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REFORM: A RHETORICAL STUDY.

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JAMES BRYANT CONANT'S CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATIONAL
REFORM: A RHETORICAL STUDY

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JAMES BRYANT CONANT'S CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATIONAL
REFORM: A RHETORICAL STUDY

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JAMES BRYANT CONANT'S CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATIONAL
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INTRODUCTION

Subject of Study

James Bryant Conant has become one of the most significant men of the mid-twentieth century. Esquire magazine recently listed him as one of "the 100 most important people in the world, . . . the one hundred people who, for good or ill, pack the most clout, , . . who, between 1965 and 1975, have had (or will have) the greatest impact on your world."¹ Even a decade earlier, Francis Griffith had pointed out, "Dr. Conant enjoys an enormous prestige and any writer who dared to challenge him would look like a lap dog yapping at a mastiff."² "As scientist, educator, and statesman," Merle Borrowman wrote in Saturday Review, "Conant has already won victories aplenty."³ When honoring Conant for his outstanding service to children, Parents Magazine also underscored his eminence: "A teacher affects eternity. . . . He can never tell where his influence stops. James

¹"The 100 Most Important People in the World," Esquire, LXXIII (April, 1970), 104.

²Francis Griffith, "Another Look at the Conant Report," National Association of Secondary-School Principals Bulletin, XLIV (October, 1960), 59.

³Merle Borrowman, "Conant, the Man," Saturday Review, XLVI (September 21, 1963), 60.

Bryant Conant is just such a teacher whose influence--as a scholar, scientist, statesman and author--has affected academic thinking throughout the world."⁴

Conant's positions of public service span half a century and encompass three major areas. As a scientist he served in the Chemical Warfare Service (1917-1918), was a professor of Chemistry at Harvard (1919-1933), acted as chairman of the National Defense Research Commission (1941-1946), was deputy director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development (1941-1946), and was a member of the Atomic Energy Commission (1947-1952). Politically, he served as United States High Commissioner to Germany from 1953 to 1955 and as United States Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany from 1955 to 1957. His educational positions include his fourteen years as a chemistry professor at Harvard, twenty years as Harvard's President (1933-1953) during which time he reorganized and nurtured the professional education program, and two years as Educational Advisor to Free Berlin (1963-1965) under the auspices of the Ford Foundation.⁵

Conant's social impact results primarily from his role as educational critic; this role evolved from his

⁴"Parents Magazine Honors Dr. James Bryant Conant for Outstanding Service to Children," Parents Magazine, XXXIX (February, 1964), 56.

⁵Who's Who in America: 1968-1969 (Chicago: A.N. Marquis Company, 1969), XXXV, 426.

scientific and political endeavors as well as the educational involvement. His positions in these three areas produced an interest in the welfare of America, her public education, and the relationship between the two. They led him to believe that the welfare of this country is directly related to the quality of her educational system, and this conviction inspired him to improve the country's future through education. Numerous writers have lauded his supremacy as an educational critic. In 1960, William Brickman called him a "major authority on education . . . [whose] words are carefully considered by those to whom education is dear."⁶ In the same year Saturday Review characterized him as an "educational statesman. . . . When he speaks, the voices of his critics--and they are many--are ignored, and the voices of those who see a need for a more dramatic reshaping of our entire educational structure get far less attention."⁷ More recently, in 1967, Terry Ferrer stated that "at seventy-three, he Conant still towers over the country's educators. . . . His name and his efforts in public education have been unequalled."⁸

More than any other position the Harvard Presidency

⁶ William W. Brickman, "Conant's Discovery of an Educational Problem," School and Society, LXXXVIII (April 9, 1960), 171.

⁷ "Profile: Movers and Shapers of Education," Saturday Review, XLIII (October 15, 1960), 88.

⁸ Terry Ferrer, "Conant Revisited," Saturday Review L (March 18, 1967), 56.

shaped his educational ideas and objectives. Before that time he had led a rather sheltered academic existence as a student in wealthy private institutions, Roxbury Latin School and Harvard, and as a chemistry professor at Harvard. When he assumed the Harvard Presidency, however, he immediately confronted the financial problems of the Graduate School of Education. Determining whether to close that school forced him to look closely at both public and professional education. If he allowed the Education School to close, he soon realized, Harvard graduates could no longer teach in public schools; they could not be certified without the necessary education courses. Once committed to keeping the school open, Conant traveled and spoke extensively throughout New England to obtain the necessary money. During his numerous trips, Francis Spaulding, a Harvard education professor, accompanied him, persuading Conant of the importance of schools of education and increasing his interest in public schools.⁹

Particularly since 1959, one can easily trace Conant's influence in the development of American education. Changes which have occurred in American education, notably the American high school, reflect in part that influence. "As a result of Conant's The American High School Today," Samuel Holton said, "there has been pressure to make the high school

⁹James B. Conant, My Several Lives (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1970), pp. 187-188.

cover some of the work now taught in the freshman and sophomore years at college."¹⁰ Leavitt, Goodman, and Cooper added, "The comprehensive high school, under criticism from Conant and others, has shifted to a more academic emphasis."¹¹

Time magazine published an extensive summary of changes which it contended occurred as a direct consequence of The American High School Today. As the article stated:

Things have happened in U.S. public schools since his (Conant's) calm, compact 'first report to interested citizens' began to circulate. With 224,824 copies in print, his book is the first education bestseller since the vastly more excited Why Johnny Can't Read (1955). 'With the mantle of Dr. Conant around me,' as one principal puts it, many a working schoolman has finally got the school board's green light for scores of reforms and experiments.¹²

Specific changes in particular towns were then cited. In such places as Philadelphia, Richmond, and Pasadena there has been an increase in the number of major subjects available for gifted students, improved summer school offerings, and more counselors for all students. Across the country mathematics courses have been reshaped to fascinate students with mathematical concepts rather than bore them with rote learning. The pupil-teacher ratio is being reduced for

¹⁰Samuel M. Holton, Understanding the American Public High School (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1969), p. 165.

¹¹Howard B. Leavitt, Kenneth S. Goodman and Jack H. Cooper, "The Levels of Education," Foundations of Education, ed. by George F. Kneller (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1963), p. 522.

¹²"Inspector General," Time, LXXIV (September 14, 1959), 76.

English classes. Foreign language offerings have also improved; more languages are being offered for more years, with the trend continuing in that direction: "Last year the U.S. Office of Education," for example, "urged all schools to begin ten years of language in the third grade."¹³ In periodicals throughout the country these changes and many others are attributed to Conant's The American High School Today.

A decade later in The Comprehensive High School, a follow-up study of The American High School Today, Conant himself suggested changes which have taken place. His claims of success, however, were not as glowing. In some areas there has been partial success, he felt, but further improvement was still warranted. At one point he stated that "in almost all the schools one might characterize the course offerings as comprehensive. But by no means do all have as wide an offering as a comprehensive school should have if it is to do justice to the desires and potentialities of all its students."¹⁴ "If one accepts the criteria set forth in my first report," he added, "then one must conclude that only a few of the schools about which we obtained information can be regarded as highly satisfactory. On the other hand, the evidence indicates that the situation

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ James B. Conant, The Comprehensive High School (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), p. 13. Italics his.

regarding academic studies in a great many schools is better than it was ten years ago."¹⁵ More specifically, he was disappointed with the results of his recommendation for an increased number of full-time counselors.¹⁶ He was much more satisfied, however, with results in other areas: (1) thirty per cent of the two thousand schools offered at least one or more advanced placement courses for highly gifted students;¹⁷ (2) seventy-one per cent of the schools offered and sixty-two per cent required a course in "problems in democracy" which was attended by a cross section of the student body;¹⁸ (3) English composition courses were better staffed than ten years earlier;¹⁹ (4) sixty-four percent of the two thousand school boards have arranged to offer four years instruction in at least one foreign language;²⁰ and (5) forty per cent of the schools questioned were offering calculus and twenty-three per cent specified other types of advanced mathematics could be elected.²¹ These highly gratifying signs indicated that American education was indeed improving along the lines he recommended.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 26-27.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 33-35.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 39.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 51.

²¹ Ibid., p. 55.

The primary instrument with which Conant prodded and persuaded his countrymen was rhetoric. A prolific writer, he has written numerous books and articles on education, in addition to his scientific works. A popular public speaker, he has spoken frequently before many significant groups; among his speaking efforts are several series of lectures and several convention keynote addresses. He has presented three lectures each on the following occasions: the Jefferson Memorial Lectures at the University of California,²² the Page-Barbour Series at the University of Virginia,²³ and the Sachs Lectures at Teachers College, Columbia University.²⁴ Other notable examples of lectures are the Pollak and Inglis Lectures at Harvard University, a lecture at Wayne State University, the Morrow Lecture at Smith College,²⁵ the Spaulding Lecture delivered at Yale, and an address presented on the 100th anniversary of the founding of Michigan State College.²⁶ Professional groups before whom he has spoken include the Invitational Conference on the Academically

²²James B. Conant, Thomas Jefferson and the Development of American Education (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), p. v.

²³James B. Conant, Education and Liberty (New York: Random House, 1953), p. v.

²⁴James B. Conant, Education in a Divided World (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. vii.

²⁵James B. Conant, The Child, the Parent, and the State (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. v.

²⁶James B. Conant, The Citadel of Learning (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), p. vi.

Talented Secondary School Pupil and the National Association of Secondary-school Principals.²⁷ Occasionally, he has been interviewed on radio and television.²⁸

Since his speaking tour for the Harvard School of Education and since his earliest writings on education, he has consciously launched a rhetorical campaign to persuade Americans to revamp their educational system. He has not just written and hoped for results, but tried to persuade with repeated, varied forms of rhetoric over a long period of time. As Merle Borrowman commented, "Not since John Dewey has anyone made such a sustained and provocative survey of American education as has James Bryant Conant in his book-by-book analyses of our public school system this past decade."²⁹ William Boutwell described Shaping Educational Policy, one of the more recent books in Conant's series, as "the capstone of a one-man campaign to redesign the American school system from kindergarten through

²⁷ National Education Association, The Identification of the Academically Talented Student in the American Secondary School, A Report of the Invitational Conference on the Academically Talented Secondary School Pupil, February, 1958 (Washington: National Education Association, 1958); James B. Conant, "Individual Development and the National Need--A False Antithesis," National Association of Secondary-School Principals Bulletin, XLIV (April, 1960), 383.

²⁸ "Our Teachers--Educated or Miseducated?" C.B.S. Radio Network documentary, cited in "Conant Follow-up," Senior Scholastic, LXXXIII (December 6, 1963), 1T; "The Day They Had to Close the Schools," C.B.S. Reports, telecast, January 27, 1970.

²⁹ Merle Borrowman, "Conant's Fight for Better Teaching," The Atlantic Monthly, CCXV (April, 1965), 113. Italics his.

graduate school."³⁰ Thus, rhetoric permitted the necessary dissemination of his ideas to all, giving him the opportunity to reach people with his systematic plan. The extensive distribution of his plan, as developed in his books and amplified in his articles and speeches, afforded everyone the opportunity to become acquainted with his ideas. Conant's foremost interest was in reaching the layman. His books were addressed to "interested citizens." In some instances, as in the case of Education in the Junior High School Years, he was concerned with reaching a particular kind of interested citizen, the school board member. A typical expression of his attitude regarding the importance of the layman in educational change appeared in The Education of American Teachers: "Laymen," he said, "will certainly have to enter into the fray in many states, and public opinion must be aroused."³¹ Public concern is essential to educational reform since laymen, through their elected representatives on the school board, must ultimately approve educational changes if those changes are to be implemented. It was imperative to Conant's campaign, therefore, that the masses approve his plan. Through his rhetoric, especially his books, he informed and persuaded them.

³⁰William D. Boutwell, "What's Happening in Education," PTA Magazine, LIX (January, 1965), 25.

³¹James B. Conant, The Education of American Teachers (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1963), pp. 217-218.

Purpose, Scope, and Materials

The primary purpose of this study is to analyze the strategy and efficacy of Conant's campaign for educational reform. Toward this purpose the following major question will be answered: How did James Bryant Conant use rhetoric to achieve success as an educational reformer? To clarify the scope and nature of this analysis some important terms require explanation. Rhetoric will be used herein to include all spoken and written efforts to adjust people to ideas and ideas to people. Campaign will designate a systematic endeavor to gain acceptance and motivate implementation of a specific program. Strategy will be used to represent the rhetorical plan followed in the bid for action; tactics are the specific rhetorical techniques used to fulfill the plan.

The materials to be considered will be Conant's rhetoric, whether originally written or spoken, which appears in print. Eleven of his most significant works were selected for more intensive analysis:

- 1948 - Education in a Divided World
- 1953 - Education and Liberty
- 1956 - The Citadel of Learning
- 1959 - The American High School Today
- 1959 - The Child, the Parent, and the State
- 1960 - Education in the Junior High School Years
- 1961 - Slums and Suburbs
- 1962 - Thomas Jefferson and the Development of American Education
- 1963 - The Education of American Teachers
- 1964 - Shaping Educational Policy
- 1967 - The Comprehensive High School

These books will receive primary emphasis because of their seminal nature. His autobiography will be used as a supplementary source. In addition, his articles and speeches printed in periodicals from January, 1958, through December, 1969, the most significant period, will be analyzed for their supporting role. Reasons for centering on his written work are twofold. The audience is larger and more varied; the works are more accessible and more available for re-assessment.

Rationale for Study

This study should valuably supplement research in educational philosophy and reform. No previous studies have provided an overview of James Bryant Conant's entire campaign for educational reform. Several of them, however, have examined portions of his program or some of the ideas on which his program is based. Two dissertations focused on his recommendations for the junior high school.³² Eight dissertations discussed his recommendations for the American high school. Seven of the latter determined the extent to which Conant's suggestions for the high school met certain existing high school programs in all or portions of California, Indiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Ohio,

³² Lewis Lincoln Beall, "Evaluation and Implementation of the Conant Report on Education in the Junior High School Years" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1963); Sister Mary Eileen Christopherson, "Implementations and Limitations of Conant's Recommendations for the Junior High School Years Applied to Catholic Schools" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1967).

and Tennessee.³³ The eighth was concerned with the attitude of school officials toward Conant's recommendations.³⁴ Three studies were aimed at a more philosophical level. A master's thesis, as early as 1953, attempted to determine Conant's educational theories.³⁵ Delbert Weber compared the educational ideas of Conant and Robert Maynard Hutchins.³⁶

³³ James Gordon Halle, "The Conant Recommendations' Degree of Acceptance and Implementation in California High Schools" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1962); Dan A. Schafer, "Study of the Extent that James B. Conant's Recommendations for the American High School Have Been Implemented in Selected Indiana High Schools" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Indiana, 1963); Charlie Quinn Coffman, "A Study to Determine the Extent to Which 100 Selected High Schools of Mississippi Met the 21 Recommendations of Conant and to Suggest General Locations for High Schools Large Enough to Meet His Criterion of Size" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Mississippi, 1964); Walter Elzie Danley, Sr., "A Study to Determine the Extent to Which Selected Public High Schools of Missouri Met Conant's Twenty-one Recommendations for the Comprehensive High School and to Suggest General Locations for High Schools Large Enough to Meet His Criterion of Size" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Mississippi, 1965); Philip Cornell Putnam, "A Study to Determine the Extent to Which the High Schools in Four Northern New York Counties Meet Conant's Twenty-one Recommendations for the Comprehensive High School" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Colorado State College, 1968); Donald R. Steer, "Conant's Recommendations for the American High School: Implications for Implementation in Ohio High Schools" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1959); Osler Z. Stephens, Jr., "The Conant Recommendations: Their Acceptance, Implementation, and Effectiveness in Selected Tennessee High Schools" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Tennessee, 1965).

³⁴ Paul Marland Schilling, "Opinions of Selected Indiana School Officials Toward James B. Conant's Recommendations for American High Schools" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Indiana, 1960).

³⁵ Miguel A. Casillas, "The Educational Theories of James Bryant Conant" (unpublished Master's thesis, Catholic University of America, 1953).

³⁶ Delbert Dean Weber, "A Comparison of the

Edward Heinig studied articles written by Theodore Brameld in which Brameld classified Conant as an essentialist and concluded that Brameld had not sufficiently supported his claim.³⁷ The overview contained in the present study will not only provide insights into parts of Conant's program, but will also discuss their interrelations and will compare his approach with other points of view.

Information gained from this study should also augment rhetorical theory and criticism. No previous study has focused on the rhetoric of such an educational campaign. Rhetorical theory benefits from the confirmation or rejection of precepts which the practices of a successful rhetorician provide. Isolating the particular methods Conant used and relating them to current rhetorical theory should provide further verification of current theory, as well as insight into the use of rhetoric in educational reform. The major contribution to rhetorical studies may well be the development and testing of the analytical method to be used. Within the model Cronkhite's classifications of kinds of reasons which motivate people, while possibly not fully developed or substantiated and far from traditional, probe the frontiers of knowledge suggesting a direction for further research.

Educational Ideas of James Bryant Conant and Robert Maynard Hutchins" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1962).

³⁷Edward Jeremiah Heinig, "Analysis of Brameld's

This study should also contribute to historical research. Such an influential campaign for educational reform provides insights into the social and intellectual history of the mid-twentieth century. The study may also valuably supplement biographical information about Conant.

Method

The method of this study is both historical and analytical. Historically, Conant's reform measures and campaign will be described in their chronological, social, and intellectual context. His recommendations will be analyzed from the standpoint of their developmental pattern and their purpose. His proposals will be assessed in relation to the social climate which spawned Conant's insight and nurtured those proposals. Conant will be classified philosophically and his position compared to other current major philosophies. Finally, potential and actual criticism of his program will be examined. Analytically, emphasis will be placed on his specific works and how they interrelate in the entire campaign. A model based on Gary Cronkhite's paradigm of persuasion will be developed to facilitate the study of the campaign and the rhetoric therein.³⁸

Critique of Conant's Proposals of Secondary Education" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1963).

³⁸Gary L. Cronkhite, "Logic, Emotion, and the Paradigm of Persuasion," Quarterly Journal of Speech, L (February, 1964), 13-18; cf. Dorwin Cartwright, "Some Principles of Mass Persuasion," Human Relations, II (July, 1949), 253-267.

Through this model Conant's campaign strategy and tactics will be analyzed.

In Cronkhite's view the successful persuader must perform three acts. First, he must submit his propositions (object concept) to the audience. Then he must identify those values which will best motivate the audience to accept his program (motivational concept). Finally, he must link his proposition to those values so that the adherence to those values by the audience will provide them with sufficient reason(s) to accept the proposition.³⁹ For purposes of this analysis the third procedure, linking the object concept to the motivational concept, will be designated "identification construct."

Cronkhite proposes six possible reasons the listener might have for accepting one or more concepts as valuable: (1) to defend his ego, (2) to maintain his identity, (3) because he likes the source, (4) because the language has special significance for him, (5) because he realizes that a relationship which he formerly thought to exist either never did exist or it no longer exists, and (6) because he realizes that overt acceptance of the object concept might benefit him and that the overt claim need not change his internal attitude.⁴⁰ Ego defense argues that acceptance of

³⁹Cronkhite, "Logic, Emotion, and the Paradigm of Persuasion," 15-16.

⁴⁰Gary L. Cronkhite, Persuasion: Speech and Behavioral Change (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1969), pp. 75-80.

the object concept will make the listener feel superior. Maintenance of identity shows that acceptance of the object concept will be consistent with the listener's view of himself. The source as a motivational concept may operate in three ways to achieve persuasion; either he himself may be a powerful motivation, or he can testify that another sufficiently motivating force is related to the object concept, or he may combine the two methods. Impressive linguistic units may be persuasively related to the object concept. A negative relationship, formerly undetermined, may be shown between two concepts, and thereby lead the receiver to accept a position. Finally, the persuader may establish that the listener has something to gain by overtly claiming acceptance of the object concept even though he may not actually accept it.

As Cronkhite explains, the speaker or writer must relate or identify his position with one or more of the six reasons for acceptance which may be operating within the audience. Cronkhite identifies five major kinds of relationships.⁴¹ Efforts to utilize these five proved futile and this portion of Cronkhite's analysis was abandoned for use in this critical model. As a substitute, Conant's rhetoric is examined in three categories: (1) his rhetorical strategy, or his general design for relating his position to audience values; (2) his rhetorical tactics,

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 81-83.

including his argumentative and stylistic techniques; and (3) the supportive role of his less significant rhetorical efforts.

This model was chosen for three major reasons. First, it readily permits a general characterization of the entire campaign as well as a pattern for analyzing the specific rhetorical acts. Second, although it uses the paradigm of classical conditioning as a base, it is more flexible for rhetorical analysis because it allows for the possibility that a listener may perceive a negative relationship between the relatively neutral stimulus (the conditioned stimulus or object concept) and the stimulus which is already capable of eliciting a specific behavioral response (the unconditioned stimulus or motivational concept) with the result that "his response to the object stimulus will be the opposite of his response to the motivational stimulus."⁴² When expanded to include specifics about linking techniques or the identification construct, it adds flexibility to the paradigm of classical conditioning by providing a model for discussing rhetorical techniques in their full context.

Finally, this model affords a different perspective on rhetorical proofs. Traditionally, proofs have been divided into logical, emotional, and personal; although they work in conjunction, the division forces their independent consideration. Cronkhite points out that a somewhat different

⁴²Ibid., p. 75.

view may be beneficial and revealing; rather than make a distinction between "logical" and "emotional" appeals, since it is difficult to ascertain the basis for the differentiation, rhetoricians should think more in terms of appeals to "cognition" and "activation." These psychologically respectable terms retain much of the meaning of the older words, he contends, but they demonstrate more: Appeals to the cognition(s) of the listener would comprise the object concept (or proposition), and appeals to activation would become the motivational concept (or reasons for action). All reasons for a person's action, however weak, would be included as part of the motivational concept rather than reserving this category for passionate appeals, even though all reasons do not provide equal motivation for a particular listener. The value of a particular reason to the rhetorician would be commensurate with the ability of the reason used to motivate a particular listener at a particular time. Approval of the speaker could be one of those reasons, thus, subsuming the traditional ethos or personal appeal under the motivational appeal.⁴³

The new perspective provided by Cronkhite's model is valuable to the rhetorical critic because the distinctions are far more clear-cut. The independence of the concepts allows them to be easily identified which, in turn, assures greater agreement among critics as to what is happening in

⁴³Ibid., p. 78.

a specific speech, essay, or book. A second advantage of this view is its revelation that all appeals have an emotional element, a possibility which rhetorical theorists have long suspected but been unable to demonstrate so clearly. An approach using this model, therefore, provides considerable advantage over more traditional approaches.

Organization

This study is organized into five chapters. Each of these chapters will discuss a part of Conant's campaign; combined they will provide a panorama of his efforts for educational reform and the measures he took to assure its success.

Chapter one will present his objectives and proposals; in Cronkhite's terms this is Conant's object concept or what Conant wished his audience to accept. Chapter two will describe the social and intellectual conditions out of which Conant's campaign grew, characterize the general audience toward which the campaign was directed, and fit Conant's efforts into the broader context of all educational philosophy and reform. Chapter three will analyze Conant's reasons why Americans should accept his program. This analysis will reveal Conant's conception of American values and the extent to which his conceptions coincide with those of other experts. In Cronkhite's terminology this analysis will probe Conant's motivational concept.

Chapter four will examine Conant's identification

construct. His rhetorical strategy and tactics will be analyzed for a better understanding of how he sought to link or identify his program to the values of his audience. Chapter five will discuss the success of his efforts in order to substantiate the soundness of his strategy and tactics, offer conclusions growing from this study, and suggest directions for further research.

CHAPTER I

OBJECT CONCEPT

Educational systems and practices have traditionally evolved from one of three bases: a predetermined philosophy, needs of the child, or societal needs. Some educationists first develop a philosophy of education and then construct an educational system consistent with that philosophy. Other educationists observe the child's needs and potential and then devise a system which fulfills them. A third group bases its approach on the needs and aspirations of society and formulates educational programs designed largely to be socially beneficial. James Bryant Conant is primarily a member of the latter group.

Conant viewed education as the major vehicle for accomplishing national goals; although not the only role of education, it is primary. In the early growth of the United States the major goal and thus the task of education was to aid in synthesizing the populace into a democracy. To Conant our system of education has served us well in this respect: "To my mind," he said, education "has provided the great engine for democracy which has served this nation of many creeds. Without it I doubt whether so many different national cultures brought by the nineteenth century migration

could have found a common basis of understanding."¹

The recent national goal is the preservation of democracy, and education remains essential for the task. As Conant explained, the schools are "the vehicle by which the American concept of democracy may be transmitted to our future citizens;"² they must help "extend the boundaries of our interest and our sympathy as never before . . . to leap two oceans;"³ and therefore, "the strength of this republic is intimately connected with the success or failure of our system of public schools."⁴ The schools, however, fall short of this societal function; they neither prepare Americans to understand adequately and perpetuate democracy nor to deal effectively with other cultures. To Conant two solutions seemed open if education would fulfill its mission: "improve the schools or change the pattern."⁵ Conant devoted two decades to the former and detailed an educational blueprint for the satisfaction of social and national needs in the United States.

The purpose of this chapter is to outline Conant's blueprint for educational reform. That program constituted

¹James B. Conant, Education and Liberty (New York: Random House, 1953), p. xi.

²James B. Conant, Education in a Divided World (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 1.

³Ibid., p. 18.

⁴Ibid., p. 1.

⁵Conant, Education and Liberty, p. xi.

the "object concept" of Conant's campaign, that is, what he sought to have understood, accepted, and implemented. The analysis will first examine his general guidelines, then consider his recommendations for secondary education, his restructuring of teacher education, and finally his proposal for educational unification through a nationwide planning commission.

General Guidelines

Education of all students to their maximum potential would assure the survival of our democracy, argued Conant, and is possible through a system which (1) preserves the democratic principles that made us great, particularly our unique diversity with its emphasis on individual differences; (2) provides the unity necessary for mutual understanding and cooperative development; and (3) improves drastically the quality of education. He described a program which fit these prescriptions.

Americans are diverse; they have different aspirations, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and levels of intelligence. Coming from various regions of the country, they foster views typical of their own region. Furthermore, they believe so strongly in the right of the individual to be different that they are willing to do almost anything to support a country which encourages that difference; in fact the diversity of its people may be a major source of our national strength. Local school support is one way American

diversity is reflected; although it may seem to produce chaos, it is "characteristic of our flexible decentralized concept of democracy."⁶ Not just characteristic of our society, local control is also beneficial because it allows the schools to adapt to the needs of the particular geographical area in which they are located.

Like all peoples, Americans differ in degrees of intellectual ability. To Conant this meant a school system must acknowledge this difference and educate so that we use this diversity to advantage. The current system can be altered to do this. The aspect of the present system most in need of consideration would be training of the gifted. Appropriate measures need to be taken to identify those students and urge them to seek the best education the curriculum could provide. Curriculum revision would often be necessary to accomodate the gifted. Thus students with superior capabilities could be trained for maximum benefit to a society which needs them badly. "If we so desire," Conant explained, "we can, through our schools, annually . . . make available for the national welfare reservoirs of potential professional talent now untapped."⁷

Employment options and desires are another source of diversity. American schools should reflect the importance of this diversity, depicting the options and training

⁶Ibid., p. 87.

⁷Ibid., p. 56.

according to student choices. Assuming the student has the necessary intellectual capacity, his desired vocation should determine both the length and kind of education he pursues. Social pressures toward "status careers" should be deemphasized, and early selection of personally appropriate vocations encouraged. Even though a student may later change his mind, early choice is beneficial because it will increase the significance of his school work, increase the motivation to remain in school longer, and augment the information desired from each course. He also will have sufficient time to take elective courses necessary for his chosen career.⁸

These geographic, intellectual, and vocational differences should be preserved and reflected in our educational system, Conant believed, because they strengthen and perpetuate our democratic principles. All differences, however, are not so desirable. The people of this country possess divisive differences which ultimately work against her future. Unity in those areas should be established.

One harmful difference is reflected in the social, economic, or religious desire of many citizens to send their children to private schools. Private schools should be discouraged because they are a "divisive force in our society."⁹

⁸James B. Conant, Slums and Suburbs (New York: The New American Library, 1961), p. 41.

⁹James B. Conant, Shaping Educational Policy (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 45.

Only when students attend the same schools will they work and play together, thereby developing mutual understanding and respect for each other. Sectarian religious instruction is equally undesirable in the public schools because it emphasizes differences that separate people. Moreover, such training is unnecessary since the promotion of moral and spiritual values, a primary function of religious training, has also been a goal of our nondenominational schools.¹⁰ The use of taxpayers' money to support training which divides rather than unifies the populace is "to suggest that American society use its own hands to destroy itself."¹¹

A second undesirable separative force in American society is the segregated school which emphasizes differences that develop animosities. Segregation keeps Negroes from realizing their full potential at a time when all available intellectual resources must be tapped. Racial integration can reduce the separation and improve the quality of Negro education. Especially at the secondary level all possible steps must be taken to integrate: School district lines often need alteration to achieve the greatest integration possible; then, as a last resort, bussing should be used to assure that each school is as integrated as any other school in the district. Conant stated, however, that he would leave the elementary schools "as neighborhood

¹⁰Conant, Education and Liberty, p. 86.

¹¹Ibid., p. 87.

schools even if many were as a consequence essentially all Negro. But," he continued, "I should advocate pouring money into such schools with the hope of overcoming the incredible handicaps under which children in the Negro slum schools suffer."¹²

By nurturing the differences which work to national advantage and minimizing the differences which divide and create misunderstanding, this country would be better able to preserve its democracy. Such measures cannot be taken, however, without money. The public must adequately finance the schools, and local revenues cannot be counted on to carry the bulk of the burden. States, therefore, must assume a greater responsibility. Because many states are woefully underfinanced, federal aid is also necessary. In the form of ear-marked funds federal aid is now valuable and should continue to finance special programs; general federal aid should be added, however, to raise educational standards nationwide. Allocations should especially provide more funds for the poorer states to raise their academic level to that of wealthier states.¹³

Not only are additional state and federal funds necessary, money currently available needs wiser expenditure. To avoid expensive duplication and wasted facilities, we

¹²Conant, Shaping Educational Policy, p. 46.

¹³James B. Conant, The Comprehensive High School (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), pp. 20-21.

should educate all kinds of students in one school, by integration of all races, religions, vocational inclinations, and ability levels. Consolidation of school districts will provide further integration and decrease expenses; all high schools with graduating classes of less than one hundred should consolidate with other schools. Greater economy, however, would not be the only benefit of this move. Students who would normally attend one of the smaller schools would likely get a better education in the larger school. They would not only have greater access to quality facilities, but the range of courses would be far greater, allowing maximum opportunity for development of each student's individual capabilities and interests.¹⁴

Further, educational quality would evolve from minor changes in the current levels of education. Elementary education should continue to include grades kindergarten through six. Junior and senior high schools, rather than being arbitrarily divided at a predetermined point as is often the case, would be organized so as to provide a substantial range of courses. This policy would provide greater flexibility. Three patterns currently used are 8-4 (8 years elementary, 4 years secondary), 6-6 (6 years elementary, 6 years secondary), 6-2-4 (6 elementary, 2 junior high school, 4 senior high school), and 6-3-3 (6 elementary, 3

¹⁴James B. Conant, The American High School Today (New York: The New American Library, 1959), p. 81.

each junior and senior high school). Small schools could offer a wider range of courses more economically on the 6-6 or 8-4 arrangement. Large school districts could more feasibly adopt either the 6-2-4 or the 6-3-3 arrangement.¹⁵

Higher education should retain its current levels. The number of students channeled into the various levels and schools of higher education, however, and the quality of education in those levels should be altered. Since the number of students attending higher education institutions has and will continue to increase, junior colleges should be popularized to take the bulk of the student load. One incentive which would make the junior college somewhat more attractive would be the awarding of a diploma upon graduation. Expanding the junior college is sensible because not only do many students drop out of college during or at the end of the first two years, but junior colleges are a less expensive way of giving the increasing student body a higher education. Such a move would also enable four-year colleges and universities to strengthen their standards since they could concentrate on quality rather than quantity education. The expansion of junior colleges would make it unnecessary to expand the number and size of four-year colleges and universities. Four-year colleges, then, would retain their current enrollment level and size, concentrating

¹⁵James B. Conant, Education in the Junior High School Years (Los Angeles: Educational Testing Service, 1960), p. 40.

on high academic standards which would make it possible for students to go into professional training after two, three, or four years, depending on the ability and drive of the student.¹⁶ Universities could then contract their four year programs in order to provide the highest caliber scholarly training for the professions.¹⁷

In short, Conant specified general guidelines for America's education system which would maintain the valuable aspects of the diversity promulgated by democracy, at the same time restricting those aspects which are harmful. Moreover, he sought quality education. To assist that quality he modified slightly the purpose and scope of the various levels of education and insisted upon adequate financing. He then turned to refining and up-grading the curriculum and related functions at the secondary level.

Secondary Education

Conant conducted two major studies of the secondary level of education in the United States; the first one was of the senior high school. Three years after that investigation he then studied the junior high school; he had come to realize that if the high school program was to have a chance at success the junior high school must prepare the student for the work to come.

¹⁶Conant, Education and Liberty, p. 57.

¹⁷James B. Conant, The Citadel of Learning (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), p. 71.

Senior High School

The high school, Conant felt, is the most critical level in determining whether students will realize their maximum potential. Although elementary schools deal with possibly a larger number of students of varying ability levels than do the high schools, the developmental levels of elementary students do not span as wide a range, nor are elementary students in need of the variety of courses required by high school students, to equip them for general education and careers. The most crucial level in the education system in terms of both complexity and numbers of students, therefore, is the high school. The comprehensive high school is the most effective means of providing quality education which would integrate our society and perpetuate the differences which make a strong democracy. The comprehensive high school can be organized to educate all ability levels, prepare students for all potential occupations, and equip them for employment upon graduation or for college if further education is required in their chosen field. The comprehensive high school includes a cross-section of all high school students in a town. It should be a melting pot which increases unity, but it can and must educate all students, particularly the talented, for their part in America's future.

The curriculum of the high school should be designed to support and encourage comprehensiveness. Toward that end,

all students should be required to take a common core of courses in order to graduate. These courses should include: four years of English; three to four years of social studies which would include two years of history, one in American history and a senior course in American problems or American government; algebra or general mathematics in the ninth grade, and one year of either biology or general physical science in the ninth or tenth grade.¹⁸ In addition, although not required, developmental reading should be available to most students.

Simultaneous with the common core of courses the student should round out his program vocationally and academically. Vocationally diversified programs for the development of marketable skills should be offered. Typing, carpentry, auto mechanics and other such courses, particularly those which reflect employment opportunities available in the community, should be a significant part of the curriculum. As encouragement for students who might need or desire such courses, some form of special recognition should be provided for those who excel in vocational subjects.¹⁹ Academically inclined students would take additional work to prepare them for college.

A wide range of courses for all ability levels should be provided. Ability grouping should proceed subject

¹⁸Conant, The American High School Today, pp. 53-54.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 57-58.

by subject, except in the large programs where tracking can be permitted.²⁰ The three general ability groups should receive attention commensurate with their abilities. For the slow group, special consideration must be given slow readers in particular; not only should they receive additional training in reading, but should be especially helped in subjects that are highly dependent on reading. Average students should be divided further into two or three groups subject by subject according to their ability.

To Conant the gifted students should receive very special emphasis. The gifted encompass two groups, the academically talented or the top fifteen per cent of the student body on a national basis and the highly gifted or the top three per cent. Academically talented students should combine four years of mathematics, four years of foreign language, and three years of science with the other courses required for graduation.²¹ Accelerated classes should be provided in all courses for the highly gifted. Where numbers of these students are insufficient to make this feasible, however, each student should be supervised by a tutor. Also, advanced placement tests should be available to all gifted students in the twelfth grade.²² However, grades should not be skipped, because students need

²⁰Conant, Slums and Suburbs, p. 59.

²¹Conant, The American High School Today, p. 62.

²²Ibid., pp. 67-68.

social maturity when they reach college.²³

Certain practices need to be followed to assure high standards in advanced academic courses. No student should be allowed to enter such courses who has not completed the prerequisites with at least a grade of "C." In chemistry and physics the standards should make it difficult for a student with less-than-average ability to pass; two courses in each should be offered, the one for above average students and one practically oriented for students with difficulty in mathematics, calling the latter "practical chemistry" and "practical physics."²⁴ Rank-ordering of students by grade average should be stopped because it encourages gifted students to take easy courses. The same motivation can be gained by providing, at each grading period, a list of all students who had elected courses for the academically talented and had an average grade of "B."²⁵ Further, an academic inventory which summarizes the programs of the academically talented students in the senior class and specifies what per cent of those students went to a two-year college, a four-year college, or a university should be provided.²⁶ Finally, extra-curricular activities should be

²³Conant, Education in the Junior High School Years, p. 17.

²⁴Conant, The American High School Today, pp. 77-78.

²⁵Ibid., p. 71.

²⁶Ibid., p. 69.

curtailed if they too frequently take students away from their homework.²⁷

The practices designed to secure academic excellence would provide optimum conditions for the preparation of terminal and college-bound students, but they would also jeopardize interaction among all students so that each might not develop the understanding and ability necessary to work together in a democracy. Homerooms and the twelfth-grade American problems or government class, therefore, should be heterogeneously grouped to include people of all ability levels and interests.²⁸

Adequate conseling is essential to the proper functioning of the system. One counselor for every 250 to 300 students is ideal. Counselors should have teaching as well as testing experience and should be able to work closely with parents. The counselor's primary concern would be to guide each student through his individualized program, paying special attention to identifying gifted students and directing them into college preparatory courses subject by subject.²⁹

Current scheduling requires alteration to facilitate students' greater exposure to courses. Each subject should

²⁷James B. Conant, The Child, the Parent, and the State (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 72.

²⁸Conant, The American High School Today, pp. 78-80.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 51-53.

be met five periods per week throughout the academic year, a practice customary in most places. The school day, however, should be organized into seven or eight periods rather than the current six-period days. Each period should then be forty-five minutes in duration with two periods being combined for industrial arts and laboratory sessions.³⁰ In addition, tuition-free summer school should be available for enrichment and remedial courses.³¹

Special attention for all students should be given to English. During the four required years, half the time should be spent writing compositions. Each student would write one theme per week which would necessitate a one to one-hundred pupil-teacher ratio to make grading possible for the teacher. Further, schoolwide composition tests should be administered in each grade. In the ninth and eleventh grades these tests should be graded by a committee, in addition to the teacher. If students do not perform in accordance with their aptitude test potentialities on these tests they "should be required to take a special course in English composition in the twelfth grade."³²

Finally, each high school student upon graduation should be provided with a transcript of his courses and grades in addition to a diploma. This transcript should be

³⁰Ibid., pp. 69-70.

³¹Ibid., p. 73.

³²Ibid., pp. 56-57.

in the form of a card which the student could carry with him at all times. Employers should then be informed to request this transcript of all job applicants.³³

Junior High School

After presenting prescriptions for the senior high school, Conant then performed the same service for the junior high school, which is customarily considered to be only grades seven and eight even when ninth grade is located in the same building. Here as at the senior high level, he designated the courses he considered essential enough to be required. All students in both grades seven and eight should take English in which reading and composition would be stressed; social studies which would include both history and geography; mathematics, and science. Art, music, and physical education should then supplement the above requirements.

Some courses should be limited to certain students. Girls should receive instruction in home economics while boys should study industrial arts.³⁴ Bright students should start algebra or the new math in the eighth grade. Some students, if not all, should begin the study of a modern foreign language on a conversational basis with a bilingual

³³Ibid., p. 56.

³⁴Conant, Education in the Junior High School Years, p. 16.

teacher in grade seven.³⁵ Instruction in the basic skills of reading and arithmetic should continue as long as necessary for those students who can profit.³⁶

Participation in extra-curricular activities such as musical and dramatic productions, assembly and homeroom programs, interest clubs, intramural athletics, and student council should be encouraged. Such activities broaden the student's program, develop his interests and talents, and provide him with opportunities for leadership development and social growth.³⁷

The school should operate under a well organized day, so that both the daily schedule and the operational plan are as effective as possible. Subject matter should be organized so that there will be close coordination in each subject area from kindergarten through grade twelve with grades seven and eight fitting into their appropriate place in the scheme. Instruction should also be coordinated so as to provide intellectual challenge for the whole range of abilities found in the school. At the same time the daily schedule must be flexible enough so that students would not have to omit one essential subject to take another. Departmentalization, where students change classes each period, is the best plan for the junior high school. Block-time teaching can be

³⁵Ibid., p. 17.

³⁶Ibid., p. 20.

³⁷Ibid., p. 22.

used under certain circumstances; since this enables one teacher to know his students well, because he meets fewer students for a longer period of time, and it serves as a good way to assist the transition of students from elementary to junior high school. This approach should only be used, however, in those rare instances where a teacher equally qualified in two subjects can be found. Endorsement of such an approach should not be interpreted as approval of "core" teaching which breaks down subject matter lines. Instead, the division between subjects remains with a single teacher teaching both subjects.³⁸

Certain equipment is an essential supplement to satisfactory instruction. A well-stocked library is vital for research. A gymnasium with locker rooms and showers, specially equipped home economics rooms for girls and industrial arts rooms for boys, an auditorium or assembly space which will accommodate at least half of the student body, and cafeteria space for at least one-third of the students are all essential to an effective junior high school.³⁹

A well balanced faculty and staff of fifty professionals per one thousand pupils is the minimum acceptable ratio for an adequately staffed school, with a good principal as top priority. To help him, he should have one assistant principal for every seven hundred fifty pupils and a

³⁸Ibid., pp. 22-26.

³⁹Ibid., p. 31.

secretary for every two hundred fifty pupils.⁴⁰ A guidance and testing specialist should be available for every two hundred fifty to three hundred students.⁴¹ An adequate staff is only the beginning; a realistic approach to the faculty working situation is also needed. For teachers to be effective their work-load must be manageable. They should only be asked to teach five periods per day. In addition, the pupil-teacher ratio should be realistic. English teachers must be restricted to one hundred pupils per day to facilitate the grading of themes. Physical education teachers should be able to handle two hundred pupils per day. All other teachers should have between one hundred twenty-five and one hundred fifty pupils per day. To complete the complement there should be a professional librarian who is responsible for no more than seven hundred fifty pupils.⁴²

Conant's observations of the junior and senior high schools not only culminated in the foregoing recommendations, but also caused him to realize anew the importance of the teacher in the classroom. Although good organization, equipment, and staffing in conjunction with good course offerings and scheduling are vital to good instruction, Conant was reminded that the quality of the teacher is equally if not more important. Since excellent teachers must have superior

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 37.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 27.

⁴²Ibid., p. 34.

training, he then studied teacher education to help improve that training.

Teacher Preparation and Regulation

Conant's recommendations for secondary education were accepted by most readers, acclaimed by many. One reason they were so readily absorbed was that they would not drastically change secondary education. Not so his recommendations for teacher education; they represented a drastic change.

Conant characterized his teacher education study in its conclusion in two words "freedom" and "responsibility." He determined that "the state should allow each college and university the maximum degree of freedom to develop its own program. Each institution should assume the maximum degree of responsibility for those graduates it certifies as being competent to teach."⁴³ Through his recommendations, he first set up the conditions to establish the free climate he desired. He then suggested guidelines for the institutions to use in assuming their responsibility when they had more freedom. His observations fall into three distinct categories: (1) current administrative restrictions, (2) administrative responsibilities, and (3) teacher education. Clearly, they touched on all major aspects of the teacher training situation.

⁴³James B. Conant, The Education of American Teachers, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1963), p. 217.

Current Administrative Restrictions

Conant considered teacher training to be severely hampered by the control exercised by accrediting agencies and current certification practices. He felt that the power generated from the wrong source. Consequently, he sought to set the condition before the public.

Accrediting Agencies

Accrediting agencies had a stranglehold on teacher training institutions, Conant felt. The power of professional associations, notably the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and regional associations such as North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools had become stronger than they should be, to the extent that these associations amounted to quasi-legal bodies. Because of their undue strength and because they represented only a narrow sector of those actively engaged in America's public and higher education, their power should be diminished to that of supervisory agencies with limited functions. They could study and make recommendations concerning all or portions of the teacher education program of any institution; they could evaluate employment practices; and they could provide a forum for the debate of teacher education issues. However, they should not be allowed final authority on institution accreditation as they now have. Along with the reduction in power of these agencies, Conant felt their representation should be broadened, since they represented such a small portion

of educators: "The governing boards of NCATE and the regional associations should be significantly extended to give greater power to (a) representatives of scholarly disciplines in addition to professional education, and (b) informed representatives of the lay public."⁴⁴

Not only the accrediting agencies were holding institutions back from their rightful role in education, however. In Conant's estimation the state certification regulations were equally, unduly restrictive. Both of these forces when combined, severely limited the initiative of the individual institutions. Upon these certification requirements, therefore, Conant focused.

Certification Procedures

States should change their outlook on certification in two ways. First, there should be a change in state certification requirements which would decrease their control over institutions. Second, states should practice certification reciprocity which would mean that a teacher certified by one state would then automatically be certified in all states.⁴⁵

For teacher certification a state should have only three requirements. The candidate should possess a baccalaureate degree from a legitimate college or university. He should have satisfactorily completed a student teaching

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 69.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 70.

assignment in a state approved school under qualified college and public school personnel. Further, he should hold a teaching certificate which indicates that the issuing institution attests to his competency in his field and grade level.⁴⁶ Minimizing state requirements would partially result when states realize they often do not actually control certification, but only appear to. For example, colleges training teachers generally determine what a teacher must do to be certified, and the state provides regulations consistent with the colleges' beliefs. In the few instances where the state has incorporated requirements inconsistent with the practices of the training institutions, such requirements received only lip service.⁴⁷ Even so, these requirements do influence some institutions unnecessarily because they apply statewide and often inhibit potentially valuable originality. The proposed change, therefore, is more efficient and more in line with the need for diversity than the current method.

Teacher training institutions should also make some certification changes. Secondary-school teachers should be certified in only one field because split certification is unsatisfactory in two ways: Adequate background in two subjects is unlikely to be attained in two years, and split certification is becoming increasingly unnecessary, because

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 60.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 58-59.

secondary schools are consolidating and making it possible for a specialist to have ample classes to teach in his field.⁴⁸ Further, certification should be awarded in the fields of art, music, and physical education without grade designation, making it possible for these teachers to work at either the elementary or secondary level.⁴⁹

In short, Conant's recommendations reduced the power of accreditation agencies by making them merely advisory boards rather than governing boards. He also advised a decrease in state influence by diminishing the extent of the control which it exercised in the form of certification requirements. These moves created a regulatory void which Conant sought to fill by reminding the universities and colleges that greater freedom carries with it greater responsibilities. Conant then described the nature of their responsibilities with a series of guidelines.

Administrative Responsibilities

With the replacement of the stringent controls by more flexible regulations, the quality of teacher training could deteriorate immeasurably unless training institutions and states assume their responsibility. Attitudes, viewpoints, and procedures must be clarified and reworked, however, if the void is to be filled productively.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 167.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 184.

Training Institutions

As an initial step in the shift of responsibility, the relationship of colleges and universities to their own teacher training programs must be clarified. Colleges and universities should, in light of their new freedom, assume the responsibility of developing their own teacher education program. The program of each institution should be subject to only two restrictions. The president of the institution, speaking for both the academic and professional education faculty, would attest that the candidate was qualified to teach in his field and grade level. The institution should establish with the public schools a state-approved practice teaching situation. The freedom realized by each institution under such flexible circumstances should motivate each institution to raise the quality of training since a healthy competition among all institutions in developing well trained teachers would be created.⁵⁰

Once a college or university had set up its own unique, quality program, it should then devise machinery to maintain high levels of teacher training. Along this line, the board of trustees of each institution should insist on being furnished with evidence that training is being kept high in three areas: (1) The faculty should be asked whether there is a continuing and effective interdepartmental approach to teaching and, if not, why not. (2) They should

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 63.

also be asked to justify present requirements for future teachers. (3) If courses are required in foreign language, evidence of mastery should be mandatory.⁵¹

After the quality of the program had been raised to meet these three standards of quality, each institution should assure itself of intelligent students with which to work. High grade averages should be essential for admittance to the program. Students desiring to be teachers should come from the upper third of their high school graduating classes. While realistically one must admit that such selectivity could create a shortage of teachers, it is imperative that this requirement be stringently enforced. It would be far better to utilize such new developments as television and team teaching in the hope that the demand for teachers would decrease, than to permit a lowering of academic entrance standards as is often currently done.

The institution, however, cannot afford to relax even after it has obtained capable students. It must then check their competency before certification, to ascertain that their performance has remained high. Such a check would be handled in two ways. Where courses are sequential a student could show his competence by having satisfactorily passed the last in the sequence of courses which would demonstrate his grasp of what had preceded it. Or when the courses are not sequential in nature the student should be

⁵¹Ibid., p. 111.

tested for competency over material which is capable of being tested.⁵²

A second step in the shift of responsibility from the state and accrediting agencies to the institution would require each institution to review its staffing practices. Two phases of staffing need special attention. The first phase involves an adequate complement of teachers. It takes a minimum staff even to begin an effective job; therefore, institutions, particularly small ones, have three alternatives. They can hire sufficient staff to do the job. They can supplement their program by utilizing offerings at nearby institutions. Or they can cease to train teachers.⁵³ The second phase of staffing would require each institution to hire a new kind of teacher, a "clinical professor." This new professor should be an expert at teaching his subject and have proved himself in both the school and college classroom. He should not be required to have a Ph.D. or to publish, even though he would be paid as a full professor and accorded similar respect. His duties would be twofold: He should supervise student teachers and teach methods courses. He would also be expected to return to the school classroom periodically to refresh his ability to teach at lower levels.⁵⁴

⁵²Ibid., p. 109.

⁵³Ibid., p. 163.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 143.

In short, two preliminary steps must be taken to shift the responsibility for quality teacher education from the state and accrediting agencies to the individual institutions. First, a sound program must be established. Then academically capable pupils must be enlisted and their competency supervised. Second, an adequate size staff must be hired to train these teachers. Moreover, a new position, clinical professor, should be established. When an institution had taken these two steps, it would be in a better position, in Conant's estimation, to provide quality training. Money, Conant conceded, however, could still keep that training from becoming a reality. He, therefore, set to work on needed financial changes.

States and School Boards

States and school boards should be instrumental in helping raise the quality of teachers in more vital ways than ever before. Rather than concentrating on certification requirements as they have in the past, they need to concern themselves with providing financial assistance where it will be the most beneficial. They also need to supplement employment information and ease conditions for new teachers.

Financial assistance should be rendered during the initial teacher training and at the in-service levels. At the training level both students and institutions should be assisted. Loans should be made available

to students in the upper one third of their high school class. These loans might then be cancelled after four or five years teaching in the state's schools.⁵⁵ Financial assistance should also be provided local school boards by the state to defray the cost of overseeing student teachers. The money should be available to oversee all student teachers whether they are enrolled in private or public colleges or universities. This aid when combined with state supervision would insure high quality practice teaching situations.⁵⁶

Once the state has assured adequate financial support for student teaching situations and assisted students with loans, several other financial practices need alteration. For one thing, salary schedules require drastic changes. A large increase in salary could accompany the move from a probationary status to tenure. Further, salary increments for advanced study must be made mandatory by state law. These increments would not correlate with course credits, but should only accompany the attaining of a master's degree gained during full-time residence or four summer sessions. Furthermore, the courses for the higher degree must have been work directed toward developing the competence of the teacher as a teacher.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 82.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 64.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 195.

In addition to salary rewards, the school board ought to financially aid teachers who wish further training. The school board, or the state if need be, would provide financial assistance to teachers wishing to attend summer school to work on a master's degree. A salaried leave could be possible to work on that degree for a full-time semester. Here too, the money might have to come from the state initially, but it would be controlled by the board.⁵⁸

Beyond providing added financial support to students and in-training teachers, states and school boards could do even more to improve the quality of teachers on the job. The state needs to assume the initiative in providing vital information to school boards and in regulating the assignment of teachers. The State Department of Education in each state could supply information of two kinds to local school boards: All school boards ought to be kept informed of the types of teacher-education programs at colleges and universities throughout the state. They should also be kept abreast of "the supply and demand of teachers at various grade levels and in various fields."⁵⁹ These measures would make it easier for boards to know which schools graduate the best candidates as well as the possible availability of people to fill open positions. A wise choice of teachers would be more likely under such

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 197.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 66.

conditions. State education authorities should then prepare and vigorously enforce regulations assuring that teachers, once hired, would be assigned only those duties for which they are specifically qualified.⁶⁰

Local school boards should ease the initial probationary period of employment for teachers, allowing them the opportunity to develop their ability to handle students and situations gradually. Five practices would be invaluable in this regard. The board should provide help in the form of (1) more limited responsibilities for teachers; (2) assistance in obtaining materials; (3) an experienced teacher to work in the new teachers own classroom; (4) a select group of students containing no discipline problems; and (5) aid in better understanding the community, the neighborhood, and the students in that locale.⁶¹

Conant's employment suggestions were designated primarily to smooth the transition between training and employment and to assure teachers of the highest quality. His most extensive and controversial contribution to educational reform, however, grew from his approach to teacher education.

Teacher Education

Course-work and practical training are probably the most significant determinants of teaching quality. Conant's

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 67.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 70-71.

recommendations for teacher education included both initial and in-service training. His precise ideas were startling and highly unpopular in many quarters.

Academic Curricula

Conant detailed a program of courses for teacher training. Certain courses are academically necessary, he felt, if the teacher is to have the proper depth and breadth of exposure to subject matter. Electives are an unnecessary luxury since the student had a free choice of career and he chose teaching. He had a free choice of institutions to attend, and he had a free choice of concentration areas.⁶² The prospective teacher should concentrate, therefore, on becoming the best possible teacher with decisions about the kind of training necessary made by the institution. Even the high school preparation of the prospective teacher should be considered. Bright high school students, an essential for teaching, should have carried four years of English with emphasis on writing, four years of consecutive study in a single foreign language, three to four years of mathematics, three years of natural science, three years of history and social studies, and two years of art or music, all without undue strain on their time and energy.⁶³

⁶²Ibid., p. 99.

⁶³Ibid., p. 84.

Prospective teachers should extend their high school training in the following manner: First, they should gain a general education during the first half of their four college years or approximately sixty out of one hundred twenty hours. General education requirements should include a continuation of subjects of high school. Six hours of English composition; six hours of the Western world's literary tradition; nine hours of history, at least half of which is other than American; six hours of art and music appreciation; and twelve hours of physical and biological science, with each subject studied consecutively, would complete a continuation of the studies begun in high school. Certain introductory courses should be discontinued in the curriculum of any high school currently offering them: general psychology, sociology and anthropology, problems of philosophy, economics, and political science. Future teachers should take three hours of each of these introductory courses in college as completion of general education requirements.⁶⁴ Any student should have ample opportunity to examine out of all general education subjects; advance standing examinations should be readily available, permitting students to bypass courses in which they are already competent.⁶⁵

Once Conant had mapped out his program for general education he confronted the subject of specialization. The

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 98-99.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 97.

time to be spent in subject matter concentration is contingent on whether the student is preparing for elementary or secondary teaching. Elementary teachers could complete their concentration in thirty-six hours including six hours of introductory courses which were a part of their general education. Secondary teachers would need forty-eight hours in their specialty including the introductory courses.⁶⁶

Kinds of courses vary with the level of specialization. Primary teachers at the level of kindergarten through third grade should take courses which would prepare them in content and methodology of all subjects they will teach in the early school years. They should also have six hours of reading; the first three hours of reading should help the students four ways: it should (1) acquaint the student with the entire elementary reading program and the variety of methods and materials available, (2) provide a thorough knowledge of the basic reading skills and the extension of those skills in grades four through six, (3) provide the opportunity for the student to emphasize the reading program for either the primary or upper grades, and (4) provide the opportunity for a laboratory experience where the student would actually teach children. The second three hour course in reading should "deal primarily with the identification and correction of reading problems."⁶⁷ Elementary teachers

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 107.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 157.

at the level of fourth through sixth grades should prepare themselves in depth in a specific subject or cluster of subjects normally taught in those grades. They should only be introduced to the remaining elementary subjects.⁶⁸ They must, however, take the first three hour reading course taken by primary teachers.⁶⁹

Secondary school concentration Conant subdivided for consideration because the programs must be tailored to the major. His first subdivision included science, social studies, English, and mathematics. A history major would need thirty-three hours history, three hours political science, three hours economics, and six hours geography in addition to his social studies courses in general education. If the student majored in one of the other social studies, such as political science or economics, the thirty-three hours would be in the major area.⁷⁰ Six hours of either physics or chemistry and thirty-nine hours of mathematics above his general education courses would be necessary for a mathematics major.⁷¹ A combined chemistry and physics major would include twenty-one hours of chemistry, twenty-four hours of physics, and possibly three to six hours of

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 155.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 156-157.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 172.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 174.

mathematics to be added to general education.⁷² A biology concentration would include thirty-six hours of biology and nine hours of physical science, with the general education.⁷³ English teachers should have work in British and American literature in depth, in the structure of the English, modern grammar, adolescent literature, reading problems, speech, drama, and advanced composition.⁷⁴

Once Conant had prescribed the program for the solid subjects he then turned to his second major course subdivision: art, music, physical education, and foreign language. These subjects have one significant commonality, the teacher must be a good performer. Moreover, in all but foreign language he has probably attained considerable training before entering college. Proficiency, therefore, should be checked before allowing entry into the program. Students desiring to teach these subjects would take the usual general education and professional education courses and would spend the remainder of their time in their field of concentration, approximately thirty-five to forty hours. One reminder is necessary, however: Since the physical education instructor is likely to become an administrator later in his career, less time should be spent by him in physical education courses and more time should be given to gaining a

⁷²Ibid., p. 175.

⁷³Ibid., p. 176.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 172-173.

broader general education.⁷⁵

Professional Training

After describing the courses which would assure depth of knowledge and understanding for qualified elementary and secondary teachers, Conant proposed the training which would enable them to transmit better their knowledge to their students. Professional education courses were his first major target. In his estimation, the survey foundations course should be wiped out and educational history, sociology, and philosophy should be taught only by history, sociology, and philosophy professors respectively. These changes are necessary because foundations courses are too eclectic and professors of education do not have sufficient depth to do justice to a demonstration of the relationship between education and philosophy, history, and sociology.⁷⁶ Regarding educational psychology, however, Conant felt its inclusion warranted, "The role of psychology in the education of future elementary teachers," however, "should be greater than in the education of teachers for secondary schools"⁷⁷

Methods courses also deserve reconsideration, Conant felt. For the most part, general and special methods courses are unnecessary. General methods courses overlap too greatly

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 179-184.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 129-131.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 137.

with information already gained in educational psychology. Special methods courses in the use of instructional techniques such as audio-visual methods deal in information which becomes quickly obsolete and can be learned easily outside the class. Methods courses taught by a particular discipline, such as history or English, also have their weaknesses; while such courses are more valuable than methods courses taught in education departments, they are not totally effective, because they are taught by people with a thorough knowledge of subject matter, but little knowledge of what can be realistically expected of various age children.⁷⁸

The solution to the problem of methods courses is the use of clinical professors to teach them.⁷⁹ The courses should occupy no more than one semester's work, taken concurrently with student teaching. Moreover, they should be handled differently for each teaching level. At the primary level, methods in all subjects would be taught in a course which integrated all subjects the student would teach. Upper elementary grade teachers would get the necessary exposure to methods for all elementary subjects in a series of workshops.⁸⁰ Methods courses for secondary teachers would then be included with practice teaching;

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 137-139.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 140.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 159.

combined, student teaching and methods courses should receive nine hours credit.⁸¹

One recurring problem is the excellent student who would be an asset to teaching, but who did not take his professional education courses and later desires to teach. This person should be encouraged to become a teacher. Even though no school under normal circumstances should require a fifth-year continuous preparation for teachers, one possibility would be a fifth-year program to equip such a person to teach.⁸²

In addition to the student's academic work, the future teacher should receive practical professional training of high quality. In part this could be accomplished by having all education courses except for educational history, sociology, and philosophy accompanied by laboratory experiences which would assist students through actual opportunities to teach.⁸³ More intensive practice teaching should last eight weeks for a minimum of three hours per day with three weeks of complete responsibility for the classroom.⁸⁴ For this training elementary teachers would get eight hours credit;⁸⁵ secondary teachers would combine it with their

⁸¹Ibid., p. 144.

⁸²Ibid., p. 205.

⁸³Ibid., p. 161.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 162.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 159.

methods course for nine hours credit.⁸⁶ State approval of practice teaching programs would control the quality of training. The state should work closely with college and public school authorities, regulating practice teaching conditions and the accompanying methods courses, and insisting on evidence that the clinical professors and co-operating teachers are qualified.⁸⁷ The public schools that enter into a contract with the teacher training institutions also have a responsibility in controlling the quality. They should provide good cooperating teachers, whose leadership, teaching, and ability to evaluate are dependable. Moreover, the work-load of these teachers should be reduced and their salary raised as encouragement in their work.⁸⁸

Post Certification Education

Receipt of a teaching certificate should not be the end of a teacher's training. This is primarily true because the person who benefits from methods and psychology courses most is the person with some teaching experience. Those courses are largely wasted on people who have not taught; therefore, such courses should be kept to a minimum at the undergraduate level and moved into graduate school.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 171.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 64-65.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 212.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 203.

Advanced training comes primarily in graduate and in-service training. Although valuable, the latter is not a good basis for salary increments, because ample time and attention cannot be devoted to courses taken after school and on Saturday. Such courses also detract from the time and energy needed for teaching and are often of little value to the individual's teaching, in fact sometimes luring teachers into administrative work. Even with these shortcomings in-service training is frequently valuable; it keeps the teacher abreast of current educational developments and helps intellectual growth by providing greater breadth and/or depth.⁹⁰ If used, in-service training should take the form of short-term seminars, often called workshops. They should be held during the school year, without cost to the teacher, and be designed to keep him up-to-date in his field and in problems of his school and school district. No credit toward salary increases, however, should be given.⁹¹

Graduate courses with a master's degree as their goal should be encouraged. The teacher should seek this training when it can be pursued on a full-time basis. To insure relevant quality work in a well designed program, Conant offered several guidelines: (1) any graduate should be eligible to work on a master's degree in his undergraduate

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 191.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 207.

specialty at the institution from which he graduated; (2) provided it will increase the teachers competence, any course no matter how elementary should be allowed for credit toward the degree; (3) no extension course or course taken while the teacher is teaching full-time should be credited; (4) comprehensive examinations must be passed before a master's degree should be granted; (5) it should be possible to complete the degree in four summers or two summers and one full-time semester; (6) when insufficient arts and sciences offerings are available to complete the degree, arrangements should be made for transfer to another institution where they are available, at no loss of credit, and (7) the master's degree should be in elementary education for elementary teachers, and for secondary teachers the degree should be a master's of education in the subject of the majority of their graduate work.⁹²

Conant further suggested directions for teachers to take in their study. Elementary teachers could take a variety of courses. They could gain advanced instruction in teaching reading, arithmetic, and science as well as psychology. One third of the teacher's time could be spent gaining greater knowledge in English, history, science, or mathematics, whichever happened to be the area of concentration. Teachers in slum areas could profit from sociology, economics, and political science when related to school

⁹²Ibid., pp. 197-198.

problems. Secondary teachers with certification in a single field could go one of several ways. They might get further work in psychology, history and philosophy of education, and a methods seminar. Teachers in grades seven and eight could benefit from a seminar on junior high school teaching methods and additional child psychology; two-thirds of their time should be spent in gaining competence in another field or developing competence in handling advanced-placement work in their own field. Foreign language teachers could develop a second or third language as well as work in psychology and a methods seminar. Music teachers could secure mastery in additional instruments and musical theory. Since graduate work in art is not sufficiently developed, an art teacher might combine art history and psychology for a graduate major or develop equivalent competence in English or social studies. Graduate majors in physical education are notoriously weak; they should, therefore, be cancelled. A physical education teacher wishing to enter into a research career in the physiology of exercise and related subjects should, instead of taking graduate courses in physical education, develop a stronger background in physiological sciences in his graduate program.⁹³

Conant was clearly concerned with the academic, practical, and post certification training of the student. If the magnitude of the changes Conant suggested for teacher

⁹³Ibid., pp. 200-201.

education, especially when compared to the minor changes he suggested at the secondary level, is any indication, he felt the major problems of education were a result of inadequate teaching which was often the result of poor teacher training. He was not content with a proposal; he wanted also to assist its implementation by unifying the American education system under a national commission.

National Coordination

Educational planning in the United States has been haphazard. For the benefit of future generations and to assure a more effective use of educational monies, some degree of order needs to be imposed. Accordingly Conant advocated a commission to synthesize American educational policy.

Such a commission would need to consider several factors. Certain groups must be represented; at the public school level, state and public school people must both be included. Beyond the high school, plans could not be made by the state alone, by private institutions alone, nor by Washington alone; all three would be essential. Congress could provide some help through grants, but this kind of help alone will not suffice. Even Congress cannot carry the burden alone, particularly from a planning standpoint. Such aid would be sporadic and lack unity. Finally, even though the establishment of a mandatory national policies commission would be unconstitutional, no good reason precludes nationwide

planning under a voluntary commission.⁹⁴

The commission could evolve in the following steps. A compact to determine membership and operational guidelines would be drawn up by the states and approved by Congress. Each state should be represented, although one person might represent several less populated states. Each state should be ready to listen, but would not be forced to comply with the commission's conclusions.⁹⁵ Seven unifying, working principles would assist in promoting order for the group:

1. It is assumed that our present form of government should be perpetuated; to that end all future citizens of the nation should receive an education that will prepare them to function as responsible members of a free society, as intelligent voters and, if appointed or elected to public office, as honest reliable servants of the nation, state, or locality.

2. It is assumed that each state is committed to the proposition of providing free schooling to all the children in the state through twelve grades. (Though the Federal government has no power to proclaim the doctrine of free schools, practically the action of all the states during the last 100 years enables the interstate commission to declare that providing free public schooling is a nationwide policy of the United States.)

3. It is assumed that in every state the parents have a right to send their children to private schools, colleges, and universities instead of to the publicly supported institutions. This assumption follows from the interpretation of the Federal Constitution by the Supreme Court on more than one occasion.

4. It is assumed that each state desires to have all normal children in the state attend school at

⁹⁴Conant, Shaping Educational Policy, pp. 109-110.

⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 123-124.

least until they reach the age of 18, but that the states differ and will continue to differ in regard to the laws requiring school attendance and the way special provisions are provided for physically and mentally handicapped children.

5. It is assumed that each state accepts the responsibility of providing for the education of at least some of its youth beyond high school; the organization and financing of such education, however, differs and will continue to differ state by state; in each state opportunities for education beyond high school now includes at least one university chartered by the state and largely supported by public funds; the continuation of such universities as centers of research, advanced study, and above all, fearless free inquiry is essential to the welfare of the state and the nation.

6. It is assumed that the education provided in high school and beyond by public institutions is designed to develop the potentialities of all the youth to fit them for employment in a highly industrialized society.

7. The financing of education, including research and scholarly work in the universities, is a concern of private universities, and the states, and the Federal government.⁹⁶

If each state legislature would officially adopt these principles we would be officially committed to the same basic principles of educational policy for the first time.⁹⁷

This commission, which could be called "Interstate Commission for Planning Nationwide Educational Policy," would be valuable in two major directions. First, it could provide information in vital areas. For example, information is needed on the percentage of able boys and girls attending college and the reasons more do not attend. Information is

⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 129-130. Italics his.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 130.

also needed concerning the education of professional people state by state and their employment, concerning scholarships and loans, and concerning the location of study centers above the A.B. degree in relation to population distribution. Second, this group could delve into major problem areas, for example: the relation of the junior college to professional training and the need for technicians; terminal education and future employment; the supply and demand for training and employment of scientists and engineers; the education of the Negro; the education of members of the medical profession; uniform standards for degrees beyond the M.A.; and the promotion of research and scholarly endeavors in our institutions of higher education in all fields.⁹⁸ This nationwide policies commission would synthesize and make educational policies and practices more consistent throughout the country and throughout all levels of education from kindergarten through graduate and professional training. Conant felt such planning to be vital.

Summary

Conant felt that education should be the major instrument for the accomplishment of national goals. In the past it helped the nation achieve synthesis. In the future it must aid our survival. People of this country must learn to understand themselves and work with people from other

⁹⁸Ibid., pp. 131-132.

countries. Education can help in both respects. It can do the most to preserve and augment domestic strength. In order to accomplish this task, education must be improved along certain guidelines. Preservation of vital but harmless differences such as those inspired by a variety of intellectual capabilities, occupational desires, and geographical interests is one major guideline. To do this the school should retain local control, give specific attention to all ability levels particularly the gifted, and train for all possible vocations.

A second guideline, education must obliterate divisive forces which create tension. This task can be accomplished by discouraging all private education and racial segregation. Third, a quality education is essential if survival of our democracy is to be assured. Federal, state, and local money should be combined to provide the adequate financing of quality education. Small secondary schools should be consolidated so as to provide a wider range of courses more economically. Minor alterations in the levels of education would also increase educational quality. The elementary school should remain the same. Secondary schools should be divided into junior and senior high schools on the basis of offering the widest possible range of courses for students. The organization of higher education, however, would be changed the most. Junior colleges should be promoted so they could absorb the largest enrollment. Four-year

colleges should retain their current size and improve the quality of instruction. Universities then should complete the system by providing the ultimate in quality training for the professions.

The high school poses the most difficult educational problem: providing a quality education tailored to all vocational interests, and intellectual levels for people of all races and religions. The comprehensive high school is the most economical answer. It can provide what is needed. In the comprehensive high school high academic standards can be maintained for all students with special emphasis on the gifted. These standards cannot be maintained without sufficient course offerings for all ability levels, sensible scheduling, adequate physical facilities, and astute counseling. The junior high school, it must be remembered, is largely a preparatory ground for high school. It should offer a smooth transition from elementary school. at the same time it prepares students for later work. Like the high school, it must have the best program of courses, the necessary facilities, and adequate counseling to function as it should.

Well trained teachers are vital to the success of the entire system. Consequently, every effort should be made to provide quality training for them. Institutions should be given the widest latitude to create a sound program. Toward that end restrictions currently placed on

teacher training by accrediting agencies and certification requirements should be reduced or exorcised. Institutions should then take the initiative in establishing quality programs consisting of general and professional training tailored to each teaching level and subject. They should also insist on quality students with which to work.

After they are certified, teachers should be encouraged through loans, sabbaticals, and salary increments to pursue a master's degree designed to improve their teaching effectiveness. These degrees should be pursued in residence during the summer or school year, not undertaken while teaching. At no expense to teachers and for no increase in salary, in-service workshops should be made available as an aid to overcoming academic and social problems associated with teaching. These measures would monumentally up-grade the quality of teachers in the classroom.

To unify and insure improvement throughout the nation, Conant urged a voluntary planning commission. Such a group could insure Conant's dream of diversified, unified, high quality education. One can better understand the reception of Conant's system of ideas, however, through an examination of the social and intellectual context in which they originated and on which they depended for acceptance.

CHAPTER II

THE RHETORICAL CONTEXT

A realistic assessment of Conant's rhetorical task is only possible when one considers the social and intellectual context of his campaign. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to describe the circumstances of his campaign for educational reform. Toward this end the following topics will be discussed: (1) the social milieu, which includes the temper of the times and Conant's fitness for the task in those times, and (2) the intellectual climate from the standpoint of educational philosophy and critical reactions.

On the one hand, Conant could not have created a more favorable social situation. In fact, without such a situation he might have lacked a desire to produce his plan; instead, the situation not only motivated him, but also assured the plan's welcome. On the other hand, the intellectual situation was in many respects undesirable; perhaps from here, either directly or indirectly, came much of his opposition. However, to his advantage was the consistency of his plan with the views of the most strongly held philosophical position among educationists. Overall, Conant seemed aware of his allied and opposing circumstances and prudently adapted to them.

Social Climate

The close of World War II found Americans in a state of tension and anxiety. They were tired of war yet feared its return. Nearly four years of war had depleted their energies. Countless lives had been lost. People had also neglected other duties while attending to the war. Further, the fear of a world annihilating nuclear war was growing. In 1945, a public opinion poll showed that Americans were almost evenly divided over whether there would be another war within the next twenty-five years. By 1947, the figure had grown to nearly three-fourths registering the belief that another war was imminent. "The explosion at Hiroshima had created a psychological and moral crisis."¹

Several other factors increased the anxiety created by the fear of war. For one thing, the gap between the average citizen and the expert was expanding. The rapid development and increasing complexity of information made it difficult for even the most educated layman to know what was happening in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities.² Secondly, a sentiment was developing that nothing is sure and dependable; as historian Merle Curti explained, "On every side, man's world seemed more and more contingent, shifting, and elusive. The physical sciences almost daily

¹Merle Curti, The Growth of American Thought (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964), p. 749.

²Ibid., p. 753.

revealed the uncertain character of what was once taken for granted as physical reality."³

The anxiety created by fear of war, the inability of common man to communicate knowledgably, and the lack of a stable "reality" manifested itself in several ways. First, there was a resurgence of religious faith; Americans were often unable to solve their problems logically and turned to religion for help.⁴ Another manifestation was the fear of communism and communists, revealed most vividly by Joseph McCarthy's conspiracy hearings and investigations which found a communist under every bed.⁵ Finally, Americans felt the need to reassert their belief in democracy, as illustrated by the rapidly increasing attention to racial problems. "The stimulus which World War II gave to democratizing race relations," Curti claims, "was intensified during the Cold War, for the Communists found it easy to publicize sensationally every incident of racial injustice and thus to further among the non-white peoples of the world the image of America as hypocritically professing democracy and behaving in flagrantly undemocratic ways."⁶

In short, since there existed no one way of quelling their frustration, Americans reacted erratically. The

³Ibid., p. 767.

⁴Ibid., p. 747.

⁵Ibid., p. 759.

⁶Ibid., p. 779.

launching of Sputnik in 1957 further intensified the public fear. "The Soviet Union's detonation of hydrogen bombs and increasing evidence of competence if not superiority in missiles and satellites (Sputnik, 1957) shook Americans as nothing else in the arms race had done."⁷ Consequently, where the public had needed answers in the late forties, they demanded them by 1958; they wanted a satisfactory course of action.

America's education system was considered a major factor in Russia's assumption of the scientific-military lead. Until Sputnik, Americans believed they had the best education system in the world. As Vice Admiral Hyman G. Rickover pointed out in one of his scathing criticisms of the schools of the period, "Until Sputnik planted a seed of doubt in our hearts, nearly all Americans believed certain illusory assertions." Furthermore, he added, "They believed them as implicitly as they believed that only American boys can take apart and put together an old car, or that we have made all the important scientific inventions."⁸ The assertions in which Americans have such faith could be expressed as follows:

American schools are the best in the world; American teachers by reason of their sociological and psychological training practice the most up-to-date pedagogy, while European methods are archaic,

⁷Ibid., p. 766.

⁸Hyman G. Rickover, American Education--A National Failure (New York: E. P. Dutton and Col, Inc., 1963), p. 57.

fossilized, rote learning; American textbooks
are the envy of the world.⁹

Sputnik unleashed unprecedented attacks on the schools, attacks as emotional as they were logical. Educationist Theodore Brameld asserted that "the immediate result of the Sputnik was . . . an almost hysterical attack upon American education for failing to produce enough engineers and scientists to beat Russia at the new game of conquering space."¹⁰ Not only did Sputnik increase the interest in better education of scientists and engineers but also encouraged increased federal aid to education. To Carroll Atkinson and Eugene Maleska, "The post-Sputnik awakening of the American public, together with the devastating indictment in the Conant report on senior high schools, seemed to swing the tide in favor of federal aid to education."¹¹ Sputnik also caused educators to reassess the length of the school year since Soviet children got more educational hours as a consequence of a longer year.¹² Probably the most abrupt, jarring educational change which took place as a result of Sputnik, however, was the demise of progressivism. Don Parker appraised the situation thus:

⁹Ibid. Italics his.

¹⁰Theodore Brameld, Education for the Emerging Age (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 7.

¹¹Carroll Atkinson and Eugene T. Maleska, The Story of Education (New York: Chilton Publishers, 1965), p. 457.

¹²Ibid., p. 423.

Even before 1957, there were those, both within education and without, who felt that the progressive pendulum had moved too far and were all for giving it at least a firm nudge back in the direction of skill-getting. Sputnik, however, changed all that. Instead of a sane movement, experimentally based, the Bestors, the Rickovers, and the basic educationists clamoring for 'back to-the-basic-skills' and endorsing everything from phonics to the Amidon 'teach-30-children-as-though-they-were-alike' Plan, sent the educational pendulum reeling drunkenly into a no-man's land where polemics replaced problem solving.¹³

Clearly, educational change was compulsory after Sputnik.

James Conant had the background and inclination to point the direction of educational change. His background was unquestionably appropriate to the task. His scientific involvement with the government during both world wars furthered his already deep commitment to science by relating it to the military problems of the United States. Moreover, his life-long obligation to education, as a student, teacher, and for two decades president of one of the nation's leading universities, Harvard, provided the insight and thorough understanding of academic excellence to create high regard for his assessment and recommendations.

Conant's inclination materialized in two stages, each occupying approximately a decade. His initial surge as an educational critic produced three books, Education in a Divided World, Education and Liberty, and The Citadel of Learning. These works sought to enlighten the country on

¹³Don Parker, Schooling For Individual Excellence (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1963), pp. 18-19.

ways of using education to cope with the volatile state of the post-World War II era. They were reasonably well received. His second and most attention commanding thrust could be described as his post-Sputnik period. The fact that Sputnik explored space during the preparation of his fourth book, The American High School Today, magnified the importance of both the book and its author. Conant, himself, noted that the book was timely; as he said:

The timing was perfect. A wave of public criticism of the high schools which had started after Sputnik had reached its crest. School board members all over the country were anxious for specific answers to such questions as: 'How should we organize our schools?'; 'What should the high schools teach?' We [Conant and his staff] supplied the answers boldly and categorically in twenty-one specific recommendations.¹⁴

Ironically, at the outset of the study the public hunger for solutions could never have been foreseen.

The remainder of his critical works appeared during this time and added texture to his program in two ways. They supplemented his earlier works by providing additional development for previously submitted ideas. Further, they gave greater scope to his program. He carried his approach into other kinds of education such as teacher education. He dealt with another level, the junior high school, and he considered other aspects of education such as planning.

A better qualified doctor for an ailing America could

¹⁴James B. Conant, My Several Lives (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1970), p. 621.

not have been found. Here was a scientist-educator specifying ways to strengthen American education so that Russian scientific achievements would not continue to exceed America's own accomplishments. Moreover, he assessed the American temper and direction accurately, to his advantage. He was the expert prepared to speak to Americans in such a way that they could easily understand, a much needed skill in light of the average American's inability to comprehend education and science with its new complexity. He recognized their religious fervor, but felt they must keep it separated from education. He sought to subdue their anxieties about communism by providing a simple plan of action. He reinforced their desire to cling to democratic ideals by enabling them to demonstrate their belief through actions such as equal opportunity for all, Negroes included. Briefly, Conant provided insightful answers; Americans were prepared to listen. Thus, Conant had a near-perfect social climate for his recommendations. Although the intellectual climate was less ideal, it too weighed heavily in his favor.

Intellectual Climate

Although Conant's educational campaign was highly successful, certain portions of his program experienced serious opposition. Since his opposition originated largely from the intellectual community, particularly from professional educators and educational critics, a more thorough understanding of the nature of that criticism as well as

Conant's reaction to it can be gained through an analysis of the philosophical and critical milieu of the period.

Dominant Educational Philosophies

Educational beliefs can be synthesized into four major groups, labeled regressive, conservative, liberal, and radical. The regressive philosophy is considered a philosophy of culture. Highly reactionary its adherents react against such democratic beliefs as science and majority control.¹⁵ Regressives would like to see a reaction in the schools against modern social and educational trends. They believe in "the unfolding of everlasting or perennial forms that lie potentially within matter."¹⁶ Consequently, knowledge exists and has but to be unfolded. Learning is the development of mental discipline which assures the maximum unfolding of man's latent rationality; it is not primarily "doing" but is "reasoning."¹⁷

Regressives advocate a return to the religious, social, and political theories of the medieval period or Greek civilization. They argue that "the core beliefs of ancient-medieval culture apply as vitally to the twentieth century after Christ as they did to the fifth century before Christ

¹⁵Theodore Brameld, Patterns of Educational Philosophy (Yonkers-on-Hudson: World Book Co., 1950), p. 383.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 384.

or the thirteenth century after."¹⁸ Their curriculum is static; it revolves around the "great books." Even so, it resembles in many ways the essentialist curriculum.¹⁹ Because regressives believe that individual persons and experiences may come and go, but patterns and forms remain forever, and because they believe that fundamental truths are unchanging, hence perennial, they are often called "perennialists."²⁰

The perennialism of regressives is by no means the strongest twentieth-century philosophy, from the standpoint of numbers, nor are perennialists unified; they are divided between those of religious and those of secular educational orientation. The largest group of perennialists is associated with the parochial schools of the Roman Catholic Church. Significant numbers are dispersed, however, throughout secular institutions. "In many public schools . . . the beliefs of this level of choice are to be found mingled with essentialist beliefs, since the latter are unusually hospitable to them."²¹ Moreover, perhaps the most conspicuous influence of perennialism is exerted "upon a number of leading colleges and universities whose leadership is secular."²² Perennialism,

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 291.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 384.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 293.

²¹ Ibid., p. 92.

²² Ibid.

then, while not the leading philosophy during Conant's most notable period, was certainly a strong one.

At the opposite extreme to the perennialism of regressives is the radical position. A fledgling philosophy during Conant's peak writing period, it commanded minimum but staunch forces. Where perennialists look to the past for direction, radicals look to the future. We must look to the future, they contend, because the hopelessly decayed roots of our society must be torn out and replaced. We must rebuild, therefore, not merely perpetuate, hitherto dominant structures, habits, and attitudes.²³ This rebuilding is to be accomplished through a cooperative search for supreme aims which should govern man and would be adopted by consensus.²⁴ Western civilization is at an end if we fail.²⁵

Society has the necessary resources available for economic abundance, health, education, cooperation, and other desires and needs, radicals claim, and it must act fast rather than gradually to take full advantage of these resources.²⁶ The task of education then is clear. Brameld, himself a devout radical, states:

The one task of education before all others is that of helping to reconstruct the world's cultures to

²³Ibid., p. 525.

²⁴Theodore Brameld, Philosophies of Education in Cultural Perspective (New York: Dryden Press, 1955), p. 76.

²⁵Brameld, Patterns of Educational Philosophy, p. 409.

²⁶Ibid.

the end that the common peoples shall attain maximum satisfaction of their wants, including the satisfaction of building and ruling their own civilization everywhere on earth--theirs to own, to design, and to enjoy.²⁷

Because the radical wishes to use the schools to reconstruct the social order, he is often called a "reconstructionist."

A somewhat less revolutionary and more widely accepted position than the radical is held by the liberal, often called a "progressive." In fact, "progressivism and its wider rationale, liberalism, have been in many ways the most articulate and influential patterns of social, philosophical, and educational thought and action in the American culture of the past half-century [1900-1950]."²⁸ The purpose of this philosophy is to encourage man to function in the scientific mode. "To think," according to the progressive, "means to analyze, to criticize, to select among alternatives, and to venture solutions upon the basis of both analysis and selection."²⁹ "Truth," to the progressive, is what works. If it works it is true. Since what works varies with the situation, truth is relative.

The purpose of the school is to educate man to function according to the principles of the progressive philosophy. The school is to teach the student to "think" scientifically so that he can arrive at "truth." The school, therefore,

²⁷Ibid., p. 393. Italics his.

²⁸Ibid., p. 89.

²⁹Brameld, Philosophies of Education in Cultural Perspective, p. 75.

would reflect adherence to the progressive philosophy. New teaching techniques and equipment should be welcomed. New methods are central and are to be abandoned only when they fail to work in a particular situation; they should be tried again, however, under different circumstances. The school should also reflect the relativity of truth by adapting to "every change in the social order, and occasionally do a little discreet pushing to make society move along a little faster in 'liberal' directions."³⁰

Although progressivism has had significant and widespread impact on current education, "the conservative position embodies perhaps the most widespread and popular beliefs about education."³¹ This position is usually referred to as "essentialism." Essentialism spans the modern era from the Renaissance to the present, reaching its peak at the end of the nineteenth century. Essentialists, whether idealists or realists, hold the attitude that current society is in a state of fatal fluctuation and the only hope for its survival is a return to the more stable foundation typical of the past. This return can best be accomplished through a school system which follows already proven educational methods and curriculum. "The schools must be grounded . . . upon the tried and tested heritage of skills, facts, and laws of knowledge

³⁰Kenneth H. Hansen, Public Education in American Society (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall Inc., 1963), p. 85.

³¹Ibid., p. 84.

that have come down to us through modern civilization."³²
 The curriculum is, therefore, traditional, the learning process primarily absorption, and examination is the predominant means of determining the extent of that absorption.³³

These four philosophical orientations are neither as unified nor as clear-cut as they may appear. They are not unified since all adherents do not necessarily arrive at a particular philosophy from the same base. For example, both realists and idealists can be essentialists. Moreover, adherents may disagree on the reflection of their philosophy in the schools. Essentialists, for instance, may disagree on what is essential. While these philosophies are not unified, neither are they mutually exclusive. According to Brameld, there is a core of ideas common to all four philosophies. Essentialism and perennialism share a good deal of the same philosophic, educational, and cultural outlook, while progressivism and reconstructionism have some common views also.³⁴

Conant's Educational Philosophy

Conant has not stated a philosophy. He may not have done so because he has not formulated one, or he may have felt that claiming a philosophy would distract from the real

³²Brameld, Patterns of Educational Philosophy, p. 80.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Brameld, Philosophies of Education in Cultural Perspective, p. 76.

issue, his program, by providing more points of attack. More likely, however, he failed to declare a philosophy because of his conviction that educational improvements should come from an assessment of society's needs rather than as an outgrowth of a philosophy. As he contended in Education and Liberty, "The social behavior characteristic of a people is more significant in determining the nature of the schools than the acceptance of any particular philosophy of education."³⁵

Although he had no stated philosophy, one can infer his philosophy, or at least facets of it, from his plan. He fits in the four dominant philosophies as a liberal conservative, more conservative than liberal. He only appears to have perennialist leanings when he advocates the study of foreign languages because he does not favor Greek and Latin as the perennialist would prefer. Further, Conant would not approve of the perennialist idea that Greek, Latin, German, and French should be studied one year each, another perennialist recommendation.³⁶ He has no desire to reconstruct society which means he could never, therefore, be considered a reconstructionist. He does have a number of progressive tendencies, however. Languages should be studied because they have a practical value; they can be used to equip the United States for her role in world leadership. "The grim

³⁵James B. Conant, Education and Liberty (New York: Random House, 1953), p. 2.

³⁶Brameld, Patterns of Educational Philosophy, p. 333.

competition with the Soviet Union in newly developing countries," Conant stated, "turns quite as much on an adequate supply of competent linguists as on our ability to send competent engineers and businessmen to these nations."³⁷ A second progressive tendency is reflected in Conant's contention that a student's education should fit him for his life work, a theme central to his entire program and in harmony with the practical bent of many progressives.

Conant's approach, however, is primarily conservative. He stresses the importance of traditional American values. These values made our past strong; they will insure our future. He adheres strongly to an "essential" curriculum. He also prefers to wait until educational innovations such as television and new approaches to the teaching of mathematics, physics, and languages have "stood the test of time," a conservative axiom.³⁸ If "one assesses his [Conant's] most conspicuous proposals," Brameld asserts, "then he reveals himself to be primarily an educational conservator whose assumptions are accordingly closer to those of the essentialist than to those of any other theorist."³⁹

In short, fitting into social context as one equipped and willing to supply much needed educational answers, Conant emerged from the philosophical milieu as a "liberal conservative." The answers he supplied from his essentialistic

³⁷James B. Conant, The American High School Today (New York: New American Library, 1959), p. 76.

³⁸Ibid., p. xi.

³⁹Brameld, Education for the Emerging Age, p. 51.

vantage, however, reaped abundant criticism from certain groups. An assessment of the nature and scope of that criticism is essential to a productive appraisal of the task with which Conant was confronted, even though the significance of certain criticisms may rest more in the fact that Conant chose to ignore rather than renounce them. No analysis of such factors can be conclusive because several critics have not sufficiently formulated their position; it can, however, suggest critical trends.

Critics and Conant

The context of a particular rhetorical effort, whether a speech or a book, is composed of more than just the socio-philosophical climate just described. A "critical climate" is also present. Both potential and actual criticism are equally significant to understanding the rhetorical event, since the author assesses and consequently adapts to critics and criticism and critical reception seriously affects the author's success. For further insight into Conant's persuasive task, it remains, therefore, to look at that critical context, potential and actual, as well as Conant's customary reaction to critics.⁴⁰

Potential Criticism

Conant was open to criticism from a social and a philosophical vantage. He was less vulnerable to attack, however, on the social front. Because Americans fearing

⁴⁰Refer to discussion of Supportive Refutation on page 148 of this study.

war had become convinced that one avenue of escape was through education, notably in science and mathematics, and because Americans had become aware of the need to rely on experts for advice, a role substantially filled by Conant, he was reasonably secure from socially based attack. His philosophical position, however, was not as secure.

Although Conant had stated no philosophy, it was possible for critics to infer his philosophical tenets and attack them. Some of his weaker opposition could come from perennialists. They would be less harsh than critics espousing other philosophical views because of the overlap between their perspective and Conant's. They agree with Conant on the value of foreign languages, memorization as a way to learn, and feel that students should be trained for a trade. Their most serious disagreement would be in the area of curriculum. They would take issue with Conant's stress on science. Further, they would look with disfavor on Conant's lack of recognition of "great books" as the core of education from which the significance of all other courses grows. Finally, unlike Conant, they would stress mental discipline as the rationale for certain subjects.⁴¹

Radicals would be among his severist critics since Conant sought to merely reshape rather than reconstruct society through education. They would also object to his "atomistic" curriculum which fragments knowledge rather

⁴¹ Brameld, Patterns of Educational Philosophy, p. 332.

than demonstrating its interrelationships.⁴² While Conant had some liberal tendencies, he was far from being a progressive. He would, therefore, come under fire from that quarter also. For one thing, progressives would object to Conant's rigid course structure for all schools since they are relativists. Progressives contend that:

There is no single body of content, no system of courses, no universal method of teaching that is appropriate to every kind of school. . . . Rightly constructed, the curriculum is not unlike a laboratory. It is unceasingly experimental, and all its participants--teachers and students alike--are, in some fashion, staff scientists. Hence the one thing that should be avoided is rigidity in static requirements, absolute boundaries, mechanical standards, preconceived solutions.⁴³

Finally, Conant might expect objections from essentialists. While they would not likely disagree with his contention that certain courses are essential, they could argue that the list of essentials should contain different courses.

In short, Conant remained vulnerable to attack from each of the four dominant philosophical positions: regressive, conservative, radical, and liberal. Furthermore, some of this potential criticism reached fruition, thus necessitating an examination of his actual criticism.

Actual Criticism

To locate and assess all criticism of Conant and his

⁴²Ibid., p. 571.

⁴³Ibid., p. 149.

works is nearly impossible. All one can hope for is a sample. The first area of attack centered on his unwillingness to state a philosophy. This unwillingness piqued his critics because it decreased the number of points open to censure, since it is difficult to attack a man for something he has never professed. Had Conant stated a philosophical position with its explained or implied view of reality, value, knowledge, learning, and other basic tenets, then critics could have attacked him on any of those grounds. His choice, therefore, seemed wise.

A number of critics expressed the feeling that Conant's programs would have been more substantial if they had grown from a fully developed philosophy. Donald Robinson pointed out that "many readers have inquired why Conant the scholar failed to place his findings and his argument in a fuller philosophical . . . background."⁴⁴ Donald Grote contended that "the major weakness of Dr. Conant's report is the absence of statements of an educational philosophy that justify his conclusions."⁴⁵

Conant was also attacked for his methods of acquiring information and for recommendations made in his individual works. Various critics felt Conant's method of determining recommendations was unscientific. "Conant attempts

⁴⁴Donald W. Robinson, "Education's Flexner Report," Phi Delta Kappan, XLV (June, 1964), 429.

⁴⁵Donald V. Grote, "Assessing the Conant Report on the Junior High School," National Association of Secondary-Schools Bulletin, XLV (April, 1961), 273.

to join supportable specifics to broadside generalities in a way most unsuited to a man of science," contended one editorial.⁴⁶ Edward Fagan initially praised Conant's work: "There is no doubt that his The American High School Today, Slums and Suburbs, and The Education of American Teachers gave direction to the comprehensive high school, the education of the culturally disadvantaged, and the strengthening of admittedly weak professional education." But then Fagan decried, "All these studies, valuable as they were, had the same fault: poor sampling technique."⁴⁷ In a review of The Education of American Teachers Harold Abelson complained that one could "hardly detect the scientist's approach in a book so replete with personal advice and opinion."⁴⁸

Conant's specific works and recommendations also attracted considerable criticism. Although The American High School Today was his most widely accepted book, it had its critics. Brameld commented that "Conant's curriculum, like that in the vast majority of high schools today, reminds me of an egg crate--a boxed-in series of cubicles divided from each other by artificial walls."⁴⁹ Robert

⁴⁶ S. M. Elam, "How Shall We Handle the Poison Ivy?" Phi Delta Kappan, XLII (April, 1961), 273.

⁴⁷ Edward R. Fagan "Conant on Teacher Education: A Critical Analysis," The Clearing House, XXXIX (April, 1965), 462.

⁴⁸ Harold H. Abelson, "Book Reviews," Overseas, III (February, 1964), 26.

⁴⁹ Brameld, Education for the Emerging Age, p. 55.

Hutchins stated that Conant "tells us how many years of each subject should be required but not what should be learned during those years."⁵⁰ And Rickover contended that Conant's program could not compete with what was already being accomplished in England where sixteen per cent of her children, two to three years younger than American high school graduates were handling a more vigorous course.⁵¹ The criticisms of The American High School Today were mild both in number and content, however, by comparison with those aimed at The Education of American Teachers. Comments on this book varied in extremes from calling it insurrectionary to stating that it had nothing new to say. A favorite reaction to the book was to criticize Conant for "not writing a different book or for not treating particular topics close to the reviewer's heart."⁵²

Clearly, all Conant recommended was not heartily endorsed. He was open to criticism and he received it. There is no way to sample all the criticisms that were directed his way for there are virtually as many kinds of comments as there are critics. Moreover, there is no way to accurately signify the number of Conant's critics since as Fred

⁵⁰Cited in "Profile: Movers and Shapers of Education," Saturday Review, XLIII (October 15, 1960), 101.

⁵¹Rickover, American Education--A National Failure, pp. 304-305.

⁵²Lindley J. Stiles, "Dr. Conant and His Critics," Teachers College Record, LXV (May, 1964), 714.

Hechinger pointed out "a favorite defensive technique of academia is to defeat unwelcome criticism through the silent treatment," and Conant whose recommendations were critical of existing practices has not always been criticized openly.⁵³ However, even through the limited foregoing examples of criticisms one can readily see that despite a favorable social and intellectual climate Conant's success was far from insured.

Each time a major work by Conant appeared, its nature and success were influenced substantially by the criticisms of the preceding work. What appears to be a steady, unaltering flow of ideas, reveals upon close scrutiny fluctuations and adaptation. Criticism contributed to these alterations. The criticism existed, Conant was aware of it, and he had his own way of handling it. Criticisms which he felt must be recognized were refuted in his works; he brought up the opposing idea and demonstrated why his approach was superior. Despite his awareness and adaptation, he was not a man easily swayed by his critics. As Saturday Review noted: "Conant rarely replies to his critics, except indirectly, and because his audience is much larger than theirs, his technique of ignoring them has been effective."⁵⁴ Merle Borrowman characterized him as a man who "listens

⁵³ Fred M. Hechinger, "Dr. Conant's Bombshell," The Reporter, XXIX (September 26, 1963), 44.

⁵⁴ "Profile: Movers and Shapers of Education," 101.

carefully and thoughtfully until he feels he has understood the evidence," but who then considers the subject closed and is unresponsive until new evidence appears, if he cannot accept the point of view being offered.⁵⁵ The nearest Conant has come to conceding to his critics was when he said: "I'm not sure that The Education of American Teachers (1963) has been successful. . . . Maybe the timing was wrong. Maybe I was not wise to delve into teacher-education reform."⁵⁶

Summary

A war-weary America feared it would have no rest as a consequence of a changing social order. Tension was created by fear of a nuclear war, the common man's inability to communicate knowledgably on many subjects, and a highly unstable, shifting "reality." Americans reacted by reasserting their belief in religion and democracy and by sensing communist conspiracies on all sides. Sputnik increased the anxiety and pointed to American education as the culprit. Americans, therefore, turned resolutely to education as a solution to their dilemma. James Conant had the capability and the inclination to prescribe an educational program which he felt would upgrade educational quality sufficiently to meet the challenge. His program developed in two stages.

⁵⁵ Merle Borrowman, "Conant, the Man," Saturday Review, XLVI (September 21, 1963), 58.

⁵⁶ Terry Ferrer, "Conant Revisited," Saturday Review, L (March 18, 1967), 57.

First, he sought to show the country how to protect its safety and supremacy after World War II. Second, he became highly prescriptive in terms of specific educational changes needed. Sputnik provided the spark to ignite his ideas and reputation, thereby creating a highly favorable social climate for all his proposals. Recognizing the need of Americans to reaffirm their faith in democratic and religious ideals while allaying their fear of communism, Conant determined to upgrade education, pushing religion into the background and bringing democracy to the fore as an antidote to communism. In short, he had ideal social conditions for rhetorical success, and the capability and credentials to capitalize on them. His intellectual climate, while less perfect, was nevertheless largely favorable.

There were four predominant philosophies during his most productive period: perennialism, essentialism, progressivism, and reconstructionism. Essentialism encompassed the largest band of believers with progressivism next and perennialism and reconstructionism attracting the fewest adherents. Conant was an essentialist with progressive tendencies which assisted his popularity and effectiveness immeasurably, but did not rally everyone. His philosophical position, as inferred from his rhetoric, left him vulnerable to attacks varying in accordance with the critic's position. Each position contains views about knowledge, reality, and learning, among other aspects, which lead to a particular

curriculum. At each point of departure, Conant was potentially open to censure. Actual criticism took many forms. Some of the major areas criticized were his lack of a stated philosophy, his methods, and the recommendations evident in his various works. He seemed aware of the nature of his criticism, but was not intimidated. Those criticisms he felt worthy of attention he handled within his works; the remainder he largely ignored. In light of his subsequent influence, his assessment and handling of the rhetorical context within which he worked appears prudent.

CHAPTER III

MOTIVATIONAL CONCEPT

The persuasive process is the rhetorician's demonstration to his audience of a significant relationship between a concept the rhetorician wishes accepted (a relatively neutral stimulus for the receiver) and a concept already approved by the receiver (one of high stimulus). When an audience member perceives that through acceptance of the proposal he will be assisted toward his own goals, theoretically he should be motivated to favor the proposal.¹ Whereas the preceding chapters considered Conant's object concept and the rhetorical context into which it was projected, this chapter analyzes his motivational concept.

In his attempt to move his audience to accept his program Conant relied heavily on their need to maintain their identity.² Maintenance of identity establishes that acceptance of the proposal will be consistent with the receiver's view of himself. This chapter will show that in view of the social conditions of the time, notably the need for Americans to strengthen their national pride in order to withstand the ideological threat of communism, Conant's choice of this incentive was indeed astute.

¹Gary L. Cronkhite, Persuasion: Speech and Behavioral Change (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., p. 75.

²Ibid., pp. 78-79.

Dominant American Values: Conant's Conception

Implicit throughout Conant's works is the claim that acceptance of his educational program would enable Americans to maintain their personal and national identity. American identity was clearly in danger from communism. This danger was a prime concern of the many Americans who had become aware of Russian technical advancement and national aggrandizement. Conant felt, however, that significant numbers of people still might be unaware or unwilling to admit the extent of the danger, and he sought to alert those people and alarm them to constructive action. Fear for the future could have provided the strong motivation Conant desired, and no doubt it immeasurably assisted his cause. He chose, however, once he had reminded or alerted people to the consequence of inaction, to take a positive approach by showing them a way out of their dilemma rather than capitalizing on their fear. Education, he submitted, provided a most valuable vehicle for solving the problem, if the educational system was structured and operationalized so that it not only taught but reflected the principles vital to maintenance of the national identity, as his educational program was supposed to do.

Conant isolated four principles which he felt must be perpetuated through an education system if it were to fulfill this mission: freedom, democracy, equality of opportunity, and equality of status. The first concept, freedom, is all-important to Americans; historically, they have

strongly contended they must be free. "Our American ideals spring from the history of this nation; in part they represent the strivings of all free nations, in part they are the product of the unusual conditions of our development," Conant contended.³ Our cherished ideals and creed contain the aspirations of all free nations, but were forged into a viable system by Americans. Nourished by the writings of the eighteenth century, this creed and system adheres "to a form of representative government based on free elections, untrammelled discussion of political issues, universal suffrage."⁴ The American legal system also reflects the freedom derived from a heritage which evolved through centuries from the doctrines of common law: "We [Americans] consider the rights of the individual as of paramount importance. Trial by jury, the writ of habeas corpus are as essential to us as the air we breathe."⁵ The civil liberties, including religious freedom are also products of the American heritage and of equal importance to her citizens. Further, Conant stated, "however much we may differ among ourselves in the inevitable cleavage between the right and left as to specific measures to be taken by governmental bodies (local, state, or Federal) we never cease to think of the government as our agents."⁶

³James B. Conant, Education in a Divided World (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 3.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., pp. 3-4. Italics his.

Americans must preserve and reinforce their belief in freedom if they wish to continue. This preservation and reinforcement can be vitally assisted in three ways. First, Americans must realize that one freedom cannot survive without others. Economic, political, and social freedom are interwoven. If we let one freedom fall the remaining freedoms will gradually vanish.⁷ Second, freedom of discussion is essential to the perpetuation of freedom. "As in the early days of this century, we must have a spirit of tolerance which allows the expression of a great variety of opinions. On this point there can be no compromise even in days of an armed truce."⁸ Assuring this second imperative, Conant predicted in 1948, would be quite difficult since excited citizens would be increasingly alarmed over alleged "communist infiltration;" Conant's prediction proved true with the McCarthy hearings.

Third, free inquiry must reign in the education system, particularly the universities, as a reflection and a means of the perpetuation of freedom. This spirit of free inquiry can be stressed by getting the subject of modern Marxism out into the open, by recognizing that the world is not at peace but in a state of armed truce, and by insisting that scholars declare their own basic social philosophy. Moreover, universities must assure that a variety of views

⁷Ibid., pp. 31-32.

⁸Ibid., p. 172.

are represented and that teachers are careful scholars rather than propagandists.⁹ This, then, was Conant's conception of freedom.

Democracy was another vital American ideal, in Conant's estimation. It is so important that "the issue of war or peace depends on our will to develop the physical and spiritual strength of our people as a democracy."¹⁰ The hopes of the United States rest on her ability to be the leading partner in a semi-global development of democracy as Americans understand the meaning of the word. But "what is American democracy? In part a fact, in part a dream, and the latter is as important as the former."¹¹ Further, Conant agreed with Frederick Jackson Turner when Turner described the aim of Western democracy "as the production of a society of which the most distinctive fact was the freedom of the individual to rise under conditions of social mobility, and whose ambition was the liberty and well-being of the masses."¹²

How will Americans know that democracy is at work? "Let us never forget, [it] is to be tested in terms of adult behavior."¹³ How will democratic principles be instilled

⁹Ibid., pp. 174-175.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 2.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 16.

¹³Ibid., p. 110.

in society? They must be taught and practiced in the schools. "One of the most important jobs of the schools is to instill into the students the concepts not only of political but of social democracy."¹⁴

In Conant's estimation equality of opportunity was the third American ideal central to the national pride. "One of the highly significant ideals of the American nation has long been equality of opportunity."¹⁵ "Equality of opportunity means equal opportunity for the youth of each generation; the phrase as applied to adults has little or no meaning."¹⁶ While theoretically a society could function according to this principle there is actually a fundamental conflict which acts as a deterrent. The goal of society can be to give all children an equal chance, but such a goal will conflict with the desire of each parent to do the best he can for his own offspring. As long as the family is still a powerful unit in a society, therefore, inequality of opportunity will automatically, often unconsciously, be at odds with equality of opportunity. Since the more favored parents will obtain greater favors for their children, the need will exist for a perpetual compromise in any adherence to the doctrine of equality of opportunity.¹⁷

Education should play as strong a part in stressing

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁷Ibid.

this equality concept as it should in furthering the principles of freedom and democracy. Education has the potential of moving us either toward or away from this goal. Parental pride, economic inequalities, "cultural patterns, religious forces, and group hostilities must be reckoned with if we are to move further in the direction of reducing inequalities of education."¹⁸ A reduction of the counteractive force of these factors will be difficult to accomplish because "social prejudices and deep-seated tensions involving race, color, and creed will be met in more than one locality."¹⁹ Clearly, then, reflection and perpetuation in American education of the concept of equality of opportunity will be a challenging but essential task.

The remaining concept Conant felt should be stressed through education was equality of status. Equality of status was described by him as the attitude that "each honest calling was as respectable as all others. The banker or the lawyer might make more money than the blacksmith and the carpenter, but he was not to be accorded a privileged position."²⁰ All societies have leaders; some societies have a static condition wherein the same people are leaders in all situations, whereas in other societies a person may be a leader in certain

¹⁸Ibid., p. 42.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰James B. Conant, Thomas Jefferson and the Development of American Education (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), p. 57.

situations, but occupy a place farther down the echelon in other situations. Whether the society be a simple one as in the first description or a complex one as in the latter, leaders become leaders as a consequence of meeting certain criteria. A man may become a leader as a result of attaining wealth or education, or he may have inherited his position. By whatever path he may have acquired his stature Conant felt that he should not be accorded special status. Each person should live up to his potential and interests with no man being considered more personally or socially worthy because of having greater potential or particular interests.²¹

American education has stressed and reflected this view in the past. "The land-grant colleges were both a symbol of equality of status and a means to the realization of the idea."²² Further, "one academic manifestation of this doctrine is our unwillingness to state frankly that a bachelor's degree lost any meaning as a mark of scholastic attainment or the completion of a course of formal academic training," Conant contended. He continued by stating that "whether one has a degree in engineering, agriculture, home economics, commerce, physical education, or in the arts and sciences, he is entitled to be called a 'college graduate.'"²³

²¹Conant, Education in a Divided World, pp. 54-62.

²²James B. Conant, The American High School Today (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1959), p. 17.

²³Ibid.

The practice of perpetuating the ideal that all people are equally worthy as long as they are working toward their maximum potential should be continued through the educational system. By emphasizing a system that educates all the students of a community without judging some programs within the school as better than others, the goal can be realized.²⁴

In short, freedom, democracy, equality of opportunity and equality of status are major American ideals and the words symbolize even more. They are products of her past; they can make a valuable contribution to her future. Education is a most effective vehicle for perpetuating these ideals. Conant assessed the desire of Americans to maintain their identity as Americans to be a valid reason why they should and would value his observations and recommendations; he believed they would be anxious to reassert the major American ideals. This reason was relevant and timely, which made it an appropriate choice. By using a reason of such significance to create a condition of imbalance in his readers, which he in turn satisfied with a blueprint drawn by a master architect, he displayed a sound understanding of dominant values in American culture.

Comparative Analysis of Conant's Conception

A better understanding of one person's point of view

²⁴Ibid., p. 19.

and his strategy is possible when other views are contrasted with it. Differences become more apparent, and other dimensions of the point of view often illuminate strategies necessary to gain its acceptance. One must keep in mind, however, that rhetorical strategies in a campaign as long and involved as Conant's are rarely totally deliberate, or fully recognized by the rhetorician as his strategy, consequently a critic must infer from what appeared to happen what likely did happen. The discussion which follows will show that Conant constructed a frame so perfectly sized that only his program was apt to fit exactly.

Comparison

In American Society, published in 1951, shortly after Conant's first educational publication, Robin Williams, noted sociologist, specified fifteen major value-orientations held by Americans. The views presented in his book were synthesized from the most pertinent research of the period; therefore, they represent a compilation of the predominant views of that time.²⁵ Most of the values Williams discussed were implicit or lightly touched upon in Conant's works. Three of them which provided the core concepts for Conant's persuasive strategy, freedom, democracy, and equality of opportunity, were interpreted the same way and seen as equally

²⁵Robin M. Williams, Jr., American Society (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), pp. 388-440.

significant by both Conant and Williams, Pertinent to Conant's strategy, however, was the divergence in viewpoint between the two men concerning a fourth concept which completed Conant's core, equality of status. Robin Williams' assessment of the importance of these four concepts will be presented and a comparison drawn with Conant's views.

Williams agreed with Conant that freedom is a value held in high esteem by Americans; as he stated:

We need no research to tell us that the verbal affirmation of the value of freedom is widespread and persistent. The widespread positive reaction to the symbolic value of the word is illustrated in many ways. For example, a Gallup poll released in August, 1946, showed that freedom in general, or in some specific application, such as freedom of the press or of worship, is most often mentioned as the greatest advantage of the American form of government.²⁶

Williams also agreed with Conant on the significance of democracy. He pointed out that "the sheer prevalence of culturally sanctioned attention to something called democracy forces us to include it in our listing of major value-themes."²⁷ Democracy is considered the way to maintain freedom because "at the time in which the primary political and economic structure of the new society was laid down, the great threat to freedom was perceived as coming from the centralized, absolutistic state."²⁸

²⁶Ibid., p. 417.

²⁷Ibid., p. 433.

²⁸Ibid., p. 418.

Both Williams and Conant paid homage to equality of opportunity as a third value-orientation in American society. Williams considered equality of opportunity to be one facet of democracy. "Like freedom . . . democracy in American culture is a highly complex and derivative theme," Williams contended. "A reference to democracy does not denote a clear, unitary value but a multiple nexus of more specific beliefs and primary values."²⁹ Equality of opportunity to Williams is a major derivative which he placed within the context of the broader concept equality, explaining that equality is made up of two facets: "The dominant cultural value is not an undifferentiated and indiscriminating equalitarianism, but rather a two-sided emphasis upon basic social rights and upon equality of opportunity."³⁰ He further asserted that "the avowal of equality, and often its practice as well, has been a persistent theme through most of American history. Even modern economic organization, which in many ways epitomizes inequality has stressed 'equality of opportunity.'"³¹

Clearly then, Conant and Williams agreed that Americans adhere strongly to freedom, democracy, and equality of opportunity. Each concept, they contended, represented a major value-theme in American society. They did not agree, however, on the significance of the fourth concept.

²⁹Ibid., p. 433.

³⁰Ibid., p. 409.

³¹Ibid., p. 415.

The disagreement between Conant and Williams with regard to the value bestowed on "equality of status" by Americans provides insight into Conant's motivational concept. In the beginning Williams and Conant were in accord, however. Williams agreed with Conant that our society, with a few exceptions, began its independent political existence by breaking sharply with traditions of social deference. As Williams stated: "The United States began its independent political existence as a congeries of societies, which in the main had broken sharply with the traditions of social deference and with the hierarchical social structures that still characterized Britain, and Europe."³² The American society "in its formative periods was one that could, and wished to break with its hierarchical tradition and . . . this result was favored by fundamental objective and ideological conditions."³³ This discarding of traditions of social deference held until the late nineteenth century, argued Williams. To this point Conant and Williams agreed, but they disagreed sharply on the attitudes of modern Americans. Williams contended that during the late nineteenth century the concept of freedom and the principle of equality collided. "For instance," Williams explained, "the cumulative effect of freedom to pursue individual advantage, given the opportunities and institutional framework of nineteenth

³²Ibid., p. 409.

³³Ibid., p. 410.

century America, was to destroy equality of condition."³⁴
 As a consequence of this collision modern America "shows inequalities of wealth, power, and prestige; and there is far from being perfect equality of opportunity to acquire these things."³⁵

Even though occupation alone does not identify social class position, Williams pointed out that it is the most significant single determinant, because in our modern society a person's occupation influences his whole way of life. Williams elaborated thus:

The ranking of individuals according to occupational activity is affected by two main considerations: the prestige of the occupation and the rank of the individual within it. In American society broad occupational groups are evaluated according to a definite pattern that places at the bottom of the prestige scale manual labor and unskilled personal service involving direct personal dependence upon superiors. Above this level the prestige of occupations seems to follow roughly the degree of skill presumed to be entailed and the size of the income derived. The authority over persons inherent in a given occupation further modifies the rank-order; for example, factory foremen or policemen or judges seem to receive an added increment of prestige on this ground.³⁶

Further, although one must always interpret this kind of information with care, a certain security can be gained from the fact that "popular evaluations of occupations, at least at the level of abstract stereotypes, seem to be highly crystallized and have remained stable over a considerable period

³⁴Ibid., p. 411.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., p. 84.

of time."³⁷ Williams reinforced this claim, explaining that "in some twenty serious studies of the social prestige ranking of occupations which have been made during the last twenty-five years in the United States, there is remarkable consistency in the rankings reported."³⁸

Conant, in contrast to Williams, strongly insisted that the ideology of the United States had remained fixed in its rejection of the doctrine of inherited privilege. "In spite of slavery, of the landed aristocracy of the South and the families of seaport merchant princes, in spite of later industrial barons in the North and East," Conant contended, "the ideology of the United States has remained fixed in its rejection of the doctrine of inherited privilege."³⁹ Conant felt this rejection to be historically unique. He explained that a sixteenth-century statesman who was only familiar with the history of the human race to the sixteenth century would have been amazed had he been dropped into the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century. He would have had great difficulty understanding the then current zeal for Americanization of the foreign-born. He would have contended that Americanization of these people kept them from assuming the lowest positions on the scale. This, in turn, kept American society from following the usual

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Conant, Education in a Divided World, p. 11.

methods for forming societal stratas.⁴⁰

The rejection of the doctrine of inherited privilege was the consequence of an ideal which "proved more powerful than the self-interest of the moment," Conant concluded. "The doctrine of freedom and equality rode down the economic forces which were forming separate classes. The principle of no hereditary privileges still dominated the American dream."⁴¹ Further, Conant implied that since Americans did not stratify on that basis they did not stratify on any basis. In short, Conant and Williams disagreed as to whether equality of status was a current value in American society.

Significance

Conant emphasized the significance of the concept of equality of status in his campaign. He felt that the basic flaw in American education was that it failed to educate each person to his maximum potential. He felt that this failure was harmful to the individual and to society. Individuals, either unwittingly or because they did not favor the resultant low social status if they possessed minimum potential, often did not realistically attempt to fulfill their capabilities. Consequently, they often became highly frustrated because they aspired to too much or too little. Further, it was harmful to society because

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 12.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 14.

a person who does not perform in accordance with his highest capabilities and interest is often less productive and less well adjusted. Moreover, the abilities of the highly gifted were badly needed by society since they possessed capabilities which could aid the country to withstand communism, if they were fully trained to do so.

The solution, Conant felt, was to provide an educational system which would be more flexible, in order to educate each person to his maximum potential. In this way both the individual and society would be served, but most importantly society. Conant conceived such a system. There was one major deterrent, however, to the workability of the system he proposed. All students, regardless of their differences in potential and interest, must fully realize their capabilities and willingly work toward their maximum fruition. This would mean that while some students might require years of training beyond a bachelor's degree, others might terminate their education shortly before or after high school graduation. Conant realized, however, that as long as society attached social status to a certain length and limited kinds of education, many students would aspire to that education which gained for them the highest status. These often unrealistic aspirations would be pursued by many students and encouraged by their parents. It was necessary to convince people, therefore, that personal worth and social status had not been and should not be considered as contingent upon the

length and kind of education so much as contingent on the fulfillment of the student's maximum potential whatever it may be. By removing such social pressure students would be more likely to enroll in courses in which they were interested and which they had the ability to handle. The teaching in each classroom then would not have to span such divergent ability levels and could concentrate on meeting the more narrow scope contained in each individual classroom. In this way each student would have the opportunity to acquire an education commensurate with his capabilities and interests.

Clearly, then, equality of status was the crucial concept to the entire campaign. Its full acceptance was essential to the viability of his program. He was prudent, therefore, in his choice of a strategy which stressed that concept as one of the basic American principles.

Summary

Conant chose as his primary motivational strategy to appeal to the need of Americans to maintain their identity. Americans could, by strengthening their identity, better withstand the forces of communism.

Four concepts were essential to the national pride: freedom, democracy, equality of opportunity, and equality of status. Conant thought that each of these concepts had been held in high esteem by Americans of past generations, but that to the detriment of the country they were not adequately

reflected and perpetuated in the schools and should be in the future. Robin Williams, as a consequence of an analysis of pertinent sociological research, agreed with Conant that Americans had and did indeed value freedom, democracy, and equality of opportunity, and they had paid homage to equality of status until the late nineteenth century when the concept of freedom and the concept of equality collided. Since that time, Williams concluded that status was determined largely by occupation and one's position within that occupation.

Equality of status was a crucial concept in Conant's program, for all people needed to accept it if his program were to work. Conant had specified a program which stressed the importance of each student voluntarily electing to educate his full potential. He was aware that such an eventuality was unrealistic as long as social status was based on the length and kind of education the student obtained. Conant knew, further, that his program was organized to maximally educate each pupil for performance at the most productive level for his own good and for the good of society, and that his program could only accomplish that purpose if each student felt free to enroll in those courses for which he was best suited. Conant's motivational strategy, therefore, demonstrated an astute awareness of a declining American value whose reassertion was important to acceptance of his program and fulfillment of our national goals.

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CHAPTER IV

IDENTIFICATION CONSTRUCT

Although a rhetorician has a firm grasp of two major concepts, his program or object concept and the reasons which will motivate his audience, his motivational concept, he must still connect the two. This process will here be termed "identification construct." The word "identification" is used to designate the linking of the two concepts. The term "construct" is selected to underscore that the rhetorician must build identification into his rhetorical efforts. One can analyze the identification construct in terms of rhetorical strategy and tactics. The former deals with the more general design, the latter with more specific techniques for implementing that design.

This chapter analyzes Conant's major works to determine the rhetorical strategy and tactics he employed to gain acceptance of his educational reform. Conant's rhetoric was successful; each of his techniques positively or negatively affected that success, some more than others. Examination of his practices can, therefore, provide insight into that success. Since some techniques are used deliberately and others are not deliberate, more information is often possible through an examination of the works than might be forthcoming if the author chose to delineate them himself. Furthermore, an author is often so close to his work he is unable to see

a dependence of certain techniques or to assess their effectiveness. This analysis may facilitate such discovery.

The chapter is divided into three main sections, dealing with (1) his rhetorical strategy, (2) his rhetorical tactics, both argumentative and stylistic techniques, and (3) the role of speeches and articles. The analysis will show that Conant's rhetorical strategy was designed to wrap the mantle surrounding freedom, democracy, and equality of opportunity around equality of status thus elevating it to equal stature. His tactics were chosen in order to direct the outlook of his audience to the feasibility of his plan. His speeches and articles allowed isolation and more complete development of specific ideas presented by him elsewhere.

Rhetorical Strategy

As a strategy for establishing the relationship between his program, the audience values, and American survival, Conant constructed a "chain of dependencies." The four basic value/aspects in Conant's conception of the American tradition provided the intermediary links of the chain; America's democratic survival and Conant's educational program were terminal links. The chain thus became: American democratic survival in a world divided by communism depends upon freedom which is dependent upon democracy which depends upon equality of opportunity which depends upon equality of status which, in turn, depends upon Conant's program. The

order of the links can also be reversed further demonstrating the interdependency between them: Conant's program depends upon equality of status which depends upon equality of opportunity which depends upon democracy which is dependent upon freedom which depends upon survival in a divided world. This chain not only provides the rationale for his program but also reveals his rhetorical task and strategy; he needed to establish each link and connect it to its neighbor.

Before he could do anything else Conant had to demonstrate that Americans did live in a divided world which threatened their survival. Thus, he began formulating his strategic chain in his first book, Education in a Divided World; in succeeding works he strengthened each link and established its connection with the next link in the chain. To show how the world was seriously divided between the ideologies of the Russians and the United States, Conant first raised the question: "But is it a fact that the Russians divide the world, a few readers may inquire? Indeed, is the world divided? Are we not witnessing merely a temporary period of high tension between former allies?" "If so," he continued, "why emphasize the grim and depressing aspects of what must be but a passing phase in the history of the relations of two great nations?"¹ One can only answer these questions with consideration of what goes on behind the iron

¹James B. Conant, Education in a Divided World (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 19.

curtain, he contended. How seriously should the present differences in ideology between the Soviet Union and ourselves be taken? For an answer to this question, Conant asserted, one must appraise how seriously the leaders behind the Iron Curtain take their own philosophy.

In the United States, Conant contended, three points of view currently explain the intensity with which Russian leaders cling to their ideology and how their attitudes translate into a Soviet-American relationship. One view considers Kremlin dwellers as Slavic followers of Thomas Jefferson, or at the worst early socialists of the eighteenth century whose "aggressive actions are based on fear of the capitalistic and imperialistic United States."² At the other extreme is the viewpoint that Soviet rulers are the same kind of men who were once so closely associated with Hitler and Mussolini. Some people believe they are "military gangsters planning to conquer the world. Or a variant of this theme is to believe that they are the military descendants of Peter the Great, bent on Russian expansion of a nationalistic sort by force of arms."³ The third position, the one Conant endorsed, views the leaders of Soviet Russia and her satellites as "fanatic supporters of a philosophy based on the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin" with the chief reliance on the efficacy of their doctrine rather than

²Ibid., p. 20.

³Ibid.

on military force.⁴

Americans could assume, Conant continued, that the current difference is only the "inevitable disagreement between powerful nations united in a great war."⁵ For instance, they may be similar to those that existed after the Napoleonic wars between England and Russia. A look at the nature of the Soviet philosophy, however, leads to the belief that the disagreement is more fundamental. The outlook of the United States and Russia is not only different now, but indications are that their views will continue so for several decades at least. As a consequence of this division, this country is endangered militarily and ideologically.

Attitudes toward possible solutions vary according to ones view of Soviet philosophy, and of the Soviet relation with the United States. "To some, the prospects for the future, indicated by the diagnosis of the present to which I incline," Conant maintained, "will seem too grim: decades of a divided world, the only two great industrial nations living in two separate 'universes of discourse'? This is too horrible to contemplate, too unstable to endure," these people will feel. "To others, it will seem too rosy, and my failure to equate the present rulers of Russia with international gangsterism or military imperialism will be written off as 'soft-headed.'"⁶

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 19.

⁶Ibid., p. 28.

"War" seems to be the solution advocated by both the more optimistic and the more pessimistic objectors, Conant contended. If Americans conclude that a divided world cannot be endured, or if they determine that the Russians are military-minded aggressors or gangsters, "then war will come. But that it will be a solution of the problem, hardly any intelligent person can maintain."⁷ A more sensible view is that, given time, something can be worked out, and the Russians will be willing to wait because "the very basis of the Soviet philosophy, let us remember, gives the comforting assurance that history is on their side." Conant explained further how the waiting game will likely work:

According to their view, in due course of time every nation will undergo a revolution, and a dictatorship of the proletariat will be established; then eventually when a capitalistic encirclement has given place to a totalitarian socialistic encirclement throughout the world, the state will wither away. Thus the rulers of the totalitarian states envisage their Utopia, and they seem quite prepared to assist the course of history by keeping a steady pressure where they can.⁸

Rather than sit idly by, Conant believed, Americans can use the time gained as a consequence of the Russian outlook to work on a solution which will be favorable to this country's future.

Having thus established that America was in danger ideologically, Conant then began linking it with succeeding premises. "Our fitness to survive the Russian challenge

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 21.

clearly depends on many factors, but it depends primarily on a vigorous demonstration of the vitality of our own beliefs in democracy and freedom."⁹ Conant argued further that if his diagnosis was correct, "Our fitness to survive in a divided world is related to the the power inherent in our traditions. Our future strength," he continued, "depends to a large measure on wise and intensive cultivation of those elements in our democratic culture which are peculiarly our own."¹⁰

The relationship between "freedom" and "democracy" is complex; nevertheless each concept is significant. The implied relationship has three facets: First, democracy is a category of freedom since it is one form of government under which freedom can be maintained. Second, democracy and freedom are interdependent in that democracy is the vehicle for freedom in America, and yet democracy is not possible without freedom. Third, since Americans perceive the same ideals and results inherent in both concepts, they are similar; they can be used synonymously. In short, while the relationship between freedom and democracy is complex, to Conant American survival was dependent upon freedom which relied on democracy.

Equality of opportunity and equality of status were explained as two essential elements of democracy. "Certain

⁹Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 18.

unique ideals," Conant claimed, "are the hallmarks of American democracy. To my mind, these ideals which I shall sum up by the words 'equality of opportunity,' and 'social democracy' are a special product of our history."¹¹ "There are no classes in America.' This phrase," Conant insisted, "has been used countless times to emphasize our belief in equality of opportunity."¹² A decade later in The American High School Today, Conant stressed anew that "equality thus came to mean for many new Americans not only political equality but also equality of opportunity. It came to mean too, especially west of the Alleghenies, equality of status of all honest labor."¹³ Five years after this contention in The American High School Today Conant reiterated and amplified the relationship between these two concepts in Thomas Jefferson and the Development of American Education.

The idea of equality of opportunity has become today widely accepted in almost all free societies. For us it seems to have a frontier origin, and yet Napoleon paid homage to the same ideal when he said that every soldier in his army carried a field marshal's baton in his knapsack. We can hardly claim to have exclusive possession of the idea that society, should be so arranged that a career is open to the talented. The case with the doctrine of equality of status is quite different. Here we are concerned with a notion which in origin and wide acceptance, I would maintain, is strictly American.¹⁴

¹¹Ibid., p. 4.

¹²Ibid., p. 14.

¹³James B. Conant, The American High School Today (New York: New American Library, Inc., 1919), p. 17.

¹⁴James B. Conant, Thomas Jefferson and the Development of American Education (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), p. 57.

Conant discussed the concepts of American survival, freedom, and democracy primarily in Education in a Divided World, but he considered equality of opportunity and equality of status in more recent publications as well because the latter concepts were more disputable and yet essential for adoption of his program. For the United States to protect its freedom and survive in a divided world Americans needed to bolster their democracy and realize more of their potential. Conant saw the failure to provide equal education and the undue social pressure toward certain professions and educational degrees as serious threats to equality of opportunity and status and thus to our democracy, freedom, and survival. Then, reassertion of equality of opportunity and status were prerequisite for the national task, and educational reform was Conant's plan for reasserting equality and realizing increased American potential.

Conant felt that his program would be the best solution because it both reflected and promoted equality. Other educational reform proposals would simply not be as effective in reasserting equality and increasing our potential. Although other proposals may promote equality of opportunity by teaching it as a basic principle of democracy, they do not reflect it in their operation, because no system other than his allowed the latitude and guidance necessary to help students realize their maximum potential, and equality of status could not be reflected or effectively promoted in any

system which does not recognize and train students of all races, religions, and ability levels for all possible careers. In fact, Conant argued that his program promoted and reflected both equality of opportunity and status as far as possible: It was designed to teach these concepts by example because its flexibility allowed all students to reach their maximum potential which is true equality of opportunity, and each possible career was deemed equally worthy of inclusion in the system. This reasoning led to the conclusion that Conant's program provided the final step Americans must take to assure their survival.

In short, the argumentative structure of Conant's campaign followed the series circuit described by Douglas Ehninger and Wayne Brockriede or the sorites of classical logic and rhetoric, in which each subsequent claim is dependent upon the stability of the preceding claim.¹⁵ American survival in a divided world was dependent upon freedom which was dependent upon democracy which depended upon equality of opportunity which, in turn, depended upon equality of status which then was dependent upon Conant's program. The reversal of this dependency chain established by Conant reveals the significance of equality of status, particularly, to his campaign. That concept must be elevated to like stature with the other concepts so that Conant's program would provide the most nearly perfect solution.

¹⁵Douglas Ehninger and Wayne Brockriede, Decision by Debate (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1963), pp. 234-235.

Rhetorical Tactics

Conant's rhetorical strategy was implemented through a variety of tactics. Both argumentative and stylistic techniques assisted him in persuading Americans that his program and their aspirations were closely allied.

Argumentative Techniques

Seven argumentative techniques emerge as central to Conant's approach: (1) authoritative appeal, (2) empirical support, (3) residual problem-solution, (4) historical precedence and tradition, (5) supportive refutation, (6) re-statement and repetition, and (7) analogy. An examination of these techniques as well as an analysis of the functions and relations of his argumentative techniques demonstrates the way they operated to further the success of his campaign.

Authoritative appeal

Authoritative appeal involves the notion that source approval should transfer to message approval. Authoritative appeal can come from the rhetorician himself, personal appeal, or it can come in the form of outside authorities which the rhetorician uses to support either a single contention or as much as an entire program, supporting authorities. Conant used both personal appeal and supporting authorities to his advantage.

Personal appeal permeated Conant's rhetoric. For

his audience Conant frequently reinforced his own image and the authenticity of his studies by simultaneously presenting his ideas and reminding his readers from where and whom they came. He utilized two traditional methods in his effort. First, he often referred to himself when seeking acceptance, frequently expressing himself in the first person singular, and implying expertise when presenting his observations and recommendations. Further, his use of the first person singular, "I," functioned persuasively not only by arguing "since you approve of me, approve my program," but it argued his intent to assume the responsibility for the books that bore his name. Belgian legal and rhetorical theorist, Chaim Perelman, asserts that when a speaker substitutes "one" for "I" he "somehow decreases his responsibility for the statement."¹⁶ Conversely, one can conclude, then, that the opposite is true, that when "I" is used in place of "one" he increases his responsibility for the statement. Conant's extensive use of "I" throughout, even when considering his many acknowledgements, would seem to bear this conclusion out.

The second method he used was to elaborate his expertise. One instance, in the early stages of his discussion of the need for a nationwide planning commission he reminded his readers that he had served off and on for twenty-

¹⁶Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), p. 161.

two years on the Educational Policies Commission.¹⁷ Further, the studies which led to his recommendations concerning the junior high school,¹⁸ senior high school,¹⁹ and teacher education,²⁰ as well as his reassessment of the high school²¹ were described during the initial stages of his discussions of those levels so that readers could assess the validity of his findings. A third way he demonstrated his ability was by comparing educational systems. In Education and Liberty he compared systems in England, Scotland, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States.²² He compared English, German, Russian, and American schools in The Child, the Parent, and the State.²³ Such comparisons underscored his breadth and depth of information. A fourth and final way, was his revelation of far-reaching knowledge of American educational history. His depth of understanding of the Jeffersonian

¹⁷James B. Conant, Shaping Educational Policy (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 7.

¹⁸James B. Conant, Education in the Junior High School Years (Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 1960), p. 9.

¹⁹Conant, The American High School Today, pp. 21-47.

²⁰James B. Conant, The Education of American Teachers (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963), pp. v-ix.

²¹James B. Conant, The Comprehensive High School (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967), pp. 1-12.

²²James B. Conant, Education and Liberty (New York: Random House, 1953), Chapter I.

²³James B. Conant, The Child, the Parent, and the State (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1965), Chapter I.

tradition was exposed at length throughout Thomas Jefferson and the Development of American Education. Moreover, he laid the groundwork for a discussion of The Education of American Teachers by explaining the historical development of the quarrel between education and other professions as it related to determining teacher education programs.²⁴

Authoritative appeal was also generated through the use of supporting authorities. For his study of the American high school, although he explained that he retained the primary responsibility for material contained in his books, he reported consensus among his collaborators who were from various branches of education. He began his acknowledgments as follows:

I was fortunate, in organizing this study of the American high school, in being able to enlist the services of four able co-workers, two of whom had had years of experience in high school administration. In my visits to schools, I always had the valuable assistance of at least one co-worker. Although the opinions expressed in this report are my own, I believe that, in general, they also reflect the views of my four colleagues; certainly, their accumulated wisdom and effective labors have shaped to no small degree the findings of this report and my recommendations. With pleasant memories of many hours of stimulating discussions and long journeys, I record my indebtedness to my four collaborators: Eugene Youngert, Barnard S. Miller, Nathaniel Ober, Reuben H. Gross.²⁵

When he studied the junior high school he reported a similar indebtedness to collaborators Dr. Matthew P. Gaffney, for many years superintendent of New Trier Township High School,

²⁴Conant, The Education of American Teachers, Chapter I.

²⁵Conant, The American High School Today, p. v.

Winnetka, Illinois, and later professor in the Harvard Graduate School of Education; Mr. Franklyn O. White, principal of Central Junior High School, Greenwich, Connecticut; and Mr. E. Alden Dunham, a member of his previous staff. Further, he admitted his obligation "to so many superintendents, principals, and teachers throughout the nation. . . . On several occasions," he stated, "I had the opportunity of discussing my tentative findings with groups of junior high school principals, and I profited each time from a vigorous interchange of opinions."²⁶ Later when he studied teacher education, his reliance on his colleagues increased and became even more complicated than for previous studies. He explained it as follows:

I have been most fortunate in my collaborators. For the first year's study, which involved visiting teacher-preparing institutions. I was able to secure the services of Prof. Jeremiah S. Finch of Princeton University, Prof. William H. Cartwright of Duke University, Dr. Robert F. Carbone, now professor at Emory University, and E. Alden Dunham, whose assistance had proved so valuable in previous studies. Prof. John I. Goodlad of the University of California at Los Angeles was able to give me only a portion of his time, but together with Professor Cartwright he supplied the essential knowledge of the details of teacher training. Professor Finch, as a former dean of the college at Princeton and a professor of English, was in a position to assist me in my discussions with members of the academic departments in the various institutions we included in our travels.

In the second year of the study I focused attention on the state regulations that place limitations on the local school board's freedom to employ teachers. Since changes in these regulations have been the subject of recent controversy in more than one state capital, I

²⁶Conant, Education in the Junior High School Years, p. 3.

decided I needed the assistance of both a political scientist and an historian. I was lucky enough to persuade Prof. Nicholas A. Masters, now at Pennsylvania State University, and Dr. Merle L. Borrowman, professor of education and history at the University of Wisconsin, to join the inquiry. Together with Dr. Michael D. Usdan, now a professor at Northwestern University, these gentlemen formed a traveling team that visited the capitals of the 16 most populous states. Dr. Elbert K. Fretwell, Jr., assistant commissioner for higher education of the state of New York, was good enough to give me a month of his vacation time and for this period traveled with the others.

In the preparation of the manuscript all the members of both years' staffs have played a major part, and all have reviewed the final draft. While I think it fair to say there was a remarkable degree of unanimity among these advisers, none of them agrees completely with everything I have written. The responsibility for the reporting as well as for the recommendations is mine. At the same time I must record the fact that many of the ideas set forth in the following pages did not originate with me; a good number of them were initially thrown into the discussion by a member of the staff.²⁷

A committee was organized to formulate the documents and review the returns from the questionnaires sent in connection with The Comprehensive High School. Conant was Chairman with Nathaniel Ober, Vice Chairman, George E. Shattuck as Associate Director, and Douglas W. Hunt as a Special Consultant. The remaining members were Robert L. Foose, Samuel M. Graves, Warren C. Seyfert, Ellsworth Tompkins, and Eugene Youngert. Conant "undertook the responsibility of writing the reports with the understanding that the members would not be responsible for any of the statements." He contended, however, that he believed the conclusions had "the

²⁷Conant, The Education of American Teachers, pp. v-vi.

full approval of the committee."²⁸

In short, by consistently referring to himself; by demonstrating his expertise through a reminder that he had served in an expert capacity and that he had conducted studies which led to his recommendations for junior high schools, senior high schools, and teacher education; and by revealing his understanding of comparative education and educational history, Conant demonstrated to his readers that he was qualified to point the direction for educational change. Further, although he did not abdicate responsibility for his works, he made full use of authorities to lend credence to his ideas, particularly in those areas in which he had the least experience such as public school administration and teaching.

Empirical Support

The use of empirical support not only strengthens a rhetorician's case, but reinforces his image as well. Open to attack on the grounds that he does not know what he is talking about, he must convince his audience that his assertions are based on fact, not fancy. One way this can be furthered is through the use of empirical support. Once the audience is convinced that the speaker or writer is well informed, his image is automatically improved. Since Conant could not speak from first-hand experience on the public schools,

²⁸Conant, The Comprehensive High School, pp. v-vi.

because his career as an educator had been confined to higher education, he perceived that one of his weaknesses would be reliable data from which to reason. He, therefore, set out to gain that data, subsequently employing it to advantage.

Where appropriate, he explained in the preliminary pages of his books that his recommendations were based on conclusions reached as a consequence of visiting or sending questionnaires to the schools under consideration. For his study of the American high school a team of 5, Conant and 4 others, visited 103 individual schools and 4 school systems. Conant, himself, visited 56 schools and 3 of the 4 districts.²⁹ He and his staff visited 237 schools in 90 school systems in 23 states for his study of the junior high school.³⁰ In 22 states 77 institutions were visited by Conant and his staff when compiling his recommendations for the improvement of teacher education. These institutions included church-connected colleges or universities, private institutions not church connected, state universities, and state and municipal colleges. His report concentrated, however, on the 16 most populace states from each geographic region.³¹ Information for his most recent study reported in The Comprehensive High School was obtained through

²⁹Conant, The American High School Today, pp. 100-104.

³⁰Conant, Education in the Junior High School Years, p. 9.

³¹Conant, The Education of American Teachers, pp. vi-vii.

questionnaires. While this method provides data which is somewhat less reliable than the observation method used in his earlier studies, it has the advantage of being more extensive. His concern was the opportunity for studying a variety of subjects in 2,000 widely comprehensive schools of medium size, nationwide.³²

Conant's efforts to appear objective by amassing data in this manner were supplemented by his method of reporting that data; he provided charts throughout the appropriate studies so as to take advantage of the objectivity of alleged "facts." For example, in his study, The American High School Today, he included a graph designating the career commitment of students,³³ a chart summarizing the extent to which the schools studied fulfilled the criteria for comprehensiveness,³⁴ and a graph displaying the percentage of the academically talented students from those schools who were carrying a program equal to their abilities³⁵ along with a variety of charts and graphs compiling various kinds of information in the appendices. Another example was his use of tables in The Comprehensive High School. Such tables included an overview of the ratio of students to

³²Conant, The Comprehensive High School, p. 1.

³³Conant, The American High School Today, p. 39.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 34-35.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 36-37.

guidance counselors by number and per cent of schools³⁶ and the number of students instructed daily by one English teacher,³⁷ and other similar data. In short, Conant's methods of obtaining data and his methods of reporting it strengthened his case and supplemented other image-building factors.

Residual Problem-Solution

One of Conant's primary argumentative techniques was to delineate a problem in such a way as to make his recommendations appear to be the logical solution: he managed this technique in one of three ways: (1) He would state the problem, then subdivide it for greater clarity and ease of handling and finally offer a solution which met his analysis of the problem. (2) He would briefly crystallize the heart of the problem then proceed to show how his program would eliminate the difficulty. (3) In one of his works he would analyze the problem in detail and then solve the problem with his program in a subsequent work.

One of the best examples of his problem partitioning method appeared in Shaping Educational Policy. He stated, therein, that expansion and control of higher education has often been decided with little attention to long-range state and national needs.³⁸ He then divided the problem into four

³⁶Conant, The Comprehensive High School, p. 28.

³⁷Ibid., p. 38.

³⁸Conant, Shaping Educational Policy, p. 50.

disadvantages which he felt accrued from such disregard, using states exemplifying these disadvantages as proof of the difficulty. Lack of planning is, first of all, clearly disadvantageous, Conant explained, in that it allows the intrusion of politics and politicians into educational decisions. He cited Illinois as a place where this worked to the detriment of higher education; in the absence of the proper machinery for overall educational planning, an intense competition has built up between Southern Illinois University and the University of Illinois which has resulted in bitter fights over role and function. Also in Illinois, duplication of programs and new campus locations which were opened to add strength to each university have not necessarily produced the wisest expenditure of money and efforts. Another disadvantage is that an institution loses some of its autonomy when politicians seek to determine educational policy in return for favors rendered in the legislature.³⁹ A fourth disadvantage, and one exemplified in Texas, is that politicians take advantage of weak educational machinery to aid their own districts; because the Texas Commission for Higher Education has no control over the establishment of junior colleges they have become a pork barrel. Florida and Georgia are equally concerned about the possibility of education becoming one of the biggest pork barrels.⁴⁰ Thus, by dividing

³⁹Ibid., pp. 51-54.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 55-56.

the problem into various disadvantages and providing examples of localities where these disadvantages have operated, Conant opened the way for his proposal.

After subdividing the problem, Conant pulled the whole discussion back together by pointing out that "education like other public enterprises must compete for what is available."⁴¹ He then reviewed three alternative solutions which have been tried but which were not successful; he explained why they had failed:

When a state has no plan, no clear-cut idea in what direction its educational system should move, public officials are not compelled to take into account any criterion other than the power of each educational interest and to decide for themselves which programs are politically valuable and which are not.⁴²

The establishment of an Interstate Commission for Planning a Nationwide Educational Policy is an answer, and to Conant the answer. Each state would be represented on such a commission but would not be forced to adhere to the suggestions of the commission. The major advantage would be that states would receive guidance with regard to workable policies and and practices and would be warned of pitfalls. While the commission could not force compliance, and would not wish to, it could solve the problem as he depicted it.

Conant's second technique of residual problem-solution was to crystallize the heart of the problem and solve

⁴¹Ibid., p. 58.

⁴²Ibid., p. 59. Italics his.

it within a few pages. Even such crystallization carefully anticipated his solution. Writing in 1964, in regard to the deplorable condition surrounding the education of the American Negro teacher, for example, he first pointed out that this problem cannot be analyzed or solved by looking at the United States as a whole, but must be attacked by first separating states of the South, where total segregation exists, from Northern states, where partially or totally integrated schools are in evidence. Such a division is necessary because Southern Negro children have suffered an educational handicap which must be realized and dealt with by anyone attempting to remedy the problem. Because these children have lived virtually segregated lives dominated by white people and graduated from totally Negro high schools, he continued, they are ill prepared for college work. Their level of competence in reading and mathematics would not qualify them for admittance to even the least selective state university. The intellectual incompetence of these children is to a considerable extent due to the impoverished cultural background reflected by the lack of family and community interest in reading books, magazines, or even newspapers, as well as the block to ambition which is an inherent product of being reared in such a segregated, culturally deprived society. Forced to attend colleges and universities of low standards and often not performing at a highly satisfactory level even in these institutions, these

Negroes are graduated as elementary and secondary teachers to teach the next generation of Negro children. "That such states [segregated states] exist and are different from other states is a fact that needs underlining in any rational discussion of what is the most serious political-educational problem facing the United States today."⁴³

Furthermore, the current practice of attempting to approximate equal opportunities for Negroes by blurring the distinction between Negro schools in segregated states and all-Negro schools in states which are at least partially integrated is a mistake. A solution cannot be arrived at, he continued, by viewing the education of the Negro on a national basis because the problem is not the same in the South as in other states.

This discussion demonstrates Conant's skill in getting to what he considered the heart of the problem. He not only analyzed the problem so that he could arrive at a solution, but presented his analysis clearly so that when his solution appeared on the next page it sounded like the sensible solution to the problem. "The first matter to be attended to," said Conant, "is the formulation of a state policy."⁴⁴ He then remarked that "the issue should be transferred from the local level and the courts as far as possible. The state, by legislative resolution or by the action of a powerful and

⁴³Ibid., p. 42.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 43. Italics his.

respected state board, should declare that the public schools as far as possible should be comprehensive schools.⁴⁵ Although Conant continued the elaboration of his proposal in subsequent pages, his brief crystallization had set the nature of the problem so that his solution was the only viable alternative.

While Conant sometimes presented his problem-solution sequence in close proximity, he was equally apt to illuminate the problem in one of his works and then provide the solution in a later effort. For instance, as Conant argued in Education in a Divided World, "The relation of the United States to other nations, the structure of American society, and blueprints for future domestic and foreign policy are not only highly relevant to a discussion of education but supply the basic premises."⁴⁶ After identifying these as the central issues in 1948, The Citadel of Learning published eight years later, elaborated the need for capable students to learn foreign languages "so as to aid our relationship with other nations."⁴⁷

The position for which Conant is probably best known is his staunch advocacy of identification and maximum education of the gifted student, and his handling of this issue provides another example of his technique of identifying the

⁴⁵Ibid. Italics his.

⁴⁶Conant, Education in a Divided World, p. 1.

⁴⁷James B. Conant, The Citadel of Learning (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), p. 40.

the problem in his early works and developing the solution later. Conant was particularly concerned with the limitations imposed on the gifted student by the school that the student attends and this theme ran through much of his rhetoric. In his first education book in 1948, he elucidated the problem: "The difficult question is how a brilliant boy or girl, clearly professional material, should be educated in a high school where not more than 30 per cent of the graduates wish to go on for further education."⁴² This isolating of the problem cleared the way for the program which he presented in detail in The American High School Today eleven years later.

As early as 1948, the question in Conant's mind may have been how to assure the best education for the academically talented, but by 1959, he had, himself, provided a very specific, detailed plan. It took him a few years to arrive at his solution, but his clear statement of the problem, as he saw it, enabled him to determine what was needed so that a solution could be sought. While Conant's critics might disagree with regard to the essence of the problem, his ability to state his feelings with conviction is, in itself, persuasive. Then by following this forceful statement with such a detailed plan for its solution while others were, in many cases, still grappling with the situation, he had the persuasive edge. Admittedly, he was not the only person

⁴²Conant, Education in a Divided World, p. 137.

speaking with conviction either with relation to the problem or the solution, but the firm clarity with which he presented his case was certainly in his favor. Unlike other educational reformers Conant made his recommendations appear logical by identifying the crux of the problem in such a way that the recommendations fit as perfectly as possible.

Historical Precedence and Tradition

Closely related to his use of residual problem-solution techniques was Conant's use of historical precedence and tradition. Conant knew educational history and comparative education and skillfully used the information to substantiate his program, elevating his views of American values and goals, and legitimizing this view of his proposals by an apparently objective source, history and tradition.

For instance, in Education and Liberty he not only compared American secondary and higher education systems with those in England, Scotland, Australia, and New Zealand, but he also traced secondary and higher education in the United States. Conant proceeded with such deliberation that the recommendations he made with regard to secondary and higher education appeared to be the inevitable next step in the progression. Further, these recommendations seemed to have acquired historical legitimacy.⁴⁹

A second example centered on the certification requirements for teachers. In the early chapters of The

⁴⁹ Conant, Education and Liberty, p. 57.

Education of American Teachers he traced the purposes and requirements for certification from their beginning. After working his way through the historical development, Conant then examined current certification practices, concluding that they do not perform their intended function:

In none of the states do the rules have a clearly demonstrated practical bearing on the quality of the teacher, the quality of his preparation, or the extent to which the public is informed about the personnel in the classrooms. In every state literal adherence to the rules is impractical and evasion is common.⁵⁰

By tracing the development of the purposes and certain influences on certification practices, Conant showed that current practices, however sound they may be theoretically, are not accomplishing what they should; thus he justified a change. He then followed his development by providing a solution which he felt would more effectively produce teachers of quality. Under his plan the stranglehold certification requirements and accrediting agencies exerted on teacher training would be released and professors of all subjects would cooperate in devising and implementing quality teacher training. His solution, therefore, was historically aligned and appeared objective.

Conant frequently utilized the techniques of the two examples just described, carefully tracing that aspect of the problem which made his solution seem practical, and making his solution seem to be the next evolutionary step which

⁵⁰Conant, The Education of American Teachers, p. 54.

fit American purposes. Sometimes he combined these two procedures but used different works to accomplish different parts of the technique; The Child, the Parent, and the State in conjunction with Education in a Divided World is exemplary of that technique.

As early as 1948, in Education in a Divided World Conant argued that for the good of the nation we must educate people for their role in a divided world. Historically and geographically the view has differed as to whether the individual or the state should be the primary benefactor of education. Conant appeared to feel that Americans needed to awaken from their child-centered stupor of the first half of the twentieth century and become more aware of America's national needs. By the time he wrote The Child, the Parent, and the State, making use of the information gained in the studies he conducted for The American High School Today which had been published only a few months earlier, he apparently felt that this country had not taken heed. Americans were not sufficiently aware of the need to maximally educate the academically talented or to equip all children for a new kind of world role. The implication permeating The Child, the Parent, and the State is that Americans have failed to implement the necessary curriculum and procedures because they have not shifted their focus from the child's needs to the nation's needs. In order to aid the shift Conant employed the technique described above. He identified the crux of

the problem by historically tracing our attitude from the private concept (education is the individual's responsibility and he is the prime benefactor) to the public concept (education should be by the state and for the state). Education has ceased to be a private matter to be financed by one's own family for the benefit of the child and his family as it was in mid-nineteenth century England, according to Conant. It has become increasingly the public responsibility for the public good to be controlled by the state. He then compared the relationship between the child, the parent, and the state in totalitarian and free nations to show that while there is no need for this country to become completely nationalistic some concern must be shown for the national welfare. He explained his use of this technique when he said:

The starting point for a discussion of our tax-supported schools might well be a consideration of the legal and political structure of our system of education, and this chapter [Chapter I], therefore, will be devoted primarily to the present relation of government to parents and children. But in order to provide a background for my analysis of current American problems I propose first to range about in both time and space. I hope to 'frame the target' --to use the old naval ordinance phrase--by examining the relation of organized society to the family in England in the mid-nineteenth century and by noting the relation of youth to the authority of the state in the Soviet Union in 1959. Then I shall try to land a shot very near the center with a few words about German schools as they operate today.⁵¹

The Child, the Parent, and the State is essentially a book written for the purpose of delineating a problem. A shift

⁵¹Conant, The Child, the Parent, and the State, p. 2.

in focus for the American people was the prescription, and one could look to the recommendations in The American High School Today for specific steps to be taken that would implement the shift.

Supportive Refutation

Another recurring argumentative technique in Conant's work is the refutation of actual or potential criticisms as a means of supporting his own position.⁵² Whether Conant was answering actual or potential objections, his recognition of points open to attack, his willingness to cope with them, and his constructive use of the refutation are most significant. The examples which follow indicate his sensitivity to actual or potential objections and an emphasis in refutation on supporting his position with common sense and the pragmatic.

Critics of education have one thing in common, a concern with what the schools "ought to do." Any critic who advocates drastic overhaul as what "ought to be done" about American education is clearly a critic of Conant's conservative approach. Whether intuitively or as a consequence of his rhetorical ability, Conant sensed this criticism must be answered in order to clear the way for acceptance of his proposals. In The Child, the Parent, and the State he stated that his study of the American comprehensive high school led

⁵²Refer to discussion of actual and potential criticism of Conant's ideas and approach on page 89 of this study.

him to conclude that no radical change was necessary in the basic pattern, except where schools were too small. He then went on to say that he knew "that there are critics of our public schools who disagree with any such statement. These 'radical reformers,' as I call them, are apt to base their arguments on the alleged superiority of European schools."⁵³

In refutation of this argument Conant countered that when people advocate adopting the European plan they are thinking of the pre-university schools of Europe. These schools are special schools designed to prepare students for the universities which in Europe are strictly professional schools. Consequently, they are very difficult, and, although they only enroll about one-fifth of any age group, many students still fail along the way. Students who do not pass the tests to be admitted to pre-university schools complete their full-time education at fourteen and go to work. Moreover, there is no such thing in Europe as our four-year liberal arts college. In other words, education for all youth even into college, the American educational goal, is not possible under the European system, and, even if it were a more desirable approach for American education, it would be "literally impossible in the United States."⁵⁴ As Conant explained, he refuted their position:

⁵³Conant, The Child, the Parent, and the State, p. 80.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 81.

Let us see what would be required to Europeanize American education. First of all, one would have to abolish all the independent liberal arts colleges (over 1000 rugged institutions--quite a job). Second, one would have to eliminate or greatly alter large areas of instruction in many universities. Third, one would have to set up a uniform examination for admission to the universities and uniform standards for degrees. Fourth, one would have to change the laws on employment of youth and the school-leaving age and then correspondingly persuade labor unions and management to imitate the European practice in regard to employment of young people. And last, but by no means least, one would have to abolish local school boards and place the control of the curriculum and the employment of teachers (including their allocation to the specific school) in the hands of the government of each state.

But what would be even more difficult than all this reorganization would be a necessary reversal of the whole trend of developments in our history. One would have to modify profoundly the American belief in local responsibility and the American attachment to two ideals derived from our frontier history--the ideals of equality of opportunity and the equality of status of all forms of honest labor.

Anyone who wishes to take on seriously a reform movement to bring about any one of the changes I have listed is welcome to the job. To my mind, he wouldn't get to first base, nor should he.⁵⁵

In short, Conant presented a possible counter-proposal and refuted it by saying that it did not fit our needs, and even if it did, it would require measures too drastic to envision. His inclusion of this refutation was good strategy because The Child, the Parent, and the State in which it appeared was published during the same year The American High School was printed. The American High School Today was released simultaneously with three other books criticizing American education and comparing it unfavorably with European

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 81-82.

schools.⁵⁶

Conant was also criticized for his neglect of a clearly stated educational philosophy. In the opening paragraphs of The Child, the Parent, and the State, Conant answered those critics; he stated:

The great philosophers from Plato to Whitehead have written about the aims of education; their writings have profoundly influenced the way men and women have thought about the problems of bringing up children; their discussions of the nature of knowledge and the way knowledge is passed on from one generation to another have provided countless teachers with a set of ideas basic to their profession. Yet it is quite evident to anyone who reads books and articles about schools and colleges that when lesser lights have attempted to define education the results more often than not have been neither novel nor illuminating. Over the years I have wrestled with definitions and struggled with chains of logical reasoning; I have been guilty of my share of educational banalities. As a consequence, I must confess to an increasing distrust of the use of the deductive method of thinking about questions confronting teachers.

When someone writes or says that what we need today in the United States is to decide first what we mean by the word "education," a sense of distasteful weariness overtakes me. I feel as though I were starting to see a badly scratched film of a poor movie for the second or third time. In such a mood, I am ready to define education as what goes on in schools and colleges. I am more inclined to examine the present and past practices of teachers than to attempt to deduce pedagogical precepts from a set of premises.⁵⁷

Conant's adoption of a "common sense" instead of a philosophical approach to improving the schools was a wise choice

⁵⁶Fred M. Hechinger, The Big Red Schoolhouse (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1959); Edmund J. King, Other Schools and Ours (New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc., 1959); Hyman G. Rickover, Education and Freedom (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1959).

⁵⁷Conant, The Child, the Parent, and the State, pp. 1-2.

because Americans seem to prefer such an approach. Thus Conant dealt with major criticism of his approach; by bringing them into the open and refuting them, he was able to strengthen his position.

Restatement and Repetition

Conant's frequent restatement and repetition increased the exposure, amplification, and perhaps the credibility of his proposals. Restatement, or reformulation of an idea, especially enabled him to display the various dimensions and implications of his ideas. Education of the gifted is a prime example of his use of restatement to depict his position from several vantage points. In Education in a Divided World he stressed the need to identify and educate gifted young people and revealed the dilemma faced by the heterogeneous school. "At this point we touch once again upon a topic which has been more than once mentioned in passing: selection of gifted youth at a relatively early age in education," he remarked. "The educational dilemma, of course, looms above the horizon; differentiation versus undifferentiated curricula is on the agenda for discussion."⁵⁸ He then pointed out that the homogeneous school comprised predominantly of the highly gifted can concentrate on providing classwork at one level of occupational goals. "The difficult question is how a brilliant boy or girl, clearly

⁵⁸Conant, Education in a Divided World, p. 136.

professional material, should be educated in a high school where not more than 30 per cent of the graduates wish to go on for further education."⁵⁹

In Education and Liberty he examined the issue of education of the gifted anew repeating some of what he said previously, but adding new elements for consideration. He pointed out that one factor retarded adequate appraisal and consequent improvement of the situation: "There is a false antithesis in the minds of too many people (including some educators) between education for all American youth and education for the gifted. For the American public high school to continue to fulfill its purpose," he argued, "any idea of an opposition between these two functions of secondary schools must be eliminated."⁶⁰ He opened one consideration of the subject of gifted students in The Child, the Parent, and the State with the question, "What, if anything, is being done for the highly gifted student (a small percentage of the population)?"⁶¹ He then pointed out how bored these students would be in the regular classroom.⁶² In The American High School Today the majority of his recommendations were in one way or another related to educating these students; his suggestions dealt with everything from counselors

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 137.

⁶⁰ Conant, Education and Liberty, p. 64.

⁶¹ Conant, The Child, the Parent, and the State, p. 79.

⁶² Ibid., p. 80.

to identify them, to courses they should take, to providing courses for other ability groups and interests so as not to dilute the courses for the gifted.⁶³ He stressed again the significance of identifying and educating the gifted in Slums and Suburbs, pointing out that it "is not only in the best interest of the child but in the best interest of the nation as well."⁶⁴ In Education in the Junior High School Years he also explained why early identification is essential: He contended that it was primarily necessary in order to allow them to complete a four-year mathematics sequence by grade eleven and be ready for college-freshman mathematics in grade twelve; he further amplified the subject by arguing that it is better for very bright students not to skip grades because they should be relatively socially mature when they enter college.⁶⁵

Nationwide planning would assist early identification and superior education of the gifted he argued in Shaping Educational Policy. One study indicates, he reported, that an alarmingly small percentage of able boys and girls go on through higher education. This study, however, was preliminary and inconclusive. If there were more reliable information state by state it might be possible to recruit

⁶³Conant, The American High School Today, p. 99.

⁶⁴James B. Conant, Slums and Suburbs (New York: New American Library, Inc., 1961), p. 77.

⁶⁵Conant, Education in the Junior High School Years, p. 17.

and educate greater numbers of the academically talented. A nationwide planning commission could provide such data.⁶⁶ Conant sent questionnaires to 2,000 widely comprehensive schools of medium size in order to evaluate the progress schools had made in the direction of the recommendations he specified in The American High School Today. He then reported in The Comprehensive High School that he had no way of judging to what degree the schools he was considering were "successful in developing the potentialities of their academically talented students."⁶⁷ Clearly, Conant reexamined periodically the issue of education of the gifted. Much of the time was spent repeating what he had said before. He did bring in new points that had not been previously considered, however, thus expanding the understanding of the public with each restatement.

A second issue which received treatment by Conant at least as widespread as the one just discussed was foreign languages. A discussion of foreign languages was initiated in Education in a Divided World where Conant pointed out that in a world in which a country must be conscious of other nations, a mastery of foreign languages is as important as mathematical, scientific, and artistic talents. It is absurd, therefore, for "public school men to advocate

⁶⁶Conant, Shaping Educational Policy, pp. 124-125.

⁶⁷Conant, The Comprehensive High School, p. 49.

the elimination of all foreign languages (modern and ancient) from the high schools."⁶⁸ He touched on the subject of foreign languages only slightly in Education and Liberty, but stressed at one point his opinion that time "should be used in acquiring such skills as advanced mathematics and the reading and writing of French or German."⁶⁹ In The Citadel of Learning Conant complained that American families, even in the higher income brackets, unlike European families, do not insist on their children developing a mastery of mathematics and foreign languages. While this practice is satisfactory for the less able students "the way out of this educational quandry lies in identifying scholastic talent young (in mathematics or foreign languages or both)," he contended, "and then providing for teachers who will stimulate the selected students to do their utmost because they want to and as a matter of pride."⁷⁰

Conant allowed the subject of foreign languages to intrude in at least eight areas in The Child, the Parent, and the State.⁷¹ In the latter of these areas he admitted that parents have a natural concern as to whether once their

⁶⁸Conant, Education in a Divided World, p. 139.

⁶⁹Conant, Education and Liberty, p. 65.

⁷⁰Conant, The Citadel of Learning, p. 45.

⁷¹Conant, The Child, the Parent, and the State, pp. 37, 40, 45, 53, 67, 69, and 77.

son or daughter is enrolled in a subject such as foreign language the subject would be learned. Conant then explained to readers that he was well aware that just enrolling in a course which was available would not insure learning. Quality teachers are an equally essential element in that learning.⁷²

One of his twenty-one recommendations for the high school was devoted exclusively to foreign languages. In this recommendation he urged that a third and fourth year of foreign language be offered no matter how few students enrolled. Further, "the guidance officers should urge the completion of a four-year sequence of one foreign language if the student demonstrates ability in handling foreign languages."⁷³ "We do not as yet have evidence enough to say what is the relation of aptitude for the study of a foreign language by the new methods to the other scholastic aptitudes. Time alone will tell," Conant stated in Slums and Suburbs. "However, my guess would be that there will be some among the average students who have marked ability for languages," he continued.⁷⁴ He recommended, in Education in the Junior High School Years, that experiments in teaching foreign language as early as third grade be continued

⁷²Ibid., p. 77.

⁷³Conant, The American High School Today, p. 73.

⁷⁴Conant, Slums and Suburbs, pp. 89-90.

since more evidence of the advantages accrued is needed. He also reminded school boards that if the study of language was started as early as grade seven, they must be prepared to finance it for the six years through high school.⁷⁵ When discussing the education of foreign language teachers Conant reminded his readers that unlike other teaching fields, there is an observable, absolute standard by which to measure the foreign language teacher's competence. Oral and written tests have been devised which accurately evaluate the spoken and written aspects of foreign languages. If teachers are required to take these tests before being hired, students can be assured of quality instruction.⁷⁶

Added impetus has been gained in the direction of the need to have national educational synthesis. Foreign languages, as well as other sequential subjects, have increased the pressure. There is a need to assure a student who begins a language in one school that he can continue it in the next school he may attend. This is not presently possible in most cases. A national planning commission could assist coordination of such subjects, increasing the consistency nationwide.⁷⁷ Conant was later delighted to

⁷⁵Conant, Education in the Junior High School Years, p. 18.

⁷⁶Conant, The Education of American Teachers, pp. 181-183.

⁷⁷Conant, Shaping Educational Policy, p. 6.

report in The Comprehensive High School that marked improvement had been made in offering four years of at least one modern foreign language. As he pointed out, "The situation has clearly changed radically for the better since 1958."⁷⁸

Conant kept points he considered important before the public by introducing them into most works and showing how they related to the various subjects under discussion. This restatement and amplification emphasized subjects of importance to him, at the same time acting as a constant reminder of their significance to the public. Training of the gifted and foreign language education were probably the most extensively covered of any topic, but were not the only areas he emphasized with restatement. School financing, ability grouping, equality of opportunity, and equality of status were also stressed frequently throughout his major works.

Analogy

Conant used analogy to uncover what he considered to be blindspots Americans had concerning education. Although he used them sparingly, he employed analogies well. "Our system of selecting professional students as compared with the British is like a long giant funnel narrowing down gradually. The British system a generation ago at least,

⁷⁸Conant, The Comprehensive High School, p. 51.

was more like a long narrow cylinder," Conant contended in Education and Liberty. Moreover, he continued, "even today the analogy between a funnel and a cylinder holds because throughout the British system there is far more attempt to select the pre-university students at an early age than here in the United States."⁷⁹ Although this analogy was introduced in a discussion contending that "a major factor in the United States in forcing the expansion of free secondary schools has been the four-year liberal arts college," it had a more subtle point.⁸⁰ It presented the argument that the British system, one European system by which we could pattern a change, does not fit the American conception of equality of opportunity. A second revealing analogy in Education and Liberty argued that "if the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eaton, it may well be that the ideological struggle with Communism in the next fifty years will be won on the playing fields of the public high schools of the United States."⁸¹ While less subtle than the previous one, this analogy argued the crucial role of American secondary education in the future of America.

Through the use of another analogy Conant contended that schools should vary their methods of teaching and

⁷⁹Conant, Education and Liberty, p. 32.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 62.

motivating students according to the aspirations and interests of the majority of the students enrolled. The school teaching mostly students who will terminate their education upon graduation from high school will need to use different techniques than the school largely containing potential college students. "To assume that the way the two schools teach literature and art should be the same," argued Conant, "is like assuming that the diet of a lumberman in the north woods should be the same as that of a desk worker in a southern city!"⁸²

A final example of Conant's astute choice of analogy to argue and emphasize views he felt were not fully realized by Americans is drawn from Slums and Suburbs. With this comparison Conant urged the recognition of a serious potential danger: "The building up of a mass of unemployed and frustrated Negro youth in congested areas of the city is a social phenomenon that may be compared to the piling up of inflammable material in an empty building in a city block."⁸³

Functions and Relations of Conant's Argumentative Techniques

Conant relied primarily and often on the seven argumentative techniques just discussed. It helps little to identify such techniques or to determine the frequency of

⁸²Conant, Education in a Divided World, p. 86.

⁸³Conant, Slums and Suburbs, p. 24.

their use, however; more important is how they functioned and that they worked to his advantage. Individually, each technique had a function which was beneficial: Conant identified educational problems in such a way as to make his solutions the most feasible of possible solutions; he established his recommendations as being in line with historical progression and American tradition; he refuted potential arguments against his approach before they could be fully developed against him; he used restatement and repetition to amplify and elucidate ideas relevant to his approach, and he lent objectivity to his conclusions through his personal appeal, his supporting authorities, and the use of empirical support; and he revealed and argued through analogy views he thought unknown or unheeded.

Conant's argumentative techniques significantly affected the thrust and form of his campaign. Collectively, they functioned to instill in the public a sense of security and confidence in Conant and his proposals. They accomplished this purpose by aiding the reader toward the feeling that here was a man who knew well American education both past and present; moreover, he possessed the ability to isolate and solve American educational problems. The techniques enhanced the feeling that Conant understood what Americans were seeking and was sufficiently informed about the educational systems of other nations to be aware that those systems would not help Americans achieve their goals. In

short, these techniques combined to create the impression that Conant was knowledgeable, objective, and vitally interested in educational reform and his program was substantial, consistent, and practical. Thus his argumentative techniques immeasurably assisted his persuasion.

Stylistic Techniques

Aside from its function as a means of expression, style also serves in an argumentative capacity in that the style ingratiates the author's reasoning to the audience; style suggests or disposes an audience for argument and thus serves to further or impede reasoning. Perelman supports this point of view when he states, "Choice of terms to express the speaker's thought is rarely without significance in the argumentation. It is only where argumentative intent has been deliberately or unconsciously suppressed that one can allow that synonyms exist which can be used indifferently in place of each other."⁸⁴ Several features of Conant's style were argumentative as well as aesthetically impressive.

Metaphor

Conant often used powerful metaphors which functioned argumentatively and thus augmented his other argumentative techniques. Perelman explains that "we consider a figure to be argumentative, if it brings about a change of perspective,

⁸⁴ Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 149.

and its use seems normal in relation to this new situation.⁸⁵ Conant's metaphors qualified as argument under this definition. "As I read the history of the United States," Conant stated in Slums and Suburbs, "this republic was born with a congenital defect--Negro slavery. Or, if one prefers another metaphor we started life under a curse from which we are not yet free."⁸⁶ These two metaphors argued that Negro slavery has the same crippling effects on America as a congenital defect or a curse would have on their victims. In other words, these metaphors served argumentatively as an abbreviated analogy.

In the statement "we are allowing social dynamite to accumulate in our large cities," Conant argued that the racial situation is due to cause a social explosion much like a dynamite explosion.⁸⁷ Somewhat later he reemphasized the seriousness of the situation through another metaphor. Add to all the other problems "the possibilities of inter-racial hostility and gang warfare between Negroes and Puerto Ricans and the resentment of both toward the whites, and one has a veritable witches brew," Conant assured, "which comes to boil with unsavory violence in certain schools in certain areas--particularly in the junior high school years."⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 169. Italics his.

⁸⁶ Conant, Slums and Suburbs, p. 16.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

Another instance of Conant's argumentative use of metaphor appeared in The Education of American Teachers where he argued the absurdity of the supine acceptance by colleges and universities of the semester-hour system and conventional patterns of courses as the only way these institutions can be organized, to the exclusion of all others. He pointed up the "untouchable" nature of this system when he called both the semester-hour system and the course pattern "sacred cows."⁸⁹ In short, Conant's metaphors were not mere novel expressions. They were frequently designed and utilized to urge the imminence of dangers. In a sense they were often veiled fear appeals.

Charismatic and Devil Terms

Conant also relied frequently on emotionally laden words to aid his persuasion. Over and above the argumentative nature of words described earlier by Perelman, one might say that some words are supremely argumentative. They are so emotionally laden that they function to suggest an argument so powerfully that they make it unnecessary to complete the argument. Such words are sometimes called "devil" and "charismatic" terms. "Devil" terms carry a negative value judgment; they are terms of repulsion. Further, no sure way provides explanation of their power. Richard Weaver points out that "a singular truth about

⁸⁹Conant, The Education of American Teachers, p. 78.

these terms is that . . . they defy any real analysis. That is to say, one cannot explain how they generate their peculiar force of repudiation. One only recognizes them as publicly-agreed-upon devil terms."⁹⁰ "Communism" is just such a word. It is used by Conant and carries an inherent negative connotation in this society. When Conant argued that our world is divided by "communism" he did not need to further demonstrate that this condition was undesirable; the need for a solution to the situation became immediately self-evident. Although there is no recognized explanation, Weaver attempts to assess the psychological state which creates the negative interpretation of this word by saying that it is possibly the need for a scapegoat. He contends that a nation must have an enemy. If that enemy is not another nation, as it is in the case of the word "communism," another race, type, or political faction will become the adversary.⁹¹ At any rate, "communism" is a negative term the use of which often relieved Conant of the necessity of proving its threat.

"Charismatic" terms are words of "considerable potency whose referents it is virtually impossible to discover or to construct through imagination."⁹² Two such words used by

⁹⁰Richard Weaver, The Ethics of Rhetoric (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), p. 223.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 222.

⁹²Ibid., p. 227.

Conant were "freedom" and "democracy." Freedom has such power that "the greatest sacrifices contemporary man is called upon to make are demanded in the name of 'freedom;' yet the referent which the average man attaches to this word is most obscure," Weaver states. "Burke's dictum that 'freedom inheres in something sensible' has not prevented its breaking loose from all anchorages."⁹³ The fact that modern man given a choice between freedom and responsibility will opt for responsibility, the fact that the term has been used to attempt to get men to assume more responsibilities such as taxes and military service, and the fact that freedom in its truest sense is no longer possible, none of these conditions has altered its power. "'Freedom' remains an ultimate term, for which people are asked to yield up their first-born."⁹⁴ Moreover, "there is plenty of evidence that 'democracy' is becoming the same kind of term."⁹⁵ It too has a nebulous referent. "The variety of things it is used to symbolize is too weird and too contradictory for one to find even a core meaning in present-day usages," Weaver insists. "More important than this is the fact . . . that people resist any attempt to define democracy, as if to connect it with a clear and fixed referent were to vitiate it."⁹⁶

⁹³ Ibid., p. 228.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 228-229.

The power of these words, although virtually inexplorable, is supreme. Men have fought and died on their behalf. Conant's use of these terms harnessed the power of the words to his cause.

Focusing Devices

Conant relied heavily on two devices to help him draw attention to his ideas, "signposting" and rhetorical questions. His "signposting" devices not only emphasized his ideas and called attention to their importance, but they also acted as aids to retention. He stressed the major proposals in his books through the use of bold type, italics, enumeration, or a combination of two or all three. Each of the fourteen recommendations in Education in the Junior High School Years and each of the twenty-one recommendations in The American High School Today was numbered and presented in bold type. In The Education of American Teachers his twenty-seven proposals for up-grading teacher education were numbered and italicized for emphasis. Italics were also used to bring out important points within the recommendations in Education in the Junior High School Years. Moreover, added impact was provided in The Education of American Teachers and The American High School Today through enumerated summaries and in The Education of American Teachers recommendations were numbered and grouped under bold-type headings designating responsibility for their realization. In short, through the use of enumeration, bold type, and

italics Conant made it possible for people to quickly refer to a particular recommendation. Further, he assisted retention, at the same time designating them worthy of attention. In this manner he argued "pay attention to and remember these points for they are important."

Conant also stressed certain ideas and channeled the thinking of his readers through the use of the rhetorical questions which permeated his works. For examples of his use of the rhetorical question one can turn to any of his works, but the following from The Education of American Teachers will demonstrate their use. In a discussion concerning the hold education schools have on certification practices, Conant pointed out that teachers in private schools do not have to be certified, and therefore they can take a wider range of courses often eliminating many education courses essential to certification. Private schools benefit because they can hire teachers on their academic merits rather than because they have attained certification. He then asked, "Why shouldn't there be the same free choice in our public schools?"⁹⁷ In answer to this question he then proposed a change in state certification requirements which allowed the training institution to decide, with the exception of student teaching, what the teacher must do to become certified. His question clearly led the way to his proposal. Conant not only used the single rhetorical question in

⁹⁷Conant, The Education of American Teachers, p. 8.

the manner just described, but he often used rhetorical questions in tandem, as in Education in a Divided World. He began with the question, "What is American democracy?"⁹⁸ He quickly answered that question, following it with an uninterrupted series of questions. "What sort of Society do we wish to develop here in the United States? Is that society to be continuous with our past development and a reflection of our traditional aspirations? Or is it to represent a marked deviation? If the former, what are the basic ideals of American democracy, and how can we further their realization?"⁹⁹ Later, the chapter where these questions appear reveals that they were designed to lead the reader to agree with Conant that Americans want a society which is consistent with this country's past.

Conant's rhetorical questions were decidedly leading. He used them frequently. They served him well in this capacity and also as a way, along with signposting, to draw attention to considerations he deemed important.

Role of Speeches and Articles

Articles, as well as complete and excerpted texts from Conant's speeches, have appeared in numerous journals, particularly after he became Harvard's president. His reputation as an educational critic, however, has been built

⁹⁸Conant, Education in a Divided World, p. 2.

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 2-3.

more recently, becoming full-blown after the publication of The American High School Today. It seems advisable, therefore, to examine his speeches and articles as they appeared in journals from January, 1958, to December, 1969, to determine their contribution to his campaign.

The major benefit from his speeches and articles was the added exposure which allowed the opportunity for him to clarify and reinforce his ideas; this took place in three ways. First, his ideas appeared more frequently. Conant's ideas, particularly those considered most significant by him, were repeatedly brought before the public. Regardless of the title of the speech or article Conant usually found an opportunity at some point in his articles and speeches to include his recommendations in major areas. If one measures the importance of these ideas to him by the frequency with which they are discussed, then one can say that his important ideas received exposure in most of his articles and speeches. An excellent example of one of Conant's recurrent themes is education of the gifted. In an article in Look which purported to discuss "Athletics: the Poison Ivy in Our Schools," Conant pointed out that we cannot afford to ignore the fact that "our national need for developing all potential talent is desperate. The necessity to strengthen our schools and colleges so that those who have academic ability will develop it to the full is proclaimed almost

daily."¹⁰⁰ When discussing the junior high school in the National Parent-Teacher, Conant stated that "early identification of the highly gifted seems to me to be a most promising development."¹⁰¹ In an address delivered to the American Vocational Association Convention in Chicago on December 7, 1959, Conant tactfully led into this same favorite topic, the education of the gifted, when he said that "only a relatively small group of youth have the scholastic potentialities which enable them to complete the post-high school technical course of four, six, or eight years necessary for research scientists and engineers."¹⁰² Finally, there are the articles and speeches with the express purpose of discussing the education of the gifted such as an NEA Journal article, "The Academically Talented,"¹⁰³ and his opening statement to the Invitational Conference on Academically Talented Secondary School Pupils in February, 1958.¹⁰⁴ Conant saw clearly a

¹⁰⁰James B. Conant, "Athletics: The Poison Ivy in Our Schools," Look, XXV (January 17, 1961), 60.

¹⁰¹James B. Conant, "Dr. Conant Looks at the Junior High School," National Parent-Teacher, XLIV (May, 1960), 6.

¹⁰²James B. Conant, "Vocational Education and the National Need," American Vocational Journal, XXXV (January, 1960), 18.

¹⁰³James B. Conant, "The Academically Talented," NEA Journal, XLVIII (April, 1958), 218-219.

¹⁰⁴National Education Association, The Identification of the Academically Talented Student in the American Secondary School, A Report of the Invitational Conference

relationship between the education of the academically talented and other educational issues. He took advantage of the hearing provided by the journals to show the relationships and to stress the importance, in his mind, of the issue, thus increasing his exposure.

A second way in which articles and speech texts assisted Conant was to allow him to isolate one or two ideas for discussion, rather than including all the related issues elaborated in his books. This isolation of ideas is particularly valuable because some of the many thoughts presented in a book are apt to be lost or underemphasized. In "Social Dynamite in Our Large Cities," a speech delivered before the Conference on Unemployed Out-of-school Youth in Urban Areas, Conant was able to limit his discussion to the relationship between unemployment, education, and unrest in the nation's slums.¹⁰⁵ While he discussed this relationship in Slums and Suburbs at greater length, he had also covered other related problems, among them parental ambitions and their effect on education.¹⁰⁶ Through this speech Conant was able to bring his analysis of the problem to the attention of people who were concerned, centering on that aspect of the situation

on the Academically Talented Secondary School Pupil, February, 1958 (Washington: National Education Association, 1958), pp. 15-17.

¹⁰⁵James B. Conant, "Social Dynamite in Our Large Cities," Vital Speeches, XXVII (July 1, 1961), pp. 554-560.

¹⁰⁶Conant, Slums and Suburbs, p. 71.

in which they were most interested. Consequently, he isolated and emphasized one portion of the problem, expounding on it for the conference and for those who read the speech text. Moreover, when this exposure was added to emphasis gained through the use of restatement in his books, one can see that his major ideas received great stress.

Third, Conant's exposure in periodicals is significant because it may have helped him reach a different audience. All Americans have not purchased or had access to all his books. Those who have acquired them may not have read them. Even people who are very interested in education and its problems have likely not read each of his books. Consequently, if one could only become acquainted with his ideas by reading his books his audience might be rather limited. Through his articles and speeches Conant hoped to interest people who were not already acquainted with his ideas as well as those not already converted to his way of thinking to read his books which contained his ideas in greater scope and detail. One group of people who might be so enticed is the layman. Articles and speeches by Conant have appeared in a number of magazines popular with this group such as Life, Look, The Reporter, Saturday Review, U.S. News and World Report, Ladies Home Journal, and Redbook. They have also been included in periodicals aimed specifically at parents, for example, Parents, National Parent-Teacher, and Child Study.

By reading his articles, educators may also be inspired

to read those books with which they are not already acquainted. His thoughts were introduced to educators through a variety of educational journals, both general, specialized, and regional. Of a general nature he was included in School and Society and Education Digest. For a more specialized audience his articles and speeches appeared in such periodicals as Industrial Arts and Vocational Education and the American Vocational Journal. Illinois Education and the Virginia Journal of Education were among his regional publishers.

In short, then, laymen and educators can become better acquainted with Conant's concepts by reading popular and professional periodicals. These articles serve to reinforce, amplify, and isolate ideas presented in his books. Frequently his statements in both books and periodicals are identical. Whether new or repeated, restated or verbatim, Conant's ideas gained added exposure through periodical publication.

Summary

Conant's identification construct consisted of a perceptive strategy which involved an implicit dependency chain. This chain allowed him to link his program to American survival in series fashion interjecting highly motivating concepts such as freedom, democracy, and equality of opportunity between the two. He also included the less accepted concept equality of status in the chain in the hope

that the strong allegiance Americans feel for survival, freedom, democracy, and equality of opportunity would generate strength to equality of status and then his program.

The rhetorical tactics he used to strengthen his case and assist the audience to see the relationship between his program and their aspirations included seven argumentative and three stylistic techniques. One consistent argumentative technique was the use of a residual problem-solution approach to delineating the problem so that his recommendations would appear to be the logical solution. He handled this in three ways: He subdivided the problem in order to more clearly demonstrate how his solution solved it. At times he briefly crystallized the heart of a problem, and then immediately provided a solution. At other times he would use one work to establish a problem and provide a solution in a subsequent work.

Second, he carefully fit his proposals into historical perspective and tradition and vice versa. By combining his knowledge of educational history with his understanding of comparative education, he demonstrated that his proposals were in line with and appropriate to his conception of American history and ideals. He further used history to reveal his view of the educational weaknesses of the American system which fit his answers. Another argumentative technique was skilful integration of supportive refutation of potential

and actual criticism to support his own ideas. He employed restatement and repetition as a means of keeping his ideas before the public and at the same time of providing additional details. His arguments from analogy served to highlight what he felt to be little-known conditions. Finally, he used personal appeal, outside authorities and empirical support to substantiate his claims and create an aura of objectivity: His use of the first person, singular, "I," argued his prestige and expertise as well as his willingness to assume total responsibility for the ideas expressed in his books. He relied heavily on other experts for advice and acknowledged their assistance in the appropriate works. He discussed his research methods as a way of making his evidence and conclusions more objective and thereby more acceptable. He pointed out that he and his staff had visited or sent questionnaires to the schools summarizing the information gained from these sources in charts, graphs, and tables.

In addition to his argumentative techniques Conant depended heavily on certain stylistic techniques. His metaphors worked in conjunction with his analogies to notify the public of potential danger. Further, charismatic and devil terms such as communism, democracy, and freedom which were used by Conant, carried a persuasive advantage beyond the average word. Finally, he called attention to his major recommendations through the use of such stylistic techniques as signposting and rhetorical questions which emphasized the crux of the issue under discussion.

Conant was also able to use his printed articles and speeches to advantage. His ideas received added exposure by appearing more frequently. He was able to isolate and fully develop particular aspects of his approach, and he had the opportunity to reach different audiences.

All his techniques combined to work in his behalf by creating the impression that he was an expert willing and capable of determining the areas of weakness in America's educational system and formulating sound remedies. Americans could thus feel secure in adopting and following his blueprint.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

James Bryant Conant has served his nation successfully in many ways. As a scientist he has assisted this country indirectly as a chemistry teacher and more directly through his work on the various national scientific commissions of which he was a member. These commissions have pondered and been responsible for decisions on such issues as chemical warfare and the atomic bomb. Politically, his work as liaison between post-World War II Germany and the United States furthered the stability which free Germany currently enjoys. But in no area has he experienced greater success than in his educational endeavors, first as a teacher and president of one of the nation's most prestigious universities, Harvard, and more recently as educational critic.

Conant has been a prolific writer and speaker on educational reform. His ideas have been widely dispersed either in their original form or through secondary sources. The American High School Today demonstrates the extent of his distribution. Saturday Review reported the sale of an estimated 150,000 copies of this book,¹ and Francis Griffith contended that the publicity given The American High School

¹"Profile: Movers and Shapers of Education," Saturday Review, XLIII (October 15, 1960), 88.

"was probably unequalled in the history of American education."² It not only reached the best-seller list where it remained for weeks, but it was discussed in newspaper editorials, educational periodicals, and "the sensational slicks with their multimillion circulations."³ PTA's and school boards appointed committees to compare their school systems to Conant's recommendations. Reviews of his report were favorable almost without exception.⁴

The Education of American Teachers was another of his widely publicized books. Paul Woodring, then editor of Saturday Review, commented that it promptly reached the best-seller list. This was a remarkable accomplishment for a book on education, he contended. Moreover, "editorial response in non-professional journals was immediate and enthusiastic. Of the first 2,000 reviews and editorials that appeared in magazines and newspapers across the country, most were favorable and many were laudatory."⁵ Further, he added, "the reaction to the book makes it clear that Conant, unlike most educators, commands a large audience that includes legislators, school board members, academic scholars,

²Francis Griffith, "Another Look at the Conant Report," National Association of Secondary-School Principals Bulletin, XLV (October, 1960), 59.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Paul Woodring, "Teacher Education: 1964," Saturday Review, XLVII (September 19, 1964), 51.

and parents."⁶

Even rightly assuming that these were the two most highly publicized works and even granting the possibility that their dispersion is overestimated, when one takes into consideration the circulation of magazines such as Look and Life which carry his articles one must admit that his ideas are readily available. His reputation is such that more than one writer has expressed the fear that "his words may be self-verifying; that is, if people believe him accurate, his remarks may become accurate."⁷ Or, to express the fear another way, "His word can all too easily be interpreted as the Word."⁸ While all his works received maximum attention Conant considered The American High School Today, Slums and Suburbs, and The Comprehensive High School as his major contributions.

Undoubtedly The American High School Today will prove to be a "landmark" in criticism of the American high school; however, one must not overlook the impact of The Education of American Teachers and Shaping Educational Policy. Before the close of 1964, seven colleges and universities had been selected to serve as proving grounds for the recommendations Conant had advanced concerning teacher education. Funds

⁶Ibid., 5.

⁷Joe R. Burnett, "Conant on the Philosophy of Education," Educational Theory, XIV (January, 1964), 25.

⁸Roy A. Edelfelt, "Editorial Comments," Journal of Teacher Education, XIV (December, 1963), 359. *Italics his.*

for the Northwestern University program were to be provided by a \$125,000 Carnegie Foundation grant. The University of Wisconsin study was to be supported by a \$266,000 grant from the U.S. Office of Education. Five New York Institutions: Vassar, Cornell, Colgate, Brooklyn College, and Fredonia State College--selected for their broad range of classification, a women's college, an Ivy League university, an independent liberal arts college for men, a large municipal college, and a state liberal arts college--were to be supported by a \$400,000 budget request from the state of New York.⁹

Added to the attention garnered by The Education of American Teachers is that of Shaping Educational Policy. "In the fall of 1964 Dr. James B. Conant published his book on Shaping Educational Policy, recommending the creation of a new body for more coordinated planning at all levels of education in the United States," Allan Cartter reported. "probably to his--and many other educators'--surprise, one year later a Compact for Education was in existence on paper and will probably be a reality before this issue of the Record is published."¹⁰ In short, Conant's rhetorical efforts were well received.

⁹"Conant Teacher Education Reforms Tested," Senior Scholastic, LXXXV (December 2, 1964), 4T.

¹⁰Allan M. Cartter, "The Shaping of the Compact for Education," Educational Record, XLVII (Winter, 1966), 81.

This study has examined the role of rhetoric in that success and has reached conclusions which fall into three major categories: (1) historical, (2) biographical, and (3) theoretical. Historically, more information is now available concerning the evolution of Conant's campaign as well as the social and intellectual climate of the times. Conant's campaign for educational reform developed in two stages which reflect not only his development but the social and intellectual climate of the times as he reacted to it: (1) his post-World War II phase, and (2) his post-Sputnik period. In the former stage he established the impetus for action. In the latter he developed the form that action should take. These stages evolved through his rhetoric.

His success was especially generated by his seminal rhetorical works, his books on education. In these books he was able to explain the problems of American education, prescribe a solution composed of many facets, and motivate a multitude of Americans to take heed and accept his proposals. During the first stage of his campaign, he perceived and set forth the dilemma this country faced as a consequence of the strengthening of the communist ideology after World War II. He sensed that many Americans were unsuspecting. He, therefore, sought to alert them, alarm those only vaguely aware of the approaching danger, and demonstrate the role of education in diverting a crisis. The first decade of his career as a critic was spent in this endeavor. Of the three books

written by him during that period, two of them were particularly valuable. In Education in a Divided World he stressed the danger America faced with regard to her survival in a divided world. Then through an implied chain of reasoning he sought to motivate the public to his view: their survival depended upon their ability to reconstruct and strengthen a belief in four fundamental, interdependent American ideals, freedom, democracy, equality of opportunity, and equality of status. He then established important relationships among these four concepts. This ideological complex which he established in his initial book permeated his entire campaign. Once he had set up his motivational concept in this work he began tying it to a roughly developed educational program. In Education and Liberty, he then set up a framework for all levels of education, restressing the importance of fitting education to the interests and desired employment of the student and depicting the role of the junior college, the four-year college, and the university in this effort.

Heralding his second stage, Sputnik accomplished what Conant might never have been able to have done alone. It vivified dramatically the danger posed by the Russians at the same time verifying Conant's earlier claim that the responsibility for America's inability to keep pace with Russia should be laid at the doorstep of education. America must train scientists and engineers who could outdistance Russia in the space race. Fortunately for Conant, The

American High School Today, a blueprint for the educational reform at the secondary level with implications for all levels, was on the drawing board. This book presented a far more detailed plan than he had previously devised, designed to up-grade American education by taking advantage of one of the country's most valuable natural resources, her gifted youth. This plan was further developed and expanded in subsequent books. He prescribed for the junior high school and teacher education and advised the establishment of a planning commission to provide greater national educational synthesis. When he harnessed this sophisticated program to his motivational concept or the audience values, as he did during the second decade of his campaign as a critic, he had a formidable persuasive package.

Biographically, by examining Conant's ideas as well as his strategy and tactics we know more about the man. He was a man of deep commitment. He believed in the supreme importance of America and education and sensed an irrevocable relation between the two. He felt that this country had reached its current stature by adhering strongly to her democratic ideals and that its citizens must continue to uphold them. Although he was highly successful in science and politics as well as education, he chose to spend two decades of his life showing Americans how this could be accomplished through education. Clearly a conservator of the past he felt, however, that we must have a workable educational

system. He, therefore, demonstrated liberal leanings.

Rhetoric was his primary means of accomplishing his purpose. He was both prolific and effective in its use. Conant wrote and spoke and people read and listened. His rhetorical tactics were invaluable in gaining understanding and acceptance for his program for he did not rely exclusively on the strength of his program and the temper of the times as his only persuasive allies. He employed a number of rhetorical techniques tailored to his own purposes. He was a man of strong personal and professional appeal and he used it extensively, supplementing his expertise with men of renown who worked as his collaborators. He further augmented his knowledge and experience by visiting many of the institutions he sought to improve. He collated the information he and his staff gained on these visits and through questionnaires, keeping this empirical support before his readers in the form of charts, graphs, and tables.

He employed three versions of the residual problem-solution pattern. He sometimes identified the problem then subdivided it for greater manageability. He identified the problem and solved it within a few pages. Or he identified the problem in one work and solved it in a later book. Each of these techniques was valuable because it helped him shape the views of his readers so they would coincide with his. Another persuasive device he relied heavily upon was to use history as he conceived it, to substantiate the feasibility

and appropriateness of his recommendations to American values and past practices. Supportive refutation of potential objections also worked to his advantage by demonstrating that other positions had been taken into consideration by him when he planned his program. Through his use of restatement and repetition he was able to keep significant aspects of his approach before people, improving their perception through further amplification and development as well as a change in perspective. His analogies worked by uncovering blindspots he thought pertinent; they subtly changed the reader's perspective. Each of these argumentative techniques while not necessarily original in the annals of rhetoric were integrated into his own well-conceived combination, fashioned to fulfill his unique persuasive situation.

His stylistic techniques, argumentative in their own right, worked in conjunction with his other argumentative techniques. While the function of style is often considered to be clarity and variety of expression, it cannot be consigned to that task alone. Conant's style reinforced his other techniques. His metaphors became extensions of his analogies by subtly stressing one of the points made by those analogies, the impending danger created by the threat of communism. They can often be classified, therefore, as veiled fear appeals. His use of charismatic and devil terms also assisted his cause. The word "communism" carried with it its own

unsavory connotation. He could therefore argue against communism without having to detail its specific ills. "Freedom" and "democracy," when used by Conant, assisted him in the opposite direction. They are powerful persuaders on their own, but when placed in juxtaposition to "communism" they became even more potent. His focusing devices also proved valuable. Signposting designated that ideas were important and worth remembering. Rhetorical questions ascribed the same importance while leading the audience in a desired direction. In sum, certain recurring argumentative and stylistic techniques significantly furthered Conant's cause.

Theoretically, we now know that Conant used successfully a combination of rhetorical methods. These methods are not original with Conant but are traditional. Faith in these techniques had been verified once again. Moreover, his particular combination of these methods provides insight into ways they can be used to increase success.

The theory of rhetorical criticism has also been furthered as a consequence of the model employed in this study. This model is extremely valuable because it provides a tool for demonstrating a clear distinction between proofs (logical, emotional, and personal) which heretofore have been difficult to separate for purposes of analysis. The major advantage of the Cronkhite model is the insight one gains from viewing emotional appeals as reasons which motivate the audience to action and the isolation of the reasons

used by a particular rhetorician to implement this action. When expanded so that the identification construct is distinctly separate from the motivational concept, it allows the rhetorical critic to distinguish between the practitioner's strategy and his implementation of that strategy. The techniques the practitioner uses help him connect the plan he is trying to get accepted (object concept) to the audience values he feels will best get it accepted (motivational concept). A desirable, but not required, addition to this model would be an enlargement which demonstrated more precisely the relationship between all rhetorical techniques and the motivational and object concepts. Possibly an expansion of the identification construct could be developed which would serve this function.

This study has opened several promising avenues for research. Substantively, since Conant's prestige exerted such force on his rhetoric, this study could become the first step in an analysis which looked at every aspect of his rhetoric and the rhetoric of others who have discussed Conant to determine how his prestige was established. Further, a comparison between his books and his journal exposure might reveal a difference in the amount of reliance he placed on the various rhetorical techniques discussed in this study. Such information could then contribute to a larger study which attempted to determine whether the length of a rhetorical work in some way determined the kind and complexity of

rhetorical devices employed. A third interesting study could examine the articles written by others which comprise Conant's secondary exposure, as a means of determining the extent to which they assisted his cause. For a final substantive direction, a study of the educational movement generated by Sputnik which would compare findings in this study with the practices of other educational critics of the period would prove fruitful. Methodologically, expansion and further development of the Cronkhite model would prove valuable.

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