spiritual and financial benefit of the entire calling. But the question remains what effect is produced in the university by this endless expansion of its repertory of degrees, and what attitude we should take toward the process.

The easy and obvious attitude is an aristocratic disdain for whatever is new and vulgar. The faculty of arts and sciences looks with suspicion upon the candidates in law and medicine, who in turn feel an impatient irritation at the candidates for masters of art in teaching—the entire company of learned men averting its eyes as social work and library science receive their distinctive hoods. But though I find this attitude natural, holding as I do a degree in philosophy itself, the very original of the "academic" calling, still it seems to me a superficial response to a very deep problem. If I may make a rather odd comparison, it is like those liberal criticisms of American foreign policy during the Eisenhower years which made much of ineptitude of style and technique and ignored the more important question of basic goals. The fundamental question is not whether mortuary science should be granted a place alongside medicine, and library science next to law, but whether a university is an appropriate place for professional schools *at all*.

In the last chapter of this book, I shall argue for the Draconian proposal that *all* professional schools and professional degree-granting programs should be driven out of the university and forced to set themselves up as independent institutes. At this point, I wish merely to indicate some of the implications of professional training for the educational activities and institutional organization of a university.

The inclusion of professional schools and programs within the university damages and eventually destroys the unity of the academic community. Each professional school seeks to prepare its students for admission to the profession in the larger society. Hence, relationships develop which cut across university lines. The medical school establishes an association with a local hospital in which its students can do practical work. The professors maintain private medical practices as well as giving time to clinics. The faculty of the law school adjusts its curriculum to the demands of the state bar association, on whose committees many professors may sit. Practice teaching for education students requires a standing arrangement between the school of education and local primary- and secondary-school systems.

In countless ways, the activities of the professors and students of the professional schools reach out beyond the university, and inevitably loyalties are divided. The professional faculties cannot commit themselves or their energies to the university unconditionally, as professors in the arts and sciences regularly do. It was not surprising, therefore, that during the Columbia crisis, the college faculty and members of the graduate faculties of arts and sciences involved themselves most completely in the affair, while members of the law, medical, and business faculties rarely did more than attend the several large all-faculties meetings called by the president.

I do not see how the centrifugal dispersion of energies and loyalties can possibly be halted while professional schools and programs remain in the university community. It is obviously desirable that medical students spend time in hospital wards, that law professors help to set the standards of admission to the bar, that future teachers have the opportunity to conduct real classes under supervision before they begin their regular careers. And so long as such connections exist between sections of the university community and other social institutions, it will be impossible for the university itself to command the undivided loyalty and attention of all its members.*

Despite the fact that professional programs are tending more

* A second problem of great importance, though not directly relevant to our discussion, is the effect on the professions themselves of state regulations in the form of licensing boards, certification procedures, and legal codes of professional ethics. It might appear to be all to the good that the state should thus oversee the conduct of the professions, but a number of observers of quite diverse political persuasions have pointed out hidden dangers. Milton Friedman, in his iconoclastic essays *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, 1963), makes a striking attack on the state's regulation of the medical profession. By empowering boards of doctors to set quite high standards of medical education and qualification, Friedman argues, the state effectively divides the general population into two groups: those who can afford to pay for—and indeed get—generally excellent medical care, and those who, not being able to afford the medical care available, are also denied an opportunity to be treated by second-rate doctors with inferior medical preparation. By making "quacks" illegal, the state in effect says to the poor, "If you cannot afford the best, you must settle for nothing." Would we re-

and more to be located at the graduate level in American universities, professionalism has a very powerful effect on the character of undergraduate education. To some extent, this influence is felt whether the professional school is part of the university or not; but in some cases, as we shall see, the intrusion of professionalism into college education is helped along by the total lack of separation between undergraduate and professional curricula or faculties.

From the point of view of the professions, a college is expected to perform *three* functions: First, it must sort the undergraduates out into two groups—those who are acceptable as candidates for admission to professional programs and those who are unacceptable. Second, it must rank the acceptable candidates along a scale of excellence in aptitude and achievement in order to facilitate a fair and efficient distribution of scarce places in the more desirable professional programs (the crunch to get into Harvard Medical School is probably the most familiar example). And third, it must prepare undergraduates for professional training through inclusion in its curriculum of material which the professional schools wish to require as prerequisite to admission. The first two of these functions are inseparably bound up with the process of *grading*, a subject so complex and controversial that I shall deal with it in a separate section later in this book. The third touches upon the large question of the proper conduct and style of undergraduate education.

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fuse to allow a poor man to buy a secondhand Ford, on the grounds that no one should drive less than a new Rolls-Royce?

From the other end of the political spectrum, Henry Kariel makes an extremely persuasive case for the repressive and establishmentarian effect of state certification in a number of professional fields. In his book, *The Decline of Pluralism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), Kariel shows how the state strengthens the medical establishment of the AMA by placing in its hands the legal power to take away a dissident doctor's license, deprive him of indispensable hospital affiliation, and deny him the specialty certification he needs for certain sorts of medical practice.

Problems like these do not in the final instance concern the university, but insofar as professional faculties serve also on state licensing boards, the university becomes implicated in governmental activities which may very well limit its freedom as a community of free inquiry.

Three views of what undergraduate education ought to be are at work in America today, and corresponding to them are three sorts of undergraduate curricula. The first view is that college is merely an extension of high school—more material, a higher level of accomplishment demanded, somewhat greater freedom of choice and independence of work habits, but essentially just four more years of high school. The second view is that college is, or ought to be, the opening stage of professional training—in short, that college should really be graduate school. The proponents of this notion point to the improvements in high school preparation of today's college students and argue that the junior and senior years of college could be integrated into graduate and professional training programs with no educational loss and a great saving in time to the school-burdened student. The third view is that between the accumulation of knowledge and skills at the secondary level, and the professional preparation at the graduate level, there ought to occur an intellectual, cultural, and emotional experience which is *neither* a mere continuation of what went before *nor* a mere foretaste of what is to follow. Since I am deeply committed to a belief in the unique and irreducible character of undergraduate education, I should like to sketch a few arguments for it here and then try to show how the ideals and demands of professional training have invaded and at least partially destroyed it.

Sometime in late adolescence, boys and girls enter an extended period during which they make the difficult transition from childhood to the adult world. Just as the greater biological complexity of human beings lengthens and complicates the physical process of sexual maturation, producing the distinctive suspension of sexual development known in psychoanalytic theory as the latency period, so the complexity, flexibility, and autonomy of growing-up in our society produces the distinctive phase which Erikson calls the "identity crisis."

The child as a student masters a number of linguistic and mathematical skills and absorbs a body of information with very little psychic conflict.* But on the threshold of adulthood, he is

* Although quite unnecessary strain may be produced by familial and social pressure to do well in a competitive ranking system associated with the

suddenly faced with a problem much greater than any his schooling has ever posed. He must decide who he is, and hence who he is going to be for the rest of his life. He must choose not only a career, a job, an occupational role, but also a life-style, a set of values which can serve as his ideal self-image, and toward which he can grow through the commitment of his emotional energies. These choices are fateful, dangerous, highly charged, and are felt as such by the young man- or woman-to-be. Sexuality is of course an element in the emotional intensity of the choice, but it is by no means the most important. Ideology looms larger, as Erikson says. The very openness of choice in our society forces the late adolescent to question the deepest assumptions of his culture and upbringing. Hence religion in former times, and politics today, play a greater role than sex or money in the searching doubts of the future adult.

College is the appropriate setting for this transitional experience, and undergraduate education should be designed to facilitate and enrich it, not to squelch it. Ideally, students should be removed from their homes and gathered together into autonomous residential and educational communities. There they can experiment with being adult in a setting which is at once divorced from parental supervision (and the domination of the parent-child relationship) and somewhat insulated from the adult world of occupational roles and familial obligations. Through an education which is both exacting and flexible, students can make provisional commitments to styles of thought and action, test them for their fittingness, and either reject or adopt them in a more permanent way. I do not mean to imply that all students ought to become academics or intellectuals. But I do maintain that every young person should grow to adulthood with a style of intellect and sensibility which he has freely chosen in order to express his own needs, thoughts, and feelings in an appropriate and spontaneous

learning, children do not resist learning; what they frequently resist is the demand that they submit enthusiastically to invidious comparisons between themselves and their fellows.

way. The life of the intellectual is indeed only one among many, but the life of the mind should be the possession of every man and woman.

There are many readers, I fear, who will consider these remarks patronizing to undergraduates—the latest in a long line of rationalizations for the doctrine that the college stands *in loco parentis* to the student. Insofar as I deny that adulthood is the mere negation of childhood, I may indeed appear to patronize young people, for I admit that they are no longer children and yet refuse to acknowledge that they are adults. But this prolongation of the path to adulthood is the price we pay for the greater moral and spiritual autonomy that adulthood brings. There is no identity crisis for the child who has no freedom to choose an identity. The ancient Hebrews declared a boy to be a man at age twelve, and indeed, why not? He was not expected to *choose whether to be a Jew*; that was decided for him. When he could perform the predetermined roles assigned to him by his society, it was time for him to assume the status of an adult. The postponement of adulthood in our society is (or ought to be) a consequence of the weightiness of what it is to *be* an adult.

Educationally, the failure to recognize the unique importance of the transitional stage results in the attempt to hasten professional training. If no useful purpose is served by college, save as a brushup on high school subjects and a preparation for graduate school, then obviously one should improve high school education and start students on the road to their professions as early in their lives as possible. According to this view, undergraduate curricula should be reconstructed so that students need not waste time on irrelevant subjects or on introductory courses which will only have to be repeated at the graduate level. With appropriately "enriched" programs, we should be able to turn out lawyers at age twenty, doctors at age twenty-two, and doctors of philosophy at age twenty-four. Just such proposals are increasingly popular in American educational circles today. They place an especially high premium on early choice of career. The ideal student, in the eyes of such educators, is not the enthusiastic and imaginative young man or woman who vigorously challenges the norms and roles

offered by society, but the college freshman who already knows the topic of his doctoral dissertation. Surely it is not difficult to see that the precocious student, by moving smoothly from secondary schooling to professional training, loses precisely that experience of choice and commitment which is a precondition of genuine moral and emotional freedom.

To be sure, the transitional period is unruly, awkward, marked by false starts, shifts of direction, and dramatic changes of emotional climate. To the mature adult, a young student in the full flush of an identity crisis is at the very least an embarrassment and at the worst a threatening reminder of the compromises and dissatisfactions which lie beneath the surface of his own settled life. Frequently, therefore, students find their natural allies among the ranks of those men and women who feel a need to remain suspended, as it were, in an incompletely resolved crisis of identity. Such adults are frequently the very best undergraduate teachers, and in a college setting they find a social use for a psychological condition which would be merely a hindrance elsewhere in society.

Given this conception of undergraduate education, it seems to me that college could fruitfully begin earlier and perhaps not last quite so long. A practical proposal, responsive to the pressures of professionalization and to the present structure of secondary education, would be to admit students to college at the end of their eleventh year, for a college program of three years' duration. There should be *no* preprofessional training during that three years, although students ought to be permitted to *concentrate* their studies in any way they wish. Then, those students wishing to go on to graduate and professional programs would do so, pausing perhaps, as in the case of medicine, for a year of concentrated preparation in the special subjects required by their chosen profession. By means of this arrangement, the three stages of education would be clearly distinguished, and the crucial second stage would be given a separate institutional setting at just the right time in the lives of the students. No one would be led to confuse specialization with professionalism, or career uncertainty with unseriousness and weakness of will.

Opponents of professionalization at the undergraduate level

have frequently supported their position by appeals to theories of the nature of the subject matter of education. As we have already remarked, it is common to invoke the great cultural tradition which is the common heritage of all educated men, and then to identify the undergraduate years as the appropriate time for transmitting this tradition to students. At some institutions, so mechanical was the application of this view that a student was permitted to acquire his first degree merely by passing a set of survey examinations in the great tradition (University of Chicago under Hutchins). Elsewhere, emphasis was laid on reading the great books in their original languages (St. John's), or on mastering the historical sweep of the tradition (Columbia).

"Interdisciplinary studies" and "problem orientation" have also appeared as slogans on the placards of the antiprofessionals. The enemy here is "specialization," which is considered the characteristic vice of the professional. Cross-disciplinary curricula, staff-taught courses drawing on the faculties of several departments, undergraduate major fields defined in terms of problems rather than disciplines, all have been tried as ways of differentiating undergraduate from graduate education and ensuring that professional training is postponed until after the bachelor's degree.*

There is no reason why undergraduate education should not embody a theory about intellectual traditions or about the value of nonspecialization, so long as the members of the faculty are committed to it and the students responsive to it. But as a defense against professionalization, such a maneuver originates in a confusion. The distinguishing mark of professional training is not its *content* but its *form* (if I may adapt an old philosophical distinction). Professional training aims at the achievement of *qualification*, through the demonstrated mastery of a body of material and a repertory of skills. It is infused with the distinctive norms of the profession, which the candidate is expected to internalize and conform to. The candidate's social role, status, income, and, to a considerable extent, self-image will be defined by the profes-

* Needless to say, both interdisciplinary studies and problem-oriented programs have flourished at the graduate level, particularly in the natural and social sciences.

sion for which he prepares himself. These characteristics of professional training, and not the degree of generality or specificity of the material learned, set professional training off from other forms of education. A general practitioner is as thoroughly professionalized as a heart specialist. City planners, for all the extraordinary breadth of their field, are professionals, and as for the great tradition, prerevolutionary China has demonstrated that even a humanistic education can be molded into professional training.

I myself am a devoted admirer of the great tradition, a long-time practitioner of the arts of disciplinary cross-fertilization—and yet, I would be perfectly happy to see an undergraduate devote himself enthusiastically to the study of a narrow, ahistorical speciality. Precision, detail, sophistication, a concentration on the particular, are as valuable in intellectual activity as breadth, perspective, synthesis, and a sense of the whole. What matters is that the material should engage the student's intellect and sensibility, that he should be held to the highest possible standards of thought, and that his activity be free of the extraneous career consequences of the professional school. Only by such genuine experimentation, sharply different from both the dilettante's superficiality and the professional's career commitment, can a young man discover who he is and who he wants to be.

Before leaving the subject of professionalism in higher education, we must take a look at the anomalous case of the *academic profession*, which occupies a special and peculiar position in the university. The academic profession is in a manner of speaking the proprietor of the university, its natural inhabitant. The university is to professors what the hospital is to doctors or the courts to lawyers. And yet, it seems odd to call professors professionals at all, despite the fact that their very title proclaims that status. Using the term in its modern sociological sense, rather than in the original meaning as "one who professes [some doctrine]," can we correctly describe university professors as *professional men?* And if we can, what ought the relationship be of this profession to the university?

A university professor's work characteristically consists of two distinct and sometimes conflicting activities. First of all, he regularly engages in some sort of creative intellectual work, whether scientific research, literary analysis, pure mathematics, social criticism, or classical scholarship. Intellectual creation *as such* is not the distinctive activity of any particular social or occupational role, although a society may institutionalize certain features of it in an attempt to transform it into a defined role. In the history of Western civilization, at least, amateurs have contributed as much as professionals to the sciences, arts, and human disciplines. In the earliest days of philosophy, for example, it was considered a mark of moral superiority not to earn any money from one's philosophizing. Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, and Marx are among the great philosophers who cannot be said to have lived off their philosophy, while St. Thomas, Rousseau, Hume, Kant, Hegel, and Russell in some sense did. It would be impossible to find any indication of this difference in the philosophical theories actually espoused by members of the two groups.

The difference between intellectual creation and professional activity is vested in a distinction deeper than that between the professional and the amateur. The significant point is not the economic payoff of the activity, but the nature of the criteria or standards against which it is measured. Intellectual creations are judged by the criterion of *truth*, by which I mean not only fidelity to reality but also theoretical simplicity, explanatory power, conceptual elegance, and logical coherence. After everything has been granted which must be granted to the sociology of knowledge, the fact remains that the criteria of success in historical research or philosophical argument are *not* socially defined. It would make perfectly good sense to say that the entire scientific population of a society was engaged in bad or wrong research, or that all of the mathematics done in a society was inconsistent. Intellectual creation, in short, is not at base a *social* activity, despite the fact that it is frequently done by groups of men, at the instigation of society, and for social rewards.

Professions, on the other hand, are social roles whose content and significance are defined by norms operative in the society.*

* As defined in this way, some professions include a nonprofessional component whose correct analysis involves extra-social considerations. Medicine,

There are no objective correlates to the professional activity of the lawyer, the accountant, or the priest (assuming for the moment that there is no God). Even the architect and the general pursue careers whose criteria of success are social in origin, for what counts as good housing or military victory is a matter of culture, not nature. Hence, the university professor is *not* properly a professional insofar as he engages in intellectual or artistic creation.

As an active participant in some form of intellectual activity, the professor characteristically takes upon himself the responsibility for initiating others into the traditions and forms of the activity.* He is thus *teacher* as well as *creator*. The relationship of professor to student in this initiation is rather like that of master to apprentice. The two seek one another out freely and establish a bond, by mutual agreement, which is moral and emotional as well as intellectual. The apprentice-master relation is most obvious in scientific laboratories, whose one senior chemist or biologist will preside over a complex of research activities carried on by students and junior scientists, much as a medieval master craftsman would oversee a small family of apprentices and journeymen. Something like the same instruction should occur between a doctoral candidate and the director of his dissertation, although of course it frequently doesn't.

But graduate education has a professional as well as a nonprofessional component. The professional component is the procedure of certification, leading characteristically to the conferring of a degree. It is governed by norms of competence, fairness, and objectivity which have little to do with original intellectual creativity. The professors in a graduate department are expected to suspend their personal intellectual convictions when passing on the performances of doctoral candidates. The same logical positivist who regularly follows Hume's injunction to "consign to the flames" any books containing nonempirical metaphysics is expected to sit impartially on the board of a candidate who has written in the style of Hegel. To be sure, professors frequently fall short of this professional norm of objectivity, but they acknowledge themselves bound by it nonetheless, just as fee splitters pay lip service to the Hippocratic oath. Politically motivated favoritism or reprisal is considered a particularly serious violation of professional norms in academic circles. However difficult he may find the effort, a professor must not allow the political persuasions of the student to influence his judgment in the processes of certification. One measure of the intensity of the passions stirred up on the Columbia campus, I regret to say, was the inability of a small number of distinguished professors to abide by this inflexible principle of professional life.

The nonprofessional component in graduate education is the intellectual, emotional, and moral interaction through which a student learns from a professor what it is to be a creative intellect. There are no socially determined rules in this relationship, no prerequisites, certifications, or degrees. No act of a university can confer intellectual creativity on a professor who lacks it, and no law can compel a student to enter into a relationship which he resists or condemns.

The conflict between professional certification and intellectual initiation destroys the coherence of graduate education in American universities. At every turn, professors and students find themselves torn by the contradictory standards and divergent demands of the two activities. The result has been to make the process of certification needlessly painful and to corrupt the process of initiation.

for example, seeks to cure physical ailments. Since it is a natural, not a social, fact whether someone is sick, doctors obviously conform their activities at least in part to natural, as opposed to social, standards. Thus, an educated layman who performs successful operations while passing himself off as a certified surgeon can be said genuinely to have cured illness, but not thereby to have shown himself to be a qualified doctor. A poet, on the other hand, has in our society no professional setting for his activity. Hence, it would be meaningless to speak of someone successfully "impersonating" a poet by writing good poems while not being correctly certified. One of the peculiar side effects of excessive professionalization in American society is the tendency of academics to look on amateur historians or philosophers as impostors, as though only a man with a Ph.D. should be permitted to try his hand at *professional* scholarship!

* My discussion of this process of initiation very much reflects the sensitive account given by Michael Oakeshott in his collection of essays, *Rationalism in Politics* (New York: Basic Books, 1962).

Consider, for example, the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. At most American universities, the candidate must complete a set of courses and examinations designed to demonstrate his mastery of the content and techniques of a defined field of knowledge. He must then present an extended piece of writing which purports to contain an "original contribution to knowledge." Now, every professor who has ever attempted to administer this system of requirements knows that there is something wrong with them—which he expresses, typically, by the complaints that "standards are too low," and that "students take too long to get through." But very few academics perceive that the source of the problem is the conflict between the ideals or criteria of certification and initiation.

Certification is the maintaining and applying of public, objective, impartial, minimal standards of competence. It is a species of what I have called *evaluation*. When a law faculty certifies a candidate in law, or a medical faculty a candidate in medicine, it attests that the candidate has demonstrated at least a specified minimal command of the discipline (of course, the minimal level may be quite high). In its certification procedures, the faculty openly appeals to the accepted norms of the profession; but it is pledged not to impose on candidates its particular convictions with regard to matters which are subjects of dispute within the profession. Thus, a law professor ought not to fail a student who disagrees with him on the matter of loose versus strict construction of the Constitution, but he may perfectly well fail a student who refuses to master the rules of evidence on the grounds that legal disputes should be decided in trial by combat. Nor need a mathematics professor feel any compunction about failing a candidate who disdains consistency as the hobgoblin of little minds.

Furthermore, since certification is a social precondition of employment in the profession, students acquire certain economic or quasi-economic rights which the faculty is bound to honor. If a graduate student completes the course and examination requirements for the doctorate at a fully acceptable level of performance, he has a *right* to begin work on his dissertation under the direction of some qualified member of his department. He may be a tedious person, the members of the faculty may all have other interests and projects, no professor may feel moved to take the student on—no matter. The candidate has a right to dissertation direction and the faculty has a duty to provide it. This obligation is as binding on the academic profession as is the doctor's duty to continue the treatment of his patient. To recognize and honor such obligations is a very large part of what it is to be a professional.

But the standard of adequacy in the writing of the dissertation —"an original contribution to knowledge"—*is not a standard of minimal professional competence and cannot in all honesty be administered as such.* Disputes over the genuine originality and significance of a putative contribution to a field of knowledge are precisely the sorts of disputes which arise *between* reputable members of the academic profession. Such disputes appeal to the objective criterion of truth, rather than to the socially defined criterion of professional competence. Intellectuals repeatedly condemn, as worthless, pieces of work which, in their role as professors, they would readily accept as competent doctoral dissertations. Members of the same department, who privately view each other's intellectual creations as completely without value, must sit together on doctoral committees and somehow transform the intellectual standard of "contribution to knowledge" into a professional standard of competence.

The conflicts begin well before the dissertation stage is reached. As creative intellects initiating others into their activity, professors quite naturally feel a powerful desire to turn away all but the very few students who show genuine signs of talent and a deep personal commitment to the creative enterprise. But as the certifying officials of their profession, these same professors consider themselves bound to respond to the pressures of the profession as a whole. Graduate programs expand to meet the demand for Ph.D.'s, not in response to the arrival at their doors of greater numbers of brilliant students. It is as though Jascha Heifetz were to schedule extra masterclasses because the New York Philharmonic had empty desks in the second violin section!

Internal institutional contradictions are no doubt distressing to philosophers, who have a professional penchant for vesting logic

with metaphysical significance. But for the social critic, the crucial question must be *cui male?* Who is hurt by the situation? I am persuaded that both students and professors are hurt, in their certification activities as well as in their relationship as teacher and student.

The greatest source of harm is the dissertation requirement imposed on every doctoral candidate. Graduate students by and large find the course and examination requirements similar to the sorts of work they handled successfully as undergraduates. Standards are higher, and the professional commitment demanded of them is exceedingly threatening to some candidates who until then have relied for inspiration on no more than a natural enthusiasm for the field; but graduate schools do not find it difficult to devise a system of qualifying requirements which their students can handle. At the dissertation stage, on the other hand, candidates linger painfully for years. Outsiders are always astonished to discover the *average* time required for the completion of the Ph.D. It is common for eight, ten, twelve, or more years to elapse between the candidate's enrollment and the awarding of the degree. Most of this time is spent working on the dissertation. No one will ever total up the marriages ruined, the children neglected, the anguish suffered, and the years of fruitful work blighted by the curse of the unfinished dissertations. As a young faculty member at Harvard and Chicago, I frequently found myself serving on the examination committees of men ten years my senior, whose length of teaching experience far exceeded my own.

It is not hard to discover the source of the problem. The doctoral dissertation is supposed to be precisely *not* the sort of task which a competent student of the subject can set for himself in a limited period of time. The dissertation is *not* five, or eight, or fifteen term papers. It is supposed to be in some way an *original* piece of creative work. Now, no one would think of trying to set a timetable for creative work. It would be absurd to suggest that Kant was somehow remiss in waiting eleven years after his Inaugural Dissertation before publishing the *Critique of Pure Reason.* Indeed, it is usually counted to his credit that he chose to withhold publication until he had solved the deep problems which

stood in his way. But the doctoral candidate is urged, cajoled, seduced, and pressured to finish his dissertation quickly. He is told to take a "manageable" topic, limit it rigorously, work efficiently —and produce something original and worthwhile! Perhaps Johann Sebastian Bach could turn the chore of composing a weekly cantata into the act of creating beautiful music, but even most geniuses find it difficult to make so great a virtue of necessity.

The natural response to the destructive anomalies of the Ph.D. is to lower both sights and standards. Don't attempt an original and creative work, the candidate is told. Do something merely different and competent. Edit a text too obscure to have caught another scholar's eye; survey the complete works of a minor figure justly forgotten; ring one more change on some old ideas which have not suffered *every* possible permutation as yet.

Surely it is obvious that no good can come of such a system. Those few candidates who have the seeds of creation within them will be blighted by the necessity of contorting their original thoughts into the unnatural shape of the dissertation. The others, competent though they are to master their field and teach it, are compelled to drag out of themselves the simulacrum of a new idea, wasting their energies and, like as not, destroying their enthusiasm for their chosen subject.

In the last chapter, I shall propose a radical reconstruction of graduate education designed to eliminate these wasteful efforts and establish a rational system of professional training and certification. At this point, I wish only to lay bare the source of the trouble. To repeat, the incoherence of graduate education arises from the conflict between two distinct activities guided by two entirely separate sets of standards, namely, the training and certification of college teachers on the one hand, and the initiation of promising acolytes into intellectual creativity on the other. Insofar as the standards of the first are inappropriately applied to the products of the second, the current student outcry against "professionalism" has a legitimate basis in fact.

CHAPTER THREE

The University as a Social Service Station

Our third model is at once a description, a prediction, and a justification. It portrays the university as a complex institution, or perhaps an aggregation of institutions loosely held together, which performs an array of educational, research, consultative, and other services for American society as a whole. The theorist of this model is of course Dr. Clark Kerr, former President of the University of California, whose Godkin Lectures at Harvard in 1963, published under the title *The Uses of the University*, have given us the indispensable term "multiversity."

Kerr's book is one of those rare productions which, in its fusion of style and argument, form and content, perfectly exemplifies its subject of discourse. Eclectic, pragmatic, thoroughly modern in diction as in thought, *The Uses of the University* is somehow just the sort of book which *ought* to be written by the president of a multiversity. It is couched in "descriptive-celebratory" style, as we may call the ambiguous cross between factual narration and normative defense which so many of our social scientists adopt when speaking of contemporary American institutions. One is never entirely clear whether Dr. Kerr is merely recounting the changes which he perceives in American universities or congratulating us all on them. Nevertheless, I think we can easily enough separate the description and prediction from the justification and consider them in isolation.

"Today," Kerr begins, "the large American university is . . . a whole series of communities and activities held together by a common name, a common governing board, and related purposes." It is, as he puts it, a "Federal Grant university," for its financing, its direction of growth, its purposes, and its personnel are all dominated by the availability of federal support, in the form of research

grants, student fellowships, aid to area studies or language programs, funds for laboratory construction, and so forth.

The multiversity, as its name suggests, exhibits none of the unity of place, purpose, and political organization which characterized older universities. At its heart lies an undergraduate college—or perhaps many undergraduate colleges and programs. But it stretches out in every direction, embracing professional schools, research institutes, training programs, hospitals, primary and secondary schools, farms and laboratories, in several cities, states, even in other countries. The University of California will probably have a branch operation on the moon before the century is out.

The ancient image of the walled enclave is of course entirely inappropriate to the modern multiversity, which has no walls or gates, and so cannot even be said to "stand open" to the larger society. It simply merges with its surroundings, so that even at the level of budgets and administration it may be difficult to discern the precise boundaries of the institution. Of all the interpenetrations, that between multiversity and federal government is most significant. So completely have the two come to rely upon one another that the relationship might better be considered a symbiosis than a seduction. The movement of men from classroom to government bureau to university administration and back is steady and unimpeded. The paths beaten by these traveling experts are soon followed by students, who go easily from a graduate program in political science to a congressional internship, back to take a doctorate and on to the State Department or Pentagon, and back again to the university; the phrase "circulation of elites," had it not already been preempted in sociology for a somewhat different phenomenon, would perfectly characterize the flow of personnel between government and multiversity.

Like all social institutions which undergo rapid change, the multiversity exhibits a considerable incoherence between its new, expanding programs and its sizable body of established, traditional activities. The president may concentrate his attention on the new institutes, grants, programs, and degrees which spring up on the periphery of the institutions; but there will still be many professors and students whose lives are untouched by these "multiversi-

tarian" activities. To the member of the more traditional humanities departments, for example, the only effects may be a rash of new building in the vicinity and the subtle awareness that elsewhere in the university faculty members are paid better and students receive fatter fellowships. As is well known, the natural sciences are most thoroughly at home with the new order, the humanities least comfortable (save for certain formerly quite arcane languages which have suddenly acquired "strategic" value), with the social sciences ranging themselves between the two poles. Some very anomalous marriages and arrangements take place, testifying (according to one's prejudices) either to the open-minded liberality or mindless stupidity of the federal government. One of the most prominent radical critics of American foreign policy, for example, draws much of his substantial pay from a federal grant to an electronics laboratory, where he does brilliant work on—of all things—the philosophy of language. A second flourishes as a professor of industrial engineering in a university division which depends upon government grants.

The multiversity is not a mere receiver of social benefits, the terminus of a flow of social wealth. It is itself a highly productive element of the American economy through its training of skilled personnel, its development of new technology, and the accumulation in its faculty of scarce and much-desired expertise. Kerr repeats the familiar observation that California, New York, and Massachusetts have taken disproportionate shares of defense contracts and industrial development because of their congeries of academic institutions. We see here a vivid evidence of the fact that technical knowledge is an even more valuable economic resource than mineral deposits in an advanced industrial society. It is easier and cheaper to bring the raw materials for electronics industries to Boston than it would be to induce the scientists of MIT or Harvard to move, say, to Minnesota.

Like the great conglomerate corporations which have grown up through mergers, takeovers, and diversification, the multiversities become involved in virtually every sort of activity requiring technical expertise or bookish skills. They are the holding companies of the knowledge industry. The criterion of admission to the

multiversity, however, is not profitability in the economic sense but profitability in the social sense. The multiversities become social service stations.

It is not difficult to articulate the argument which can be made in favor of the multiversity. To begin with, the multiversity is not unique in serving the ends of the larger society. As Kerr points out, universities have always devoted themselves to purposes at least partially defined by social forces and social groups outside the walls, whether by glorifying God, training ministers, preparing the sons of the upper classes for positions of rule, or turning out the experts needed to run a technological economy. In a democratic and pluralist age, it is only natural that those demands should be many, varied, even conflicting. To meet them, the institution must itself become internally diverse, quite probably at the price of the unity and harmony which graced an earlier age. The critic who bemoans the loss of institutional community is really asking that only a single social interest be served in the university. No matter which interest is chosen, the result must be counted a loss to all but a fraction of the society as a whole. In this way, academic radicals manage to combine an extreme egalitarianism in politics with a reactionary elitism in education. The true defender of democratic values (I trust the reader will recall that I am still rehearsing the defense of the multiversity) is the dedicated and harried multiversity president, through whose tactful maneuvering the widest array of conflicting interests are accommodated within the academy. Here is Kerr describing the office of which he was the first occupant:

> The president in the multiversity is leader, educator, creator, initiator, wielder of power, pump; he is *also* office holder, caretaker, inventor, consensus-seeker, persuader, bottleneck. But he is mostly a mediator [p. 36].

Social justice, as well as history, requires the university to serve the society in which it resides. It is, after all, parisitic upon the community, consuming resources much as monasteries once did. The social bookkeeping may be a trifle obscure, but somewhere, somehow, the professors and students are living off the productive

labor of the working classes. And the purer, the more intellectually meritorious the activities of the academy, the more thoroughly they are parisitic. Surely it is reasonable that the recipients of this benefaction should return a part of its value to the society in the form of technological innovation, expert consulting, professional training, and cooperation in socially useful enterprises. However dedicated the public may be to the religion of education, with its magnificent temples, ancient texts, exclusive rituals, and conspicuously idle priests, there is a limit to the amount of wealth the academy may legitimately absorb in a society far from affluent.

It is not only traditional *and* just that the university serve society; it is also exceedingly useful that it do so. As a people, we Americans are active rather than contemplative. When we have identified a social evil, our inclination is to do something about it, not to reflect on its significance for the human condition. At every level of the public and private sectors we are busy planning, adjusting, experimenting. There is an insatiable need for expert knowledge and advice, and the universities are great social repositories of such expertise. It is as wasteful for a great university to sit untapped in the midst of a modern city as it would be for the Colorado to flow on undammed or the Mesabi to lie unexploited. There is not an enterprise in America, from the formulating of foreign policy to the organizing of community control of public schools, which does not benefit from the active participation of the personnel of the multiversity.

If tradition, justice, and social utility are not sufficient to justify the multiversity, let us add one final argument: in a society which distributes wealth and status very unequally indeed, the multiversity serves as a prime instrument of opportunity and upward mobility for millions of Americans who would otherwise be trapped at the lower levels of the social pyramid. The great English, French, and German universities have been exclusive institutions where high and specialized standards of admissions effectively barred all but the privileged few. Whether by the economic inutility of their courses of instruction, the unavailability of the dead languages they demanded of applicants, the rigidity of their standards, or even merely by their expense, they effectively guaranteed that only the sons of the wealthy and well-placed would matriculate within their walls. By contrast, the multiversity opens its arms to students from virtually every level of wealth, social status, and native ability. Through networks of community colleges and adult education programs, it draws in students who either cannot afford, cannot handle, or would never have thought to seek, a traditional four-year degree in arts and sciences. The poorly prepared student, the under achiever, the late developer, are encouraged to slip almost imperceptibly into the orbit of the multiversity. The ablest among them are there spotted by their teachers and encouraged to advance to the next level of academic achievement. At Columbia University, for example, there are men in the faculty who began in the School of General Studies and were brought along through graduate study to the Ph.D. Had the system been forced to make a final decision on them in their undergraduate days, they would undoubtedly have been rejected and lost to Columbia.

The same openness can be seen in the multiversity's willingness to add degree-granting programs in subjects once decisively excluded from the academic world. The haughty humanist may consider nursing or landscape gardening lesser breeds without the law, but how many young people would never have any experience whatever of the life of a university if they were forced to take the quadrivium and trivium or nothing at all! One need simply look at the university systems of France or England to see the destructive social effects of an elitist philosophy of education.

We can conclude this defense of the multiversity with a passage from Kerr. Characteristically, Kerr insists that he speaks *descriptively*, but the tone is clearly celebratory:

> The American University is currently undergoing its second great transformation. The first occurred during roughly the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when the land grant movement and German intellectualism were together bringing extraordinary change. The current transformation will cover roughly the quarter century after World War II. The university is being called upon to educate previously unimagined

numbers of students; to respond to the expanding claims of national service; to merge its activities with industry as never before; to adapt to and rechannel new intellectual currents. By the end of this period, there will be a truly American university, an institution unique in world history, an institution not looking to other models but serving, itself, as a model for universities in other parts of the globe [p. 86].

I think we may say that we have given the multiversity a fair hearing. It has tradition behind it, justice and utility for it, and the future ahead of it. Why then does the prospect of it so depress us? Why does every right-thinking (which is to say, left-leaning) reader turn in dismay from Kerr's description? What, as the English rather quaintly say, is so off-putting about the multiversity?

There are four grounds for this reaction to the emergence of the multiversity, of which one is in my opinion illegitimate, a second legitimate but relatively unimportant, and two so important that together they outweigh the genuinely powerful justification which we have just sketched.

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In academic circles, the principal source of anti-multiversity feeling seems to be mere intellectual snobbism. Aristocrats are characteristically sentimental about the poor and contemptuous of the middle class. So it is in academia. The same Ivy League brahmins who welcome the disadvantaged and the ghetto dweller into their midst, scorn the business courses, nursing program, extension schools, and institutes of applied expertise which constitute the bourgeoisie of the intellectual world. The humanities and pure sciences look down on all those academic *arrivistes* who seem so perfectly at home in the multiversity. The ambition to turn a job into a profession seems comical to those who prefer to forget that their profession is also a job. The attitude of the academic elite to the multiversity is rather like that of eighteenth-century landed interests to monied interests, or—somewhat later—like that of old money to new money. As usual, this snobbery is tricked out in an ideology of scholarship and education, but beneath the rationalizations one can discern the same disdain which the aristocrat Plato expressed, 2500 years ago, for those Greek teachers who charged money for their lessons.

A *legitimate* complaint against the multiversity is its tendency to undermine the internal political organization of the academy. For reasons which will be set forth in Part Three of this essay, I share the widespread commitment to a faculty-student-run university. But my experiences at Columbia and elsewhere make me very much aware of the difficulty of preserving genuine faculty-student authority in an institution with many faculties, many student bodies, and no coherent bonds of internal unity. Even in a traditional university there are centrifugal forces which tend to separate department from department and division from division. The sheer size of many university faculties makes the delegation of authority appear inevitable. Under these circumstances, academic institutions should move toward smaller units with more complete autonomy of such discrete units as a medical school, law school, or theological faculty. But the multiversity moves in precisely the opposite direction. The more numerous and diverse the activities it draws within its orbit, the more it must rely for its governance on a central administration. When an affair like the Columbia uprising occurs, faculty and students are appalled to discover how many of the activities of the university take place absolutely at the discretion of the president or chancellor, without even the semblance of control by the members of the university. Now, so long as the university clings to its traditional form, the faculty and students have some chance, however remote, of taking effective collective control. But in the multiversity it is impossible even to determine who should count as a member of the faculty or as a student. In this organizational chaos, the central administration rules, by default, as a responsive and benevolent dictator. Naturally, the multiversity president sees himself as more acted upon than acting, powerless rather than powerful. But in fact, what real power of decision there is in the multiversity concerning the major questions of growth, financing, and so forth rests with him. Dr. Kerr is quite right in comparing the role of multiversity president with that of President of the United States. Both are posi-

tions of rulership by default which bear no recognizable relation to the traditional ideals of democratic society.

But this is a minor evil of the multiversity. If nothing worse could be said against it, we would have to conclude that the benefits of the new university outweighed its faults. A very much deeper criticism must be made of the rationale of the multiversity, what Kant would have called its Regulative Principle of Action. The key to this principle is the slippery notion of "social need."

Throughout his essay, Kerr speaks of the multiversity as responding to social needs or as satisfying demands made upon it by society. Here are a few passages which echo this refrain:

> It is interesting that American universities . . . which are part of a highly decentralized and varied system of higher education should, nevertheless, have responded with such fidelity and alacrity to national *needs* [p. 49].
>
> Federal agencies are more responsive to particular *national needs* than the universities would be . . . [p. 59].
>
> With all its problems, however, federal research aid to universities has helped greatly in meeting national *needs* [p. 68].
>
> The nation *needs* more research activity . . . and more personnel. . . . From now to 1970 the expected supply of engineers and scientists will fill only three quarters of the *demand* [p. 76].
>
> Knowledge is exploding along with population. There is also an explosion in the *need* for certain skills. The university is responding to all these explosions. The vastly increased *needs* for engineers, scientists, and doctors will draw great resources to these areas of the university [pp. 110–111].
> [all emphases added]

The difficulty with these and countless other assertions in Kerr's book is their complete failure to draw a sharp distinction between the concepts of *effective or market demand* and *human or social need*. Dr. Kerr's discussion commits exactly the same error which

lies at the heart of classical laisser-faire economic theory. In this way, his book serves as a perfect expression of liberal ideology.

The point is a simple one and many critics since Marx have elaborated it: A *human or social need* is a want, a lack, the absence of something material or social, whose presence would contribute to physical and emotional health, to the full and unalienated development of human power—in a word, to true happiness. Individuals have needs for food, for leisure, for privacy, for the esteem of their fellows, for productive and fulfilling work. Societies of men have collective needs, for social justice, for peace, for cultural and political community.* Some needs are *felt needs* —that is to say, they are lacks or wants of which the needy persons are quite conscious. Other needs may not be *felt* as such, because of ignorance, or lack of experience. A man who has never experienced art in any form can hardly be expected to know that his life lacks one of the great fulfillments available to us, but it is perfectly possible for an external observer to see the drabness of his life and perceive what is missing. In the same way, a primitive tribe forever living on the edge of subsistence may have no idea what the human body can become, given good food, rest, and healthful exercise. Yet a doctor might easily observe that the entire tribe suffered a physiological lack, of vitamins perhaps, or protein, or sheer calories. In short, the distinction between felt and unfelt (or manifest and latent) need is empirically grounded; it requires no appeal to a theory of the "real self" or such like implausibilities of Idealist metaphysics.

Effective or market demand, on the other hand, is simply the existence in a market economy of buyers who are in the market place, have money in hand, and are prepared to spend it for a particular commodity. Hence the familiar expression, "He is in the market for" this or that. Demand is said to be *effective* when it is capable of eliciting a response in the form of a *supply*. Needless to say, there may be a large effective demand for a commodity at one price, and little or no effective demand for the same commodity at

* See Chapter Five, "Community," of my *The Poverty of Liberalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), for an analysis of the nature and varieties of community.

a higher price. Originally, the concept of effective demand was defined for the situation of a commodity market, but it is not difficult to see how it can be generalized. In the academic world, for example, when there are many applicants (large supply) for a few teaching positions (small effective demand), those doing the hiring can get away with a kind of callous mistreatment (broken promises, unanswered letters, discourteous interviews) which disappears as soon as the supply shrinks or the demand increases. That is why it is a good deal more pleasant to look for an academic position in California than in Boston or New York City. The "law of the market" even applies in affairs of the heart, as the scarce males at a summer resort can testify.

The rationale of the classical free market rests on two assumptions, both of which have for quite a long time now been known to be wrong. The first assumption is that all human and social needs are *felt needs*. The second assumption is that felt needs in a free market society are always expressible as *effective demand*. Thus, if men *need* food, they *feel* hungry. If they *feel* hungry, then they go into the market to *buy* food. The demand for food drives up the price, which drives up the profit, which attracts investors, who increase the supply, which drives down the price again *and satisfies the need*. A continuing rolling adjustment of resources to needs takes place, in a way which guarantees the fullest satisfaction possible with the resources and technology available.

In the classical theory, no moral judgments are permitted concerning "true" versus "false" needs, or "higher" versus "lower" pleasures. Happiness is assumed to be the only thing intrinsically good; and happiness, it is supposed, consists in the satisfaction of whatever desires one actually has. So when men want poetry, their expressed demand will elicit poetry from some source or other in society; when they want pornography, pornography will appear.

There is a case to be made for this pristine doctrine, although I confess that it has always seemed to me more aesthetically pleasing by virtue of its simplicity, than persuasive or plausible. But quite frequently, an author will appear who systematically identifies *effective market demand* with *true human need*, while not subscribing at all to the postulates and presuppositions which, as

we have seen, underlie such an identification. That is, he will talk as though a demand in the market automatically expressed a human or social need, while at the same time talking as though he made moral judgments about true versus false needs. The result is not an argument, nor is it exactly just a confusion. The result is a covert ideological rationalization for whatever human or social desires happen to be backed by enough money or power to translate them into effective demands. I shall try briefly to show that Clark Kerr is guilty of exactly just such ideological rhetoric.

The crucial point is that many human needs cannot get themselves expressed adequately as market demands. In America, for example, there is a great need for cheap, well-made, well-designed clothing and housing. For a variety of technical reasons, it is possible to make a very nice profit from cheap, well-made, well-designed clothing. Hence, Americans by and large are well and attractively clothed at virtually every economic level save the very lowest. At the same time, little or no profit is to be made in well-designed, well-constructed, low-cost housing, although high-cost housing returns a fine profit. Here an enormous human and social need fails to express itself in a market demand capable of eliciting an adequate flow of investment capital, and our cities sink deeper and deeper into decay. The same disparity between *need* and *supply* exists in the field of medicine and public health, ghetto education, conservation, and pollution control.*

When Kerr speaks repeatedly of the multiversity's responsiveness to national *needs*, he is describing nothing more than its tendency to adjust itself to effective *demand* in the form of government grants, scholarship programs, corporate or alumni underwriting, and so forth. But his language encourages the reader to suppose that the demands to which the multiversity responds are

* In fairness to the laisser-faire position, which I have dismissed a bit casually, it ought to be pointed out that a major obstacle to the flow of capital and labor into such areas as medicine and low-cost housing is the existence of arbitrary restrictions (building codes, minimum-wage laws, medical licensing procedures) which violate the principle of the free market. I don't believe that these deviations from laisser-faire explain away the major failings of the capitalist system, but a good deal more argument than I have offered here would be necessary to refute such theorists as Milton Friedman.

expressions of genuine human and social needs, needs which make a moral claim upon the effort and attention of the academy. It takes very little thought to see the weakness of this implicit claim.

The nation *needs* more engineers and scientists, Kerr says. Only three fourths of the *demand* will be met at current rates of enrollment. But the shortage of engineers in America is due entirely to the enormous space program, which absorbs tens of thousands of highly trained personnel in an enterprise of very dubious social priority. When Kerr speaks of the "demand" for engineers as one to which the multiversity ought to respond, he is covertly (and probably unwittingly) endorsing the space program. He would hardly view the matter that way, I should imagine. But the alternative is to assume without question that the multiversity should accept the goals and values of whoever in America has the money to pay for them. Instead of calling his essay *The Uses of the University*, he could more appropriately have titled it *University for Hire*!

The same covert rationalization applies to the multiversity's acceptance of war-related research. When Congress appropriates money for research into weapons systems, counterinsurgency technology, or problems of manpower recruitment, that merely proves —at best—that the American people through their representatives wish to express a market *demand* for such research. To go a step further and say that such research meets a national *need* is to *endorse* the purposes to which it will be put, *approve* of them, adopt them as one's own. By systematically confusing the concepts of need and demand, Clark Kerr begs all of the major political questions of the day.

Surely it should be obvious that the academy must make its own judgment about the social value of the tasks it is called upon to perform. Even if the federal government wants war research or political stability studies or officer training, the professors and students of the university may decide that the government is *wrong* and that its desires should be resisted. If someone asks what right the professors and students have to question the will of the federal government, we can only reply, what right has the federal government to impose its will upon free men and women?

But there are material conditions of freedom, as a Marxist might say, and a university too heavily dependent upon federal grants will find itself unable to take a stand against programs and directions of development which it believes to be wrong. It is honorable for the workers in a government agency to accept the policy direction of Congress and the President. They exist to effect the will of the people, which expresses itself through its elected representatives. But it is *dishonorable* for a university to become a government agency by forfeiting the active exercise of its power of independent evaluation.

> So many of the hopes and fears of the American people [Kerr writes] are now related to our educational system and particularly to our universities—the hope for longer life, for getting into outer space, for a higher standard of living; our fears of Russian or Chinese supremacy, of the bomb and annihilation, of individual loss of purpose in the changing world. For all these reasons and others, the university has become a prime instrument of national purpose [p. 87].

Kerr's voice is the voice of praise, but his words are an unwitting indictment of the modern university.

So we come to our last criticism of the multiversity. If it is an *instrument* of national purpose, then it cannot be a *critic* of national purpose, for an instrument is a means, not an evaluator of ends. In America today the power of the federal government has grown so great that there is almost no independent center of activity with the authority to challenge its policies. Within the broad consensus of practical politics there are countless disagreements and conflicts of belief or interest, but when the very premises of that consensus are wrong, who is to combat them? The great universities stand alone as institutions rich enough, powerful enough, possessed of sufficient moral and intellectual authority to cry Nay, Nay, when every other voice says Yea, Yea. There is no better example of this "power of negation," as the Hegelians might say, than the case of the Vietnam Teach-ins. Without overestimating their role in the great shift of opinion which eventually brought Johnson down and drove the government to the peace table, I

think it is fair to say that the public debates staged by dissenting professors and students were the turning point in the history of America's involvement in Vietnam.

Clark Kerr's vision of the university of social service poses a great choice to those of us who care about the future of the academy. Shall the university accept the symbiotic interactions with government which are now offered? Shall it devote its resources to the satisfaction of those social desires which make themselves felt as effective demands? Or shall it remain institutionally aloof and counterpose itself to the momentum of government, foundation, and industry? It won't do to strike for a middle course, thinking that we can accept the government's money and be admitted to the council chambers while yet remaining free to dissent. Perhaps we might persuade ourselves that such a course was honorable, but I fear we would soon find it in practice impossible. The federal government is not likely to underwrite a foreign service officers' training program with the understanding that the candidates will in their seminars explore the imperialist foundation of American foreign policy. Nor is the government likely to show much patience for a federally supported laboratory which diverts its grant money to the development and publication of techniques for guerrilla insurgency against American forces.*

It comes down to this: at the present time in the United States, is there a greater social need for full-scale integration of the resources and activities of the universities into existing domestic and foreign programs, or for a sustained critique of those programs from an independent position of authority and influence? My own belief is that we need critique, not cooperation, and I therefore reject the model of the multiversity as an ideal for the modern university.

* I have no doubt that somewhere in the United States today a team of scientists is engaged in just such a study, for the purpose of alerting the United States military to the weaponry its forces will face in the 1970's. I trust the reader can see the difference between such a study and the sort of "anti-American" research I have in mind. The flexibility of the American government in the study of means is exceeded only by its rigidity in the pursuit of its agreed ends. What troubles me is the gradual extinction in the university of any spark of resistance to those ends.

CHAPTER FOUR

The University as an Assembly Line for Establishment Man

We turn finally to an anti-model of the university, in terms of which contemporary student radicals mount their assault on university education in America. When the current movement of student protest got under way roughly five years ago, the original attacks were directed at specific conditions or policies which were felt to be immoral or inconsistent with a good education. In some universities, students renewed the old attack on Reserve Officer Training programs; in others, they protested the recruiting activities of corporations or government agencies with obvious military connections. Sometimes, as at Berkeley, students aimed their fire at teaching and staffing policies which produced large, impersonal classes and a minimum of student-teacher contact. But wherever the protests appeared, the targets were particular in nature. The unexpressed implication was that the university as a social institution was itself sound; the evils were not intrinsic to the institution but were *abuses* of it. Even in the Columbia affair, coming rather late in the development of events, the rebellious students stuck very closely to a set of six demands, each of which was concerned with a specific university action or policy.

As the several campus protests have grown into a movement, however, students have progressively generalized their criticism into something like a theory of what is wrong with higher education in America. Gradually a model of the university emerges and crystallizes, laying bare the connections between its underlying structure and the variety of visible evils which manifest themselves here and there.*

* The movement from particular, disconnected complaints against abuses of the existing institutions to a coherent, general critique of the institution itself

In its fully developed form, the radical critique of the American university consists of three elements—or, as philosophers like to say, three moments. These are: a thoroughgoing criticism of the content and organization of education within the university; an account of the relation of the university as an institution to the other major institutions of our society, in particular to the government, to industry, and to the military; and a theory about how the first is causally related to the second.* I shall do my best to rehearse the critique as forcefully as I can. First, however, it might be helpful to bring into the open and debunk once for all a rather silly notion of the university which plays a large role in the rhetoric, if not in the theorizing, of radical students these days.

The theory, which we might call a vulgar Marxist heresy, runs something like this: the university in capitalist society is [like a] corporation, run by administrators and trustees (and faculty—the theory is confused about their role) in the interest of the institution and of the capitalists, many of whom are to be found in administrative positions. The students are an exploited and downtrodden proletariat, maltreated and manipulated by their bosses. Liberation will come through solidarity, organization, and the permanent overthrow of the university power structure by an alliance of students together with those junior faculty who choose to throw in with the progressive class of students.

is of course a familiar pattern. It is characteristic of "anti-ideological" liberals to remain fixated at the first stage, justifying their failure to progress beyond spot criticism and piecemeal reform as "pragmatic" or "hard-nosed." The ideological result is a covert rationalization of existing institutions, for no evil is ever perceived as *intrinsic* to the institutions rather than a mere *abuse* of it. For a more systematic discussion of this subject, see my *Poverty of Liberalism*, Chapter Three, "Power." See also Herbert Marcuse's discussion of the repressive effects of behavioral social science in *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964). The source of these several discussions is Marx's theory of class-consciouness.

* I don't know whether any student radicals have formulated their theory quite this coherently and systematically. I have had trouble finding an SDS publication, for example, in which the argument is laid down clearly enough to permit a lengthy quotation and analysis. Nevertheless, I shall stand by my reconstruction as capturing the essential structure of the thing if not all of its variety of detail.

There are three reasons, I think, why this grotesque misrepresentation of the character of a university appeals so viscerally to a number of rebellious students. First of all, it is a readymade rhetoric, complete with slogans, emotional associations, rallying cries, and symbols—the red flag of communism, the black flag of anarchism, "All power to the Soviets," "communes," and so forth. This is a noble revolutionary legacy, nicely calculated to drive sober, middle-aged liberal administrators wild. At Columbia, émigré professors who should have known better lost all sense of reality and panicked, freely predicting another major reign of terror if the "young hoodlums" were not immediately and forcefully put down.

Secondly, the fantasy that the students are the proletariat rebelling against their capitalist exploiters carries with it the comfortable corollary that they are riding the wave of the future. As the Bolsheviks studied the French Revolution and adjusted their expectations accordingly, so a number of radical students enjoy the thought that they are the eighty-one in the Sierra Maestra, or the spearhead of an American Long March.

Finally, of course, students find it morally comforting to identify themselves as a suffering proletariat, because in their souls there echoes the old Judeo-Christian belief that suffering cleanses and ennobles. At all costs, some students must see themselves as victims, sufferers, the exploited, the wretched of the university community. It is as though they had once read Socrates' injunction, "It is better to suffer injustice than to commit injustice," and misremembered it as, "It is better to suffer injustice than *not* to suffer injustice"!

The bits and pieces of working-class movement rhetoric appear in calls for a student "strike," or for "student solidarity," or in the view of the university as composed of classes with conflicting class interests. Actually, though, the rhetoric is all wrong. If one were to give a quasi-Marxist analysis of the university, it would look something like this:

The university is like a capitalist firm. The trustees are the board of directors and the administration is the management. The workers are not the students, but the *faculty*. The firm manufac-

tures a line of consumer goods, namely, its various *degrees*. The students, of course, are the *consumers*. They buy the product put out by the firm. There is a genuine conflict of class interests between the management and the workers—i.e., between the administration and the faculty. As usual, the workers want higher wages, shorter hours, better working conditions, fringe benefits, and job security. When the supply of labor far exceeds the demand, then working conditions and wages are poor. For some time now, however, higher education has been undergoing very rapid growth. Like all growth industries with a high technological component and skilled labor force (such as petrochemicals or electronics), higher education experiences high wages, good working conditions, and a very mobile labor force, with a good deal of intra-industry raiding.

In the industry as a whole, there is a surplus of supply over demand (i.e., empty places in freshman classes each Fall), but the quality of the product varies enormously from firm to firm, and there is a perpetual shortage of the most sought-after degrees. This quite naturally drives up the price, particularly since the quality firms maintain an artificially short supply through oligopolistic techniques of market control. Oddly enough, the industry's leading firms do not exact the high market price for their product in *dollars*. In fact, they sell their degrees at a considerable dollar loss. But they *do* exact an extremely high price from their customers in the form of certain behavior patterns and performances which they make prerequisites for the sale of the degree. By and large, those customers who pay the price for the scarce quality degrees get value for their money and effort. Their earning power and status opportunities increase quite satisfactorily. Since this fact is well known, an ever-larger pool of potential customers is formed and competition for the scarce products is fierce. Under these labor and market conditions, the workers (i.e., faculty) have considerable bargaining power, and they therefore do quite well even without collective bargaining. Were they to threaten to strike a single large firm (university), they could easily bring it to its knees. The customers (students), on the other hand, cannot effectively employ the traditional consumers' weapon of a boycott (*not*

a "strike"). There are too many potential customers ready to take their places, should they try.

This little parody is not entirely wide of the mark. In particular, the bit about universities demanding behavior rather than money from their "customers" strikes close to home, and one might sum up a good deal of recent student discontent by saying that more and more consumers of higher education are deciding that the product is not worth the nonmonetary price. But the gap between parody and reality is still enormous, and there is much to be learned from that fact. The moral relationships among capitalist, worker, and consumer are simply nothing like those among administrators, faculty, and students. Different criteria of value guide choices and action on all sides, different norms of acceptable behavior operate, different criteria of success and failure are invoked by each community in allocating the nonmaterial rewards of status and approbation. The Rolls-Royce dealer with six cars and forty rich customers would simply turn his back on a purchaser who complained about the style of the Rolls. If you don't like it, don't buy it, he would say, and invite the next customer into his office. But no Ivy League dean, even in a fit of total exasperation, would summarily expel rebellious students on the grounds that plenty of other young men with high College Board scores were waiting to be admitted. Much of the frustration which students suffer in their confrontations derives from their knowledge that it is the forbearance of faculty and dean, not their own power, which keeps them from being thrown out on the spot. They are forced to rely on the fact that the university is precisely *not* a capitalist firm merely out to make a profit, but rather is an educational institution dedicated—for better or worse—to *their* intellectual development.

But attractive though the fantasy of the suffering proletariat may be, it plays no important part in the serious critique of the university on which the radical students base their attacks. Let us turn therefore to the three-stage radical analysis of what is wrong with American colleges and universities.

The starting point of the critique is a subjective fact—a feeling, not an axiom or a theory. Large numbers of the brightest, most

enthusiastic, curious, eager, academically turned-on students in America are thoroughly dissatisfied with the education they are offered in universities today. The students most profoundly disturbed are precisely those who might be expected to enjoy college the most. They are the college-oriented, the academic achievers, the very students to whom the curriculum and university life are tailored in the best schools. It is worth reflecting for a moment on the significance of this basic fact, because it frequently gets lost in the confusion and emotion of demonstrations and confrontations. The first principle of institutional diagnostics is that something is wrong when those best suited to the life of the institution rebel most violently against it. If the secular at heart drift away from Rome, the Church can comfort itself that not all are called to the service of God; but when the priests rebel, then it is almost certainly the Church itself which is at fault. So too, professors need not be unsettled by the defection of students who are obviously unsuited for the activities of the academy. But the rebels today are the best students, not the worst. And that can only mean trouble in the university itself.

When I say "the best students," I do not mean merely the "A" students, although the universal experience is that the rebels number in their ranks some of the most successful students by grading standards. I mean those young men and women whose alert and probing minds mark them as natural participants in the life of the mind.

The discontent is at first vague, imprecise, unarticulated, as one might expect. Students who have fought a vicious battle to win admission to a top school find that the experience there falls short of their expectation. They rebel against regulations for which they see no reason. They struggle to fight free of educational restrictions and requirements which stifle rather than stimulate their interest. They see no point in the endless testing and grading to which so much of the genuinely educational activity of the campus is subordinated. They grow impatient with their professors' calm assurance that the facts and techniques they master now will prove valuable to them later on. Their education, they protest, is not *relevant*, by which they mean that it speaks neither to their needs

nor to the needs of the world. It is *specialized*, they say, or *professional*—meaning mostly that it seems dull and pointless.

At the same time, the students find themselves part of an academic community which has intimate relations with the larger world of American society. It is *their* community; they identify with it immediately and completely. But it does things they detest, and it is run by men with whom they feel no bond of sympathy or understanding. It contracts with the government for war research; it confers honorary degrees on industrial tycoons and puts slumlords on its boards of governors; it runs officer-training programs, welcomes defense industry firms as recruiters, and establishes professional schools to train future State Department officials.

Now one might expect that a student who disapproved of these activities would simply turn his back on the university, or at least close his heart to it. Not at all. The university is his world, his turf, his home. Nothing is more striking than the speed with which the new student identifies the university as *his university*, so that his criticisms come from the inside rather than the outside. Senior professors with thirty years of service behind them may deprecate the rebels as outsiders, newcomers who have yet to earn the right to criticize the institution; but to the rebels themselves, the newest registrant is as completely a part of the community as the oldest emeritus professor. Indeed, that is the principal reason for the bitterness of the attacks, which resemble family feuds rather than political conflicts.

So strong is their identification with the university that although the rebels will criticize it, condemn it, revile it, obstruct it, even—God forbid—burn it down, the one thing they will not do is simply turn their backs on it and walk away. They are truly the children of the university, and so it is not surprising that their ultimate act of rejection is to step outside the walls of the academy and found their own Free University in its shadow. All the essentials of a university can be found there—teachers, students, courses, reading lists. Only the titles are different: revolutionary drama, rather than Shakespeare; a history of revolutions rather than a history of France; guerrilla tactics rather than a statistical approach to voting behavior. But university curricula are flexible,

and there is hardly a course in a Free University which could not be comfortably accommodated in the establishment next door.

When the radical students try to put their frustration and discontent together in a coherent form, their critique goes something like this: the university is indeed like an industrial firm in capitalist society, but its product is not a degree, as in our little parody, nor are students the customers of the firm. The product of the university, to alter a famous description by an older liberal critic, is the *Establishment Man*. The customers for this product are the corporations, government agencies, foundations, military services, *and universities* whose destructive, repressive, antisocial activities demand an ever-larger supply of loyal and unquestioning workers. The students are the raw material from which the university fashions its product. Strictly speaking, the universities are only the final stage in a productive process which begins in elementary schools, or even prior to that in the home. The Establishment Man is a highly productive worker, but he is very expensive to produce. Consequently, the firms who purchase him must pay a high price, in taxes and "voluntary" contributions, to the colleges and universities of America. Viewed in isolation, a university may seem to be a nonprofit organization supported by charitable donations; but seen as part of the total advanced industrial economy, the university proves to be as profitable as an executive training program, a union apprentice system, or indeed any intermediate step in production through which raw materials must pass before becoming salable in the market place.

Viewed as an exercise in labor training and discipline, the activity of the university is seen to pose very complex and tricky problems, whose solution calls for great skill and imagination on the part of faculty and administration. Technologically advanced capitalism requires a large number of workers who combine technical skill with a high level of imagination, inventiveness, and individual initiative. The system demands growth, which in turn rests on innovation both technical and administrative. Now, men cannot be coerced or bribed into the sorts of creative activity necessary for continued economic growth. The motivation must

be internal, and it must be something more than mere greed or acquisitiveness. When Robert McNamara reorganized the command structure of the Ford Motor Company, he was driven by pride, by the excitement of putting into practice the theories he had taught at Harvard Business School, by a desire to put his stamp on a huge industrial bureaucracy. The same motives operated in him as Secretary of Defense, during which time there was no question of his private gain.

Unfortunately (so the radical critique continues), men who are encouraged to think and act creatively may very well begin to question the values of the system for which they are being prepared. Their doubts may extend beyond the merits of wealth and status to the very foundation stone of the system—production for profit rather than for use. They may become first critics, and then active opponents, of capitalism at home and imperialism abroad. But it will not do to guard against this danger by stifling originality and initiative, for thereby one stifles profits as well. Some way must be found to provoke an outpouring of creative energy in profitable directions, while misdirecting the attention of productive Establishment Men from the glaring evils and injustices of the social and economic system they are about to enter. This complex double task, the radicals argue, is precisely the concealed goal of the education in America's colleges and universities.

It works like this: starting initially in elementary school, bright students are presented with challenging and interesting materials in the natural sciences and humanities. At the same time, they are made vividly aware of the severe competition for desirable slots at the higher levels. Before they are old enough to question the value of the prizes they compete for, students are launched on a desperate race for college, for graduate school, and beyond. Everywhere they turn—to their families, to friends, books, television, movies—they see the rewards of success in the race they are running. Society really *does* pay off on success. Those who win the race are wealthy, famous, honored; they have leisure, luxury, and exciting opportunities for new experiences. What is more, the successful ones even get to tackle the really challenging new tasks.

It is the "A" students, not the "C" students, who perform heart transplants, argue landmark cases before the Supreme Court, advise Presidents, and take control of giant corporations.

The anxious students, oppressed by the competition for success, suffer an intellectual block which makes them unable to see the evils of the system they are struggling to enter. The undergraduate years, which might well provide a brief, quiet moment for reflection, are infected by the competition for graduate and professional schools.

But even in so repressive a society, there are voices which cry a warning, critics who question the very basis of the system rather than merely quibbling about its details. These voices are a threat to the system, for like the boy who insisted that the emperor had no clothes on, they pierce the hypocrisy and point to the evils which lie before our very eyes.

To meet this challenge, the proprietors of the system—the educators—have devised a masterstroke, a brilliant device for emasculating and domesticating the critics. Rather than argue against them, which would elevate their importance, or censor them, which would confer all the appeal of martyrdom upon them, the intellectual establishment welcomes the critics into the academy and puts their books on the required reading list! Mastering the condemnations of the system becomes one of the conditions of success in the system.

The academic establishment defends itself against these charges by insisting that it takes no stand on the issues of war or peace, capitalism or socialism. As a setting for inquiry and debate, it remains strictly value neutral. Perhaps so, the radicals reply, so far as the *content* of university education is concerned; there is no ban in the academy on the works of Marx, Lenin, Mao, or Che Guevara. But the *form* of the education defeats content, no matter how radical. Theory is divorced from practice, students grub for grades in courses on revolution as eagerly as in courses on organic chemistry or the philosophy of the Enlightenment. Competition sets students against one another even in courses devoted to the study of cooperation and community. And always the system grinds on relentlessly, taking in lively, eager boys and girls and

spewing forth precision-tooled Establishment Men. Can McGeorge Bundy ever have been a child?

The false consciousness of the educational process—the anxious emphasis on artificial goals, the stifling of genuine creativity and critical intelligence, the concealment of the real purposes of the institution—merely mirrors the false consciousness in the society as a whole. Production for profit rather than use has its analogue in scholarship for publication rather than for wisdom. The continued illusion of harmony between labor and management is echoed in the pretense that students and faculty have a common interest. And just as the exclusion of the poor and the Black from the most advantageous jobs is rationalized by their lack of appropriate training, so the exclusion of their children from the best universities is rationalized by appeal to high school grades and aptitude scores. To be sure, there is tokenism in the university as in industry; but so long as corporations produce for profit and universities educate for safe performance rather than for radical self-fulfillment, both institutions will comfortably discover that the poor and the Black simply do not measure up.

Thus we have a critique of the university and a critique of society, but is there a causal link or merely a striking parallel between the two? How does the university come to reflect so perfectly the values of the society? (Or should we say, with certain American sociologists of an idealist persuasion, that the institutions of the society reflect the values of the university?)

The answer is the third and connecting link in the chain of radical argument. The needs, values, and hypocrisies of the larger society are inflicted upon the university through the financing procedure of university education and through the intimidation of the higher university administration. So long as the lion's share of the money for universities comes from industry, foundations, and state and federal governments, society at large can effectively dictate the form and content of the education within the academy. Sometimes, of course, the dictation is direct and rather brutal, particularly in state universities run by conservative state legislatures. But usually the pressures are subtle and indirect—carrots rather than sticks. We have already looked at the ways in which the profes-

sions impose standards on professional schools. In much the same way, the desires of corporations reflect back into undergraduate programs from which they intend to draw their junior executives.

Sometimes, the pressures are so indirect as to disappear from sight. For example, in response to Soviet space successes, a National Defense Education Act was passed, creating graduate fellowships and providing money to strengthen areas of university activity which the Congress deems valuable to America's military ambitions. The heavyhanded loyalty oath and affidavit requirements of the NDEA fellowships have received a great deal of publicity, but the real coercive effect of NDEA on graduate education has little to do with such know-nothing excrescences. Even if they were eliminated, the major pressure would remain. The mechanism is this: the government makes available to universities much-needed fellowship money. The universities respond by accepting the money *and applying the funds thus freed to other pressing needs* (such as faculty salaries). Now, the NDEA grants run for a term of three years. This places an enormous pressure on students to complete their graduate work quickly, because their university, having allocated its funds, is apt not to have further scholarship aid available when those three years are up. Typically, a graduate student on an NDEA grant will study for three years and then teach as an assistant for several years while trying to complete his dissertation. But if students are pressured to finish quickly, then the content of the graduate program must be adjusted so that the average good student can master it in the allotted time. Thus, by a chain of consequences, the government's laudable allocation of money to graduate fellowships ends by squeezing *all* graduate study into a lockstep which bears no intrinsic relation whatever to the logic of each individual discipline.

Over and above the direct and indirect financial pressures which bear upon the university, the values of the society are guaranteed a place in the academy by the way in which the university is ruled. Representatives of the military-government-industrial establishment sit on the governing boards of universities and appoint their chief executive officers. Even though university presidents are frequently former professors, they are selected by nonprofessors who quite

naturally co-opt into the ranks of the administration only those whose attitudes are congenial to the establishment. Eventually, of course, the combination of these various internal and external pressures produces a class of professors who have quite thoroughly internalized the false and hypocritical standards of the system. Hence even a university reorganization which places power in the hands of the faculty will not have a noticeable effect on the life of the institution. Indeed, cries of faculty power serve the same ideological function as did nineteenth-century reformist calls for extension of the suffrage. The evil inheres in the system itself, and nothing short of a radical separation of the university from society, or even a reorganization of society itself, can replace false values with true values and education for repression with education for liberation.

What shall we say of this attack on American higher education? It should be obvious, from the passion with which I expound it, that there is much in it which I consider true and important. Certification, ranking, and professional criteria of success *do* intrude on the educational life of the university, and their effect is almost always destructive. Young men and women are required, at precisely the wrong time in their lives, to behave either like little children or like middle-aged careerists. Every attempt at imagination, flexibility, and experiment—and there are many superb attempts—must struggle against the extraneous and irrelevant demands of the system for grades, prerequisites, certificates of "good standing." It is as though the act of love were governed by civil service regulations. In Part Two, I will discuss the differences between the legitimate educational activity of *criticism* and the irrelevant activities of ranking and certification. Later, I will suggest a way in which undergraduate education might be at least partially insulated from career pressures and demands. I am also in sympathy with the radical criticism of American society at large, although neither I nor the other critics can offer adequately reasoned proposals for systematic change. Finally, I take it as too obvious to dispute that the university experiences great pressures and manifold influences from the corporate, eleemosynary, military, and governmental worlds; considering American higher education as a

whole, much of what happens in universities is explainable only in terms of the operations of such outside forces.

Nevertheless, the radical critique of the university is wrong on several important counts. To begin with, despite the pressures and constraints of contemporary higher education, it seems to me clearly the case that university life is *liberating* for most students, and that the liberation occurs *because* of what the university is rather than *in spite of* what it is. To repeat—and I fear that many repetitions will be necessary—I am *not* suggesting that American universities are satisfactory as they stand, or that the only changes needed are marginal adjustments. I am only claiming that *even now*, a great many colleges and universities are much freer, much more conducive to serious questioning and open debate, much more committed to human values, than any other major institution in the United States. Their effect is to promote in students a reexamination of the unquestioned religious, moral, social, economic, and political dogmas by which men customarily live. Indeed, one of the causes of student rebellion is the contradiction between their newly awakened awareness and the old social constraints and demands which still bear down upon them. Once an undergraduate sees how devoid of intellectual importance his grades really are, it is trebly painful to be forced still to worry about them and compete for them.

I am equally in disagreement with the radicals' view of the relation of the university to American society. American universities today, despite their defense contracts and ROTC programs, their businessman trustees and Establishment presidents, are the only major viable institutional centers of opposition to the dominant values and policies of the society. The churches are weak, the unions have long since made their peace with the established order, the poor and the Black are as yet not organized, and little can be expected from the corporate world or the agricultural sector. It is in universities that opposition to the Vietnamese war started and flourished. There, if anywhere, new and deeper attacks on the evils of American society will be mounted. *Here again, the opposition role of the university flows from its very nature as a center of free inquiry*. Against all the pressures from the larger society, colleges and universities in the United States have for half a century been in the van of progressive social reform and social criticism.

I am enough of an old-fashioned Marxist to believe that societies cannot, by an effort of will or outburst of utopian fervor, leap over major steps in social progress. If the universities are at the head of such progress, then anything which strengthens them is to the good, and anything which weakens them can only have a reactionary effect. To be sure, the next possible stage of social development may still fall far short of our dream of the good society, but no twist of Hegelian Dialectic will persuade me that a society progresses by destroying its most progressive institution. Many students now feel so great a revulsion against contemporary America that they cannot mobilize their emotional energies for anything less than a total, revolutionary transformation of society. I sympathize with them. Their condition is in no way dishonorable, and if I were younger, less settled in a career, and less entangled in the intense personal relationships of marriage and parenthood, I think I might share their feelings entirely. But the fact remains that only next steps are ever possible; final steps can never be taken. So those of us who can still sustain a concern for the partial amelioration of social evils must rely upon the actual institutions which offer us the most assistance. In America today, the university clearly heads that list.