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I. *INTRODUCTION*

Honored to participate in the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the University of North Dakota

Much has happened in the hundred years to change the character of the American university.

And it would be prudent to expect much more to happen that will cause changes in the next hundred years.

But instead of being prophetic about what lies ahead (it is not the business of philosophers to engage in prediction or prophecy), I shall speak normatively about the future—trying to say what should happen to make the university and its college a better place than it is now.

In order to do this, I will

first, review the changes that have occurred in the last hundred years,

then, face the reality of the American university in its present state,
and

here permit me to say what its greatest failings are
and finally, I will recommend one or two changes that I think can
correct those deficiencies.

II. A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

A. America a hundred years ago was not a democratic society—not democratic politically, economically, or socially—and, consequently, not democratic educationally.

1. *Politically*: an oligarchial republic: constitutional government with severely restricted suffrage—much less than half the population.

2. *Economically*: the condition of the working class

- a. As reflected in TR's Progressive Party Platform in 1912
- b. As manifested in the injunction against Big Steel in 1928.
- c. As confirmed by the Bill of Economic Rights—for the first time in 1943.

3. *Socially*: class divided: a working class and a so-called "leisure class." Veblen: "The Theory of Conspicuous Consumption."

4. *Educationally*:

- a. Horace Mann in the late fifties: the struggle for at least six years of free schooling for all.
- b. Still in 1900: less than 10 percent of those eligible for high school. The overwhelming majority went to work, were regarded as fit only for the workaday world, and not to become educated human beings, because *not educable*.
- c. Those who went to high school (considered as preparatory for college) and then went on to college, belonged to the privileged class—*the relatively few*—

either destined for a professional life mainly law, medicine, the ministry, or engineering

(there were no schools of business, or journalism, and so forth, then)

or destined for the life of a gentlemen and the pursuits of leisure or sheer idleness (fun and games).

- d. Jefferson's dictum in 1817 still held true at the beginning of this century and persisted for some years after that.

(Let me remind you that John Dewey's great book—*Democracy and Education*—was published 1916—and that was the first time those two words were put together.)

III. *WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO CHANGE THINGS DURING THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS—REALLY, IN THE LAST SIXTY?*

A. *First of all*, politically: the coming into existence of political democracy: a constitutional government with truly universal suffrage

—the woman's suffrage amendment

—the civil rights legislation

- B. *Second*, the emergency of the welfare state—democratic socialism: Wilson's New Freedom, FDR's New Deal—and subsequent fair deals and square deals right down to Johnson's Great Society.

- C. *Third*, the reduction of class divisions and progress toward more social equality: the dwindling of an idle leisure class.

- D. *Fourth*—in the light of these changes—the extension of free compulsory schooling to twelve years, not only with all, or most, of the children finishing high school, but with an ever increasing number going on to college and university, with a much larger range of vocational or professional options there.

E. *Finally*, one other change occurred—one that has nothing to do with any of the foregoing changes.

1. I am referring to the development of graduate schools (such as John Hopkins and Chicago, with comparable innovation at Harvard and Yale), which introduced a degree that had been first instituted in the German universities of the 19th century—the Ph.D.
2. As first instituted in the German universities, but not adopted by Oxford and Cambridge until much later in this century, the Ph.D. was the badge of a scholar who was thus certified as competently trained for study and research that aimed at the advancement of knowledge in some specialized field of science or scholarship.
 - a. Please note that the Ph.D. did not become a necessary credential for those engaged in teaching in the humanistic and classical secondary schools of Germany. It was sought only by those who planned to dedicate their lives to study and research (and lecturing to others who had the same intention); but not by those who planned to devote their lives mainly to teaching the young at the level of basic schooling.

- b. Please note also that Oxford and Cambridge still preserved the mediaeval model, in which the M.A. was the highest non-professional degree, and the only professional degrees were in medicine, law, and theology.
3. In this country, the introduction of the Ph.D. did not long imitate the German model, but turned into the Ph.D. industry that plagues all our universities and has become the required certificate for college teaching, with deplorable consequences for our colleges that are, for the most part, controlled and regulated by the graduate faculties when the college is the undergraduate division of a university.
- (Even independent colleges strive to be like the colleges that are the undergraduate division of a university.)

IV. *THE PRESENT STATE OF BASIC SCHOOLING IN THIS COUNTRY AND OF AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES*

- A. Dewey's appeal in 1916 for equal educational opportunity—equal in quality as well as quantity—went unheeded. Basic schooling in this country still exhibits the same two-track system that Jefferson advocated in 1817.

Only primary schooling—the first eight years—are common schooling. After that, the branching of the ways—those destined for labor to vocational high schools; those destined for college, to so-called liberal arts high schools.

—the college-bound given one quality of schooling, the work-bound a grossly inferior quality.

It is that fundamentally undemocratic character of our system of basic schooling that *The Paideia Proposal* seeks to reform—by a one-track program that aims at twelve years of schooling of the same quality for all—with no electives and no vocational training involved.

- B. Before the Second World War, there were still, here and there (at Chicago under Hutchins, at Harvard under Conant, at Wisconsin under Meiklejohn, and at St. John's College under Barr and Buchanan) attempts to establish a general, humanistic, and liberal course of study at the college level, with few if any electives and no vocational training at all.

Specialized scholarship, specialized training for research in fields of science, and preparation for professional careers was, in all these cases, regarded as the main business of the university—its graduate schools and its professional schools—not as the task of the undergraduate college.

- C. After the Second World War, with the one outstanding exception of little St. John's College, in Annapolis and Santa Fe, general, liberal, and humanistic education (with a required program of studies) disappeared

almost entirely from our American colleges. *What had happened to cause this?*

1. *First,* the dominance of the graduate schools. (Cite Hutchins attempt to counteract this, an attempt that succeeded for a while, but failed as soon as he departed)
2. *Second,* the influence of Ph.D. training on those engaged in college teaching

(Ever increasing specialization and, with that, the proliferation of elective course offerings—with the extreme, the 4,000 courses in the Harvard catalog.) offerings
3. *Third,* the pressures exerted on the college by parents and students—and quite rightly so—for vocational preparation of one kind or another for students at the age of 18-22, who are on the verge of marriage, self-support, and the beginning of a workaday life.

D. The complaint of Ortega y Gasset—in 1930—in his *Revolt of the Masses* and in his *Mission of the University* (much more justified today than it was in 1930).

1. The progressive loss of general culture with the ever increasing intensity of specialization in all fields of scholarship, of science, and even in the learned professions.
2. Let me quote just a few passages from these two works by Ortega that, in my judgment, accurately portray the intellectual and cultural malaise of the 20th century—in Europe as well as in America—an illness that has its seat as well as its symptoms in our colleges and universities.
3. The ideal of the university (set forth in John Stuart Mill's Inaugural Address as Rector of St. Andrews and in John Henry Newman's *Idea of a University*) is, as Ortega so tellingly pointed out, no longer the ideal in this country or abroad.
4. The cultured generalist is, as a result, disappearing from our society. The specialists must remain, but everyone should be a generalist first and a specialist second.

V. *THE REMEDY FOR THESE FAILINGS: WHAT THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE*

A. First, the making of generalist at the level of compulsory basic schooling—the ideal of the Paideia reform.

That's the right place for it (not college or university) because that is the right age for it and because that is the only common schooling for all.

B. With a truly democratic system of public schooling, which is through and through general, liberal, and humanistic for all—both for the college-

bound and the work-bound—our colleges and universities can stay as they are now—places for specialized study and for vocational or professional preparation.

- C. But, as more and more of the young go on beyond basic schooling to advanced schooling in our colleges and universities, they should not be allowed to become uncultured specialists. To prevent this, some measure of general, liberal, and humanistic learning must be continued for them—in our colleges and professional schools. *HOW?*
1. My only answer at the college level is: along with all the elective majors offered in the college catalog, there should be one required minor, required for all students and for the whole four years of college, and taught by every member of the college faculty, regardless of what they took their Ph.D. in and what their narrow specialty now is.
 2. And at the university level, something like this leaven of general and humanistic learning should be introduced into the requirements for the Ph.D. and for every other graduate degree.

Every Ph.D. should be as doctor of philosophy—in the field of basic ideas.
- D. Will this occur? I do not know. I fear not, if the Ph.D. industry continues unabated and does not cease to be what William James called it at the beginning of this century—the Ph.D. Octopus.
- E. But I do know that unless it does occur, we are threatened with the demise of general culture, and with that barbarism of specialization which produces generally uncultured specialists in all fields.

The End



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