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THE SOUTHERN EDUCATIONAL ORATORY OF WILLIAM PRESTON JOHNSTON, 1880-1899

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in
The Department of Speech

by
Dinah Daniel Richard
B.S., Louisiana State University, 1973
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1976
August, 1982

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes eight ceremonial speeches delivered between 1880 and 1899 by William Preston Johnston, Southern educational leader. Emphasis is placed on the contexts in which he spoke, the strategy he employed, the various forms of support he used to amplify his messages, and the degree of his effectiveness.

Realizing that the South needed to implement universal education, Johnston helped to launch the early educational awakening in his region. Speaking on behalf of the movement, Johnston displayed certain features. First, he demonstrated a "rhetoric of optimism," stressing the New South creed. Second, he employed a strategy for prompting change, beginning with the arousal of educators, followed by the involvement of the general public, finally producing a groundswell of indignation which initiated legislative reform. Third, when verbalizing his strategy, he applied Whately's rhetorical principles and the "think-the-thought" approach to delivery. Fourth, though supporting education for all races, he believed in white supremacy and racial separation. Perceived as a man of good character, he exuded trustworthiness, which influenced public opinion and produced beneficial changes in the South's educational status during the late nineteenth century.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Charles Dabney, the great educational historian, observes that "One of the noblest advocates of public education in the postwar period in the South was William Preston Johnston, the builder and first president of Tulane University." Dabney based his conclusion on Johnston's role as a spokesman for Southern education from 1880 to 1899, during which time Johnston addressed local, regional, and national assemblies. Another writer notes that these speeches "have been widely noticed as giving a correct and vivid picture of what is called the Old South, and also of the conditions in the New South." Because of the "manly and earnest tone of the speaker, and his profound philosophical observation, with his estimate of what should be done for Southern civilization," the addresses seem to "have been much appreciated by political economists in America and Europe." In his biography of Johnston, Arthur Marvin Shaw concludes that the impact of Johnston's part in the shaping of the South has not received enough

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attention by current historians. Describing the need for a study of Johnston's educational speeches, Shaw contends:

His excellent lectures on the problems of the South during the years following the war, especially as they were related to education, have suffered a somewhat similar fate [neglect], but their situation is by no means unfavorable as regards possible future recognition, for the historian who attempts to relate the full story of educational progress in the South must give considerable attention to Johnston's accomplishments and to his philosophy of education, which is contained in his published lectures.3

A. Statement of the Problem

Shaw accurately observes that writers have neglected to give sufficient attention to educational spokesmen of the postbellum period. For example, the prominent historian, C. Vann Woodward, asserts, "The great educational awakening in the South did not come until the dawn of the twentieth century."4 Shared by other historians, this view implies that the progress in the South was ultimately the result of northern philanthropists who helped to fund and guide the South through the creation of the Southern Board, the Conference for Education in the South, and the Ogden Movement.5 As Woodward suggests, "The zeal that animated the education crusade was that mixture of paternalism and noblesse oblige, which is the nearest Southern

3Arthur Marvin Shaw, William Preston Johnston, a Transitional Figure of the Confederacy (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), pp. 249-50.


equivalent of Northern humanitarianism." A few writers disagree with Woodward's view, contending instead that Southerners sought universal education as early as the ante-bellum period, lost it during the Civil War and Reconstruction, and began to recover it as soon as they were given the autonomy of self-rule during the 1880s and 1890s. Taking a position between these two views, Dabney believed that the crusade for educational reform in the South was a result of the efforts of native born leaders who were assisted by northern beneficence. As a result of his belief, Dabney devoted one volume of his monumental work Universal Education in the South to the struggle prior to 1900 and one volume to the work during the twentieth century.

The purpose of this dissertation is to evaluate the contributions of William Preston Johnston, a native Southerner, to the educational revival that swept the South during the closing decades of the nineteenth century. This study attempts to answer the questions: What shaped Johnston's view of the Old South and the New South? What conditions prompted Johnston to speak on behalf of Southern education?


6Woodward, p. 401.


8Dabney, vols. 1 and 2.
How equipped was Johnston as a speaker? What were his goals in his educational speaking? What impact did his speeches have on the nineteenth-century educational movement?

B. Ceremonial Oratory

As a public speaker, Johnston demonstrated abilities in various oratorical situations. Preceding the Civil War, he engaged in forensic speaking, the type used in persuading judges and juries. In the presidential race of 1860, he actively campaigned for the candidate John C. Breckenridge, delivering several deliberative speeches on his behalf. During Reconstruction, Johnston became involved in ceremonial oratory, most popular during the postbellum South. Johnston himself labeled such works as panegyrical speeches, by which he meant to gratify, praise, or blame. To reinforce existing attitudes, the panegyricist seeks to amplify the underlying premises held by the audience. In his postwar speeches, Johnston attempted to console defeated Southerners. Eulogistic in nature, these speeches present a bleak, highly romanticized outlook for the region. But as the South emerged from Reconstruction, Johnston became involved in a different ceremonial context. Believing that the region could only progress


10 William Preston Johnston, "Oratory Lecture 1st on Mental Preparation," handwritten outline, Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections, p. 2.

through the adoption of a universal system of education, Johnston took to the public platform and endorsed an educational awakening. Between 1880 and 1899, he delivered numerous speeches on the importance of education. As a complete analysis of the nearly fifty extant manuscripts would be voluminous and, in some cases, duplicative, only a limited number have been selected for intensive investigation. Chosen on the basis of accurate representation and authenticity, the addresses include:

1. "What Education Is," delivered March 10, 1884, to the Louisiana Educational Society in New Orleans.


4. "The Perils of Universities," delivered on June 14, 1884, at the commencement exercises of the University of Texas in Austin.

5. "The Work of the University in America," delivered on June 25, 1884, at the commencement exercises of the College of South Carolina in Columbia.


7. "The Relation of the University to the Common School," delivered on February 24, 1885, to the joint session of the National
Educational Association, Department of Superintendence, and International Congress of Educators, who were sponsoring programs at the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition in New Orleans.


C. Justification

Southern oratory is an emerging field of study that provides an investigator with many areas of study. A few works have recently explored the Southern educational awakening, including Louis Jeter Campbell's analysis of five epideictic speeches by Walter Hines Page during the span 1891-1903, Keith Griffin's study of Page's educational speaking from 1891-1913, Charlene Handford's investigation of Charles Betts Galloway's addresses from 1893-1908, Wayne Kraemer's analysis of Edgar Gardner Murphy's educational oratory from 1900 to 1903, and Barbara Walsh's study of selected speeches at the


Conference for Education in the South, 1898-1914. These studies provide insight into the crusade at the turn of the century, but without investigations of earlier addresses, the image still exists that the Southern awakening was a twentieth-century phenomenon. Bert Bradley has compiled a brief study of the influence of the educational reform speaking by Edwin A. Alderman, Charles B. Aycock, and Charles D. McIver in North Carolina from 1885 to 1905, which helps to bring attention to the leaders of the movement in the nineteenth century. However, since there were many other educational spokesmen elsewhere in the South during this time period, attention needs to be given to the importance of those early reformers.

William Preston Johnston's contributions to the educational awakening have yet to be studied by historians. Arthur Marvin Shaw analyzed the life and works of Johnston but only devoted a few pages to his speeches. Likewise, Ralph Emerson Harris overlooked the importance of oratory when he studied Johnston's role as an educator.

16Barbara Hulbert Walsh, "The Negro and His Education: Persuasive Strategies of Selected Speeches at the Conference for Education in the South, 1898-1914" (Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1974).


18Shaw, pp. 222-38.

19Ralph Emerson Harris, "Tulane University Under the Administration of the First President, William Preston Johnston" (Master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1945).
D. Plan of Analysis and Sources for Research

When analyzing speeches, Thonssen, Baird, and Braden recommend that the critic "must seek to understand the utterance as an expression of the speaker's personality, as the culmination of his training, practical experience, reading, prior conditioning, aspirations, and goals." For that reason, Chapter II explores those factors which contributed to Johnston's rhetorical training and affected his understanding of Southern conditions. Shaw's comprehensive work served as the most useful resource in understanding Johnston's life.

In addition to considering the life of the speaker, Thonssen, Baird, and Braden point out the necessity of placing speeches in their historical context. They suggest:

Since every judgment of a public speech contains a historical constituent, the critic is peculiarly concerned with determining the nature of the setting in which the speaker performed. . . . It cannot be overemphasized that speeches are events occurring in highly complex situations, that responsibility of critical appraisal depends heavily upon the critic's ability to understand the historical trends, the motivating forces, the immediate occasion, and most of all the composition and demands of the audience.20

In keeping with that advice, later chapters discuss the special circumstances that confronted each audience.

To recognize Johnston's strategy in working on the state, regional, and national levels, speeches have been grouped according to his campaign in Louisiana, his involvement in other Southern states, and his nationwide efforts. For analysis of each address, the speaker's purpose, lines of reasoning, pattern of organization, and forms

of support are examined. Further attention is given to Johnston's overall success in achieving his desired impact on his audiences. In compiling the analysis, the critic used speeches that were published in pamphlet form, copies that were available in newspapers and educational journals, and handwritten versions that were found in the Johnston Collection at Tulane University, all of which reveal a high degree of textual correlation. In assessing the effectiveness of the speaker, numerous items in Johnston's papers proved to be beneficial, including letters, articles, and other personal effects.
Upon his death, the New York Times described William Preston Johnston as "one of the most prominent educators in the South."1 Showing an allegiance to the Lost Cause, yet demonstrating a strong desire to achieve progress in his region, Johnston typified the early crusader for universal education during the Southern awakening. This chapter focuses on those factors that shaped Johnston's concept of education and affected his role as a speaker. Divided into five parts, it considers his childhood, his schooling, his legal career, his military involvement, and his teaching and administrative roles.

A. The Youth

Coming from a family of "good old Southern stock"2 and "excellent people," William Preston Johnston (1831-1899) had "every advantage of birth."3 Born on January 5, 1831, during one of the frequent visits which Lieutenant and Mrs. Albert Sidney Johnston made to

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1 New York Times, July 17, 1899.
Mrs. Johnston's mother in Louisville, William was named after his mother's brother, William Preston, who, along with Albert Sidney Johnston, became a general in the Confederate army.\(^4\) As a child, young William was exposed to others who were eventually prominent in the Confederacy. His father was a college mate at West Point with Jefferson Davis, who was then a lieutenant in the United States Army. During Lieutenant Albert Sidney Johnston's stay at Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis, the Johnstons enjoyed a close association with Davis.\(^5\) William himself established a personal relationship with the Davis family during the Civil War and Reconstruction.

William lacked the opportunity as a child to benefit from his mother's "poetic temperament," high literary culture," and "strong religious impulses,"\(^6\) for Mrs. Johnston died when her son was four years old. Shortly afterward, the father cast his fortunes with the newly founded Republic of Texas, leaving his son William and daughter Henrietta to be reared by maternal relatives in Louisville.\(^7\) Until his death, the father's association with his two children was brief and intermittent, though cordial.\(^8\) Since William and his sister had


\(^8\)Shaw, p. 17.
inherited land from their mother, they were not dependent upon their father or relatives for their financial support or educational expenses.\(^9\)

**B. The Student**

During the years spent with maternal relatives, William became interested in oratory, politics, and military affairs. He noted that a "talent for oratory and for military and political life has marked many of the scions of this stout Scotch-Irish breed, and the descendants of Colonel William Preston had evinced the same traits, as for instance, William Campbell Preston, of South Carolina; General William Preston, of Kentucky; Gov. James McDowell, of Virginia; William Ballard Preston, of Virginia; General Randall L. Gibson, of Louisiana, and many others."

During his early years, his relatives saw to it that William received proper schooling in the city of Louisville. Later, they arranged for him to attend an academy at Shelbyville, Kentucky, which was run by Samuel V. Womack, whom Johnston later described as "a noted teacher of the Classics."\(^10\)

Although usually far away from his son during the formative years,\(^11\) General Albert Sidney Johnston maintained frequent correspondence with William and his guardian, expressing preferences for his son's formal training. Education abroad was popular during the era,

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\(^11\) Shaw, p. 17.
but General Johnston declined an appointment for his son in a French school, an honor which had been extended by Admiral Baudin of the French navy. The father also discouraged William from taking an appointment from West Point, noting from his own experience "so many evils and discouragements in the career of a professional soldier in America as to render it most undesirable." Instead, the father considered politics as a possibility for his son. In a letter to William's guardian, the father spoke "of the value, to one who looks forward to political preferment..." Wanting the finest culture "that the most liberal education can bestow," Albert Sidney Johnston concluded that William should be educated in the United States, preferably in the region where his son had been reared. Even though the father left the selection of a college up to guardians, he apparently influenced the decision, for William enrolled in institutions in Kentucky, including Centre College at Danville in 1846 and Western Military Institute at Georgetown in 1847.

In his early college years, William was an earnest student. As one relative noticed, "He had always been of a studious disposition, so that at a period when boys are devoted chiefly to play and light study he was engrossed in reading standard works of ancient and modern

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13Albert Sidney Johnston to William Preston, July 21, 1847.
14General Catalog, Centre College of Kentucky, 1890 (Danville, Ky.: n.p., 1890).
history." His father expressed concern over William's poor health during these early college years, believing that it was the result of too much study at Centre College. Nevertheless, William persisted in his endeavors, but he soon transferred to another institution.

In September 1847, when Western Military Institute opened its doors in Georgetown, Kentucky, William Preston Johnston was enrolled. Founded by a West Point graduate and patterned after Virginia Military Institute, Western Military Institute produced over a thousand trained cadets who eventually went into the Confederate army. Including rigid discipline and military uniform, its program covered mathematics, Greek, Latin, French, history, chemistry, elementary philosophy, and Spanish. During the first session, a required and unpopular course in elocution and composition was added to the curriculum. Apparently, the course must have been enjoyable for Johnston, as his classmates selected him as the campus speaker to appear on Washington's Birthday. From his father, he received a congratulatory note and advice for the speech. William expressed much concern about the preparation for the speech, which was entitled "A Crisis in the Cradle of


18 Mabel Alstetter and Gladys Watson, "Western Military Institute, 1847-1861," Filson Club Historical Quarterly 10 (April 1936): 100-103.


20 Albert Sidney Johnston to William Preston Johnston, January 4, 1848. Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.
Genius." On the day of delivery, February 22, 1848, Johnston, "dressed to the very tip" and thoroughly "frightened to death at first," delivered the speech "as well as the best on the occasion."

The success of the speech, no doubt, influenced his favor for the public platform.

At this early time in his life, Johnston mentioned his love for the liberal arts and his ambition to become a speaker. Accompanying his study of oratory, he pursued the classics, Juvenal, and Greek grammar. In a letter to his sister, he recommended the study of history and literature:

You should read all the valuable history you can--poetry if you please. I do not object to a lady's reading poetry. Such works as the Spectator, Shakespeare, the modern British Essayists, Washington Irving's works--they are amusing and instructive, and impart the foundation of a good style. I do not wish you to read history in such a way that you know the date of every skirmish, the name of every nobleman . . . you should learn to distinguish between the important and the trivial . . . to dwell upon the former with thought, to read the latter. To attempt to memorize every fact and circumstance of history would be an endless and a useless task--there is a difference between reading attentively and drudging. Don't take these to your sensitive soul as reproofs--they are items I have learned from my own experience and that of others.

The letter also revealed that young Johnston had begun to develop an understanding of pedagogy.

During this period, in addition to his preference for history and literature, Johnston acquired an active interest in popular political debates, including "Clay's speech on the War" and Calhoun's

21Johnston, Journal, December 7, 1847; February 22, 1848; November 24, 1847; and January 12, 1848.

22William Preston Johnston to Henrietta Johnston, February 29, 1848.
speech "opposing all extension of territory." As a result, he devoted more attention to his own political beliefs and changed his original stance on the question of Southern rights. On July 11, 1848, Johnston recorded in his journal that a significant turning point had occurred in his life—he was converted from antislavery leanings to the "Moderate Southern idea on the subject." He attributed the shift of attitude to a conversation with his uncle and guardian William Preston.23 In his later years, Johnston recounted the milestone in his early life:

I was born and brought up in Kentucky in a Whig family when that gifted orator and leader, Henry Clay, was the idol of the state. It was as hard then to be a Democrat in Kentucky as it was to be a Whig in South Carolina. Nevertheless, from the hour that I first turned serious attention to political affairs (and I was then very young), and learned that the Constitution of the United States had a history, through which alone it could be understood, I gravitated toward the State Rights construction of that instrument. In a word, I became a States Rights Democrat of the straightest sect of the Pharisees: what was known as a South Carolina Democrat—a John C. Calhoun Democrat.24

From that time forward, he remained a States' Rights Democrat, later serving as a delegate to the national convention in 1876 and 1880.25

As a young man, Johnston continued to be influenced by Southern political statesmen. While he considered Daniel Webster the greatest orator, he identified Calhoun as the greatest thinker.26 In later years, he recalled the strong impact that Calhoun had achieved

23Johnston, Journal, November 21, 1847; January 12, 1848; and July 11, 1848.


on his personal life and the Nation. Desiring that influence again, he said wishfully, "O Calhoun! when shall another come like thee, to set a lesson of thinking and doing to this degenerate age?"  

Perhaps Johnston's early interest in politics and oratory affected his choice in careers. During the period in which he changed his political outlook, he also made the decision to enter law as a future profession. Realizing this choice, his father advised him to "be courteous and calm" in debating and "endeavor to convince by the earnest exhibition of your argument, and do not try to show your superiority; if you have it, it will be felt and silently acknowledged; if exacted by words of bearing, it will be withheld.--If you deserve well, the merit of it will usually be accorded to you." 

In 1848, William had to withdraw from Western Military Institute because of exhaustion and poor health. To help him recover from this setback, his father sent him a letter of advice, saying:

You are, I hope, preparing for a long career. In that case, our experience teaches us that the powers, physical and mental, should be husbanded or used moderately and economically; otherwise the goal can never be reached with distinction. If our experience is correct, it would be unwise to waste our strength in a first effort. The untaught pedestrian who is trained for a ten mile race knows this; he wins his race by at no time in the course attaining the highest speed of which he is capable. What would you think of the judgment of a racerider who would give his horse

29 Albert Sidney Johnston to William Preston Johnston, May 9, 1848.
the highest speed at the start, or who, all other things being equal, would agree to carry ten pounds more than his opponent? Now, this latter view embraces your case; you have one more study than your rival. You may possibly beat him; so may the horse that carries undue weight win, but in most cases he never wins again—all his powers have been sacrificed for a single object.31

Even though the father had advised his son to cut back on his studies, the father realized that the desired outcome probably was unobtainable, for he wrote, "I have occasionally offered you a little of my experience, of which I have a large stock, purchased at high prices (which men of strong will have always to pay) to save you expense; but I doubt if it is a transferable article."32

Whether or not he heeded his father's advice is uncertain, but Johnston recuperated sufficiently to return to college. His father's letters indicated that plans were being made to finish his education at Cambridge, but Johnston chose to follow the suggestion of his uncle William Preston, who recommended Yale.33 In October 1850, he wrote to his sister that he was leaving Louisville to attend Yale College,34 and in November, he arrived at New Haven, spending several months in intensive study to prepare for college entrance exams.35 In April 1851, he shared with his sister his certainty of passing the tests given by examiners:

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31Albert Sidney Johnston to William Preston Johnston, December 11, 1848.
33Shaw, p. 34.
34William Preston Johnston to Henrietta Johnston, October 27, 1850.
35Shaw, p. 35.
They will look wise, catch me in fifty mistakes, and finally let me in. If I cannot, however, I have the consolation of hearing my tutor (a college officer) say that I read Latin better than any young man he ever saw from the West. So I will know I am not an ignoramus in that at least.36

Satisfactorily completing the exams, Johnston enrolled as a third term junior on May 10, 1851.37 When entering Yale, he established his educational outlook, as described by his classmate and long time friend Jacob Cooper:

Here he found a system of education the most steady and conservative in the whole country; presided over by a man who possessed the very highest scholarship, and was at the same time an executive the most energetic, pushing, and progressive. Yale was then a college where all that was best in the way of high scholarship, permeated with Puritanic severity of discipline and orthodoxy of religious faith, was working out its fairest results. This, moreover, was the time when the old college curriculum, with its fixed routine of studies, was yielding to the demands of the elective system, and thus expanding to give entrance to the real university. The influences of this transition period at Yale wrought powerfully on Mr. Johnston, and others, associated with him in study, who were destined to effect the most far-reaching influence in the university systems of our country.38

At Yale, Johnston continued his fondness for oratory, the classics, and other liberal arts. The college catalog listed that students took courses in Latin, Greek, rhetoric, philosophy, history, and theology. In these studies, Johnston was exposed to Homer's Iliad, Cicero's De Oratore, Olmstead's Natural Philosophy and Mechanics, Hedge's Logic, Stewart's Philosophy of the Mind, Say's

36William Preston Johnston to Henrietta Johnston, April 4, 1851.
38Cooper, p. 8.
Political Economy, Tyler's History, Blair's Rhetoric, and Paley's Natural Philosophy. The catalog also stated that the senior class studied a course of lectures on Demosthenes' "Orations on the Crown," that juniors and seniors engaged in "forensic disputation once or twice a week before their instructors, and that there were frequent exercises in declamation before the faculty and student body.39

Johnston's transition to Yale was demanding at first, but eventually he built a reputation, as described by one of his classmates:

Mr. Johnston's course was marked from the start. When students join an advanced class in an institution where the requirements are rigorous, the newcomer is likely to be somewhat hampered by an inadequate, or at least unequal, preparation. Though this was his case, he quickly rose superior to all handicaps. His power as a writer was assured at once, and was maintained with increasing reputation until the end; as shown by prizes for writing and speaking.40

His grade point average at Yale was 2.997; the highest score in the class was 3.59 and the lowest was 1.92.41

His scholarship as an orator, writer, and political scientist was recognized at Yale. When asked to engage in an extemporaneous debate, he was so effective that he won the acclaim of a large audience gathered in the college chapel.42 He took a leading position in his class for composition, winning a Townsend prize for his essay

39Catalog, Yale College, 1851 (New Haven: n.p., 1851).
40Cooper, p. 10.
41Book of Averages, Yale College, 1851, 1852, Yale University Library.
42William Preston Johnston to Henrietta Johnston, December 14, 1851.
"Centralization" and the Clark prize for "Abstractionists in Political Science." In "Centralization," Johnston analyzed the distribution of powers between the central and smaller governments, arguing against any diminishing of the local powers. In "Abstractionists in Political Science," he presented the notion that political science draws upon the services of two groups--the abstractionists, who develop theories of government, and the politicians, who apply the doctrines. Johnston's father praised his son's literary accomplishments, speaking of them as "a great triumph, which has established for you, on this very threshold of manhood a reputation for industry and ability and moral worth, fruits for a force of character which will hereafter elevate a reputation now so well deserved."

Johnston was fortunate to attend Yale at a time when it was rich in rhetorical studies and activities. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Yale president Timothy Dwight had incited an interest in oratory at the college when very few universities valued such training. The tradition continued with Erasmus North, who was occupied with elocution, and Chauncey M. Goodrich, who was appointed to the Professorship of Rhetoric in 1817. Extending into the mid-nineteenth century when Johnston attended the college,

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46 Albert Sidney Johnston to William Preston Johnston, August 7, 1852.
the interest in oratory and rhetoric eventually gave way to literature
and criticism in later decades when the Chair of Rhetoric and Oratory
was occupied by professors who shifted the focus of their studies.47
Luckily, Johnston was enrolled during a decade at Yale when oratory
was popular and when the class day orator at universities was virtually
guaranteed "political as well as literary success" in the future.48

As graduation approached, he admitted to his sister, "I would
not, for any consideration, have missed coming to New Haven," implying
humorously that his liberal education would allow him to pursue a med-
ical or ministerial career if he did not succeed as a lawyer.49

Johnston completed his studies at Yale in the spring session
of 1852.50 At graduation, President Woolsey spoke of him as "a young
man of decided attainment and fine literary promise."51 The presi-
dent's recognition of talented graduates was fairly accurate, for the
classes of 1852 and 1853 produced the founders and presidents of sev-
eral prominent universities in the United States. Daniel Gilman
became president of the University of California and later Johns

47Marie Hochmuth and Richard Murphy, "Rhetoric and Elocution-
ary Training in Nineteenth-Century Colleges," in History of Speech
Education in America, ed. Karl Wallace (New York: Appleton-Century-

1931), p. 66.

49William Preston Johnston to Henrietta Johnston, March 31,
1852.

50Record of the Class of 1852, Yale College (New Haven: n.p.,
1878), p. 73.

51I. M. St. John to Robert E. Lee, October 2, 1866.
Hopkins University, Homer Sprague became president of the University of North Dakota, and Andrew White became the first president of Cornell University. Johnston joined their ranks, serving as president of Louisiana State University and the first president of Tulane University.52

Upon graduation from Yale, Johnston returned home to enter the law school of the University of Louisville, receiving his diploma in March 1853.53 Four months later, he was back in New Haven to marry Rosa Duncan, whom he had met there earlier.

C. The Lawyer

William Preston Johnston and his new wife settled in Louisville, where he began his law practice. During the early part of the new career, he was preoccupied with establishing his business and maintaining the social status to which he had been accustomed. The young attorney was dependent upon the sale of certain tracts of family land for supplemental income,54 which allowed the Johnstons to reside in "the lighted district," a wealthy area of town.55 But whatever success he experienced, he did not appear to be satisfied with his practice in Louisville or his wife's health. He contemplated moving

52 Record of the Class of 1852, Yale College, pp. 16-37; and Cooper, p. 9.


54 Shaw, pp. 44 and 52-53.

55 William Preston Johnston to Henrietta Johnston, April 17, 1854.
to Texas where his father lived, but instead, his wife and he moved to New York, which was considered to be more cultivated and his "Kentucky friends would much prefer his living in New York to Texas."56

Johnston was offered an association with a law firm in New York, but he chose to set up private practice instead.57 When his New York business did not prosper,58 he returned to Kentucky in 1857 to resume his original business.59 The second Louisville endeavor flour­ished, and in a letter to his father, he described the handling of some difficult lawsuits, for which he was well paid.60

In his law practice, Johnston displayed characteristics for success as an attorney and an orator. Jacob Cooper, his former Yale classmate and lifetime friend, observed:

His mind was eminently judicial. Calm, self-possessed, of clear judgment and native eloquence, he had all the qualities fitting a man for success as an attorney, a counsellor, or a judge. He was a graceful and fluent speaker, and his transparent honesty carried conviction to the mind of judge and jury alike. Hence the fact of his being retained in a case went far toward securing a decision in his favor. His large and influential connection in Kentucky, and, we may say, in all the South, secured for him a clientage; and, this being backed up by elegant culture, he had every encouragement in his chosen work. A career of the most honorable sort was inviting him to enter in and occupy. Either legal practice,

56Mary E. Duncan to Marie G. Edwards, June 22, 1855, and July 22, 1855, Rosa Tucker Mason Collection, cited in Shaw.

57Albert Sidney Johnston to Henrietta Johnston, June 8, 1856.

58William Preston Johnston to Henrietta Johnston, December 30, 1856.

59Shaw p. 60.

60William Preston Johnston to Albert Sidney Johnston, June 25, 1858.
politics, or the bench offered him assured success. He did not cease to study law when admitted to the bar.61

His success as a lawyer and speaker brought him into advocacy for political issues outside the courtroom. As one relative noticed, "Though not allowing himself to be diverted from his profession by engaging actively in politics, he was always a strong advocate of the principles espoused by the South, and he took an active interest in their maintenance during the period preceding actual hostilities."62 He fell under the influence of his uncle, guardian, and mentor William Preston, who had become a member of Congress. Johnston admired his uncle, who held "his district in the hollow of his hand."63 Preston's dominance over Johnston caused him to become a more outspoken supporter of other Southern politicians too. In the presidential race of 1860, Johnston actively campaigned for the Southern Democrat candidate John C. Breckinridge, making several speeches on his behalf.64

In addition to these activities, Johnston became directly involved with "seditious" characters. His association with Judge J. R. Flanders, a Northern friend who supported Southern rights, brought Johnston to the attention of the United States government. Johnston had written to Flanders that he opposed secession but saw its inevitability. In the letter, he had said:

61Cooper, p. 14.
63William Preston Johnston to Henrietta Johnston, April 17, 1854.
64Louisville Democrat, September 26, 28, 30 and October 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 17, 1860.
I regard a dissolution of the Union as inevitable. I know the propelling ideas of Republicanism too well to have any hope. The leaders may recede; the excited people will not. I have every feeling of kindness for those at the North who have resisted our subjugation, but I assure you that I speak the sentiment of 99 in 100 when I tell you unless promptly and fully Republicanism recedes and guarantees are given for our security Kentucky, the most conservative Southern State, will certainly secede. Moreover, any attempt to coerce a Southern State will rally an army to its support. Kentucky will not permit any troops to cross her border for that purpose. Still we are striving to hope against hope through our love for the Union.

Mainly on the basis of this letter, Judge Flanders was arrested, charged with disloyal and seditious conduct, and imprisoned for several months. The record of the case against Flanders stated that "A well-known leader of the secessionists in that State, William Preston Johnston, wrote him on the 31st of December, 1860, thanking him for his kind feelings, assuring him that Kentucky, the most conservative Southern State, would certainly secede and inviting him to go there to reside."

Johnston was affiliated with another disloyal American leader, namely, his father Albert Sidney Johnston, who had suddenly resigned from the United States Army. Fearing that his father might be arrested for treason too, young Johnston sent a letter that was eventually intercepted by the State Department. The note contained a warning of a "perfidious enemy" and the information that the father was to be offered an appointment to the Confederate army, second only

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to President Davis. The association with William Preston, Judge Flanders, and Albert Sidney Johnston and the eventual historical events leading up to the Civil War led to the culmination of William Preston Johnston's legal career and placed him in the middle of his military involvement.

D. The Soldier

During the postbellum period, Johnston's speaking was characterized by a Lost Cause theme. Although it was a popular topic with most speakers who had experienced the defeat in their region, the subject was particularly personal to Johnston. An analysis of his role in the Confederacy gives insights into the basis for his pessimistic oratory after the Civil War.

When Johnston entered the Confederate side, he was filled with zeal. As one writer noted:

In the light of what has been indicated concerning the attitude and activities of William Preston Johnston in regard to the sectional conflict, it is hardly necessary to state that he devoted the full power of his energies to the Southern side. The principles which motivated him are fully enunciated in his biography of his father. When secession occurred, as he and other ardent Southerners knew it would, he became active in the efforts which were being made to throw the strength of his native Kentucky to the support of the seceding states.

As he began to recruit soldiers for the Confederate army, he immediately rose to a position of contact with the highest officials. He

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67 Shaw, p. 66.

68 William Preston Johnston, papers relating to the war record, United States Department of Defense, Washington, D.C.
travelled to Montgomery, Alabama, to confer with President Davis and Secretary of War L. P. Walker. Upon returning to Louisville, he wrote a letter to Walker and gave an assessment of the Kentucky sentiment, troops, and state of readiness.69

As a result of his endeavors, Johnston received a commission as major in the Second Kentucky Regiment of Artillery in the Confederate Army in July, 1861.70 He was soon transferred to the First Kentucky Regiment and was promoted to lieutenant colonel. Typhoid, pneumonia, and camp fever rendered him useless for a period, but upon his recovery, he was appointed to the rank of colonel to become aide-de-camp for President Davis in May 1862. He remained in that position until the end of the war, serving as an inspector general and Davis's confidential staff officer for communication with generals in the field.71

Apparently, Johnston did not enjoy his career in the military. He noticed that most soldiers were rough and "sometimes seized with a mania to get whiskey." He disliked the damp, cold tents and other discomforts of military life. Furthermore, he was lonesome for his family. In one letter to his wife, he expressed:

I think I will always be cheerful and content if I can have you but I fear I shall never be the same again that I was before the Flood. The War has entered my soul. The track of blood is across every memory and I hate. This hate I trust to curb that I may


feel and do no more than duty requires. I am willing to leave the cruel and perfidious Yankees in the hands of a Ruler juster as well as more merciful than I am, but I want to see them no more and hear of them no more.72

However, he presented a different viewpoint when corresponding with his father. He stated that his sickness was the result of his "zeal and exertions," and that "I believe I have the soul of a soldier, but my strength is not equal to my will."73 A few months after making this statement, Johnston lost his father, who fell in the Battle of Shiloh in April 1862.74

During the War, Johnston maintained a close relationship with President and Mrs. Jefferson Davis. As a result of this kinship, Johnston was allowed to participate in the innermost workings of the Confederacy. While residing in the Davis home, Johnston attended an unusual meeting in which Walker Taylor presented to Davis a plan for the kidnapping of Lincoln. Davis denied permission for the attempted abduction, stating:

In the first place, I suppose Lincoln to be a man of courage. He has been in Indian wars, and is a Western man. He would undoubtedly resist being captured. In that case you would kill him. I could not stand the imputation of having consented to let Mr. Lincoln be assassinated. Our cause could not stand it. Besides, what value would he be to us as a prisoner? Lincoln is not the Government or the Federal power. His is merely the political instrument there.75

72 William Preston Johnston to Rosa Johnston, October 10, 1861, and undated letter.

73 William Preston Johnston to Albert Sidney Johnston, February 14, 1862.

74 Shaw, p. 69.

Johnston maintained an intimate association with the Davis family, even until the end of the war. After Lee surrendered at Appomattox, Johnston tried to offer encouragement to Mrs. Davis. In a letter to her, he said that although "the disaster of Lee's army is extreme . . . the loss of an army is not the loss of our cause. . . . There is still a great deal of fight in us yet." But this hope was of no avail; within a month, Davis, his family, his close party, and Johnston were captured near Irwinville, Georgia. According to Johnston, he was the first person caught. After the capture, Davis was imprisoned at Fort Monroe, and Johnston was placed in solitary confinement at Fort Delaware near Philadelphia.

Although correspondence was not permitted during imprisonment, Johnston was able to have a letter dated July 4, 1865, delivered to his wife. In it, he shared his hopes for getting around the pledge of commitment to the United States, saying, "This would avoid my taking the oath of allegiance which I do not wish to take until I know the Prest's wishes and views, but I feel I will never be released till I do." He also asked her to "do all you can to get me out; no one can conceive how miserable is our fate who has not tried it." In closing, he told her, "I live in the past. I can see no future. If I have one, I will devote it to you. I am willing to do anything to support

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you. Ambition is dead. All ties are sundered & I am thine only as I have been."\(^7^9\) Apparently, Mrs. Johnston tried to write her husband, but the correspondence was rejected by the supervising officer at Fort Delaware, who replied to her that "your husband is well and would be satisfied with his lot, but for your and children's sake. I informed him where you are and also that you are well. Your writing to him is beyond my power to grant."\(^8^0\)

Johnston eventually took the oath of allegiance and was released from prison.\(^8^1\) As did several Confederate soldiers, Johnston went into exile. With his family and Mrs. Davis' mother, he settled in Montreal, Canada, for several months.\(^8^2\) In spring 1866, the family returned to Louisville,\(^8^3\) where Johnston tried to resume his law practice, but as one friend commented, "his health could not endure the strain which comes upon a successful lawyer."\(^8^4\)

During the period immediately following the War, Johnston's morale diminished. To compound the state of depression, he received a tactless letter from Charles Bliss, one of his Yale classmates. On the envelope of Bliss's letter, he wrote:

Why does this man write to me? . . . Why can't these Yankee thieves be satisfied with robbing and killing us, without also

\(^7^9\)William Preston Johnston to Rosa Johnston, July 4, 1865.
\(^8^0\)A. Schoef to Rosa Johnston, July 13, 1865.
\(^8^1\)Johnston papers relating to the war.
\(^8^3\)Shaw, p. 87.  \(^8^4\)Cooper, p. 18.
being intimate with us. They seem to think that the wish to degrade us is no ban to friendly intercourse. But this letter unworthy of an answer or even this comment I keep as a specimen of the genuine Puritan.85

Johnston did not lose all of his former friends from the North.

One of his lifelong companions Jacob Cooper had empathy for the soldier of the Lost Cause. In later years, Cooper expressed his feelings:

Colonel Johnston entered into that movement with a good conscience and perfect honesty, as he did every act of his life. And it is also proper to add, that his conduct while thus engaged secured the unbounded confidence and lasting affection of all his companions in arms with whom he came in contact. By descent and instinct, he had the qualities of a soldier; and by education and temper, he was fitted to act in the highest capacity in the Confederate army. He knew every prominent man in the South; he was the equal of any in birth and culture; he was adapted for the most delicate and trustworthy communications between the chief and all subordinate officers. It is safe to assert, that there was not another man in the South so fitted, from every point of view, as he, to serve as the aide and confidential secretary of Mr. Davis during the trying ordeal through which that leader passed--particularly during the waning fortunes of the Lost Cause. For he was able, by a marvelous tact, which directed the highest executive talents, joined to honesty and singleness of purpose never excelled, to win the confidence and love of that immense body of able men who proved their integrity by their sufferings and losses in behalf of a hopeless cause. Nor is it out of place to say, that the writer, though as devoted in feeling to the fortunes of the North as his friend was to the South, loved and honored him as fervently as he did any one of his own partisans. Moreover, had we met in conflict,--which a merciful Providence averted,--life might have been sacrificed, but mutual love would not have been chilled. Mr. Johnston suffered greatly in person and estate during this unnatural conflict. He lost his father, General Albert Sidney Johnston, to whom he was devotedly attached. He lost his property through the same processes which beggared so many well-to-do and even wealthy Southerners. He lost his health by severe attacks of disease incident to army life and most likely aggravated by imprisonment. It is certain that Mr. Johnston, though he lived nearly forty years subsequently and did enough work to fill

85Envelope of letter from Charles M. Bliss to William Preston Johnston, September 20, 1866.
the lives of half a dozen men, yet was a constant sufferer from chronic disease and weakness which were then engendered.\textsuperscript{86}

As Cooper noted, Johnston suffered great financial stress as a result of the war. In 1866, Johnston's sixth child was born,\textsuperscript{87} and he realized he had to take up a profession other than law to support his family. Johnston shared his burdens with Mrs. Jefferson Davis, who responded with help, saying:

All or any part of my means or any that we might ever have is at your service. I can lend you as it is a thousand dollars which is not invested except upon call, and you need pay no interest. I can very well understand Mrs. Johnston's spirits being low with her little helpless children, and that miserable Kentucky people to confront who will not help the son of the greatest man who ever lived in their state, and the purest too.

In the same letter, Mrs. Davis recommended that Johnston try to seek a position as a professor at Washington College in Lexington, Virginia.\textsuperscript{88} She believed that his role in the Confederacy would benefit Southern education. In later years, one of Johnston's friends stated the same belief:

While his services in the war of secession may be considered as an episode, they were influential in the formative period of his life. They contributed greatly to the fitness for his work as the founder of a university of unmeasured influence, and as the leading educator of the South. . . . No doubt the varied responsibilities and delicate relations which his position involved broadened his character and sharpened his intellect, as well as cultivated those executive powers so soon to be called into requisition as an educator and the organizer of educational methods. For the man who is bent on doing good work as the sole task of life, will be helped to understand and grapple with that task by every species

\textsuperscript{86}Cooper, pp. 4-6.

\textsuperscript{87}Johnston, \textit{The Johnstons of Salisbury}, p. 161.

\textsuperscript{88}Varina Davis to William Preston Johnston, September 27, 1866.
of service he is called to render God or man. Hence, no doubt; the delicacy of his tact in dealing with the complicated interests and varying tempers of men which were involved in founding a system of education substantially new in the South, was in some measure due to the rare exercise of his talents as the factotum in Jefferson Davis's military family.\textsuperscript{89}

Leaving the practice of law and his career in the military, Johnston entered a new phase of his life, that of Southern educator. Although his role in the Civil War was short-lived, he apparently carried the remembrance of the Lost Cause with him throughout the remainder of his life. As late as 1894, he stated, "... my heart was buried with the Confederacy. On it will be found engraved at the day of doom, 'C.S.A.'\textsuperscript{90}

\section*{E. The Educator}

While Johnston's early postwar speeches were characterized by a Lost Cause theme, his later oratory underwent dramatic changes. Through his involvement in the field of education, he developed a conception of a New South that would be brought about through the adoption of universal education. To understand how he derived his interest and understanding of the plan, his role as an educator is explored.

During and after the War, colleges in the South were in a deplorable state, requiring administrators to seek creative strategies to restore the institutions. The Board of Trustees at Washington College decided that in order to build their enrollment and attract students throughout the South, it needed famous Southern figures for its

\textsuperscript{89}Cooper, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{90}William Preston Johnston to Thomas Taylor Munford, January 19, 1894, Marshall McDonald Collection, Duke University Library.
staff. In 1865, it offered the presidency to Robert E. Lee, and under his administration, the school made progress.\textsuperscript{91} When Johnston's application for a teaching position was presented to the board at Washington College, it met with great approval, for he was the kind of notable person the school was seeking. Johnston and his father were well known in the region. Also, Johnston's office in the Confederacy had allowed him to have a close association with Lee, who was therefore able to assess accurately Johnston's potential at Washington College. Furthermore, Johnston received excellent recommendations from influential friends.\textsuperscript{92} Henry J. Stites and Alvin Duvall, former chief justices of the Supreme Court of Kentucky had sent a letter in which they described Johnston as "a gentleman of refined and cultivated mind --of liberal endowments and of pure and incorruptible life," who "would make a useful and highly acceptable member of your faculty." They also implied that Johnston would be able to attract Kentucky students to follow him to Washington College.\textsuperscript{93} In a letter to Lee, General E. Kirby Smith had guaranteed that Johnston's appointment would be followed by generous contributions from citizens of Kentucky for "the endowment of the chair to which he might be elected."\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{91}Shaw, pp. 94-96; Robert E. Lee, Jr., The Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee (Garden City, N.Y.: n.p., 1904), pp. 179-98.

\textsuperscript{92}Shaw, p. 96.

\textsuperscript{93}Henry J. Stites and Alvin Duvall to J. W. Brockenbrough, September 26, 1866.

\textsuperscript{94}General E. Kirby Smith to General Robert E. Lee, October 1, 1866, Record Room, Washington and Lee University.
Needless to say, Lee invited Johnston to fill the chair of history and English literature at Washington College in 1867. His appointment was well-received by local citizens and the town newspaper.\footnote{Lexington Gazette and Banner, January 30, 1867, reprinted from the Louisville Courier.} One person gave the following assessment of his suitability for the job, saying that "This was a position for which he was peculiarly well fitted by the trend of his mind, as well as his scholarly acquirements."\footnote{Johnston, The Johnston's of Salisbury, p. 117.}

Before Johnston arrived, professors from other schools had been teaching courses at Washington College on a part-time basis. But after Johnston came he took over the history and English programs, and sought improvements in them. He recommended that prerequisites to the studies include a basic English course and readings in the history of Greece, Rome, England, and America. He enlarged the curriculum to include ancient and modern history, political economy, belles-lettres and criticism, history and study of English literature, English composition, declamation, and elocution. He also added a graduate course in English that was more extensive and critical.

In the classroom Professor Johnston delivered extensive, meticulously outlined lectures. His students were required to give original orations and take rigid exams,\footnote{Catalog, Washington College, 1866, and 1867.} which included twelve lengthy discussion questions, a historical essay, and an oral test. Although he was a demanding instructor, Johnston was well liked; as
one writer recorded, "The evidence of Johnston's influence and popularity as a man and as a teacher are abundant."\textsuperscript{98} Even a newspaper reporter from the North found him to be cordial, recounting that

I met him as he was leaving the college grounds and saw at once that he was another of the old school of Southern Gentlemen. . . . Very polite and speaks in a slow, emphatic manner. . . . He is an honest man and told me more than most men of his class would have done.\textsuperscript{99}

Desiring to expand the programs at Washington College, Lee appointed Johnston to a special committee that initiated a plan for advancing the scientific course. Johnston contributed a program that included "press scholarship, designed primarily to acquaint young printers with editorial methods and to enlarge their education."\textsuperscript{100} He justified the plan on the basis that "printing is one of the arts which diffuse education, and we should, therefore seek to qualify printers for the task of education as far as possible."\textsuperscript{101}

In 1870, Lee died,\textsuperscript{102} jolting the student body which had attended Washington College because of their admiration for him. Aware of the students' disappointment, the faculty arranged a meeting with the students to discuss the future of the school. In an address

\begin{footnotes}
\item[98]Shaw, p. 101.
\item[99]\textit{Lexington Gazette}, November 17, 1869, reprinted from the \textit{New York Sun}.
\item[101]\textit{Lexington Gazette}, November 17, 1869, reprinted from the \textit{New York Sun}.
\item[102]Freeman, 4:491.
\end{footnotes}
requested by the staff, Johnston delivered an inspirational message, saying that

our country will not suffer to sink into dust and forgetfulness
this last enduring monument to his name. . . . We may return to
our appointed tasks and daily duties with cheerfulness and energy, knowing that therein we best carry out his wishes and perpetuate
his fame.103

For some time Johnston had been motivated to write a biography
of his father, but his teaching schedule prevented it. He took a
leave of absence in 1872 to devote attention to the biography,104 and
in 1874, he resigned from Washington College.105 Although he vacated
his position as "Kentucky Professor of History," he was listed on the
law school faculty from 1876 to 1880, indicating that perhaps he
taught on a part-time basis.106 The cutback in his teaching responsi-
sibilities enabled him to finish his writing by 1878. Much to the
disappointment of Johnston, the book did not sell well. Probably it
had little appeal in the North, and in the South, where the book would
have had its largest audience, it was not marketed.107 Johnston
attributed the failure to the publishers, who made no effort to pro-
mote sales. Criticizing them, he said,

103 Southern Collegian, October 29, 1870, Publication at Wash-
ington College.
104 Minutes, Faculty, Washington College, February 20,
April 23, and June 25, 1872.
105 William Preston Johnston to A. Leyburn, June 24, 1874.
106 Catalog, Washington College, 1876-1880.
107 Shaw, p. 143.
They have never sold any books in N.C., S.C., Geo., Ala., Mo., or Ark., or offered them for sale. . . . Little or nothing has been done in Texas. They have refused to advertise and consider my book dead. . . . They have no organization for the sale of subscription books in the South.108

But in spite of the limited sales in the South, Johnston received acclaim from historians and literary critics throughout the region, thereby placing his name in high esteem in Southern institutions.

After completing the book, Johnston continued teaching at Washington College. Because the institution could not afford to pay its faculty adequate salaries, and the sale of the biography did not provide the anticipated income, Johnston sought other ways to bring himself out of debt.109 He applied for the position of Chancellor of the University of Georgia,110 and later professor of literature at the University of Missouri, but he did not obtain either job.111 He tried unsuccessfully to gain an entrance into politics by campaigning for Stephen Johnson Field's nomination as the Democrat presidential candidate.112 Unable to make any breakthroughs in job opportunities, Johnston sold his official Confederate papers to the United States government for $10,000.113

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109 Shaw, pp. 122-56.
110 E. Kirby Smith to William Preston Johnston, June 12, 1874.
111 E. J. Joynes to William Preston Johnston, July 1, 1877.
113 Rowland, 8:292.
Although his attempts to obtain another job were unrewarded, Johnston was successful in his application for the presidency of Louisiana State University. On September 18, 1880, Edwin Fay, serving as state superintendent of education and member of the board of supervisors for LSU, sent a letter of invitation to Johnston to fill the position.\footnote{Edwin Fay to William Preston Johnston, September 18, 1880.} Unknown to Johnston though, the LSU board was in a chaotic state, and as one writer hypothesized, "If Johnston had known what awaited him at the Louisiana State University, it is doubtful whether even in his embarrassed financial situation he would have left his Virginia home for his new post as president of the institution in the deep South."\footnote{Jefferson Davis to William Preston Johnston, September 21, 1880.} His friend Jefferson Davis tried to forewarn him of the conditions at LSU, but the message arrived too late. Jefferson had sent a letter to Johnston, saying:

I would have answered your letter sooner but for the hope that I would obtain some more definite information than I possessed when it was received. I now however only have learned that Col. Boyd Superintendent of the Louisiana University at Baton Rouge seeks to maintain his right to the office by an appeal to the Courts, and that there is a strong public feeling in his favor. Under these circumstances I suppose nothing can be done in regard to your wish for the Presidency of that institution if indeed, with the financial and other difficulties surrounding it, you should think the place desirable.\footnote{Shaw, p. 157.}

Davis accurately forecasted the dilemma facing Johnston in Louisiana. Not only was the board divided over the question of dismissing David Boyd as president before finally appointing Johnston to

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\footnote{Jefferson Davis to William Preston Johnston, September 21, 1880.}
fill the place,117 but it was also divided over most business matters.118 Nevertheless, Johnston conveyed back to Davis his optimism for the university, saying:

The position is a delicate one, but I trust the prudence, sincerity, and kindness may enable me to avoid all personal complication. The position is not one at best, in view of the climate and other considerations, as would exactly suit me. But people usually sit down where they are asked and not where they choose.119

When Johnston arrived in Baton Rouge, he discovered that not only was the board in chaos, but the entire school was in havoc. During the seven years preceding his administration, the university had issued no degrees.120 Furthermore, only twenty-nine students were attending. He immediately improved the conditions of the school, increasing the enrollment to sixty-nine during his first session.121 As one writer recorded, President Johnston "thoroughly reorganized and re-established that institution, which had been for some time in a chaotic state."122 He expanded the curriculum to include four studies --classics, science, agriculture, and mechanics.123 He sought further


118On p. 167, Shaw points out the divided votes on items of business: 7-5, 6-6, 9-4, 8-3, 7-7, etc. Minutes, Board of Supervisors, Louisiana State University, July 3, 4, 5, 1882.

119Rowland, 8:521.

120Catalog, Louisiana State University, 1881, p. 14.

121Johnston, report to L. A. Wiltz, Minutes, Board of Supervisors, Louisiana State University, July 1, 1881.

122Johnston, The Johnstons of Salisbury, p. 120.

123Catalog, Louisiana State University, 1881, pp. 19-20.
changes too, but circumstances prevented him from accomplishing every goal he desired. During the decades following the War, the Louisiana legislature was unwilling to adequately fund, which left the school in a financial crisis. With the approval of the LSU board, Johnston petitioned the state to establish a normal school under the supervision of LSU, but the legislature rejected the proposal. To add to the trouble in making progress, dissent among board members was at a peak. Unable to achieve all that he had originally set out to accomplish, Johnston was ready to leave LSU, a move that was made possible because of the formation of Tulane University.

The benefactor Paul Tulane had provided substantial funds and property totaling over one million dollars for the establishment of a university in New Orleans. His purpose was to encourage "intellectual, moral, and industrial education among the white young persons in the city of New Orleans . . . and for the advancement of learning and letters, the arts and sciences therein." Tulane specified that the school should strive for "a course of intellectual development as shall be useful and solid worth . . . not merely ornamental or superficial," but "conducive to immediate practical benefit, rather than theoretical possible advantage."

124 Minutes, Supervisors, Louisiana State University, April 4, 1882.

125 Fleming, pp. 393-94.

In January 1883, William Preston Johnston was elected to serve
as Tulane's first president, and he was given the responsibility to
set up guidelines for the administration of the trust fund. As one
writer observed, Johnston was an appropriate choice to become the
organizer of the new university:

Here all the qualities of his philanthropic, executive, mental,
and moral nature, are brought into requisition. His work required
more wisdom than the mere art of founding. But his exquisite tact
and calmness of judgment were fully equal to the duties demanded
of him, not only in disarming opposition, but also in winning the
cordial support of those interests which were to be merged into
the new enterprise. These qualities being recognized by Mr.
Tulane, and his judgment in all matters pertaining to his work
being approved by the Administrative Board, he was invested by the
donor with plenary powers in the management of his munificent
gift. Hence President Johnston was in reality as well as in name,
the creator of Tulane University.

Johnston helped the newly appointed Tulane board when it was
faced with several important decisions concerning the control of the
university. Knowing the problems that could accrue if Tulane Univer-
sity were placed under the Louisiana government, Johnston advised the
board to be cautious, saying:

No one can dread the evils of political control more than I do. A
burnt child dreads the fire. I believe that it will ruin any edu-
cational institution subjected to it. Every safe-guard should be
established against this; and I do not doubt that the skill of
legal advisers is adequate to the task.

To circumvent government control or rivalry with state institutions,
the Tulane board chose to acquire the land and buildings of the

127 Ibid., pp. 182-85; and Paul Tulane to R. L. Gibson and
others, May 2, 1882.

128 Cooper, p. 22.

129 Minutes, Administrators, Tulane University, February 9,
1883.
University of Louisiana, a state supported school in New Orleans. The state legislature favored the move by Tulane University, knowing that it would no longer be obligated to provide funds for higher education in New Orleans. Also, the board at LSU appreciated the decision, believing that it would have fewer competitors for state monies. Having gained the approval of the state legislature and the board at LSU, Tulane University was off to a good start.

Upon opening, the new university consisted of Tulane College, the University Department of Philosophy, the Law Department, and the Medical Department, the latter two having come from the University of Louisiana.\(^{130}\) While Johnston was pleased with the size of Tulane University when it opened, he had even greater plans for the institution’s growth. In an interview with a local newspaper reporter, Johnston proposed the disbursement of tuition scholarships; the development of the best in classical and scientific education, as well as practical instruction in technical, industrial, and business branches; training in hydraulic, civic, and dynamical engineering; drawing and workshop instruction in wood and metal works; a series of guest lectures; the building of a good library and science museum; and the promotion of industrial development in the state. He based many of his suggestions for improvement on information that he acquired while on tour of schools in Virginia, Massachusetts, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri.\(^{131}\) Among Johnston's other accomplishments during his

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\(^{130}\) Johnston, "Tulane University of Louisiana," pp. 166 and 192.

\(^{131}\) New Orleans Times-Democrat, July 23 and 29, 1884.
sixteen years as president of Tulane were the formation of master and doctoral degrees in literature and classics, the creation of evening classes and home study, the founding of H. Sophie Newcomb College for women, the institution of a temporary high school department run by the university, and the establishment of a library, which grew into the present free library system in New Orleans.

The success of Tulane University has been attributed to William Preston Johnston. As one writer suggested, "It was felt by all who knew the real facts involved, that Mr. Johnston's life was a necessity to Tulane during its formative period." As the famous educator, A. D. Mayo, noted, Johnston had recruited outstanding instructors, had required contemporary teaching methods, and had worked well with the Board. One historian recorded the following description of Tulane's influence under the Johnston administration:

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133 Announcement leaflet concerning evening courses at Tulane University, December 26, 1885.


135 Johnston, "Tulane University of Louisiana," p. 192.


137 Cooper, p. 23. 138 Mayo, p. 1369.
Tulane, in growing great under the presidency of Colonel Johnston, had, obedient to his ideas, uplifted all the schools and academies of this section. The ambition of principals and assistants in private preparatory schools, is to have their pupils admitted to the freshman classes of Tulane and Newcomb without entrance examinations. Tulane, throbbing with its own life and ambition, proved a vitalizing influence throughout the entire education system of New Orleans and the surrounding parishes, sometimes lifting up, sometimes helping to do so, never without some influence.139

The educator Mayo corroborated the impact, noting that:

this institution stands for an educational policy that signifies more to the future of those States [in the South] than everything that has been written and said concerning Southern affairs since its establishment in 1884. In a way less exposed to national observation--indeed, perhaps even now not appreciated in many of the educational centers of the North--President Johnston, in the very heart of the most intensely southern portion of the South, like Dr. Curry personally and by training a Southerner of the Southerners, in fifteen years has built up an institution that in the honesty and thorough excellence of all its instruction is not the inferior of any school of the higher education in the country. . . . Tulane University to-day represents more completely the imperative Southern necessity of the broadest education and the most comprehensive method of dealing with this necessity of any school south of Mason and Dixon's line.

Because of the fame attached to Johnston's name, other educators, organizations, and institutions sought his scholarly insights. In the city of New Orleans, he headed up the Louisiana Education Society, which produced significant changes on the local level. One historian noted:

He was the soul of the Louisiana Education Society, that, in the ten years of its activity, gathered the friends of the common school in the city of New Orleans into a powerful organization which, in the ten years of its activity, repulsed the assault of its enemy, woke up its friends in the city and State, and laid the broad foundation of what is now one of the most hopeful of the public-school organizations of the Southwest.140

140Mayo, pp. 1367-69.
Johnston donated his educational talents to the people of Louisiana by serving as assistant editor and contributor to the state's *Journal of Education for Home and School*, a publication which ran from 1879 to 1888.  

As a historian, Johnston shared his academic knowledge with the state by participating as an active member of the Louisiana Historical Society. On the regional level, he was prominent in the Southern Historical Society, serving as a highly esteemed and zealous member. On the national level, he was appointed to the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution in 1892. According to one writer, "As a Regent of the Smithsonian Institute, he was brought in touch with, and helped to direct, the most important forces at work in behalf of the higher education." In addition to his work as a regent, Johnston was able to achieve progress for education through other organizations, including the National Educational Association and the International Congress of Educators, which co-sponsored a major convention as part of the World's Cotton Exposition in New Orleans in 1885.

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144 Randal Gibson to William Preston Johnston, January 30, 1892. Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.

145 Cooper, p. 22.
Through his work in local, state, and national organizations, Johnston was able to serve as a spokesman for the educational awakening in the New South.

**F. Summary**

William Preston Johnston gained experience through his childhood, education, legal career, military participation, and role as an educator that prepared him for the public platform. Because he taught oratory for several years, he was more equipped than most of his contemporaries who participated in the Southern education movement.
CHAPTER III

RHETORICAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

William Preston Johnston not only acquired the education and experience which prepared him to become a public speaker on behalf of Southern education, he also had a special understanding of the principles and application of oratory, which contributed to his success on the platform. The purpose of this chapter is to explore Johnston's rhetorical theory and practice.

A. Rhetorical Theory

When William Preston Johnston taught oratory at Washington College, he delivered a series of lectures on the concept, preparation, and delivery of speeches, including the purpose of education,¹

the power of oratory, speech preparation in general, the moral preparation of the orator, the mental preparation of the orator, and the physical preparation of the orator. For these lectures, he cited his reference books on oratory, which included:

1. Quintilian's Institutes of Oratory. 2 vols.
2. Cicero of an Orator & Brutus. (trans) 2 vols. [sic]
3. Whateley's Rhetoric
4. Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric
5. Broadus' Preparation & Delivery of Sermons
6. McIlvaine's Elocution
7. Bautaine's Art of Extempore Speaking
8. Bronson's Elocution
9. Murdock's Vocal Culture
10. Hullah on the Voice
11. Goodrich's Book of British Eloquence
13. Carlyle's Cromwell. 2 vols. (1st lost)

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2 William Preston Johnston, "Oratory, Lecture Second." Handwritten outline and full script, Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.

3 Idem, "Oratory. Lecture Third." Handwritten outline and full script, Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.


By analyzing these lectures and reference sources, his rhetorical theory can be reconstructed.

1. Function of Oratory

Regardless of the academic subject under study, Johnston proposed that the highest culture could be attained when people correlate and subordinate physical training to intellectual instruction, and intellectual instruction to moral learning. While his holistic philosophy of education was strongly influenced by Quintilian, he disagreed with the definition of the ideal orator as "the good man speaking well." Johnston hoped that moral training would produce ethical speakers, but he chose to define the study of oratory as "the art of speaking effectively."^8

As a pragmatist, he believed in the utility of an education, for while "success was a proper object of pursuit in life, yet it must yield to duty (obedience to) which must be paramount."^9 Consequently, he viewed, taught, and used oratory as a practical art. He questioned the use of public address for mere pleasure, hypothesizing that it

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^7 William Preston Johnston, "Books of Reference on Oratory." Handwritten bibliography, Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.


served a greater function. He suggested that "if oratory has such power as a mere social adjunct, on the other hand in the wideness of its application when pursued as a vocation or profession it is not surpassed by any other art." Supporting this belief, he cited appropriate examples of the use of oratory:

The message of divine love sounds cold on stammering lips, while the fervor of enthusiasm makes Peter the Hermit a trumpet of wrath to the nations. The advocate who can wring tears from a jury or by array of argument force a conviction home to the breast of the Judge is secure of fortune and reputation. The politician can scarcely hope to rise except by the art of oratory or the arts of intrigue and corruption. ... The Lecture Hall is an institution at the North, and the standpoint from which public opinion is first essayed, and prevailing ideas assailed or defended. It is an expanding arena, and offers its rewards in the appreciation of audiences of intellect and cultivation. 10

As the field of rhetoric shifted toward the literary arts in the second half of the nineteenth century, 11 Johnston felt the need to distinguish written and oral communication, pointing out that there is an essential difference however between the orator and the writer, not only in the fact that the latter commits his thought to the printed page, while the former addresses his discourse to his fellow men by word of mouth; but the rhetorical principles that go to make written and spoken compositions effective are contrary in their nature. The merits of the one are often defects when employed by the other.

Although he recognized that the two modes of communication had significant differences, he suggested that oratorical training would improve a person's skills in writing. He said, "The preparation to make a

10Johnston, "Oratory, Lecture Second." Full length script, pp. 4-5.

perfect orator will make a successful journalist and the studies that fit a man to address any audience with clearness, force and propriety, to startle with the epigram or with the attention, are those that enable him to dash off the letter or retort the quip courteous." But Johnston was apprehensive about encouraging orators to become writers because he felt that they would diminish their potential impact on the masses. He insisted that

Shakespeare sought the Drama and Milton the Epic to present their thoughts. But Demosthenes and Chatham and Clay thundered with the trumpet tones of eloquence at the gates of party or from the citadel of power; and Paul and Peter the Hermit and Wesley and Whitfield smote with the living tongue the hearts of their hearers. Hence we may see that oratory is a proper and often the only way of reaching the multitudes with the truth.

Johnston felt so strongly about the power of the spoken word that he renounced the proverbial saying that "speech is silver, but silence is golden," and replaced it with the statement that "silence is golden, but speech is fine gold." Furthermore, he contended, "we may rank it among the loftiest of the arts to which man can bend his energies."12

Johnston quoted Quintilian's explanation of art as "a power working its effects by method." Amplifying the definition as it applied to public address, Johnston pointed out that "oratory is based upon a body of rules, the result of observation and experience and by the adaptation and application of these to the formal expression of thought, produces the effects desired by the speaker." He realized that many critics accused orators of becoming mechanistic when they carefully structured their speeches, but he responded by suggesting

12 Johnston, pp. 4-13.
that even the speaker who strove for a natural, loosely woven style
was, in fact, following a set of rules. He observed that

indeed, he may deny to himself that he has adopted any method, but
it is nevertheless unconsciously present to the mind either in the
pattern of one or many models heard aforetime, or on a method that
refuses itself the name. The speaker says, "I will not use elo-
cution; but merely a conversational tone. I will not elaborate an
arrangement of ideas; but say what I think as it suggests itself." Now this might not be the most effective mode of address by a
given person on a given occasion, but the speaker evidently thinks
it the best. His conversational tone is a kind of elocution
deliberately adopted; and he has unconsciously a plan of arrange-
ment, that of presenting the arguments most familiar and obvious
to him, as they arise from association of ideas. This might be a
safe method for him that would be the last to adopt it, the accom-
plished rhetorician; but it would be but a poor one for the
untrained speaker. It is merely meant to show however that
whether consciously or implicitly ever [sic] speaker follows a
plan.

2. Acquisition of Rhetorical Skills

In choosing a method to follow, Johnston advised against inductive
learning. He realized that the stockpile of experiences of stu-
dents was limited and that learners could accidently imitate the
mistakes of effective speakers. Instead of an experiential approach,
he favored drawing upon the principles of the classical rhetoricians.
He said to his students: "When you reflect that to Demosthenes is
conceded a crown for eloquence, that none may disrepute, and that
Quintilian is still our instructor in all that pertains to oratory, we
must have a high conceit of our capacities, if we presume that our
hurried and superficial notions should supersede the canons of these
masters, approved by the centuries."13 He advised learners to follow
the deductive rules given by their instructors, for

13Johnston, "Oratory, Lecture Third." Full length script, pp. 2-5.
the methods I shall propose to you . . . are the methods by which Quintilian taught and Cicero studied, and Demosthenes became the chief of the Athenian Orators. They are essentially the same as those by which modern speakers of eminence have won their reputation. This must be so; because they are the constant deductions of wide experience, the teachings of Nature, and not the arbitrary rules of rhetoricians, as many suppose.14

Johnston accepted Quintilian's belief that oratorical training was a life-long process which commenced in early childhood. He pointed out that it has been made a question when this should begin; and Quintilian indeed properly considers the nurse as the earliest teacher. Instruction begins almost in the cradle, and the lisping accents of infancy often determine measurably the elocution of later life. Still as long as the young mind remains plastic and in the formative process, it is fit for the reception of truths and for oratorical education.

As children became older, Johnston believed that they should practice declamations and other oratorical exercises that would require students to apply rhetorical principles, thereby instilling appropriate habits that would carry over into adulthood. While opponents denounced such training as being tedious, Johnston defended it as being appropriate to the learning process, noting that a great speech is not the result of a great effort; but like a noble life is the sum of many long converging forces. A great speech must conceal the art that evolves it, and the appearance of a consciousness of skill, the discovery that the speaker is "acting a part," destroys the illusion and charm of his eloquence, and relegates him to a second rate position. This easy working by regular methods results only from long habit.15


a. Moral training. Johnston believed that certain patterns should be developed that would shape the body, mind, and soul of an orator. He noted that particular virtues contributed to the moral element of the speaker, including docility, perseverance, and equanimity. He believed that docility was important because it meant not only a willingness to learn, but the voluntary submission to study under eminent teachers. Accompanying docility, Johnston suggested that the successful orator was one who possessed perseverance, which was "that power of the soul that continues steadfast to the end to a set purpose; and when baffled returns to the pursuit with renewed and unflagging determination; which fails and tries again; which cast down is not conquered; and only recognizes in overthrow the motive for another effort." Johnston pointed out that "as Docility and Perseverance are the virtues necessary in preparation for oratory; so there are two lofty habits of mind requisite in the actual business of speaking: Equanimity and Moral Energy." He defined the former as "a balanced mind" which strengthens the speaker who "stands with unclouded front above the tumult of voices, the scowls of wrathful faces and the ominous heaving of the angry mob." To possess equanimity Johnston believed that the speaker must have self-integrity and respect for the audience.16

Johnston described the successful moral energy of speakers as consisting of their genuineness, cheerfulness, charity, and sympathy. He believed that genuineness or simplicity of feeling was necessary to

16 Johnston, "Oratory, Lecture Fourth." Full length draft, pp. 7-12.
avoid sophistry. He felt that cheerfulness or vivacity was important because of its ability to attract, excite, interest, and capture the attention by the hope of enjoyment. He wanted speakers to demonstrate charity, humanity, philanthropy, or benevolence because it was the sum of Christian civilization. He considered that charity could be turned into practical application when the speaker demonstrated sympathy, which was "not merely the sympathy with an audience" but the willingness to identify with the needs and aspirations of the people.  

b. Mental training. In addition to acquiring moral virtues that would shape the soul of the orator, Johnston believed that the speaker needed training that would develop the mind. In regard to the mental preparation necessary, he believed that the first step was to determine the orator's purpose. He relied upon Cicero's objects of oratory, which included informing, pleasing, and influencing to action; Protagoras' division of speeches purpose as to interrogate, to reply, to command, and to entreat; and Quintilian's threefold classification of panegyrical, deliberative, and judicial oratory. From these systems, he derived his own scheme, which included didactic, deliberative, and panegyrical oratory. He defined didactic oratory as religious, moral, or academic instruction presented by an orator who speaks with authority to an audience that has no antagonists present. To explain his second division, Johnston divided deliberative oratory into political and forensic settings, with the latter

consisting of speeches to the court and to the jury. To clarify the third classification, he equated panegyrical oratory with epideictic speeches, which are meant to gratify, praise, or blame as their chief object. He cited modern amusement, funeral orations, eulogies, and Fourth of July speeches as examples of panegyrical oratory. Subsidiary to these final ends, Johnston believed that the orator must be able to do as Quintilian said: to praise and blame, "to complain, console, appease, excite, alarm, encourage, direct, explain, narrate, entreat, thank, congratulate, reproach, attack, describe, command, retreat, express wishes & opinions, and speak in a thousand different ways." Johnston noted that these ends could be combined together in one oration.

In deciding "what kind of mental training is best to perfect these argumentative and suasive powers, to enable [the] orator to present a clear & forcible narrative, and to conciliate," Johnston adopted Cicero's philosophy that the orator should have both a general and specialized education. He believed that whether the student was enrolled in a scientific, classical, or orthodox program, the learner should be exposed to "classics, mathematics, history, literature, moral philosophy, modern languages, some science, and logic & rhetoric, first taught implicitly then expressly." In acquiring this general training, he advised students that "if you cannot get all you must, get (a) all you can of it—and (b) as many branches of it as you can—as classics, math, history, metaphysics."

Johnston believed that "there is a special training for oratory that may follow, but had better accompany this general training." In this oratorical education, the faculties were to be trained and information obtained by the same processes. The most important, the earliest, and the easiest faculty to be developed was the memory. The advantage of improving the powers of memory was that it "fills the mind with a fund of words, phrases, proverbs, quotations, & illustrations, [and] supplies a vocabulary & information." He recommended that speakers memorize (1) ballads, which offered simplicity, picturesqueness, and language; (2) poetry, which expressed condensed thought and cultivated the imagination; (3) striking prose passages, which excited declamation; and finally (4) entire, well-organized speeches, such as original compositions, or model orations from Demosthenes or Burke.

In addition to enhancing the faculty of the memory, Johnston believed that reasoning powers needed to be developed too. For training, he advised students to take mathematics, metaphysics, and laws of evidence. He realized that a speaker's argumentative powers alone were insufficient to obtain the desired objective, so for practical application, he recommended that students acquire rhetorical skills. He noted that logic would only show how the "audience ought to assent," but that rhetoric would teach the speaker how the "audience is brought to assent."\(^{19}\)

\(^{19}\) Johnston, "Lecture 2d. Mental Education." Handwritten outline, pp. 1-5.
Besides developing the faculties of memory and reasoning, Johnston believed that a speaker's imagination needed to be enhanced so that moral truths and imagery could be acquired. He recommended the study of history for its examples, its pictures, and its vivifying forces, and the study of poetry for its aesthetic development, its subjective and objective development, its picturesqueness, and its moral truths and abstractions made concrete.

Johnston believed that the orator needed to develop a fourth faculty, that of criticism. He defined it as "the thought by analysis of subject," based on logic and common sense. It was "necessary to a certain extent" and "important in certain directions," but it could be "injurious if carried too far," resulting in hypercriticism which "begets flatness and timidity." To enhance the faculty of criticism, he suggested that speakers concentrate on philology and translation. Also, they should be implicit and aesthetic, with "the general result of culture rather than nice and mechanical [sic]."

When developing the faculties of imagination and criticism, Johnston warned that

it must be borne in mind always that in oratory at least, they must be considered alike with memory and argumentation, as implements not ends. The end is not to pile up facts, but to instruct; not to argue, to show all the reasons for a thing, but to convince; not to roam through the realm of fancy, but to make a useful servant of the Djin of the Lamp.20

He also noted that the mere understanding of the rhetorical canons of invention, organization, and style could not make a person eloquent.

Instead, the teachings must be applied. To reach the ultimate stage of application, the speaker must pursue an exploratory process which consists of the following sequence:

1. Studies & books supply the information & training & ideas.
2. Reflection adjusts & reorganizes thus giving our own form to them.
3. Conversation, discourse, debate and argument make us apt in the arrangement; & fluent, cohesive and pointed in language; and ready in address.
2. It teaches us practically the strong and weak points of an adversary & what we may expect in public discussion.
3. It should not be with one class of men, but with all classes.  

C. Physical training. By completing these steps, Johnston believed that an orator had accomplished the stage of mental development and was ready to enter the final phase or physical preparation of the speech, which consisted of the bodily and vocal elements of delivery. Johnston stipulated that elocution consisted of "all that part of delivery that belongs to the voice" and that "action embraces all the rest of delivery," including demeanor and gesture.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the elocutionary movement produced a change in the hierarchy of rhetorical canons, which resulted in the emphasis of delivery over invention. While following the classical tradition, Johnston chose to use

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delivery as a reinforcement for the speaker's content. He noted that "when the thought of a speech, the soul of it, is so much more important than the expression why is delivery so requisite? Neither just cause, sound arguments, correct ideas or even eloquent language [are] available without voice and action." To amplify his belief, he proposed a relevant analogy, stating that "three sentinels stand guard before the crypts and secret cells of the soul where sits in state the human will: the eye, the ear, and the understanding: he who soothes the former two, readily propitiates the last, the warder of the citadel and gains access to the will." He warned young speakers not to become infatuated with delivery exclusively because "mere elocution and action [are] often mistaken by the inexperienced for Oratory; such reputations [are] neither sound nor lasting. Such men [are] mere players." 24

He realized that rehearsal of the physical aspects of delivery was necessary, but he advised against imitation or pantomime exercises. He noted that

the body is a machine, but its mechanism is exquisite and responsive to the subtle workings of the soul and mind. We are not wooden dolls, puppets to be played by strings pulled by mechanical rules--travesties of humanity--but our spiritual natures are images of God, gleams of which we are permitted to catch through the windows of our prison house. 25

24Johnston, p. 2.

Johnston taught Whately's "think-the-thought" method long before the School of Expression was developed by S. S. Curry. Johnston advocated that "action & elocution are to be a reflex of the thought & feeling of the speaker." The demeanor or bearing consisted of "the involuntary movements of the body" and should "reflect the state of the soul--the moral side of our nature." He indicated that the soul "will do this anyhow, but we want it to signify to the audience the appropriate state of mind at the time of the delivery of the speech."

He also contended that delivery "should express in your manner your Equanimity: i.e. your self-respect and your deference for your audience: your moral energy. i.e. simplicity, cheerfulness, charity, sympathy." With such a delivery, "you conciliate both minds and souls of audiences."\(^27\)

In addition to developing a natural bodily delivery, Johnston recommended a corresponding vocal presentation. He likened the capacities of the human voice to that of musical instruments, noting that "what would you say if I was to tell you that a machine has been discovered that cannot only utter words like the automaton, & sentiment like the organ, but combines the two & joins to it expression of thought. You have such a machine--the vocal organism." To use it effectively, he recommended that speakers acquire "exact knowledge of its practical use . . . for its preservation, improvement and effectiveness as an instrument of expression."\(^28\) The particular knowledge

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\(^{26}\) Robb, pp. 193-97. \(^{27}\) Johnston, p. 2.

that he himself taught included the parts of the vocal tract, the 
articulation of sounds and the phonetic alphabet, accent (time, stress, 
and pitch), pronunciation, quality of the voice, powers of the voice 
(strength, compass, and flexibility), time and pause, emphasis, vocal 
improvement, and management of the voice in speaking.29

Strongly influenced by the classical teachers and practitioners of oratory, Johnston developed a rhetorical theory that interrelated the body, mind, and soul of speakers. His views were reflected in his role as a student and teacher, but they were also apparent when he prepared his own speeches and lectures.

B. Speech Preparation and Delivery

In preparing his speeches, Johnston employed a procedure that corresponded to the one he taught to the students in his oratory classes. The teaching notes for his speech courses suggest how Johnston developed his presentation.

Johnston's first step in preparation was to determine his specific purpose, noting that "Every speaker should seriously put to himself this question before beginning a speech; 'What object is to be accomplished by it?' ... the end to be effected must be kept in view." He likened the selection of the goals and strategy to be accomplished to the construction of a building. Quoting Luke 14:28-30, he said,

For which of you, intending to build a tower sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,—saying, "This man began to build, and was not able to finish."

He added, "Indeed, the similitude of scripture is very apt to that structure, to which the orator must give being and bodily form."

After determining the purpose, Johnston's second step in preparation was to formulate a thesis, which served as the unifying factor for the message. As he noted,

In the great work of architectural art will be found a central idea, that gives unity to the conception: so, in the artistic development of human discourse, the object of the oration must be kept constantly in the view of the speaker. This is its unity; and it is thus that it becomes artistic, instead of fragmentary.

As he developed his message, he included only the supporting material that was pertinent to his thesis, noting that

intent upon the final purpose, every division of your speech should be but another phase in its development; and indeed it should shine forth through every sentence and phrase. Around it should cluster all the thoughts, images, illustrations and arguments. Whatever tends not to enforce it should be rigorously rejected. By a strict adherence to this rule, useless and cumbersome episodes,—tinsel and tawdry ornamentation, the frippery of fine speech, fall away and leave the chiselled thought in the simplicity of natural beauty and strength. Can I urge upon you then too strongly to keep to the question?

When gathering supporting material, Johnston used his own insights about the topic. But when he was unfamiliar about the subject, he turned to the opinions of experts. He suggested that "if the subject is not one on which you have thought largely and matured your views, it may serve you a very good purpose, nay, can hardly fail to benefit you, to learn the views of other enlightened men on the same or similar topics." He turned to published sources, for "embodied in
books are the multitudinous thoughts of the Army of Thinkers on all the topics that have agitated the human soul. " He advised his students "to read as largely and as fully as time and circumstances will warrant on the subject of your speech. Know as far as you can all the strong thoughts that men's minds have generated thitherward."

As he read, he critiqued the writer's ideas, which in turn spawned new insights for him. As he noted,

But read not in the spirit of the disciple, but of the skeptic and of the combatant. In this dash of flint and steel, sparks will spring forth kindling new trains under the sun; in another, what we have acquired by honest toil, dug out of dross; smelted, assayed and minted, stamping with our superscription, is our own. We must conceive ideas, "non nova, sed move."

After gathering ideas and material for the content of the message, he sketched out the outline of his argument. When preparing the skeletal draft, he kept in mind the object in view, the facts of the particular case, and last, the general principles that were to reconcile them. With this general guidance, he began the arrangement of his speeches. His speeches consisted of the four parts in a classical oration: the exordium, the narration, the proof, and the peroration. Although he did not necessarily prepare the exordium first, he designed it in such a way that it would "naturally lead to and open up the subject of the discourse." He believed that "it is generally better that it should be composed with and with reference to the argument than after it."

Before including the narration, he carefully analyzed the audience first. If the listeners were neutral or favorable toward the issue under discussion, he would set forth a narration. In the
reverse case, he "deferred, omitted, or only implied in its consequences." He then presented the statement of the facts, "unless for good reason they too had best appear by inference, instead of explication."

When designing the argument, he realized that "there is no invariable rule of arrangement," but he chose to follow the pattern recommended by Whately. Johnston proposed that "the strongest arguments be placed first, the series weakening (as you proceed towards the middle of the speech) and then in the summing up to reverse the series, thus bringing the mention of enforcement of the strongest argument last and securing the effect of a climax." Johnston would not include every line of reasoning, which would exhaust the audience, but he would carefully select "those arguments that . . . carry most weight with the audience, and press upon them most strongly those that are most convincing." For the "sake of greater efficiency in the handling of his argument," Johnston would often "ignore subordinate reasons not unacceptable to his audience on other occasions and in different relations." He believed that "one must sometimes be content to risk or even lose a valuable position in order . . . to carry the key of the enemy's line." He advised students, "Do not press your own weak points, nor stake your success upon them. Assail your opponent while he is feeble, but remember he is not routed, no matter how much harrassed, while his centre remains unbroken." He strongly emphasized the disposition of arguments, noting that "the object of Oratory is victory; and no part of it, indeed, so nearly resembles the strategy of the embattled field, as the array of arguments."
The last part of the speech Johnston prepared was the peroration. Comparing its importance to the crowning touch on the stately columns of the Corinthian capital, he believed that the peroration should "spring naturally and beautifully from the body of the discourse" and should "engage the eyes, the memories, and the sympathies of the audience to the exclusion of every rival."

After he sketched out the first draft of his speech, he would go through several revisions, believing that "every great orator should have written and committed and indeed spoken many critically revised orations.\(^3\) As a professor preparing for each lecture, he jotted down handwritten skeletal outlines, using the standard outline format. From the outlines, he prepared full length handwritten copies, which probably served as his manuscript during delivery. Occasionally, he would type the lecture notes, thereby reducing the number of pages to shuffle during the presentation.\(^3\) The same procedure was followed when he prepared public addresses. However, he sometimes used key-word and key-phrase typed outline instead of full length scripts during the actual delivery.\(^3\)

\(^3\)This conclusion can be drawn by examining his lecture notes on history, literature, and oratory, which he taught while serving at Washington College. Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.

\(^3\)This conclusion can be drawn by examining the rough drafts and final versions of his speeches, such as "Higher Education in the South." Handwritten, typed, and published versions of assorted speeches can be found in the Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.
correspondence which he was responsible for as a university president and the paperwork which was required in preparing for orations, Johnston did not avail himself of a secretary or ghostwriter, choosing instead to personally carry out all the details until the last.  

Upon completing a polished manuscript and rehearsing, Johnston then presented his message to the actual audience, at which time he underwent the true test of a speaker. He maintained that a person "is not a great orator unless he is able to frame his language amid the tumultuous assemblage of the people; to avail himself of the opportunities of the moment; and heating and blazing with the contagion of popular sympathy to strike like the thunderbolt or desolate like the sweep of a mighty conflagration." He realized the importance of adapting immediately to the responses of the audience, advocating that the speaker learn therefore, not only to compose with that precision that writing alone can give, but to speak on the spur of the moment and to train the understanding and the imagination, the two wings of the soul, to lift you at a moment's bidding from the dull earth to the commanding realm of true oratory. You become master of all arms; can meet any antagonist; and control any audience.  

Applying his rhetorical theories and techniques of preparation to his own speeches, Johnston accomplished the desired impact on his listeners. He also received outstanding reviews from newspapers that reported his addresses. Included among the appraisals are:

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34 Johnston, pp. 9-10.
He speaks in a slow, emphatic manner.35

The learned speaker fully showed its solution in his able address.36

Col. Johnston's thoughtful and eloquent words were listened to with close attention, and when he closed there was a storm of applause from the audience whom he had deeply interested and pleasantly instructed.37

The hall was crowded with visitors and the masterly manner in which the orator treated his theme commanded close attention and great appreciation . . . a solid contribution to educational philosophy than a mere rhetorical effort.38

The paper was attentively listened to and called forth several expressions of views.39

... long and scholarly address.40

... mastery analysis. 41

He not only received such admirable comments as a result of meticulously prepared speeches, but he could also produce favorable effects during impromptu speeches. In the absence of the scheduled speaker at the County Convention of the Conservative Party in Lexington, Virginia, he spoke for nearly three hours on the conditions in the country and the causes leading to them. A newspaper reporter

35*Lexington Gazette*, November 17, 1869.

36*New Orleans Times-Democrat*, March 11, 1884.

37Undated newspaper clipping describing Johnston's speech in Columbia, South Carolina, on June 25, 1884. Johnston Collection.

38*Columbia (S.C.) Register*, June 26, 1884.

39*New Orleans Daily Picayune*, February 27, 1885.

40*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, June 13, 1890.

described Johnston's message as a "powerful and sweeping review" and an "admirable" and "mastery" speech. When speaking on two impromptu occasions in New Orleans, newspapers commented that "his remarks were listened to with marked attention" and that "this address terminated very pleasantly the exercises of the day."

Because of his extensive training in oratory, Johnston was able to prepare extemporaneous and impromptu speeches that were successfully delivered to his listeners. As a result, he acquired an outstanding reputation as a speaker and was invited to speak at numerous occasions.

C. Speaking Engagements

Johnston proposed a threefold classification of speeches, which included deliberative, didactic, and panegyrical oratory. According to his system, he participated in each type. In his career as a lawyer immediately before and after the war, he engaged in forensic oratory. Johnston also engaged in political speeches, which he gave in the presidential race of 1860 when he actively campaigned for

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44 New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 13, 1887.


the Southern Democratic candidate John C. Breckinridge.\textsuperscript{47} During the postbellum period, he also presented political speeches when he spoke on behalf of Stephen Johnson Field's nomination as the Democratic presidential candidate.\textsuperscript{48}

Throughout his entire career as an educator, Johnston was involved in his second type of oratory, which included didactic speaking. While serving on the faculty of Washington College from 1867 to 1880, he was involved in academic instruction, which was one type of didactic oratory. At times during his career as an instructor or administrator, he delivered a series of lectures on Shakespeare,\textsuperscript{49} teaching history and literature,\textsuperscript{50} and miscellaneous topics of cultural interest.\textsuperscript{51}

Johnston was successful as a deliberative and didactic speaker, but he was most prominent as a panegyrical or ceremonial speaker, which was the type of public address that characterized the

\textsuperscript{47}Louisville Democrat, September 26, 28, 30, and October 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 17, 1860.


\textsuperscript{49}Johnston, pp. 117-18.


\textsuperscript{51}Idem, "Mental Imagery and Number Form" and "Some Indian Skulls and Pale Face Myths," Papers Read Before the New Orleans Academy of Science, 1886-87 (New Orleans: L. Graham and Son, 1887).
South from 1865 to 1900. Because "all of these ceremomial events required a major oration by an esteemed guest speaker" considered to be an outstanding orator and community leader, William Preston Johnston, lawyer, soldier, educator, and son of a Confederate martyr, was invited to speak at numerous functions. At Washington College he was called upon more frequently as a public speaker than any other citizen of Lexington.

Four ceremonial occasions were frequently observed in the postwar South: Memorial Day or "Confederate Decoration Day," dedication of Confederate monuments, veterans' reunions, and academic events. A perusal of Johnston's speaking engagements reveals that he participated in all four customary events. When involved in the first three ceremonial settings during the decades immediately following the Civil War, Johnston focused on Lost Cause themes, extolling the virtues of the fallen patriots. For example, on Commencement Day at Washington College in 1867, Johnston praised the state of Virginia as the "nursing mother of Washington and Lee." He continued his

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54 Shaw, p. 117. 55 Towns, p. 118.

56 William Preston Johnston, "Response to a Complimentary Toast to the Faculty of Washington College at the Alumni Supper, Commencement Day," June 20, 1867. Johnston Collection.
occasional speeches at Washington College, including a monument dedication speech for Lee's statue, and a banquet oration honoring "the Confederate Dead." Upon the death of General Lee, president of Washington College, Johnston delivered an inspiration message to the student body. To an audience assembled in the chapel of Washington College to celebrate Memorial Day, Johnston delivered the eulogy "Decoration Day at the Graves of Lee and Jackson."

Demonstrating his adaptability to nonacademic audiences in Virginia, Johnston spoke to a railroad meeting at the local fair, to the Lynchburg Agricultural Society, and to the county convention of the Conservative Party.

Johnston continued his ceremonial speaking by travelling to other states that were interested in his role as a soldier and historian. In 1872, he delivered an address entitled "The Origin of Myth." While serving as president of Louisiana State University, he presented two speeches, including "Address Before the Kentucky

57Southern Collegian, July 3, 1876; and Lexington Gazette, June 23, 1873.
58Lexington Gazette and Citizen, April 23, 1875.
60Southern Collegian, October 29, 1870.
61Lexington Gazette and Citizen, June 2, 1875; October 20, 1869; November 25, 1870; and August 11, 1875.
Historical Society" in 1880\(^6^3\) and "Response at the Banquet of the Army of Tennessee Association in New Orleans" in 1882.\(^6^4\) While these early speeches about history were characterized by Lost Cause themes, he was more optimistic in his later historical speeches, such as "The Definition of History," presented to the Congress of Historians in 1893\(^6^5\) and "Address to the Virginia Historical Society" in 1897.\(^6^6\)

While Johnston was sought after as a speaker on historical subjects, he was even more popular as an advocate for the educational awakening in the New South. As professor at Washington College, he was invited to give the 1867 commencement address at the nearby Augusta Female Seminary in Staunton, Virginia.\(^6^7\) When serving as president of Louisiana State University, he delivered important


\(^6^7\)Idem, "Commencement Address at the Augusta Female Seminary," cited in Southern Collegian, May 29, 1869; Staunton (Virginia) Spectator, June 13, 1869; Staunton Vindicator, June 11, 1869; and The Valley Virginian, June 10, 11, and 24, 1869.
educational speeches to the Board of Supervisors,68 the State Superintendent of Public Instruction,69 and the student body.70 As president of Tulane, he frequently addressed the administrators71 and the graduating classes at Tulane University72 and Newcomb College.73 Because of his popularity, he spoke at other graduation ceremonies in New Orleans, including the New Orleans Normal School74 and Southern University.75

68 William Preston Johnston, "Relations of the University of the University to Education," Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Capitolian, December 23, 1880.


71 Idem, "Tulane University. Report of William Preston Johnston to Board of Administrators, on Plan of Organization of Tulane University (New Orleans: A. W. Hyatt, 1883); "Annual Report" (New Orleans: n.p., 1885); "Report of President William Preston Johnston" (New Orleans: n.p., 1893); "Report of President William Preston Johnston to Board of Administrators of Tulane University of Louisiana" (New Orleans: L. Graham & Son, 1897); and Minutes of the Board of Administrators, Tulane University, 1883-1899.

72 Idem, "Tulane University of Louisiana: Its Place in Our Educational System" (New Orleans: n.p., 1895); and "Commencement Address" (New Orleans: n.p., 1898).


"Ready to answer the call to speak anywhere," Johnston spoke before professional associations in the state, including the Louisiana Educational Society, the Convention of Parish Superintendents, the Louisiana Colored State Fair Association, and the Louisiana State Public School Teachers Association.

Elsewhere in the South, he was held in high esteem; consequently, he delivered commencement addresses at the University of Texas, South Carolina College, Washington University in St. Louis, and other institutions.

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82 Idem, "The Work of the University in America."
Louis, and Kentucky Agricultural and Mechanical College.

Johnston also addressed other state, national, and international educational groups, including the University of the State of New York in 1892, the National Educational Association's convention for 1884, 1885, and 1886 and the International Congress of Educators in 1885 and 1893.

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84 Idem, "Problems of Southern Civilization."

85 Idem, "Address Before the Kentucky Agricultural and Mechanical College." Handwritten script, Johnston Collection.

86 Idem, "Higher Education in the South," Thirtieth University Convocation of the State of New York, July 5-7, 1892 in Regents' Bulletin No. 9, August, 1892.


90 The International Congress of Educators held their meeting in conjunction with the Department of Superintendence of the National Educational Association in New Orleans, 1885. See Special Report by the Bureau of Education.

D. Conclusion

William Preston Johnston's liberal arts education, training as a lawyer, participation in the Civil War, role as an educator, and understanding of the theory and practice of rhetoric placed him in an ideal position to become a prominent orator in the postbellum South.

As one writer noted:

Colonel Johnston has delivered a large number of addresses before various universities and other educational assemblies. These have been widely noticed as giving a correct and vivid picture of what is called the Old South, and also of the conditions in the New South. The manly and earnest tone of the speaker, and his profound philosophical observation, with his estimate of what should be done for Southern civilization, have been much appreciated by political economists in America and Europe.92

As a result, he became a spokesman for the educational awakening in the New South, delivering over fifty speeches calling for improvement in academic environments.

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CHAPTER IV

THE CAMPAIGN IN LOUISIANA

Although the entire South suffered severe educational hardships during the postbellum period, particular areas were hit harder than others. The state of Louisiana was one of those places that endured greater problems, and the circumstances were so critical that one of the state superintendents of education hypothesized: "If the generations could be educated by proclamation, and if the statute law could establish and support 'seminaries of learning,' the state of Louisiana, instead of being one of the most illiterate, would to-day be at the head of educational eminence among the States of the Republic." 1 From the moment that William Preston Johnston arrived in Louisiana in 1880 until his death in 1899, he tried to uplift the school system, using the power of the platform to awaken the slumbering public. The purpose of this chapter is to (A) survey the state's educational problems, to examine Johnston's campaign for overcoming the dilemmas, to investigate the ways in which his speaking became a part of his strategy, and to analyze three selected speeches. The addresses that best represent Johnston's campaign in Louisiana are

A. Background

One writer suggested that if William Preston Johnston had known what shambles awaited his arrival in 1880, he probably would not have moved to Louisiana.² Another historian noted:

When President Johnston came to Louisiana, in 1880, as president of the State University, he found the educational system in the midst of what might be called a struggle for existence. The University at Baton Rouge was without funds, in a hired house, with 39 students. The fifteen years of fearful political agitation since the days of '65 had made proper development of the new public-school system almost an impossibility. In New Orleans, the common school was practically in a state of siege, with the teachers unpaid and the educational public greatly discouraged.³

When Johnston arrived in 1880, he soon realized that the major problems plaguing Louisiana were the direct result of inadequate legislation, gross negligence, and social animosities, which had been the trademark of the 1860s and 1870s. The Law of 1869 had provided for a state system of public education, but few real efforts had been made to transform the legislation and rhetoric into schoolhouse brick and wood. From 1869 to 1877, blacks were practically the only people


to benefit from state appropriations, a practice that resulted in a boycott of schools by whites. Yet boycotts were mild compared to other forms of racial turmoil that were rampant. As one historian pointed out,

This period was one of bad feelings towards the Negro race, especially in Mississippi and Louisiana. In the year 1892 there were 255 known cases of lynching in the country, almost all of Negroes in the South, and in February, 1893, the average was nearly one a day. For example, in Jackson, Louisiana, where there was a Negro church meeting, a crowd of white men fired revolvers into the Negroes as they passed to and fro. About the same time a Negro girl of fifteen was taken from jail and hanged.5

The problem between the races and the poor attendance in schools prevented the Peabody Fund from cooperating with Louisiana in establishing schools until a dual system could be established.6

If the people of Louisiana had enrolled their children in the schools, they would have received more financial support from the philanthropic agency, aid that was badly needed to help reduce numerous educational obstacles. Public authorities were not only unconcerned about improving their schools, but they rerouted existing educational funds into other state operations. The most appalling example of this practice occurred in 1872 when, as Johnston noted,

the entire assets of the former [educational] fund were sold to pay warrants which public opinion and the best jurists denounced


6Knight, p. 328, and Carter, p. 22.
as fraudulent. In a word, the treasury was pillaged, the little children were robbed of their birthright, and the spoilers not only went at large but received the honors and support of the Federal Government.7

After a five-year delay, the state finally channelled some of its resources back into education, establishing a separate school system for the two races and becoming in 1877 eligible for funds from the Peabody Agency.8 Showing further concern for their schools, the state formed a board of education, consisting of the governor, lieutenant-governor, secretary of state, attorney-general, state superintendent of education, and two citizens of Louisiana. Later, this board was reorganized to include one representative from each congressional district.

As Louisiana emerged from Reconstruction, it began to give additional attention to its schools. As one educator noted, "The most important step ... in the reorganization of the public school system was taken in the Constitution of 1879," which "provided for the appointment of parish [county] boards, and declared that these boards might appoint at a fixed salary a parish superintendent of public schools." But the same writer pointed out that "While the Constitution of 1879 is entitled to our gratitude for the reinstatement of the parish superintendents, one is forced to admit that it made no adequate


provisions for the support of the public schools.\(^9\) Another educational historian corroborated the viewpoint, saying that the provisions in the constitution adopted in 1879 were poor, but they mark the beginning of the evolution of the modern system in Louisiana. It said simply that the General Assembly shall provide for the establishment, maintenance and support of public schools. An annual poll tax of one dollar was required for the schools, but no other tax was fixed.\(^10\)

Yet whether Louisiana educators praised or criticized the 1879 provisions, they all shared an apprehension about the educational status, reporting that "public schools were in as satisfactory a condition as was possible with the limited funds and quality of the teachers at their command."\(^11\) To compound the uncertainty of the circumstances in the schools, during this period the state suffered extensive flooding, which prevented the collection of local school taxes, as well as kept many schools from being opened.\(^12\) Furthermore, the city of New Orleans was struck with a yellow fever epidemic, which wiped out nearly four thousand people between 1878 and 1885.\(^13\)

In the midst of this chaos, William Preston Johnston arrived in Louisiana to serve as president of its state university, and he


\(^10\)Dabney, 1:372.


discovered that not only was higher education in turmoil, but that all levels were in disarray. Some of the causes of hardship, such as poverty, coincided with those elsewhere in the region. As one Louisiana historian noted, "Nobody was rich in our part of the state, or our part of the whole country." Another writer pointed out that poverty was very real and widespread throughout the state. The war scars were deep and long in healing. It was easy to talk about the need of school funds, but another matter to pay taxes when men experienced great difficulty in providing food and clothing for their family.

As a result of the economic plight, the state and other jurisdictions channeled limited resources into the schools. In 1882, school receipts allowed only 45 cents for each educable child in the state. At maximum, teachers were paid only $31.50 per month, a salary that was sometimes decreased or was not paid at all. School buildings were crude, and "a few hundred thousand measured the value of all school buildings and equipment in the state."
The state was troubled by other problems too. While many educational networks elsewhere in the South suffered from bad politics, Louisiana was notorious for its practices of nepotism and political favor. One educational historian said, "The administration of the schools was in the hands of political appointees, and there was not constructive leadership. Under such men it was impossible to secure the needed legislation or appropriations for the schools." Confirming the observation, another writer pointed out that the political power controlled all levels of administration, including the state and parish superintendents who "were not, and could not be, educational leaders, and as a result the public school idea grew slowly and painfully." Johnston so abhorred the power network that he said, "It will ruin any educational institution subjected to it."23

As in other states in the region, the people of Louisiana were opposed to public education at the state's expense. One writer recorded,

The sentiment in southern Louisiana was for a long time opposed to educating at public expense the children of parents able to pay in church or private schools. Public free schools for paupers were tolerated, but that was all. A stigma was thus attached to public schools which lasted down to the end of the century.24

More so than in other states, the people who believed in education were opposed to nonsectarian schools which were regarded as "antagonistic to the faith handed down by their fathers." Consequently, the

21 Dabney, 1:372. 22 Harris, pp. 61-62.

23 Minutes, Board of Administrators, February 9, 1883, Tulane University, Special Collections.

24 Dabney, 1:366. 25 Ibid., and Johnston, p. 175.
supporters of education enrolled their children in private or parochial schools.

Unfortunately, in Louisiana the opponents of all education outnumbered the few who believed in the need for it. As a result of this apathy, Louisiana ranked second to last in the nation for enrollment, with only 24 percent of the school age population listed on class rosters and only 15 percent in average daily attendance. Confirming the apathy, Johnston observed that "in New Orleans fully one half of the children of school age are refusing even a primary education, even the barest rudiments of knowledge." He noted that the indifference pertained to all academic levels of instruction, for "If to-morrow we could offer a free University education to every youth in New Orleans, nine out of ten would refuse it, for good or for bad reasons."

Because the public was not concerned about education, Louisiana suffered the consequences, namely, an illiteracy rate of almost 50 percent, which was near the bottom of the list of states in the country.27

Sympathizing with educators who were frustrated by these obstacles, Johnston acknowledged, "It is not difficult for me, at least, to understand the discouragements under which they labor."28


Yet, in spite of all the difficulties that plagued the educational system in Louisiana, he developed an optimistic outlook for its future. Describing his views to a national audience, he said:

There are states to be cited and quoted and boasted of as models, and their representatives are slow to avail themselves of the prerogative. But Louisiana is not one of these. Her position is exceptional. When I was at Yale College, that student who distinguished himself by taking the lowest honor at the Junior Exhibition, received from his grateful classmates, "A Wooden Spoon," with appropriate remarks. Strange to say, he was generally quite popular. Nobody was jealous of him. He was always "a good fellow," even if a trifle shiftless and idle. And he bore his honors weekly. Now Louisiana is the most illiterate state in the Union; and I therefore claim for her "the Wooden Spoon" in the great Interstate Education Exhibition.

But, pardon me yet another word about this college parable. Remember the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. The Wood Spoon man, who was the last at the distribution of honors in college, was not always, nor often, last in the race and the battle of life.

... Do not be astonished, then, if I tell you that there are men resolved and banded together, and animated by a heroic enthusiasm, who are determined that the last shall be first.29

With this viewpoint, Johnston embarked on his educational crusade in Louisiana. Shortly after his arrival to begin serving as president of Louisiana State University, he spoke to the state superintendent of education and the university's board of administrators about a scheme of universal education that would affect all academic levels and help uplift the entire public. In this address, he described a chain reaction that could occur by placing the university at the pinnacle of the educational pyramid. By training its students to upgrade community standards, including its common schools, Johnston believed that a cyclical effect would link the university to the lower levels of

instruction.\textsuperscript{30} While Johnston's plan would have been effective in curtailing the educational problems in Louisiana, it was ignored by state authorities who could have put it into effect.\textsuperscript{31} Ironically, the proposal was eventually adopted by the state, as described by its superintendent of education in the 1890s: "When the State takes control, it first establishes colleges and universities; then elementary free schools, and then it adds supplementary institutions for the afflicted; in the meanwhile increasing attention is paid to supervision and methods."\textsuperscript{32}

Because Johnston did not accomplish his goals by going to the top political authorities, he developed a different approach to gain universal education. At that time in Louisiana's history, his attempts to help the people were so sincere and so appreciated by philanthropists who wanted to make headway in the state that some people claimed that Tulane University was organized in order that William Preston Johnston might be given its presidency.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{30}William Preston Johnston, "Relations of the University to Education," \textit{Baton Rouge Tri-Weekly Capitolian}, December 23, 1880.


\textsuperscript{32}Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1894-95, 2 vol., 2:1304.

When Johnston first became president of Tulane in 1883, he recognized community potential that needed to be ignited. Describing his impressions, he said:

When Tulane University was organized, there were dormant in this city intellectual and moral energies by the score that waited an awakening. Culture was here, taste was here, talent was here, genius was here; but they all shrank back from declaring themselves lest they should stir the ribald sarcasm of a rampant Bohemianism. What was needed was a nucleus that did not fear ignorant ridicule, that could afford to confront and scorn it, and that would stand like a great rock in the desert for the dignity of scholarship and literature and public morality, a rallying point around which all the higher spiritual influences could set up their standards and feel their touch with the world's best thought and effort.35

On such a premise, Tulane University was founded. And finding others elsewhere in the community who shared the same feeling, Johnston helped form the Louisiana Educational Society. One educational historian has described Johnston's role in the organization, pointing out that "he was the soul of the Louisiana Educational Society, that, in the ten years of its activity, repulsed the assault of its enemies, woke up its friends in the city and State, and laid the broad foundation of what is now one of the most hopeful of the public-school organizations of the Southwest."36 The primary way in which the newly formed educational association made an impact was through rallies and meetings which were open to all educators and citizens in the community, a common method that characterized the educational awakening in

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34 Shaw, p. 196.


36 Mayo, p. 1370.
the South. Commenting on such practices that ultimately revived the South, one writer has recorded:

The state campaigns were conducted independently and were of varied origin and duration. In a region where public speaking had long been a popular form of entertainment, oratory furnished the chief instrument of persuasion. At all-day educational rallies, resembling the camp-meetings of an earlier period . . . the campaigns stressed the handicaps of ignorance and economic rewards of education.  

Believing that he could affect public opinion in favor of educational reform, Johnston was "ready to answer the call to speak anywhere," which included addresses to his own colleagues in the Louisiana Educational Society. One of his earliest and most formidable speeches to this body included "What Education Is," delivered on March 10, 1884.

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38 Mayo, p. 1370.

39 William Preston Johnston, "What Education Is," delivered on March 10, 1884, to the Louisiana Educational Society, New Orleans. While Johnston did not include a title on his incomplete handwritten script (Tulane University, Special Collections), a newspaper reporter used the title as the heading for an article summarizing the Johnston speech. See *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, March 11, 1884. The speech was also reported in the *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, March 11, 1884, in an article entitled "Education in Louisiana." Because Johnston delivered another speech entitled "Education in Louisiana" a few years later, the critic has chosen to avoid the latter title. In the Louisiana *Journal of Education for Home and School* 7 (March 1884), an abstract of the 1884 speech was included in an article entitled "The Competition of Civilization." For this dissertation, the critic has chosen to use the title "What Education Is" to refer to the speech Johnston delivered on March 10, 1884.

Although the opening pages of the handwritten script are missing, enough details are provided in the newspaper reports and journal article to give a complete overview of the introductory remarks in Johnston's speech.
B. What Education Is

On Monday night, March 10, 1884, an audience composed of educators, clergymen, newspaper reporters, and lay citizens assembled together in Werlein Hall in New Orleans to hear the fifth lecture in a series inaugurated by the Louisiana Educational Society. On the platform sat the Honorable Louis Bush, president of the organization; the Reverend Dr. S. Landrum, leader of the devotion; and Colonel William Preston Johnston, orator of the evening. After an introduction by President Bush, Johnston proceeded to talk for nearly two hours, attempting to awaken his concerned audience to the educational circumstances and solutions confronting the state of Louisiana.40

1. Introduction

Johnston believed that when constructing the exordium of a speech, an orator must consider two major factors, including "the conciliation of the audience in some form or other is properly its object" and "it should naturally lead to and open up the subject of the discourse." Consequently, Johnston so arranged his introduction that he first identified himself with the aspirations and concerns of his listeners and then connected their needs to the topic under discussion. In "What Education Is," Johnston accomplished his criteria for an effective exordium by alluding to the fine speakers who had addressed the people of New Orleans. Contrasting himself with other orators who had spoken in the city, he confessed that he was

40*Daily Picayune*, March 11, 1884, and *Times-Democrat*, March 11, 1884.
reluctant to speak, noting that the former were professionals, whereas he was only an amateur. He continued nevertheless, saying that "when ordered by our esteemed president I had nothing left to do but to obey. I shall try to fill the place of an honest blacksmith, as I am more of an artisan than an artist as a lecturer." Having demonstrated his humility and good will, he then led in his message for the audience, asking them to "hear me for my cause, and my cause is 'Education in Louisiana.'"

2. Body

To help involve the audience in the cause of education, Johnston spent his two hours of discussion presenting the following implied lines of reasoning:

Past civilizations have either survived or died because of the presence or absence of an educational system.

Today, many southerners, failing to see the fallacies of their beliefs, object to public education.

The truth is that the founding fathers recognized the correlation between freedom and enlightenment. If the premise was true during the formative years of the republic, it is still true today.

Louisiana, one of the greatest violators of the principles of the founding fathers, has failed to provide for the education of its people. Consequently, the state is suffering from a high illiteracy rate.

The reason why Louisiana will not improve its schools is because the public is apathetic.

Enlightened people, including the members of the audience, must make the public become aware that education is vital to their survival.

Concerned citizens should not waste their time expressing their individual views to the top officials in the state. The method has been tried and it has failed.
Concerned citizens should organize their efforts and work on the local level, which has been proven a successful strategy in Louisiana...

a. Organization. Believing that "no invariable rule of arrangement" must govern the organization of the argument, Johnston used several conventional patterns to convey these lines of reasoning. Before he began his discussion of the particular circumstances in Louisiana, he first examined general principles that showed the causal relationship between enlightenment and freedom. To prove the validity of the correlation, he used a chronological pattern for introducing historical illustrations. Having presented political views consistent with the ideologies held by his listeners, he was able to move into the application of the principles in local circumstances. As he covered the points about Louisiana, he used a problem-solution format, discussing the consequences of the state's inferior educational system and the ways to remedy its problems.

Johnston apparently believed that this arrangement was the most appropriate for his listeners. He felt that the lines of reasoning presented early in the speech were the ones that would achieve the greatest impact on his audience, for, as he had expressed in his lectures on oratory, "the strongest arguments [should] be placed first, the series weakening (as you proceed towards the middle of the speech;) and then in the summing up to reverse the series."\(^{41}\)

\(^{41}\)William Preston Johnston, "The Preparation of a Discourse." Handwritten notes. Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections, pp. 5-6.
In addition to implementing Johnston's rhetorical views, the pattern perhaps was the best for an audience composed of people who revered the Constitution and principles of the founding fathers. Using deductive reasoning, Johnston was able to show his listeners that his recommendations for the locality were consistent with the generalizations and assumptions on which the country had been founded.

b. Forms of support. Johnston believed that a general training in various subjects and specific training in oratory would equip a speaker to develop a mind full of words, phrases, proverbs, and quotations that would become readily accessible when speaking. An examination of "What Education Is" reveals that Johnston applied this theory as an orator, for he relied upon examples, illustrations, comparisons, statistics, and quotations as the major means of amplification in his address to the Louisiana Educational Society.

To illustrate the relationship between civilization and enlightenment, Johnston cited the examples of Germany, France, and England. Following a chronological pattern, he mentioned certain historical events in Europe during the previous century which showed that social reconstruction could be achieved only through education of the people. Drawing an analogy between Europe and the postbellum South, Johnston contended that Southerners were at an important crossroad in their history, a dividing line that would determine their future. Posing questions to stress the significance of the ultimate decision,

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he asked, "Shall we sit down by the ruins and ashes of our civiliza-
tion and weep for the past, or shall we rise to the height of our man-
hood, and prove not only that 'human endurance is equal to human 
calamity,' as we have done, but that the energy of freemen is superior 
to the issues of fate?" Answering the question with a light-darkness 
motif, he replied, "We must let light into the dark places." Knowing 
that the audience already accepted his premise, he carried the options 
a step further by appealing to the cultural pride of the people. 
Johnston said that if the people did not "come forward and help the 
schools by voice, by vote, and by every virtuous means," then the con-
sequences would be "to sit at the second table of civilization, to eat 
the scraps, to drink the dregs, to wear the rags, to take the kicks 
and cuffs, which affluence allows to squalor; to feel the rich man's 
scorn, the proud man's contumely, [and] to wear the badge of hopeless 
degradation." He pointed out that these dramatic occurrences could be 
averted if the people would respond favorably to education. 

After offering a defense for education, Johnston switched over 
to the offensive. He knew that there were "good people in this city, 
honest people, book-learned people, who believe in ignorance, who 
cherish it—in their neighbors; and who regard it as a social bless-
ing—so long as it does not invade their own homes." To refute this 
notion, he provided a common illustration, noting sarcastically that 
"when the trained servant has been replaced by the ambitious corn-
field hand, you may recall the thrill with which you have listened to 
the crash of precious china and the downfall of vases, and seen the 
dinner ruined or the children half poisoned by the most stupendous 

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stupidity and awkwardness." Claiming that education could avert such menial mistakes, he contended that even "in mechanical employments, it is evident that skill makes the difference between profit and loss."

Responding to another fear by wealthy citizens, Johnston maintained that "it is a great fallacy that knowledge hurts any one, that truth can harm." He pointed out the source of the half-truth, noting that "the usual form of the fallacy is when some person of more or less education commits a crime to attribute it to his knowledge."

Disproving the myth, Johnston pointed out that "it is the wicked heart, not the knowledge, which prompts the crime. . . . It will be hardly denied that intelligence is more competent for good and less prone to evil than ignorance, and this covers the whole case."

Returning to his defense for education, Johnston challenged the myth that the obligation of the state to provide an education is optional. Following a deductive pattern of reasoning, he argued that if a republic is to be maintained, it must instruct its citizens about the performance of duties. He supported this major premise with extensive quotations from the founding fathers, including Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, and Madison. He concluded by making the historical premise become relevant, noting, "If these admonitions were necessary when the Government was that of a nation of freeholders and slave owners, nearly all education in some degree and the heirs of ancient liberties, with how much more of solemn and prophetic warning should they fall upon our ears now in this day of universal suffrage, with enfranchised ignorance and sullen agrarianism holding the balance of power."
Bringing the significance of the line of reasoning to the audience before him, Johnston included an ironic illustration to exemplify ignorance. Presenting an anecdote, he said, "A certain Hollander is said to have written a History of Iceland, in which one chapter is headed; 'On the Owls of Iceland'; the contents of which are as follows, 'There are no owls in Iceland.'" Showing that the instance was analogous to local circumstances, he said, "Our chapter on public education may almost be written, 'There is no public education in Louisiana.'" He supported his claim by reminding his listeners of the jolting statistics released by the 1880 report of the Federal Commissioner of Education. Johnston appealed to the audience's concern over the fact that Louisiana was at the bottom of educational standards, particularly in literacy and enrollment.

Concluding his discussion of the nature of the dilemma, Johnston surveyed the cause of the problem and blamed the situation on the apathetic attitude of the general public. He assured his listeners that they should not abandon their efforts to uplift the people. To show how the ugly circumstances could be changed, Johnston summarized the familiar fairy tale of the Beauty and the Beast. Showing its application to the audience, he said, "This is but a pretty and poetic way of saying that the divine genius of charity alone can transform a brutalized humanity into a glorified humanity; that it requires the touch of the helping hand to lift up the degradation which grovels and cowers repelling friendly aid, that it is the kiss of peace alone which can exalt and ennoble the lowly, the abject, and the outcast."
Moving into his discussion of solutions, Johnston quoted certain portions of his December 1880 speech to the State Superintendent of Education and Board of Supervisors at LSU, an address that contained advice that was rejected by the former audience. He contended to this new audience that if top officials ignored the suggestions, then educators must pursue a grassroots approach which would produce a groundswell of concern. He advised the listeners not to work independently, but rather collectively through organizations such as the Louisiana Educational Society. He explained that during its one year of existence, the association had already had an important impact on the community. Concerning its influence, he noted, "The interest manifested in every part of the State, the responses which have been made to our appeals, the cordial sympathy and hearty cooperation with our movement in other states and in different branches of the Federal Government, all evince that our action is on the right line and will result in benefit to education."

Visualizing what could come out of the movement, he cited particular goals, including "better laws and constitutional amendments, by means of which we may obtain greater resources, larger local appropriations, more energetic administration, fuller supervision, normal schools and teachers better trained and better paid." His objectives also included two controversial proposals, namely federal aid and black education. In order to prevent misunderstanding, he clarified the two recommendations in depth. He justified national funds for local schools primarily on the basis that the federal government should pay the cost of educating a sizeable ignorant population which
it had recently enfranchised. He also pointed out that the white population's fear of an educated black populace was unfounded.

Although he called for help from the federal government, he qualified his position, noting that he still believed in the preeminence of local authority. To clarify the distribution of powers, he explained:

It is not the proper function of the central government to assume the task of educating the children. The proper function of the United States is not the control but "the patronage," of education in the states. The function of the state is not the instruction of the child, but the control of that instruction. For organization and supervision, this state control is all important; in everything else, it should be secondary to local management.

Showing that the policy worked, he referred to the state of Massachusetts, where $150,000 was distributed for education by the state authorities, and $5 million by the local officials. He added, "This is as it should be."

In the speech to the Louisiana Educational Society, Johnston provided a variety of expository techniques to support his premises. The distribution of material gave equal attention to the problem and the solution. As the proven solution was presented during the second half of the speech, it accentuated the optimistic theme of his address.

3. Conclusion

Johnston suggested that the peroration was the "climax of your speech." Consequently, he carefully constructed the conclusion so that it would achieve a strong impact on his listeners. He chose not to introduce new lines of reasoning in it, but instead, he amplified
his message with a relevant anecdote, poetic language, or another appropriate device that would crown "the stately column" with the "Corinthian capital."\textsuperscript{43}

To conclude his message in "What Education Is," Johnston chose an analogy that illustrated how crucial an education was. Reemphasizing the point of his speech, he asserted: "It has been said that Louisiana was settled a thousand years too soon; that the River should have had another epoch to build the land and to raise it above overflow." But pointing out that "educated intelligence can leap the chasm, and bring this fancied millenium within our time," he suggested that "it [education] can make broad and high the levees which guard your fields and cities; scoop out the mighty channel of the turbid flood which now rolls threateningly to the sea, and bring it under human control; drain and underdrain subsoil and irrigate your lands, interlace your fields with tramways, replace the mule with the dummy, make machinery everywhere do the tasks too large and too cruel for man, and practically lift the marsh twenty feet above high water mark--lift the marsh physically, mentally and morally."

4. Assessment

Johnston's abilities to apply his rhetorical principles contributed to his immediate and long-range success with his audience. His presentation evoked favorable reactions, as indicated by the frequent applause during the speech. The following day, local newspaper reports also complimented the address, as the result of "his discourse

\textsuperscript{43} Johnston, "The Preparation of a Discourse," p. 8.
being of a highly interesting character, and containing many valuable suggestions to the people of this State, on a question of vital importance to its welfare." As it was "practicable at this time to give only a resume of the lecture," a newspaper reporter for the New Orleans Daily Picayune devoted several columns to abstracting the key points of the two-hour speech. A writer for the New Orleans Times-Democrat, stating that the "learned speaker fully showed its solution in his able address," also gave sizeable attention to Johnston's message.\(^4^4\) The Louisiana Journal of Education for Home and School published the major points of the noteworthy presentation too.\(^4^5\)

The long-range effects of Johnston's speeches combined with the other endeavors of the Louisiana Educational Society proved to have a beneficial impact on the community. After a few years of the association's existence, Johnston told a national audience that the organization "has now for three years kept up its appeals to the people and to the Legislature, so to amend their laws as to give efficiency to the public school systems... It has not ceased to stir public opinion, and to awaken it to a sense of our short-comings."\(^4^6\)

On another occasion, he pointed out that without doubt there has been a great educational awakening in this State, due in part to the general movement throughout the South, but, in some degree, we may assume, to the practical measures adopted by this society [Louisiana Educational Society]. Whatever may be the causes, it is gratifying to be able to record that new

\(^4^4\)Daily Picayune, and Times-Democrat.
\(^4^5\)Johnston, "The Competition of Civilization."
\(^4^6\)Idem, "Education in Louisiana," pp. 176-77.
life seems to be throbbing in the veins of our people, and that a conscious vitality is manifest in every department of education, significant of progress and aspiration.\footnote{William Preston Johnston, "Condition of Education in Louisiana," \textit{Louisiana Journal of Education for Home and School} 7 (February 1886: 309).}

Confirming Johnston's observations, the educational historian Charles Dabney recorded that the "Louisiana Educational Society, which gathered together the friends of the schools in a powerful organization, aroused an interest in the schools in both the city and the state, and laid the foundations for the development which followed." Showing the direct effectiveness of Johnston's work through the educational association, Dabney also noted that

the act adopted in 1888 had been largely the result of the influence of President Johnston, President Thomas D. Boyd and Professor Henry E. Chambers. They secured the law to require the police juries to appropriate annually one and a half mills for public schools, which had been merely permitted before. Although many of the juries ignored the law for a time, it became the basis of the first definite progress in the schools.\footnote{Dabney, pp. 374 and 380.}

Although Johnston's speech to the Louisiana Educational Society in March, 1884, was not the exclusive reason for the educational awakening that began in Louisiana during the mid 1880s, it affirmed the effectiveness of his strategy for accomplishing the goals.

C. The Demand for High Schools in Louisiana

By the 1890s, an educational revival was well underway in Louisiana, having begun on the local level and later, having moved upward through the structural network. However, it was slow to reach
the offices of parish superintendents because the positions were purely political. As one writer observed:

This was fatal to educational progress. . . . They kept the meager records, and fully earned the money that was paid to them, but they contributed little or nothing to the advancement of the public schools. There is no thought of criticizing adversely the parish superintendents of the period under discussion, as most of them were honest, patriotic men who gave to the schools more of time and talent than their inadequate salaries justified. But they were not, and could not be educational leaders, and as a result the public school idea grew slowly and painfully.49

The concept of common schools was becoming acceptable, but as one educator of the period noted, "The most defective feature of public-school equipment in Louisiana now is the lack of high schools, save in the city of New Orleans."50 New Orleans had secondary education due to the efforts of Tulane University and the Louisiana Educational Society, which had awakened the public to the need for such schools.51 Tulane had even operated a high school department until the city could establish its own secondary school system. In 1893 though, when the University realized that it no longer needed to provide preparatory services for its future enrollees, administrators decided to phase out the high school department so that it could concentrate its attention to the development of higher education. But Tulane University did not abandon its concern for the lower levels of instruction; instead, the Board of Administrators supported President

49 Harris, pp. 61-62. 50 Fay, p. 110.

Johnston's concern for the conditions of secondary schools elsewhere in the state. In May 1893, the board adopted the following resolution:

The President of the University is requested to devote his attention to the consideration of the best means to secure the establishment of High Schools, public and private, in different parts of the city and State, having competent teachers and a uniform course of studies, selected and adapted to prepare students for admission to the colleges of the University; and to formulate and recommend to the Board such plan for encouraging such High Schools and Academies as, after examination, he concludes will be most effective.52

Based on Johnston's recommendations, the board presented proposals to public school officials in the state, with the ultimate goal of impressing "upon the Public School authorities and the people the importance of establishing Public High Schools at central points throughout the State, and especially of adopting therein courses of study devised and adequate to prepare students for admission to the Colleges of the University, as is already done to a great extent by the excellent Public High Schools of New Orleans."53 As inducements to implement the plan, the board offered the following rewards:

1. It would admit graduates from competent state high schools without requiring them to undergo screening. Such an act was viewed as an honor by educators, for as one historian recorded,

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52 "Resolutions and Address to School Officers and Teachers, Adopted by the Board of Administrators of Tulane Educational Fund, May, 1893," p. 32. Report published along with other speeches by William Preston Johnston, including "The Demand for High Schools in Louisiana"; "Report of President Wm. Preston Johnston. Commencement, June 15, 1893"; "Address of the Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund to the Public School Authorities, the Teachers and the People of the State of Louisiana"; and "Courses of Study Recommended to High Schools and Academies."

53 "Address of the Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund to the Public School Authorities, the Teachers and the People of the State of Louisiana," p. 35.
"The ambition of principals and assistants in private preparatory schools is to have their pupils admitted to the freshman classes of Tulane and Newcomb without entrance examinations."\textsuperscript{54}

2. It would extend two scholarships with free tuition and a single honorarium of $150 each to be offered for competition between students of the public schools in each congressional district of the state.

3. It would offer the two similar scholarships with like honorarium for competition between students entering from states outside of Louisiana.

4. It would offer an honorarium of $115 to the top three students in each academic level within the university.

5. It would extend two free scholarships to women entering Newcomb College, with additional honoraria forthcoming.

Summarizing the basis for the inducements, the Tulane Board concluded that "if the public authorities and people of the State will perform their duty in providing the means of preparatory instruction, the Board pledges its best efforts to establish an institution for the higher education of our youth which will meet all the manifold needs of modern life and civilization."\textsuperscript{55}

The efforts to capture the attention of public school officials met with success. Within a few weeks after Tulane's proposals were released, the State Superintendent of Public Education invited Johnston to address a convention of parish superintendents. Johnston had previously spoken to the newly formed organization when it had held its first official meeting in New Orleans in 1887.\textsuperscript{56} And now,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{55}"Address of the Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund," pp. 35-37.
\end{itemize}
six years later, he was again speaking to the organization, but this time on the subject of secondary education. Johnston felt that the opportunity to speak to the parish officials was such a high priority that he passed up other engagements in order to address them on the vital subject. Gathering together on Wednesday, June 28, 1893, in Lake Charles, Louisiana, the group listened to the timely speech entitled "The Demand for High Schools in Louisiana."57

1. Introduction

Johnston believed that before an orator presented his discussion, he should construct an exordium that would "open up the subject of the discourse." To achieve this purpose, Johnston usually began his speeches with references to the audience, occasion, and subject. In particular, he included appropriate remarks that indicated his commitment to the concerns of his listeners. In "The Demand for High Schools in Louisiana," he fulfilled this criteria by saying:

The invitation from the State Superintendent of Public Education to address you on "The Demand for more High Schools in Louisiana" met an immediate response in my breast. It is a subject that has been near my heart for the last thirteen years, and I have awaited anxiously the hour when the public mind could be aroused to a sense of its exceeding importance. Indeed, next to the establishment of a great central university, diffusing light and knowledge and stimulating intellectual activity in every department of life, a general system of Public High Schools seems to me of paramount importance to the interest of education in this commonwealth.

Establishing further common ground with his audience, Johnston added:

Without the High School we have no bridge or causeway across the chasm between the lowlands of the Primary Schools and the heights of Collegiate education. That such a connecting link is necessary

is readily demonstrable, if we attach any value to the Higher Education.

Proceeding to the immediate objective for his speech, he stated his thesis: "It is the demand for High Schools--the need of this secondary grade of education--that I am now advocating."

2. Body

To arouse his audience to implement secondary schools, Johnston developed the following implied lines of reasoning:

The government that cares about its survival must provide a free education to its people.

Besides its survival, a nation will acquire other benefits from its investment in education.

The appropriate controlling body for education is the locality rather than the state or federal government.

In order to implement the solution (high schools), the audience needs to take action.

When the concept of secondary education is finally accepted by the community, authorities should make sure that the schools are carefully designed and well staffed.

Johnston believed that careful attention must be given to the wording of the speakers' lines of reasoning. When speaking to an audience that was partially opposed to the premises, he advised the orator to present the points implicitly rather than explicitly. In "The Demand for High Schools in Louisiana," Johnston was aware that his audience, composed of political appointees who were not totally prepared for nor committed to the concept of universal education, would possibly reject a direct statement of these lines of reasoning. Consequently, he used a method of indirection to express these thoughts.
a. **Organization.** Johnston believed that after the orator had constructed the statements of fact, he should carefully arrange the argument. In choosing a pattern of organization, Johnston suggested that "what is the most effective form is the question to be asked." Following Whately's advice, he recommended the placement of the strongest points first. As in his earlier address "What Education Is," Johnston felt that his most important line of reasoning was the belief that the freedom of the country depended on the education of its people.

As a discussion unfolded, Johnston suggested that an orator must "select those arguments that will carry most weight with the audience, and press upon them most strongly those that are most convincing . . . he must often omit and ignore subordinate reasons not acceptable to his audience." Consequently, Johnston did not include a discussion of the existing problems in Louisiana schools, perhaps realizing that the politically appointed parish superintendents were themselves one of the causes of the trouble.

By the middle of his discussion, Johnston discussed the solution, showing tangible ways to implement public schools in the given jurisdictions. Though he was indirect in his earlier points, he was more explicit about the methods for achieving public education in Louisiana. While the first half of his message dealt with principles of a general nature and not readily accepted by his listeners, the second part covered practical procedures for the listeners to follow.

b. **Forms of support.** When teaching oratory, Johnston gave advice to his students concerning the use of supporting material.
Let me now suppose that you have accumulated facts, opinions, arguments, hints & illustrations; then you must apply to them the general principles that have been approved to your reason by sufficient tests, and which every man should have fixed for his guidance. Tried by these permanent standards, their true value is ascertained and their fitness for present use measured.

Using the degree of appropriateness as the major criterion for selecting supporting material for his main points, Johnston included examples, illustrations, analogies, and statistics to amplify his message to the Convention of Parish Superintendents.

As he did in his 1884 speech to the Louisiana Educational Society, Johnston began the discussion by showing the correlation between the growth of a civilization and its educational system. Once again, he supported his premise by illustrating the conditions in Germany, England, and France. Adapting the examples to his particular topic, he concentrated on the situation in France, noting:

A new France has been born; the republic is stronger than ever before. France is richer and more powerful and no man sees the end, but it certainly has a hopeful outlook for the French people and the human race. Now in that French system the High School and the College are considered as much a part of what the State owes to its children as the Primary Schools.

Johnston added to his explanation that "nothing in the way of free education is too good for the child of France; and so it should be here."

Making the transition from the circumstances abroad to the conditions in the United States, Johnston said:

But we need no appeal to authority, to precedents in other States or other nations. Our whole theory of government, with the application to it of the law of common sense, justifies the High School as part of our public school system; indeed, requires it.

To amplify the concept of duty, Johnston posed an analogy between the government and parents, noting that the obligations of a government to
its citizens is lifelong whereas the responsibility of parents to their children is temporary.

After viewing the duty from a humanitarian viewpoint, he then supported the obligation from a pragmatic stance, saying that "we must see that it is profitable to the State to teach the young all they are willing to learn." He noted that the reason society would benefit was because "the best police force ever devised is a healthy, resolute, moral public opinion; a sentiment and determination to have good laws and to execute them; and this comes through the enlightenment afforded by general education."

Along with his explanation of social utility, he discussed the notion that "knowledge is power." In his 1884 speech to the Louisiana Educational Society, he merely implied that educational tools were basically amoral and would not increase the crime rate, but in the address to the parish superintendents, he gave more attention to the premise. To clarify the idea, he added an illustration, saying,

Those who assume that moral elevation necessarily follows acquired information err, as we all know. Give an Indian a gun and teach him how to shoot it, and you simply make him a more dangerous enemy, though not a worse enemy. He merely has more power. Now if you can train his heart and mind not to use it for murder, he becomes a better, as well as a stronger man.

Amplifying the idea that the nation should strive for the social benefits of education, Johnston appealed to the cultural pride of his listeners. Quoting De Tocqueville, a foreigner who said, "A middling standard is fixed in America for human knowledge," Johnston retorted that "no true American will rest content with mere mediocrity as the destiny of his family or his country. To be the best should be
his aim." He then pointed out that to be superior, the leaders must support higher education, which could only be obtained if high schools were created, thereby forming a link between the existing common schools and universities.

To help the audience visualize the social value of high schools, he said, "Suppose we had to-day a High School in every parish, nearly sixty in all, that cost annually $5,000 each, a total, say, of $300,000 a year, and out of the six or eight thousand pupils, one youth of genius should receive the inspiration, the divine impulse, to look below the surface of things and should discover a method that would save a quarter of a cent per pound in the manufacture of sugar, then his work would pay back every year more than four times the cost of every one of these High Schools." Besides appealing to the frugality of his listeners by posing a hypothetical illustration, he appealed to their need for physical security by bringing realistic examples to their attention. He mentioned that a high school student frequently becomes an engineer, and "then his skill rightly applied at the proper moment may prevent or arrest a dangerous crevasse and a destructive overflow." He reminded them that because of the existence of high schools, "our educated young men are now doing just such work as this every day."

Acknowledging that he "could stand here all day and illustrate to you that education pays," he moved into the specifications for implementing such high schools. He defended the rights of the localities to be the supreme governing agencies over the schools. He also mentioned that while the European systems could serve as examples for
design, their centralized method of school taxation and supervision should not be followed, for "it is repugnant to our theory of government." Proving that local administration of funds was a successful practice in the United States, Johnston cited the case of Massachusetts, an example that he had used in previous speeches.

Because local authorities in Louisiana were having difficulty collecting taxes from community citizens, Johnston explained to his audience the sure ways to acquire the support of people in the vicinity. He advised the superintendents to "go to the men who are in the habit of doing the thinking and work of the parish.... Let them start the movement. Let them put the wheels in motion and appeal to the people for help." Telling the listeners to appeal to the pocket-books of wealthy citizens who are sending their children elsewhere, he said, "You can make plain to the man with children that he can have a cheaper education for his children at his home academy than in a distant boarding school." Substantiating his claim, he compared the cost of an education in different parts of the country.

Ending his explanation of the strategy for gaining community support, Johnston prompted the capable audience to exercise its own ingenuity. He noted:

But I am telling you how to go about getting High Schools when there are many men in this assembly, who with their energy, business sagacity and local knowledge could get up a High School while I am talking about it. I am merely throwing out hints. When it comes to putting them into actualities you will do it in the American way; that is, by availing yourselves of whatsoever means you have at hand and doing the best you can with these. Start your High School, bring to bear upon it the thought and aspiration of the community, and it will grow into its own proper shape, in accord with the life of the people from whom it springs.
To help the superintendents establish high schools, Johnston summarized some of the secondary school guidelines proposed by the Tulane Board of Administrators during the previous months. So that the audience would not perceive him to be overpowering their authority, he qualified his position, saying:

I do not come here to-day to exploit or commend Tulane University to you, in either its College or Post Graduate departments. But we have claimed, and always sought, to make the crown and culmination of the public school system of the state, to which it belongs. We recognize our duty to the High Schools, in so far as we are not fettered by charter restrictions. I do not go into details, for extensive publicity has been given to our efforts at encouraging them. . . . If other legitimate methods of aiding or encouraging the High Schools comes to our notice, be sure we will cordially adopt them.

He amplified his goodwill by adding that "I have been flattered by several invitations falling about this time, but I felt that in the great warfare against ignorance the most vital objective point in these latter days of June, 1893, was here in the town of Lake Charles, before this body of parish superintendents."

In summary, Johnston's use of supporting material reflected an adaptation to his audience. Using a variety of expository material, he attempted to amplify his message by including examples, illustrations, analogies, and statistics acceptable and understandable to his audience. To stimulate his listeners to initiate a grassroots movement in their respective communities, he explained the importance, simplicity, and effectiveness of neighborhood campaigns for education. To keep from undermining the existing authority of his listeners, he downplayed his own position and built up the status of his audience.
3. Conclusion

Johnston believed that the peroration was a vital component of a speech because "it gives the last impression to the audience." In its construction, "where it springs naturally from the body of the discourse," Johnston suggested that "it may engage the eyes, the memories, and the sympathies of the audience to the exclusion of every rival." Consequently, he prepared a conclusion to "The Demand for High Schools in Louisiana" that would arouse the favor of his listeners and would elicit their support in the local campaign. He accomplished his particular purpose in this peroration by including figurative analogies, literal comparisons, and highly connotative language which elevated the status of his audience.

Concluding his message, he praised the noble work of his audience and reminded them that "your work is not to be measured by the humble frame-work of country school houses, or the more ambitious structure in the village, but by the seed you plant there." He highlighted his metaphor by saying, "When you see the green blade peeping from the moist earth you can, in imagination, already behold the fields whitening with the full blown crops, and the fabrics of a million looms clothing the inhabitants of the earth with the product." After hallowing their work by comparing it to the endeavors of Peter the Hermit and John the Baptist, Johnston ended by saying:

One thing you can bring into the service of the State and for the upbuilding of this great cause: It is the spirit of consecration. Without it, all labor is vain; with it, nothing is impossible. For it is like those inflammable gases, that, mingling with the common air, make the whole mixture explosive. But on these lines I need not dwell; you have proven by your works how much you are

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in earnest. Let good work go on. Let us see Louisiana all she should be, and if our toil can help her, we shall have our exceeding great reward. I thank you.

4. Assessment

Johnston's address to the Convention of Parish Superintendents in 1893 contained some of the same premises and forms of support that had proven successful in the New Orleans campaign. In his earlier speeches, he was at the starting point of the awakening in Louisiana, whereas in his 1893 address, he was able to draw upon local experiences with which the parish superintendents could more readily identify. Knowing that many of the parish officials were political appointees but not trained educators, he decided not to isolate his listeners by boasting of his accomplishments in New Orleans and condemning them for the failures in their respective communities. Instead, he chose to flatter the listeners for their concern and to encourage them in their endeavors. He brought along copies of Tulane's recommendations for establishing high schools, hoping that the superintendents would follow them.

Apparently, word of the importance of Johnston's message spread throughout the state, and immediately he was invited to speak to another educational association in Louisiana. Johnston received a letter from W. M. Howe, a member of the executive committee of the Louisiana State Public Teachers' Association, saying:

Permit me to remark what you must surely have heard many times since your recent trip to Lake Charles, that your Address to the Parish Superintendents' Convention in June was very much appreciated indeed. As you may know I was not present but have had the satisfaction of reading your address since. Part of it appears in the Educational Department of the "Enterprise" this week. I will
mail you a copy. The rest will appear in the next issue. Your lecture has done much to awaken interest in public education in general and in High School work in particular; and yet I know that this effort has had a no more beneficial effect on the school interests of the state than many of your previous efforts.

At our December Convention we, the Executive Committee, are confident that, without you, we cannot accomplish for the schools what we should like. Prof. Sandis has, I presume, already written to you extending to you, I hope, a pressing invitation to be with us on Thursday, at least, if you can not be present for a longer period. I wish to heartily second that invitation and in addition, in the name of the Executive Committee.

In case you should prefer some other subject than "University Extension," which has been assigned to you, I hope you will not hesitate to state your preference to Prof. Sandis who I hope will at an early day receive from you a favorable reply.59

Johnston accepted the invitation to appear before the Louisiana State Public School Teachers' Association in December 1893, but instead of conversing on the assigned topic of university extension, he spoke about "State Education as a Factor in Civilization."60

D. State Education as a Factor in Civilization

By the 1890s, Louisiana had acquired several normal schools, teachers' institutes, a Chautauqua, numerous educational journals, and three professional associations, including the Louisiana Educational Society, the Association of Parish Superintendents, and the Louisiana State Public School Teachers' Association.61 Johnston had contributed to the growth of most of these endeavors and was finally extended the

59 W. M. Howe to William Preston Johnston, September 18, 1893 Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.


61 Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1894-95, 2 vols., 2:1305; Fay, pp. 112-14; and Harris, pp. 68-74.
opportunity to advance the cause of the latter association. This particular teachers' organization had been founded in 1883 in Minden under the name Louisiana State Educational Association, but, apparently, the structure had folded after a few years of existence, only to be reorganized nearly a decade later. An educational historian pointed out that the earlier group had made some contributions during its formative years, saying, "The old organization presented programs of great merit and did much to crystallize public sentiment for public schools and create professional spirit among teachers and officials." With a renewed commitment to these goals, the association launched another drive during the mid-nineties. Realizing the importance of engaging prominent educators to add to their momentum, the organization invited William Preston Johnston to speak at its 1893 convention. On December 28, in New Iberia, members of the Louisiana State Public School Teachers' Association assembled together to hear the respected orator speak on the importance of public schools in an advanced society.

62 Harris, pp. 77-78.

63 Stephens, p. 42, says that the group was reorganized in 1892 with the title of Louisiana State Public School Teachers' Association. Harris says that it was restructured in 1890 under the name of Louisiana State Teachers' Association. The letterhead on the note from W. M. Howe, a member of the executive committee, and the cover page on Johnston's published speech both use the title Louisiana State Public School Teachers' Association. The critic has chosen to use the latter title.

64 Harris, pp. 77-78.
1. Introduction

Consistent with what he believed an exordium should accomplish, Johnston opened his speech with an appropriate reference that led into the subject under discussion. Using an illustrative anecdote to convey the seriousness of his approach, Johnston alluded to Jefferson Davis' first political debate, in which his opponent S. S. Prentiss replied, "My young friend, when I was your age I began by trying to instruct and convince men by logic. It is in vain, and now I am satisfied to persuade by pleasing them." Qualifying his own priorities, Johnston then prefaced the body of his speech by saying:

Yet, with this warning before me, I am constrained to keep in the rougher road. My opportunities are so few, my message is, to my mind, so weighty, and my audience so capable of serious thought, that I shall venture to trespass on your indulgence with sober reflections even at the risk of being a little prolix and dry, trusting to the distinguished speakers with us on this occasion to brighten it with humor and eloquence.

Rarely was Johnston so direct as to state explicitly that he considered his approach to be more noble, though more dogmatic, than other speakers. Yet, such was his genuine philosophical outlook regarding the role of rhetoric. When teaching oratory, he warned his students that "I do not propose for your amusement or edification a display of oratory." As a pragmatist, he maintained that rhetoric served a greater purpose. Teaching his students, he advised, "Let us now consider the Power of Oratory; how it conduces to that success in life that is a legitimate incentive to action: and how to that usefulness to ourselves, our neighbors, and society that constitutes the sum of earthly obligation."
Having established the integrity of his intentions in the introduction, Johnston then focused his attention on the audience. Pointing out that past conditions had been discouraging but "the public school teachers have now met under the most encouraging circumstances," he sought to reinforce the importance of their endeavors. Indicating his role in their struggle, he said, "I am here to-day, in obedience to the request of your committee, to take part in your programme." Completing the exordium, he then stated his subject, "It will be my business on this occasion to discuss the question of 'State education as a factor in our civilization.'"

2. Body

To support his proposition that public schools were needed in Louisiana, Johnston developed the following implied lines of reasoning:

Civilization depends on the proper balance between liberty and social order.

Because we have not perfected social order, we need to strive for it.

Public education is the means for obtaining social order.

An ideal educational system should be based on a philosophy that treats the successive phases in the lives of individuals.

All educators share a bond in developing these successive phases.

a. Organization. Johnston believed that an orator should go beyond the mere preparation of consistent lines of reasoning. Unlike logic, which taught the orator how the audience ought to assent, he maintained that oratory showed the speaker how the audience is brought
to assent. Therefore, as he constructed the main points for his
discussion, he arranged his thoughts so that they would move the
listeners to his preconceived point of view. When organizing his pre-
mises for "State Education as a Factor in Civilization," he obviously
applied these rhetorical principles.

Following his usual inductive pattern which placed the most
general lines of argument first, Johnston emphasized the educational
beliefs that had been dormant in the minds of his listeners for nearly
a decade. Knowing that the members of the newly reorganized Louisi-
ana State Public School Teachers' Association had encountered commu-
nity obstacles in their earlier endeavors but presently needed to be
reminded of the value of their beliefs, Johnston ordered his discus-
sion in such a way that he stressed the correlation between civiliza-
tion and enlightenment. In his customary manner, he began with the
historical past, brought the principles up to present conditions, and
then applied them to local circumstances.

b. Forms of support. Johnston believed that after construct-
ing arguments, orators should defend their views with ample supporting
material. He noted that when speakers were familiar with the subject,
they could draw from their own insights. When orators were unfamiliar
with the topic, Johnston suggested that they needed to read largely
and fully so that they could express the opinions of experts. Even
though Johnston was highly qualified to gather supporting material


entirely from his own experiences, he chose to include quotations, examples, illustrations, and analogies that were taken from history, literature, philosophy, and religion as the major forms of support in "State Education as a Factor in Civilization." Knowing that his audience was composed of the foremost educators in Louisiana, he therefore used a variety of material that not only defended his position but also appealed to the assorted interests of the listeners.

Beginning his discussion, Johnston immediately clarified his terminology by quoting the philosopher Guizot, who said that "the first idea comprised in the word civilization is the notion of progress, development. It calls up within us the notion of people advancing, of a people in the course of improvement and melioration."

Johnston realized that in order to obtain a civilized society, two seemingly opposite but necessary elements must be present, noting, "Two principles that are contradictory in their phenomena--their seeming-ness--and yet are bound by an inseparable unity are the principles of individual liberty and the principle of social order." After referring to the Zoroastrian doctrine of two conflicting principles, he suggested, "The centripetal and centrifugal forces appear in nearly every problem we propose to ourselves. By these forces, nature, life and society are held in equilibrium."

In a region where states' rights and individual liberties were prized, references to the concept of a higher social order were frequently unwelcomed. Perhaps realizing the potential reaction from his listeners, he chose to extensively highlight the importance of an organized hierarchy in maintaining personal liberties. He amplified
the correlation between the two variables through the use of quotations from Kant, Marcus Aurelius, and Professor Royce of Harvard.

After he described the ideal civilization, he then noted that currently no country, including the United States, had reached its ultimate civilized status. Downplaying the failure to achieve the utmost, he chose instead to inspire his listeners, who were striving for an improved society. Johnston encouraged his listeners to continue their altruistic endeavors by saying:

Shall we then despair? Not so! We must gird our loins for the doing of God's work in the world; whatever come of it. And we may clearly hope that good will come of it. We know this, and our hearts are stirred to set right these wrongs, not for the good it will do us—for the sowers in the moral world do not gather the harvest—but because we are of a race foreordained to organize and lift up humanity; because we must continually seek a better order in which law and righteousness shall supplant arbitrary caprice and the manifold forms of wrong.

He likened their noble pursuit to the perseverance of Moses, who wandered in the wilderness for forty years before his people obtained the inheritance of the Promised Land. Suggesting that society was approaching a millenial kingdom, he added that "civilization . . . is as yet far away;—a Golden Jerusalem, that the scoffers and skeptics call a cloud and a sunset mirage; but we are sailing toward it." By using the term which suggested nautical movement, he led into another analogy, namely, the accomplishment of Columbus, a person who was steadfast in attaining a goal.

By this point in his speech, he had only given illustrations to show the value and pursuit of social order in general. To relate his message to his audience, he then began to focus on the vital role of education in the obtaining of a civilized society. He noted that
Public schools were obligatory, for "it is the business of the State to train up its children to be useful citizens, each to fill his place and do his part in the social order." To exemplify the point, he referred to the Spartan commonwealth, explaining that "I do not hold Sparta up to you for imitation. . . . I have used the example of Sparta, as I have said, as an illustration of the value of a definite purpose in government and in education." He made the example contemporary by suggesting "the world has moved; and another, a broader, a higher purpose is perceived by the people and revealed by governments, and especially, I hope by our American commonwealths, in framing schemes for the education of their children." Relating to his particular audience composed of teachers, he added, "But your especial business is to form a clear and high ideal of the duty of the state in the education of its children and do your best to attain this ideal in actual practice."

Posing the questions, "What education will achieve this?" and "What preparation of our young people will best fit each to reach up to and realize the fullness of his power?" Johnston led into a lengthy explanation of educational psychology and the chronological stages of cognitive development. He first discussed the preschool years, supporting his views with poetic quotes from Wordsworth and Coleridge and pedagogical statements from Richter. Progressing to the next phase, he mentioned the importance of kindergarten and primary schools. To illustrate the value of acquiring the rudiments of knowledge offered in elementary schools, he presented a figurative analogy. Basing the comparison on the use of coins, he said that "Without this small
change--the dimes and quarter dollars--of human intercourse, all communication degenerates into clownish chatter and clumsy mistakes." He added, "To handle simple arithmetic does not seem much; but it really means a great deal to the commonwealth. The difference between a community that has mastered it and one ignorant of it is immense--it is the difference between barbarism and a quasi civilization."

Moving into the next academic level, Johnston raised the question, "But what children shall stop at this point, the end of the primary grade, and who shall go on?" He acknowledged that many students would terminate their education because "Destiny has decreed the length of every man's tether," but that "education is meant to enable him to avail himself of it to its utmost extent." Johnston believed though that there was a sizeable population that was prevented from furthering its education because of "the narrowness of the family resources" or "doubts as to the reality of educational advantages."

To prove that even geniuses sometimes failed to acquire their families' support, he cited the cases of Somerville and Pascal, who eventually became notable scientists.

Johnston offered rebuttals to the charges launched by opponents of public education. To the arguments that "it is a rich man's school, to which the poor man's children can not afford to go" and "it is a poor man's school, to which the rich man's children do not go, and for which he should not be obliged to pay taxes," Johnston retorted that "it is neither the rich man's school nor the poor man's school. It is the citizen's school." To amplify the notion of a common education provided by the state, Johnston compared the education
of the public to the training of the militia, noting that if a higher authority expects its people to fill crucial slots, then it is obliged to prepare them to perform the duties. Appealing to the cultural pride of his listeners, he pointed out that "if the State does not equip her own sons for these positions, she must be content to see them filled by aliens, as has often been the case in Louisiana." Refuting the objection that it is easy to overstock a country with superior men, he suggested that educators reply that "it is not easy to overstock the world, and when we have too many at home we can send them abroad to lead and govern other countries, as Old England and New England have done, and as Germany is now doing."

Although his listeners were concerned primarily with elementary and secondary education, Johnston included higher education in his discussion and implied that more high school graduates should enter universities. Dispelling the myth that jealousy would accompany the increased enrollment in higher education, Johnston said that "the very opposite feeling is apt to prevail," for all citizens would view themselves as partners, not competitors, in a higher social order.

Concluding the discussion of academic levels, Johnston returned to his original theme that state education is a factor in a nation's development. As in his previous speeches, he mentioned the great advancements in Germany and France, but for the first time in his public speaking, he cited Japan as an example to be emulated. After stating the circumstances in other countries, Johnston said, "It is the duty of the hour in Louisiana to adopt and perfect a system of
education that will bring about the best results for us." Stressing his belief in a universal scheme, he said,

To be complete, it must, as I have suggested, rest upon the general education of the whole population. . . . The Parish and City High Schools should be increased and made better, and every encouragement should be given to institutions devoted to the Higher Education.

Unifying the efforts of all educators, regardless of academic level, he said, "I beg you to bear in mind that the great movement of education in the Primary Schools, High Schools, Colleges and Universities is essentially one and the same great stream of thought, the same flood tide of human reason, as the Mississippi River is one river at its fountain head and at its mouth."

By the end of his discussion, Johnston had presented a variety of expository devices to amplify his theme and to inspire his listeners. Furthermore, he ended his narration on an optimistic note which unified his listeners.

3. Conclusion

In his customary fashion, Johnston presented a peroration that would recapitulate the importance of his message and arouse the aspirations of his listeners. With the ultimate goal of inspiring the teachers who were present in his audience, he concluded his speech by using several rhetorical devices, including analogies, quotations, and poetic language. Saying that "I can not close this address, my friends, without adding a word on the vocation to which we are called," he likened the work of educators to that of missionaries, an analogy that he frequently used to suggest the divine nature of their calling. Realizing that circumstances in Louisiana had prevented the teachers
from accomplishing all that they desired, he included a quotation by Browning to remind them that their efforts, not achievements, were the factors which made them noble. After the passage, he ended with the eulogistic words:

When the cloud of despondency lowers over them [teachers], as it does over us all at times, let them recollect that they have the most difficult and delicate tasks in the whole range of educational work, and that their success may be the most fruitful of results. I only wish I could feel that I had done my work half so well as I know many of you have done yours; but to each according to his strength. And now God be with us all.

4. Assessment

In the speech to the Louisiana State Public School Teachers' Association, Johnston displayed features that were very similar to his earlier addresses, but he also included new elements that distinguished this message from the previous ones. In his December 1893 speech, he stressed the importance of state education at all academic levels, a theme that was present in most of his addresses. As usual, he clearly delineated the parts of his speech, using a classical four-fold method. Unlike the body of his previous speeches which focused on the local problems and steps for implementing the solution, he chose to highlight the aspects of culture and the pedagogical means for advancing them. Even though he dwelt on an optimistic theme, he included his customary rebuttals to opponents of public education. More so than in all of his other educational speeches, Johnston himself exemplified the end product of a cultured society, extensively employing historical, literary, philosophical, and biblical allusions. His listeners, who were the best educators in the state, probably could appreciate these features, whereas his other audiences, such as
the politically appointed superintendents, perhaps could not understand nor enjoy the highly artistic expository material. As such, Johnston's speech to the newly reorganized Louisiana State Public School Teachers' Association probably served as an inspiration to the group as it began to regain its momentum. Johnston was personally delighted with the impact of the presentation, conveying to the Tulane Administrators that "it was very kindly received by the convention, and will, I hope, do something to establish our direct relations with the public school system of the State."67

Johnston's desire to influence the educational system in Louisiana was eventually achieved and his plan for the school systems was gradually adopted. Charles Dabney, the great Southern educational historian, not only recognized the significant role Johnston played in the state's educational development, but he pinpointed the importance of Johnston's 1893 speech. In his monumental work *Universal Education in the South*, Dabney observed, "In an address before the Louisiana State Public School Teachers' Association on the subject of 'State Education as a Factor in Civilization,' he affirmed principles in advance of his time and prophetic of the campaign of the Southern Education Conference of twenty years later." After citing excerpts from the 1893 speech, Dabney attributed the eventual success of the schools in Louisiana to the guiding philosophy and work set forth by Johnston. Dabney recorded, "On this creed President Johnston founded the

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67 Minutes, Board of Administrators, January 11, 1894, Tulane University, Special Collections.
institutions in New Orleans. It was an advanced position to take at the time. Upon it Louisiana has now built her education system.\(^68\)

Dabney correctly observed the causal relationship between Johnston's work and the eventual progress made in the state. Having been inspired by speakers such as Johnston, educators in Louisiana initiated a new campaign in the mid-1890s. The audience at his 1893 speech played a vital part in the revival, as recorded by J. A. Chandler, Southern historian, who said:

Perhaps no single factor has contributed more largely to the advancement of education in Louisiana than a body of choice spirits who organized themselves into the Louisiana State Educational Association. . . . Its meetings commanded attention and its proceedings were listened to with profound respect. It stirred up interest in public education, awakened desire for better school facilities and inspired a general determination to place Louisiana on a par with other states in such matters. . . . The Association and its members are to be credited with the origination and carrying out of some of the most determinant ideas in the educational uplift of the state.\(^69\)

Yet, in spite of the advancements of the mid-1890s, the Louisiana state superintendent reported to the national commissioner of education that the state needed to accomplish one more step toward the fulfillment of universal education. In the findings for 1894-95, the state official said:

But what we require above everything is the privilege of local taxation beyond the present constitutional limitation. We have reached a point in Louisiana where local pride has been aroused. We are beginning to feel that however grateful we may be for the beneficent work of such funds as the Peabody, we must first of all

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\(^68\)Dabney, pp. 374-75.

help ourselves; we must demand our independence—the most glorious privilege granted to men.\textsuperscript{70}

Within a few years, the desired goal was reached, finding its fruition in the Constitution of 1898. One writer noted, "The constitution of 1898 said in effect to the people that if they wanted good schools for their children they could have them by paying for them. . . . It made progress possible, and our public school advancement dates from it."\textsuperscript{71}

The adoption of the new legislation has been attributed to the concerted campaign of educators and concerned citizens, for "all these awakening movements aroused both teachers and people and made a perceptible impress upon the new State Constitution of 1898, and upon subsequent legislation."\textsuperscript{72}

\textbf{E. Summary}

In 1899, only one year after the adoption of the new constitution, which made possible public schools throughout Louisiana, William Preston Johnston passed away. During the nineteen years that he had served in both public and private institutions of higher learning in Louisiana, he had labored faithfully for the implementation of a universal scheme of education, which he believed was the ultimate solution to the problems confronting the state. In order to implement the plan, Johnston devised a strategy which began with ceremonial speaking

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{70}Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1894-95, 2 vols., 2:1305.
\item \textsuperscript{71}Harris, pp. 67-68.
\item \textsuperscript{72}Stephens, p. 49, and Dabney, pp. 372-73, share the same viewpoint.
\end{itemize}
at rallies of educators assembled together for the purpose of rekindling their fervor. At such gatherings in Louisiana, Johnston excited his audiences by amplifying the principles espoused by educators, including the strong correlation between freedom and enlightenment, the importance of free public schools, and the preeminence of home rule. To help enact a system of public education in Louisiana, Johnston explained to his listeners that they must initiate local campaigns to alert and involve the citizens of the community. Johnston maintained that in turn, the momentum should produce a ground swell of concern that would demand the adoption of necessary reform.

As he was "ready to answer the call to speak anywhere," Johnston delivered over twenty-five speeches on behalf of the cause in Louisiana. Using the power of the platform to awaken educators and other citizens, he received credit for the passage of legislation that was vital in the history of Louisiana's public schools. Because of his success, he received invitations to speak in other Southern states which suffered the same problems and desired the identical solutions.
CHAPTER V

SPOKESMAN FOR THE SOUTHERN EDUCATIONAL AWAKENING

During the nineteen years that William Preston Johnston served as an educator in Louisiana, he was invited to speak to several assemblies interested in history and education. Although his specialized lectures to state historical societies¹ are worthy of analysis, his Southern educational addresses are particularly valuable, for the "manly and earnest tone of the speaker, and his profound philosophical observations, with his estimates of what should be done for Southern civilization have been much appreciated by political economists."²

Apart from schools in Virginia, where Johnston first served as an educator, and Louisiana, where he was an administrator, five universities elsewhere in the South were fortunate to have him participate in their educational crusades. They included: the University of

¹William Preston Johnston, "Address Before the Kentucky Historical Society," in Proceedings of the Kentucky Historical Society at Its Second Annual Meeting in Frankfort, February 11, 1880; and "Address to the Virginia Historical Society," December 2, 1897, handwritten copy, Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.

Texas, June 14, 1884;\textsuperscript{3} the College of South Carolina, June 25, 1884;\textsuperscript{4} Washington University in St. Louis, June 12, 1890;\textsuperscript{5} Alabama Polytechnic Institute, June 10, 1891;\textsuperscript{6} and Kentucky Agricultural and Mechanical College (date unknown).\textsuperscript{7} The three speeches that best represent his Southern campaign include the ones presented in Texas, South Carolina, and Alabama. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the educational circumstances in these selected states, to analyze the speeches that Johnston presented to audiences there, and to assess the impact of his oratory in the region. Following a chronological pattern, this chapter starts with the earliest address.

\section{A. The Perils of Universities}

In June 1884, William Preston Johnston was invited to deliver an address at the newly founded University of Texas in Austin. Johnston was an ideal choice to serve as its commencement speaker; besides being a notable educator in the region, he was the son of Albert

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item William Preston Johnston, "The Perils of Universities" (New Orleans: n.p., 1884). It was also published under the title "The University: Its Dangers and the Remedies" (Austin: n.p., 1884).
\item Idem, "Problems of Southern Civilization" (Auburn, Va.: n.p., 1891).
\item Idem, "Address Before the Kentucky Agricultural and Mechanical College," incomplete handwritten script, Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections. Attempts were made by the critic to locate a complete copy of the address and its exact date, but commencement records at the University of Kentucky are incomplete for that period.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Sidney Johnston, a revered martyr in the state of Texas. Also, Dr. Ashbel Smith, one of the founders of the school, was a graduate of Yale University,⁸ which was Johnston's alma mater. No doubt, the selection committee viewed Johnston as a man who could identify with the needs of a young university desiring to achieve fame in a growing state.

In 1880, Texas had over 1.5 million residents, representing a 94.5 percent increase over the previous census and ranking third in population in the South.⁹ Formerly a frontier state having the image of "gun brawls" and "saloons," Texas was undergoing an uplift that coincided with recovery elsewhere in the region. In describing the change, one historian noted, "We see in Texas the same forces at work as in the other states, only more violent, and the contest makes much the same picture, only on a far larger canvas and in more vivid colors."

As in other states, Texas experienced the typical struggle between the individualistic element found in churches or private communities, and the collective body organized in state school districts. These two elements added to the confusion as to what "public" schools were. The former group, which had been granted land under the Republic of Texas, wanted public lands and funds, but they did not want state control. The latter group, influenced by the English idea of pauper


schools which had been brought from the Atlantic states, believed that the state should provide free education for indigents and orphans. Because of the misconceptions by both groups, a true plan of public education was not readily implemented in either primary schools, secondary schools, or universities.

The Constitution of 1876, representing one of the earliest attempts to encourage public schools, had taken the management of schools out of the hands of the superintendent and state board, and restored it to local people. Instead of helping public schools, it caused their demise, for the people returned to private schools.10 Because the public schools had low enrollment, they received virtually no aid from the Peabody Fund for many years,11 which produced concern by Barnas Sears, its agent. In a campaign to revive the state, Dr. Sears visited Texas, and addressed the legislature and people about the importance of free schools in a democratic government. His visit accomplished its goal, for it prompted a renewed interest in public education.12

The year 1883 marked the beginning of real public school education in the state,13 for the new constitution made provisions for local taxation, a policy that was finally accepted by the people. Much of the success of the new law was attributed to Governor Roberts,

10Dabney, pp. 396-419.


who, in his extensive stump ing, said, "It is cheaper to educate the ignorant than to reform the vicious."\(^\text{14}\)

Unlike most Southerners who opposed any form of education, Texans favored the concept; their only problem was trying to decide between church and public schools. Large endowments of public land provided by the founders of the Republic and the state had helped to finance the schools, but their full potential was not fully realized in the early days.\(^\text{15}\) Even universities were ever in the minds of great statesmen and governors, but most attempts to organize state supported institutions were postponed.\(^\text{16}\) Perhaps the legislature believed that the churches were adequately fulfilling the needs of higher education, for they had formed nearly a dozen successful universities by 1880,\(^\text{17}\) the most notable including Southwestern in Georgetown (1840), Baylor (1845), St. Mary's (1852), Trinity (1869), and Add-Ran Male and Female College (1873), now Texas Christian University. The state did take advantage of money provided by the Morrill Land Grant Act, and it organized Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1876.\(^\text{18}\) Although the legislature had created funds as early as 1858 for a state university system, the Civil War

\(^{14}\)Dabney, p. 426.


\(^{16}\)Dabney, p. 430.


\(^{18}\)Chandler, pp. 444-46.
and Reconstruction had prevented any further action.\(^\text{19}\) By 1881, though, the state was ready to use the funds, so it founded the University of Texas in Austin, the oldest and largest part of the system.\(^\text{20}\) When established, it fell under the control of the governor, who appointed a board of regents to supervise its activities and finances. Apparently, despite its eventual success, the university experienced some economic and political hardships during its early history.\(^\text{21}\) Having knowledge about the inner workings of the University of Texas, Johnston delivered a message in which he described the timely problems facing the school. On June 14, 1884, students, faculty, state officials, and the general public assembled together to hear his message entitled "The Perils of Universities." Targeting his message to those listeners who could influence decision making, Johnston attempted to arouse their concern for the institution.

1. Introduction

Johnston believed that the exordium of a speech should promote the goodwill of a speaker, for "the conciliation of the audience in some form or other is properly its [the exordium's] object." In his Louisiana campaign, where he was universally regarded as a friend of education, Johnston did not need to include extensive references in his opening remarks in order to establish his concern. But elsewhere in the South, where his reputation was not known to the average person, Johnston found it necessary to expand his introductions to such

\(^{19}\)Dabney, p. 431. \(^{20}\)Roller and Twyman, p. 1126.

\(^{21}\)Chandler, pp. 444-46.
an extent that his kind intentions were readily apparent. Speaking before an audience in Austin, Texas, Johnston applied these rhetorical principles as he began his message.

Johnston opened his speech by mentioning the honor bestowed upon him to serve as the commencement speaker at the first graduating ceremonies of the University of Texas, a momentous occasion in the state's history. Readily establishing kinship with his listeners, he described the ties which bound him to their commonwealth. He recounted that when he was only five years old, he had contributed to the financial defense against the "ruthless advance of Cos and Santa Ana." Appealing to the sentiment of the audience, he said:

My father asked me what I could do to help those poor women and children. I had one treasured half-eagle, and I gave it gladly; and never was gold better bestowed than this my first free-will offering to liberty. A few months later my father dedicated himself to the cause of Texas, with a devotion which never wavered, and which shrank from no sacrifice, not even the last.

Culminating the discussion of his attachments to the state, he concluded, "Yet time and again have I turned my face toward the beloved soil, hoping to make it my home, or at least my final resting place, and my wish was that of my father, 'that a handful of Texas earth might lie upon my breast.'" He then linked his explanation of his past devotion to a concern for the state's future, a strategy which allowed him to introduce the focus of his discussion. He noted that while he could easily describe "a splendid vision of the future," he chose instead to point out "the perils which beset its path," with hope that the audience could "ward them off by such precautions as are possible."
2. Body

Alerting the listeners to the possible pitfalls that the new university could encounter, Johnston outlined the following dangers:

1. The assumption that university endowments are adequate.
2. The belief that church-sponsored universities are preferable to state controlled institutions.
3. The notion that public institutions are exclusively for wealthy citizens.
4. The idea that the board of administrators would face minimal obstacles.
5. The belief that the legislature should control the university.
6. The suggestion that the administration should oversee the instruction of students.

Helping the university avoid these dangers, Johnston proposed the following solutions:

1. Launch a campaign to avoid public misunderstanding.
2. Enlarge the board so that it includes widespread local representation.
3. Secure a charter.
4. Confer power on the faculty.

a. Organization. Johnston believed that before orators could present their premises to listeners, they needed to follow certain guidelines. He advised, "First, bear in mind the object in view; next the facts of the particular case; and lastly, the general principles
that are to reconcile them. With this general guidance you may begin the arrangement of your speech." Having accomplished these items first, Johnston then arranged his lines of argument to his advantage. He ordered his materials according to a pattern that would help arouse the audience's concern and lead the people to adopt his proposals.

Usually he constructed his messages according to a deductive pattern which gave more emphasis to the beginning arguments, but in his speech before the University of Texas, he grouped the main points according to external and internal problems. After citing each pitfall and providing proof of its likely occurrence, he quickly provided an appropriate method for avoiding it, thereby keeping the discussion on a constructive, optimistic tone. More so than in any of his other educational speeches, he clearly followed a problem-solution pattern, readily apparent by an examination of the speech manuscript which contained headings delineating the main points of the message.

b. Forms of support. In most of his Southern speeches, Johnston drew upon examples and illustrations taken from history and literature, representing expository forms of support that could be adapted for various audiences. However, in "The Perils of Universities," Johnston included extensive material of a timely and local nature, which indicated that he had carefully researched the prevailing conditions in Texas. Even though he had numerous speaking engagements during the summer of 1884, he nevertheless set aside the necessary time to gather sufficient data to support his contentions. This practice coincided with his interpretation of the orator's responsibility, for when teaching rhetoric at Washington College nearly a decade earlier,
he had advised his students "to read as largely and as fully as time and circumstances will warrant on the subject of your speech." 22

An examination of the forms of support in "The Perils of Universities" reveals that Johnston used a variety of historical records, statistics, examples, and illustrations that he acquired through research. To offset the prevalence of logical supporting material, he occasionally tempered his message with figurative analogies and poetic language.

Johnston began the discussion of external problems by addressing the first peril, namely, that the public believed universities were adequately endowed. He praised the audience for their ancestors who had provided sizeable income-producing acreage to finance higher education. But he rebuked those legislators who, in the Constitutional Convention of 1876, had "adjusted the University endowment as to leave it poorer by nearly a million of acres than its friends believed right." To circumvent possible refutation by listeners who assumed that the university's finances were ample despite the recent cutbacks, he cited the cases at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Cornell, Johns Hopkins, the University of Michigan, and Tulane, showing that even the officials at these prominent, highly endowed institutions did not believe that their funds were adequate. He extensively reviewed the recent financial reports of Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, and Tulane, proving statistically that their revenue and expenditures were nearly double or triple the ceiling placed on the

22 William Preston Johnston, "The Preparation of a Discourse." Handwritten notes, Johnston Collection, Special Collections, pp. 4-5.
University of Texas. To show that maximum benefits had not yet been attained in Texas, Johnston spoke of that hypothetical day when the university would no longer need an extensive endowment:

It will be when you see this commanding height crowned with majestic buildings, containing libraries, cabinets, museums, art galleries and all the apparatus and appliances needed to train, develop and adorn the human mind. When its professors, secure in an honorable competence, greet students thronging from many lands to this choice seat of learning, this stronghold of education. When these spacious grounds are embowered in spreading trees, beneath whose shade classical learning may recall the beauty and wisdom of the past; and science, with daring tread, shall explore the secrets of the future; and philosophy walk hand in hand with virtue and religion, and hold sweet converse with the lofty spirits of every age. It will be when from this watchtower of knowledge light is shed through the length and breadth of the land; and the rich man shall honor you; and the poor man's son shall bless you, and cry out, "Nursed by this mother, I, too, am the peer of any, a prince in Israel, and a soldier of the State against ignorance, vice, disorder and crime."

After discussing the external danger of insufficient funding, Johnston reiterated his love and concern for the state of Texas. He then embarked on an analysis of the second problem, namely, sectarianism and its tendency to overpower the creation of public institutions. Perhaps realizing that Texas was a state in which the population generally preferred church universities to public schools, Johnston avoided conflict, using the technique of indirection. Up until this point, he had directly scolded Texas for its neglect in financing schools, but he avoided confronting the people who supported the numerous church-related schools in the state. Turning the table, he used the quotations of a prominent clergyman who endorsed mutual cooperation among the churches in founding religious, though not sectarian, public universities. At length, he quoted James Thornwell, a Presbyterian minister who had helped to found South Carolina College.
Johnston then addressed the third external danger, which was the belief that educators should not concern themselves with building up universities for the entire population, when only rich people needed them. Dispelling the myth, Johnston asked the listeners to operate separately from the "cattle kings" and "railroad kings" of the state, choosing instead to "go about our Father's business." Amplifying the notion of Christian servitude, he included a maxim from the Jesuit, Sacchini, who said, "Do not let any partiality to the nobility interfere with the care of humbler pupils, since the birth of all is equal in Adam, and the inheritance in Christ."

After reviewing the three external problems facing universities, he described a remedy to the perils. Attributing the cause of the problems to public indifference, he called upon his audience to "array enthusiasm against apathy." He likened the necessary measure to an offensive war, telling the people to "look to every youth who knocks at your gate as a recruit for education, as a future soldier in the eternal warfare of light against darkness."

Concluding his problem-solution discussion of external difficulties, Johnston moved into an explanation of internal circumstances, which he believed were more perilous than the outside conditions. To support his contention, he included two figurative analogies, pointing out that "imperfect or erroneous organization and bad management are the hidden cankers which are most to be feared. More vessels perish from dry rot than from buffet of storm or wave." At this point, Johnston quickly qualified his statements, assuring his listeners that he was merely warning them of future possibilities, not certainties. He
complimented the university's board of regents for its intelligence and patriotism, telling the audience that its administrators were as worthy of praise as any other state board. Having clarified his intentions, he then cited three major internal pitfalls to avoid, which included improper administration, political interference, and inferior instruction. To resolve the first problem, he recommended a tenured, enlarged board that included widespread local representation. To avoid the second obstacle of legislative control, he advised universities to secure a charter "in the form and nature of a contract, so as to remove its discussion from political to judicial tribunals, and with its corporators appointed by the Governor, by and with the consent of the board." To prevent the third problem of poor instruction, he advised administrators to leave the educational part of the university to its faculty, and "the less the board interfered with it the better." Although he did not cite the states from which he derived his examples of the problems, he probably based them on the cases that confronted him when he had served as president of Louisiana State University.23

After discussing internal problems and their solutions, Johnston began to conclude his message. But because he prematurely used the statement "one other brief suggestion, and I will quit the ungracious task of mentor," members of the audience began to leave the room, assuming that the message had ended. Noting that the listeners

were "creating additional chairs," Johnston apologized for trespassing
upon their patience. Even though he realized that it was time to
quickly conclude his message, Johnston proceeded into an elaborate
peroration, a customary ending for his speeches.

3. Conclusion

To conclude his educational addresses in Louisiana, Johnston
usually included an appropriate local illustration that summed up the
importance of his message. To end "The Perils of Universities," he
used the same rhetorical device, selecting a suitable event from local
history and comparing it to the present struggle for universal educa-
tion in Texas. Appealing to the pride that Texans displayed for their
recent independence, Johnston noted that "Athens had her Marathon and
Sparta her Thermopylae, but San Jacinto rivaled the one and the Alamo
excelled the other, and both legends blaze proudly on the stainless
escutcheon of Texas." Having concluded on an optimistic theme, he was
able to provide a final reinforcement for those who were presently
engaged in the cause of education in Texas.

4. Assessment

In "Perils of Universities," not only did Johnston carefully
arrange his discussion around problems and solutions, but he also
appropriately placed qualifiers so that his statements would be taken
as either direct praise or indirect blame. Furthermore, when he did
rebuke Texans, he was quick to add that his remarks were the result of
a genuine concern for the welfare of the people of the state. Unlike
the Louisiana speeches which simply required supporting material that

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was acquired through his role as an educator, the speech to the University of Texas necessitated detailed research into the history and current conditions in the state's educational system. Although he occasionally used statistics when speaking elsewhere, he employed such extensive financial documentation in the Texas speech that his argument probably impressed his listeners. The exact sources of his data about Texas are uncertain, but it is likely that he acquired the information through letters that he eventually destroyed.24

While the controversial nature of his message probably offended those legislators in the audience who were responsible for the 1876 depletion of the university's endowment, the speech received favorable reviews, as reported in a local newspaper article:

The address was a masterly effort, claiming throughout its length the attention of the huge audience that thronged the building up-stairs and down. Col. Johnston, besides being endeared to the hearts of Texans, through the memory of his heroic father, Gen. Albert Sidney Johnson [sic], will ever after be doubly dear on his own account, and on account of this masterly effort in behalf of our Texas university. His beautiful and eloquent address was interrupted with applause.25

The speech also received the approval of board members, for they requested a copy of his speech for publication. Not only was the address available from printers in Austin and New Orleans, but

24A. T. Hawthorne, of Clarksville, Texas, to William Preston Johnston, June 28, 1884. The Hawthorne letter used many initials and abbreviations to describe political people and maneuvers. The writer of the letter requested Johnston to destroy the present and all subsequent correspondence concerning related topics.

25Austin (Texas) Statesman, June 15, 1884.
abstracts of the presentation were run in newspapers and education journals in Louisiana.26

The long-range effects of the address are undeterminable, but within a few weeks after the speech, Johnston received a congratulatory letter from a faculty member of Texas A&M, who relayed that he had observed the same problems occurring at the institution in College Station.27 The note confirmed Johnston's belief that the newly formed University of Texas could easily fall prey to the obstacles that plagued Louisiana State University. So sincere was Johnston's concern to alert the people of Texas that he turned down several speaking engagements during the summer of 1884 so that he could devote full attention to the preparation of his speech in Austin.28 Although he reduced the number of appearances in his tour during June and July, he

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26 Louisiana Journal of Education for Home and School 6 (June 1884) and 6 (July 1884); newspaper clipping (n.p., n.d.), scrapbook, Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.

27 J. R. Cole to William Preston Johnston, July 3, 1884. Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.

28 According to a letter to Robert W. Johnson, Johnston was scheduled to speak in Austin and Columbia in June, and Madison, Wisconsin, and Sewanee, Tennessee, in July. In the letter, he stated that "only the first has been touched." William Preston Johnston to Robert W. Johnson, May 26, 1884, Johnston Collection. Apparently Johnston cancelled the engagement in Sewanee, for he received a letter from Mr. Elliott indicating a regret that he was unable to speak at the commencement exercises at the University of the South. Mr. Elliott to William Preston Johnston, June 25, 1884, Johnston Collection. As of late June, Johnston had not prepared his message to the National Educational Association to be held in Madison, for he had not yet mailed the required abstract to the NEA Press Department. E. C. Carrigan, Manager of NEA Press Department, to William Preston Johnston, June 21, 1884, Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.
did not cancel his speech at the College of South Carolina, which took place only two weeks later.

B. The Work of the University in America

The next stop on Johnston's Southern campaign during the summer of 1884 was a state that had an appreciation for universal education from its earliest history. One writer suggested that "in no American colony was there a deeper interest in education among intelligent whites than South Carolina." The acts of 1710 and 1712 had provided free schools in Charleston, and elsewhere in the state, benevolent societies and churches had trained poor whites. Not only had the people shown an interest in schooling for both the rich and the poor, and for education in both public and private systems, but they had also believed in education at all academic levels. After the American Revolution, the state had formed two universities, one of which was the College of Charleston. To accommodate the population in the remaining areas, the state founded the College of South Carolina in Columbia in 1801. The latter school developed a classical liberal arts curriculum "considered by many to be one of the finest in antebellum America." Although the college closed during the Civil War, it reopened soon after the war ended.

Reconstruction did not drastically affect the colleges in the state, but it almost ruined the common schools. But when Reconstruction ended in 1877, South Carolina immediately underwent an educational awakening. It established graded elementary schools for both

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29 Dabney, pp. 220-25.
races and started normal institutes. The College of South Carolina offered teacher training courses in 1882 and formed a normal school in 1887. In the midst of this revival, William Preston Johnston was invited by the college to speak on the role of the higher education in America.

Johnston was the guest of Dr. Edward S. Joynes, a former colleague who had served with him at Washington College and in the Educational Association of Virginia. Joynes, who had since become a faculty member at the College of South Carolina, had learned about the importance of universal education while a student in Germany. Having become a member of the city's board of education, Joynes had also exerted a fine influence in Columbia and elsewhere in the state on behalf of public schools. Seeking insights from his long-time friend, Joynes invited Johnston to speak about the Southern educational movement and its influence on higher education.

People in the vicinity anxiously awaited Johnston's visit. Even the local newspaper in Columbia announced the arrival of its prominent guest, saying, "Those who know the reputation of this distinguished gentleman do not need to be assured of the rich treat in

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30 Roller and Twyman, p. 1143. 31 Dabney, pp. 235-36.

32 William Preston Johnston, "The Work of the University in America."

33 Columbia Register, June 25, 1884.

34 Dabney, pp. 139 and 237.
store for them. Many friends will welcome him to Columbia for his own
sake and that of his illustrious father."35

The eloquent speaker was not the only sophisticated feature of
the commencement ceremony, for the entire format and audience demanded
regalia. On Wednesday morning, June 25, 1884, the university chapel
was crowded with an audience composed of "the best people in the city
and many visitors from different parts of the State. The ladies espe-
cially were in full attendance. Ushers with handsome sashes were con-
spicuous, and the collegians wore pretty rosettes and elaborate
society badges." On stage were board members, the full faculty,
numerous colonels and senators, and clergymen from around the state.
After music from the college band, which "rendered admirably a fes-
tive air," President McBryde "felicitously" introduced William Preston
Johnston, orator of the day,36 who delivered the address "The Work of
the University in America." Targeting his message to educators who
were in the midst of a local campaign to uplift the schools, Johnston
sought to encourage them in their struggle.

1. Introduction

In his customary manner, Johnston prepared an exordium that
would reveal his goodwill to the listeners and then lead into the sub-
ject for discussion. As he opened his speech, he expressed his grati-
tude for the compliment paid him by being invited as the commencement
speaker. As in his other speeches, he established identification with

35 Columbia Register, June 25, 1884.

36 Newspaper clipping (n.p., n.d.), scrapbook, Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.
his immediate audience, this time sharing a childhood experience which
had allowed him to become a States' Right Democrat, under the influ-
ence of the South Carolina statesman, John C. Calhoun. Although
glorifying the noble Southern heritage that he shared with his audi-
ence, he used a biblical comparison to remind them that events of the
past should serve as reminders of change, for their "ark is on Ararat"
and a rainbow was given as a sign that "there shall be no more a flood
to destroy the earth." He employed figurative analogies to remind his
listeners that previous decades had been unpleasant, noting that in
1860, they were "on the volcano," and in 1870, they were "in the
abyss." But he suggested that out of the defeat came optimism, for
"the lava scars of the eruption are clothed with verdue, and the ashes
of defeat are yielding corn and oil and wine." On this positive note,
he urged that "we must do this decade's work. Let us address ourselves
to the task." Presenting his theme for his message, he said, "To sow
that others may reap, to plant that others may pluck the fruit, to
build that others may have shelter, to endure toil and sacrifices that
others may enjoy the reward, this [education of the youth] is a real
and vital Christianity, which will lift up the man, or commonwealth,
or nation, which acts upon it, to the loftiest heights of moral
achievement."

2. Body

To amplify his theme, Johnston presented a lecture on the
topics of whom, when, how, what, and how much should be taught to stu-
dents. In his message, he implied the following arguments:
All citizens should be educated.

They should acquire a primary, secondary, and higher education.

They should be taught in a manner that develops memory and imagination in younger years, reasoning faculties in middle years, and independent thought in later years.

Students should be exposed to all branches of knowledge, but they should receive specialization in the areas for their desired profession in life.

a. Organization. In selecting and arranging main points for discussion, Johnston advised:

That analysis of the subject which is most rigorous and exhaustive, though gratifying to the intellectual ingenuity of the speaker is tedious to the audience. They want what is called a broad, strong, common sense view of the subject, and though they may indulge and enjoy an occasional subtlety of the oratory, they are very naturally unwilling to hear all that can be said on a question.

Applying the same principle in his South Carolina speech, Johnston narrowed the otherwise broad subject for his presentation. While he could have spoken at length on "the work of the university in America," he chose instead to focus on the key topics of whom, when, how, what, and how much should be taught. Beginning with generalizations that were readily accepted by his listeners and placing them in the spot that he considered to be the most strategic, Johnston was then able to move into advice in the later portions of the discussion. As the practical application of his views was placed toward the end of his presentation, it did not receive as much attention as the earlier points. Johnston did not consider the practical advice to be as significant as the philosophical points. Because the people in Columbia

were undergoing an educational revival, Johnston wisely placed more emphasis on the reinforcement of beliefs held by the listeners.

b. Forms of support. As in the address at Austin, Johnston included material that revealed his understanding of the local circumstances in South Carolina. But unlike his speech a few weeks earlier, Johnston did not need to include extensive logical support to sway his listeners to his views. Since his audience in Columbia already accepted his premises, he chose details that would amplify his message and excite his listeners. Like his address "State Education as a Factor in Civilization," his speech to the College of South Carolina contained a variety of expository material selected from history, philosophy, and literature.

Beginning his discussion with "whom shall we educate," Johnston acknowledged that he did not need to expound upon the subject because the audience already agreed with him that all citizens were entitled to the benefits. As he noted,

"But, fortunately, I shall not be obliged to-day to argue in favor of the blessings of education. If I am not misinformed, there is a spirit aroused in South Carolina which is resolved that these blessings shall fill her borders, and that all shall be lifted up by their amazing power."

Having acquired satisfactory agreement for his first premise, he then proceeded into a discussion for his second topic, which was the nature and extent of education. He explained its scope by using quotations from five educational philosophers, including Masson, Lalor, Paley, Richter, and Buckle. After citing excerpts which showed that learning required an entire life span, Johnston then described his holistic
concept of the learner, again using testimonies from scholars in the field.

His skillful use of transitions allowed him to easily move from one topic to another, thereby showing the continuity of the subject matter. When transferring from "what is the scope of education" to "what are the academic levels in education," Johnston appropriately said, "If education philosophically viewed is a unit, elementary, academic, and university education are but successive phases in a continuous growth." He then addressed each phase in education, beginning with the lower grades first. Because the College of South Carolina was offering teacher training courses, Johnston provided pedagogical advice for his listeners. He pointed out that "the child that comes up from the primary school, mentally cramped, crippled and dwarfed by artificial and unnatural methods of teaching, has the same chance to grow to the full stature of intellectual manhood that the poor little chimney-sweep of a bygone age had to recover from the hard bondage which twisted his limbs and filled his lungs with soot." Sharing from the field of educational psychology, Johnston said that "the earliest season of life should be devoted to the training of the powers of observation, the cultivation of the senses, and the accumulation of a vast multitude of facts, which at that age the curiosity seeks out and the memory treasures." He refuted "superficial modern pedagogy" which treated "the cultivation of memory as almost an intellectual crime."

In addition to defending the development of the faculty of memory, he also advocated the promotion of the imagination. After mentioning creative minds of popular fiction writers such as Sir Humphrey Davy...
and Professor Joseph Henry, Johnston pointed out that their imaginations "when turned from the world of ideas to the world of fact, from subjective forces to nature, produced the most valuable practical results." Noting that wandering minds, like horses, needed to be tamed, Johnston suggested that "a great step has been taken in that self-consciousness which is the foundation of philosophy. Thereafter no casuistry can confuse the difference between a mental picture and a lie."

Progressing to the next successive phase of education, Johnston said that academic or collegiate instruction was not intended to produce "a man full of learning, but a man who knows how to think. . . . a thinker able to employ all his powers most effectively in their appointed work." Noting that many learners desired to go beyond mere professional training, Johnston recommended that certain students should proceed to a university, where "education ceases to be instruction and becomes inspiration. The wise professor no longer dictates, he leads." He then clarified the terms "college" and "university" by pointing out that Yale College, Columbia College, and South Carolina College were doing the real work of universities, even though their names suggested otherwise, whereas "any cross-roads seminary may be baptized University, and strut like an old-fashioned militia general, with epaulettes and plumes, the peacock of the parade. But such are valued at their real worth."

Again, Johnston used an appropriate transition, allowing his message to flow from the successive academic levels to their corresponding curriculum. At length, he quoted Philip Gilbert Hamerton, who
recommended that every area of knowledge be explored in higher education. To show that such a proposal would produce able thinkers, he cited the illustrations of Solomon, Aristotle, and Plato, wise men who studied varied subjects. Realizing the impossibility of acquiring all available knowledge, Johnston suggested that "we must be content with knowledge of a few things. These should be selected wisely for the general training of all our faculties and the special training of those which one will have to employ chiefly in what concerns him most nearly." Johnston listed the four areas of philosophy and letters, philology, mathematics, and natural science as the fields which would provide a broad base and without which "we cannot obtain a liberal education." Because some institutions were undergoing dramatic changeovers, choosing either to abide by a strict, classical guideline or to adopt an entirely elective system, he advised universities to follow the sound advice of President Eliot of Harvard. Quoting Eliot's article in an issue of Century magazine, Johnston recommended that universities (1) enlarge the number of degree offerings, (2) expand the choice of subjects at an earlier age than was presently permitted, and (3) change the sequence of studies. Amplifying the need to carefully design the curriculum, he used Hamerton's "ingenious analogy between education and cookery." His comparison allowed the listeners to recognize that creativity was necessary to enhance the final product, but that sound judgment must be present to reduce the possibility of unusable produce.

Having concluded his discussion of the topics of whom, when, how, what, and how much should be taught, Johnston apologized for his
lengthy oration which "presumed somewhat even upon the well-known
courtesy and culture of a South Carolina audience." As in his address
to the University of Texas only a few weeks earlier, the apology was
placed between the body and the peroration.

3. Conclusion

In his usual manner, he included departing remarks which paid
homage to the heritage of the locality. He praised the accomplish-
ments of Maxcy, Preston, Lieber, and Thornwell, all former graduates
of the college. He also returned to his statements of admiration for
the statesman Calhoun, to whom he had alluded in his exordium. Rais-
ing the question "do I find this institution sinking with the decrepi-
tude of years," he replied, "No wrinkle is on your brow, no sign of
weakness nor of age in all your stately form." Encouraging the uni-
versity to continue in its years of success, he closed by saying, "May
your work go on, in the time to come, increasing in usefulness and
broadening to that ideal which now fills you with energy and hope."

4. Assessment

In his 1884 address to the College of South Carolina, Johnston
presented his pedagogical insights to a group of people who were in
the midst of an educational revival. Unlike other audiences that were
just beginning to form schools in their regions, the community in
Columbia had always appreciated the value of higher learning. There-
fore, Johnston was able to amplify his ceremonial message by using
examples of local accomplishments. The sincerity of his compliments
for the College of South Carolina extended beyond the mere rhetoric of
the platform, for Johnston's correspondence to his home state revealed
the same expressions of approval. In the Louisiana Journal of Educa-
tion for Home and School, he extolled the virtues of the school,
noting:

It is very refreshing to the student and enthusiast in educational
work to find himself at an ancient seat of learning, where every-
thing is moving to the rythm [sic] of a well-ordered law. The
South Carolina College has just completed its annual Commencement,
and a very brilliant one it has been. There is something soothing
to the perturbed spirit, weary of perpetual striving and unrest,
in finding itself on an old-time college campus, which brings back
the hopeful days of youth. . . . If all this may be found at our
best old colleges, nowhere will it be more perfectly found than at
this seat of learning. . . . The South Carolina College, located
here, was founded in 1801 and opened in 1805. It long maintained
a singular prestige among the institutions of the land, by the
inspiring teachings of its professors, but most of all by the high
standard of honorable conduct among its students. . . . With the
revived energies and increasing welfare of South Carolina, she
will, in a few years, take the lead among the Southern States in
University education, unless larger and wealthier commonwealths
exert a like wisdom and enterprise. Surely, however, no true
Southwesterner will begrudge her a full meed of prosperity and

The same genuineness with which Johnston spoke such words was probably
one of the reasons for the favorable responses he received in the
Columbia newspapers. One reporter stated that "the masterly manner in
which the orator created his theme commanded close attention and
appreciation."39 Another writer noted:

Col. Johnston's thoughtful and eloquent words were listened to
with close attention, and when he closed there was a storm of
applause from the audience whom he had deeply interested and

38 William Preston Johnston, "Editorial Correspondence. Colum-
bia, South Carolina," Louisiana Journal of Education for Home and
School 6 (October 1884): 204-5.

39 Columbia Register, June 26, 1884.
pleasantly instructed. . . . A more successful celebration of the College has not been had since its reorganization.40

In addition to the gratitude expressed in the papers, several people sent him congratulatory letters. United States Senator R. L. Silas told Johnston, "Your speech was very handsome, eloquent and philosophical."41 His friend David Williams of Camden, South Carolina, expressed lengthy appreciation, saying:

I read with great pleasure and care your address before the Faculty and Students of the South Carolina College. Of course I need not congratulate you upon your success, for you never speak without success. But I am grateful that South Carolina should hear you, and only wish we could have always your example before us as well as your teachings. How much I wish I could put the short thirty miles that is between us behind me and see you again. I had promised myself the pleasure, ever since I heard you had accepted the invitation, but almost at the last hour "Uncle Sam" invited me, in such terms as would not admit of my declining, to be one of his jurors.42

With such favorable responses, the college immediately published his speech in pamphlets that were available throughout the region.43 The accessibility to such publications as well as the educator's outstanding reputation, no doubt played an important role in the decision by Alabama Polytechnic Institute to invite Johnston to serve as its commencement orator in 1891.44


41R. L. Silas to William Preston Johnston, June 29, 1884. Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.

42David R. Williams, Jr., to William Preston Johnston, June 26, 1884. Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.

43Johnston, "The Work of the University in America."

44Idem, "Problems of Southern Civilization."
C. Problems of Southern Civilization

In 1891, William Preston Johnston was extended the opportunity to speak in Alabama, a state that was slow to experience the educational awakening underway in the South. While other places in the region had been successful in reducing their illiteracy rates during the 1870s and 1880s, Alabama's percentage remained virtually unchanged.45 By 1890, however, signs of progress began to emerge in Alabama as normal schools, teachers' institutes, educational associations, and professional journals began to materialize, collectively helping to reduce the organizational insufficiency.

As in other Southern states representing an agricultural population, Alabama experienced a sharp division in philosophical objectives which sprang up between those who saw the liberal arts as the best foundation upon which to build for the future and those who envisioned socioeconomic recovery in the South to be dependent upon the strength of agricultural and mechanical colleges. This struggle became apparent in Alabama's educational development, with the ruling aristocracy supporting private schools of the classical tradition, and with the rural people focusing upon the concept of vocational training. The schism between the classical and the practical studies also found its way into higher education.46 At the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama in Auburn, President William Leroy Broun opposed the unsuitable designation and connotation of his land-grant school as


46Dabney, pp. 319-20, and Clark, p. 22.
an "A&M" or "agricultural" college, suggesting that the title was misleading. Wanting to avoid a misunderstanding, Broun pointed out:

I propose to call them Schools of Science, or Polytechnic Institutes, with departments of Agriculture, Engineering, Chemistry, etc. It is a mistake to call them Agricultural Colleges. Only a limited number of students turn their attention that way, and then the institutions are blamed for not fulfilling their supposed function.47

For that reason, Broun tried to get the college's name changed to Alabama Polytechnic Institute, which did not meet with success due to legal problems in changing the title. Nevertheless, Broun acquired the consent of the Board of Trustees to include both college names on the catalogs and stationery, with the preferred name in bolder type.48

During the dispute at A.P.I., William Preston Johnston was invited to speak to the graduating class of 1891. O. D. Smith, corresponding secretary of the faculty, extended the opportunity to Johnston by saying:

At the last meeting of the Faculty of this college you were unanimously elected to deliver the "Commencement Address" at are [sic] ensuing commencement which occurs on Wednesday, June 10th. It is the earnest desire of the faculty and friends [of] the institution that you will accept. It will be an occasion of unusual interest, as it [is] the first commencement since we have been fully installed in our new buildings. Earnestly hoping to receive a favorable response I am yours very truly.49

47William Leroy Broun to David F. Boyd, November 28, 1873. Walter L. Fleming Collection, Louisiana State University, Department of Archives.

48William Leroy Broun to General H. D. Clayton, June 7, 1885. General H. D. Clayton Papers, University of Alabama, Special Collections Department.

49O. D. Smith to William Preston Johnston, February 14, 1891. Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.
In his letter of invitation, President Leroy Broun suggested a topic for the message, saying:

At a recent meeting the Faculty of this College unanimously elected you to deliver the commencement address at the close of the present session, June 10th. I hope you will accept. You have thought much on the subject of technical education & its relation to southern civilization and should you [be?] so proper to present that subject, the publication of your address would call attention to its importance throughout the South & be productive of lasting benefits.  

Johnston was an appropriate choice to speak on behalf of the subject, having successfully integrated both classical and scientific studies into the curriculum at Washington and Lee University, Louisiana State University, and Tulane University. Also, Johnston had become a distinguished orator on the topic, having delivered at least four addresses thereon. Of all these speeches, his presentation to the Alabama Polytechnic Institute represented his most artistic appeal  

50 William Leroy Broun to William Preston Johnston, February 14, 1891. Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.  
52 Louisiana State University, Catalog, 1881, pp. 19-20.  
53 New Orleans Times-Democrat, July 23, 1884.  
to awaken the rural society in the South. Accepting the invitation to speak to A.P.I. about the circumstances facing the region, Johnston delivered the address entitled "Problems of Southern Civilization" on Wednesday, June 10, 1891.

1. Introduction

Johnston's Auburn presentation was clearly divided into an introduction, body, and conclusion. Containing remarks that related to the needs of the listeners and that focused on the subject under discussion, the exordium represented Johnston's usual style. In his customary manner, he opened his presentation by expressing his appreciation for the opportunity to share his views and by stating that he had given the speaking engagement priority over other pressing matters. Expressing a sense of duty to his listeners, he shared that "this great educational institution . . . asks from me a word of fraternal counsel and sympathy; the very wish puts a debt and an obligation upon me, and I am here to pay it." After his usual remarks of concern and gratitude, he then moved into the subject for discussion, pointing out that he was always concerned about individuals confronted with daily problems on which their welfare or ruin depended. Using the single unit to represent larger social structures, he then showed that "what is true of the individual is true also of the family, the community, the state, the nation. What we call conduct in the individual is roughly represented in a social organism by the term civilization." Although he noted that the word "civilization" was difficult to define, he suggested that it could be equated with progress. By bringing up the notion of an advancing society, he was able to lead
into the statement of his theme, saying, "The great question then for
the human intellect and will is how so to adjust and control the ele-
ments of this progress, that the change may be a benefit, not an
injury; that it may result in progress, not decadence."

2. Body

To clarify his thesis that social elements needed to be con-
trolled, he developed a chronological argument implying the following
lines of reasoning:

Presently, the residents of New England have achieved leadership
in the mechanical arts and education.

Northern pre-eminence has not always existed. The South played an
important historical role in shaping the destiny of the nation.

The Old South has now emerged into the New South, which should be
a welcomed relief.

As the region proceeds into a new era, it needs to adjust its
political views to accommodate the times.

In the Old South, a rural aristocracy was an appropriate form of
government; but in the New South, it is inappropriate.

The "least government possible" now means all that is necessary to
restrain the capitalists from instituting a plutocracy.

The best way for Southerners to equip themselves for the task con-
fronting them is to institute a system of public education for all
people.

Education in the sciences will produce students that will be able
to transform, not destroy, the great industrial movement underway
in the South.

Alabama is at the crossroads where it must choose to strengthen
the institutions such as Alabama Polytechnic Institute. . .
a. **Organization.** Believing that rhetoric showed the orator not just how the audience ought to assent, but how it is brought to assent, Johnston carefully constructed his messages so that he was able to move his listeners toward a predetermined end. Having the ultimate goal of arousing his audience's support in a grassroots campaign for social reform, Johnston prepared his lines of argument in such a way that they became a part of his overall strategy. Suggesting that "the strongest arguments [should] be placed first," Johnston opened his discussion with a contention that immediately captured the audience's attention. Johnston directly appealed to the competitive nature of the listeners by stating that New Englanders had surpassed Southerners in the mechanical arts and education. Instead of dwelling on a pessimistic theme which would have only discouraged the audience, Johnston changed over to a lengthy discussion of the significant contributions of the South. Using a chronological pattern, he described the major historical events and notable persons who had shaped the destiny of the nation. As he progressed into a discussion of the New South, he used a comparison-contrast pattern of organization when describing political and economic factors of past and present conditions. Noting that present circumstances were unlike conditions of the past, he concluded that Southerners needed to adjust their political outlook in order to retain their outstanding role in the country.

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55 William Preston Johnston, "Oratory. Lecture 2d. Mental Education." Handwritten outline, Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections, p. 5.

Assuring the audience that it was not at fault for the present plight in the region, Johnston shifted the blame to Northern capitalists who he said were exploiting the masses. Having covered "the problems of Southern civilization," he then turned the argument into a constructive discussion by describing solutions that would uplift the region. Stressing the urgency of an immediate response, Johnston placed the listeners in a dilemma, suggesting that they were at a crossroads for determining their future. Posing two paths to follow, Johnston highlighted the advantages of following his route. Appealing to the particular needs of his audience, he ended his discussion by emphasizing the benefits that would occur specifically in the state of Alabama.

b. Forms of support. Although Johnston repeated many of the same lines of reasoning in his various educational speeches, he usually carefully selected the forms of support so that they related to the special interests and educational level of the listeners. As the audience at Auburn was more interested in polytechnical and agricultural studies than in the liberal arts, Johnston used many examples, illustrations, and analogies from the sciences. To offset the predominance of scientific data, Johnston used expository material taken from history, religion, and Greek mythology.

To open his discussion about the inevitable changes that occur in civilization, Johnston used a figurative analogy, comparing the nature of society to the solar system, where "we find every race, every nation, every community, in obedience to some great law of social gravitation, traveling in its orbit with a velocity determined
by a multitude of factors, known or unknown." To show that some cultures were advancing at a more rapid rate, he appealed to the cultural self-esteem of his listeners by pointing out that they were descendants of a dynamic, not static, race. In his speeches to other Southern audiences, he always stressed the accomplishments of the Anglo-Saxon race, but in his Alabama presentation, he also included "its mingled strains of blood, indigenous, Roman, Keltic and Teutonic." Again arousing the pride of his listeners, he stirred up their competitive nature by asking, "And in this American people who are foremost?" He acknowledged that New Englanders had become leaders in the mechanical arts and education, but he noted that their pre-eminence had not relegated Southerners to a second-class status, as "Ishmael before Isaac" or as "Esau . . . to Jacob." Johnston mentioned that previously the South had been foremost in shaping the history of the country, but due to Reconstruction, it had lost its power of influence.

Before progressing to his remedy for uplifting the region, he devoted extensive time to a discussion of the colonial South, westward expansion, slavery, and the Lost Cause. He justified the lengthy explanations on the basis that "to know what we are, and may be, we should understand what we were, and how the present state of things has come about." He began his chronological development with references to the thirteen colonies, citing the significant roles of Patrick Henry, Jefferson, Madison, Mecklenburg, Sumter, Marion, and Washington. Johnston pointed out that as time progressed and "whenever a broad national policy has been at stake, the South has been
ready to meet the requirements; whenever money, men or arms were
demanded, the South has been first in the field." To highlight the
South's function in westward growth, he explained the parts that
George Rogers Clark and Thomas Jefferson played in acquiring new ter-
ritory for the country. Because of the importance of such people,
Johnston said, "I think it may be admitted that the Old South did its
part in the great work of shaping the destiny of the nation." He
noted, however, "but to that was added a peculiar task--a burden to be
borne by it alone." He rationalized that the South was not respon-
sible for the importation of Negro slaves, for "through circumstances,
by the folly and crimes or the mistakes of others more than itself,
the South, under Providence, became the master race over a subject
people." Again clarifying that the system of slavery was imperfect,
he admitted that "it had many and great abuses." Nevertheless, he
believed that the institution had contributed to the advancement of
the black race. Somehow trying to arouse the pride of Southerners,
he praised the people in the region for their abilities to accomplish
with Negroes what other groups could not achieve. To prove his con-
tention, he suggested:

Apply this test. A barbarous, yea, a savage race, heathens and
cannibals to this day in their own land, as travelers tell us, in
the parting of the spoil spared from torture and massacre a rem-
nant, who were sold as chattels to distant lands. These captives
were for the most part indolent, ignorant, brutal, superstitious
and cruel. They were subjected, under various nationalities and
systems of labor, to a life of slavery. Everywhere else, except
in our region, the result has been a total failure to elevate the
African to the point of self-progress. English, French, Dutch,
Spanish, Portuguese, Arab, all alike having striven in vain to
raise the negro to the plane of a tolerable civilization. His
status seemed that of impregnable barbarism. In the South alone
has the experiment proved even a partial success. But where here
is the result? Two centuries have produced a transformation in
the negro the like of which the world has never seen.

To amplify further the success of the system, he proposed a comparison
between enslavement and education, saying, "The South was the kinder-
garten, the school, the college of the negro, and slavery the curricu-
um providentially appointed to discipline his docile nature to the
uses of civilization." But because "school is out" and "the era of
pupilage has past [sic]," he advised that the schooling be continued
in the form of industrial education, with blacks "aspiring to the same
moral code and ideal as our own." Johnston went so far as to compli-
ment the Negro race in the South, which "now represents a respectable
component part of cosmopolitan commerce and civilization, and seems to
have entered, to some extent, upon the phase of self-dependence, which
is the only guaranty of national survival." Possibly because many
listeners would object to any form of amelioration of the black popu-
lation, Johnston quickly moved into a Lost Cause theme, extolling the
virtues of the fallen Confederate soldiers. In describing the South-
ern patriots, he said:

Do you remember the lad in gray who went to the front--dead, or
gray-haired now? Patience, fortitude, fidelity, warlike enter-
prise was his; and, when defeat came, an intelligent acceptance of
its consequences and an invincible resolution that it should not
entail degradation. There never was a better whetstone for valor
and the arts of war than Southern masterhood. And the republic
may miss them when most needed, if suffered to fall into decay by
the ban of popular and legislative discouragement.

To climax the Lost Cause theme, Johnston quoted verses from Arthur
Hugh Clough's "Perschiera," which ended with the line, "'Tis better to
have fought and lost, than never to have fought at all."
Having concluded his discussion of the historical past, Johnston entered into the second portion of his message, which explained methods for improving Southern civilization. He noted that while the maxim "the least government possible is the best" was suitable in the Old South, it was no longer appropriate in the New South, for conditions had drastically changed. As he pointed out to his listeners:

This then, is how we stand: a conservative rural population, accustomed to the strictest personal government over a part of its members and the laxeest over the rest, is suddenly confronted with all the problems of modern civilization. This is especially true here in Alabama, where your vast mineral resources have invited capital, immigration, manufacturers and railroads, and every sort of corporate action, in an unprecedented way.

Johnston welcomed urbanization but recognized some unfortunate consequences that could result, citing prominent cities in the past that eventually fell into decay. He noted that "if the refuse and garbage of all nationalities, sodden in ignorance and leprous with crime, are to be dumped by the shipload into our cities, they will become simply the sewers of a fetid pseudo-civilization." To circumvent cultural impurity, he proposed that "what we most need is for the hand of the law to be strengthened, so that it may hold in check the savagery of the dangerous classes--a novel term in this land--and the rapacity of our new breed and brand of millionaires." Knowing that government interference was considered contrary to the nation's foundation, he refuted the misconception, noting:

The advocates of capitalism denounce every effort to limit the wealth and power of a class, whose distinctive trait is unscrupulous rapacity, as an attempt to equalize all property. This charge is not true. There is no general feeling among Americans looking toward communism or socialism. We know the value of a reasonable competition, which trusts and syndicates have stifled and nearly destroyed. It is also alleged that the motives that
prompt the men who would restrict the enormous aggregation of wealth in the hands of the few are envy, and the instinct of robbery. This is the baldest slander.

Drawing an analogy between the extravagances of capitalism and the vices of "slugging," "gambling," "playing thimble-ring," and "lottery," Johnston noted that such practices were not among the "rights of life, liberty and happiness for which our fathers fought." He then suggested that "the least government possible now means all the government necessary for a denser population, an ignorant suffrage and more complex civilization."

To explain what was meant by "all the government necessary," Johnston proceeded to enumerate the measures that should be taken to curtail exploitation by capitalists. His list included salary ceilings in public corporations, limitations on the number of hours in a work week, prohibition of child labor, public arbitration that would prevent costly strikes, the implementation of inheritance taxes, and the formation of a graduated income tax. Aware that his proposals would be equated with excessive governmental measures, Johnston again disputed the notion, retorting,

I am quite aware that this line of suggestion will be called socialism, communism, nihilism, perhaps. But it is none of these. It is merely a statement of the right and necessity of society to regulate private property, that its congestion may not destroy the body politic.

Although he believed that progressive reform was important, Johnston maintained that the implementation of free public education was the most vital remedy to the ills plaguing the South. He observed that such a system would "help the helpless," "develop all the possibilities of usefulness in every child of the state," and "build them
up to the full Stature of the best manhood." Realizing that his opponents would cry out like Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper," he declared that it was the duty of all Christians to care for the destitute and to provide them with proper schooling.

Up until this portion of his presentation, Johnston had included only a few references to the local circumstances in Alabama. In the remainder of his message, he adapted his solution to local conditions. He praised Alabama for its generous support of the state university, noting that "every Dollar given her will be transmuted into coinage of the brain worth a hundred fold the based metal--gold." But he pointed out that more financial support was needed to boost scientific studies:

What we need most for our young men is knowledge and training for the great industrial movements that are absorbing the talents and energies of the most vigorous and ambitious of our sons. The work is special, and institutions that prepare men for it must be adapted to it. This polytechnic institute has a gigantic task to perform, and needs and should receive all the aid that your state and its citizens can give.

To clarify the misconceptions between skilled labor and industrial education, he pointed out that the latter included "brains, trained intellect, theory and practice, [and] science as well as art," characteristics which were needed to assist in the development underway in the New South. To show that scientific training has been successful so far, he cited engineering feats in Louisiana, concluding that "what is true in Louisiana is true also of Alabama and other states." He illustrated that two recent engineering graduates from Tulane University had been appointed to top managerial positions in prominent Southern industries, an achievement made possible through the students'
industrial education. Motivating the people in the locality to recognize their potential, Johnston suggested that "there is no state in which mining engineers and metallurgists are more needed than in Alabama." Knowing that President William Leroy Broun endorsed the advancement of polytechnic education, Johnston asked, "Why can not studies for this career become such a specialty here that it shall, for home work at least, rival and surpass the technical schools of the east. Strengthen the hands of the able president, and he will do the rest."

Having discussed the problems confronting the South and having presented proposals that would alleviate the prevailing conditions, Johnston was able to complete the constructive portion of his message. The chronology of his discussion had progressed from the past history to present circumstances. Adding to the importance of his presentation, Johnston proceeded into a peroration which strengthened the impact of his theme.

3. Conclusion

After he prescribed the solution, Johnston visualized the future. Realizing that most of his listeners would enter into large industries, which had been the subject of attack during his discussion, Johnston clarified that "the day of small things is past" and "this is the era of vast enterprises," but "a corporation need not be soulless." He suggested,

On the moral side of the industrial movement, this institution will be found a powerful auxiliary. Ethical instruction does not constitute virtue, but so bracing and benevolent is the academic spirit that it lifts its sons above the lower and grosser forms of selfishness, and continually invites them to live for others.
Having assured the listeners that they could exert a positive influence on the destiny of the industrial movement, he concluded his presentation. Ending on an optimistic note, he said, "Such a new South let us hope for. . . . It is vision that patriots may hope for and philosophers realize."

4. Assessment

The prominent educator A. D. Mayo, who was on tour with Johnston when he spoke in Alabama, described the speech "Problems of Southern Civilization" as a "landmark toward the future in which all true Americans may unite."\(^57\) The faculty at Alabama Polytechnic Institute praised it as a "masterly analysis of the social conditions and needs of this Southern section of the United States" and requested a copy of the speech for publication.\(^58\) Even Johnston's hometown newspaper, the New Orleans Daily Picayune, also printed a full copy of the address, indicating its popularity in cities elsewhere in the South.\(^59\) Yet, ironically, his 1891 presentation did not typify the style found in Johnston's usual educational oratory. While an address from a year earlier indicated that Johnston had suddenly adopted a populist platform in the early 1890s,\(^60\) nowhere else in his educational campaign

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\(^{59}\) New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 15, 1891.

\(^{60}\) Johnston, "The Function of the City."
does he exploit the same popular Southern myths. His address during the years of Reconstruction had been filled with themes about the Old South, Lost Cause, and Solid South, reflecting his era of discouragement, but as soon as he had joined the Southern awakening, he had abandoned his pessimistic views. Because the use of myths did not typify his educational rhetoric, an appropriate question may arise—why did Johnston use these Southern apologetic themes?

Because Johnston admitted as late as 1894 that his "heart was buried with the Confederacy," and "on it will be found engraved at the day of doom, 'C.S.A.'," some critics may assume that Johnston was reviving his attitudes that lay dormant for decades. Others concluded, as did the biographer Arthur Marvin Shaw, that Johnston represented a "transitional figure of the Confederacy," thereby possessing characteristics of both antebellum and postbellum Southerners. To say that Johnston used the myths because he still ascribed to the principles he espoused is speculative, but a more justifiable basis for their usage can be found.

Waldo Braden has accurately observed that "the postwar South provided a congenial climate in which to exploit the myth," particularly the Old South, Lost Cause, Solid South, and New South myths.

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61William Preston Johnston to Thomas Taylor Munford, January 19, 1894. Marshall McDonald Collection, Duke University, Special Collections.

62Arthur Marvin Shaw, William Preston Johnston, A Transitional Figure of the Confederacy (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943).
Citing excerpts from "Problems of Southern Civilization," Braden has shown that Johnston successfully employed themes which allowed ceremonial speakers an opportunity to excite emotionally the listeners who were in harmony with the expressed point of view. In evaluating a speaker's use of myths, Braden notes that the critic must realize that the intertwined concepts may not be consistent or orderly, but the opposing feelings are usually rationalized for the listeners. The critic, Braden says, should also be alert to the myth-user's efforts to build rapport with his listeners, to present an aura of goodwill, and to magnify or minify certain human characteristics. Braden's insights into the use of myths probably best explain the seemingly contradictory nature apparent in the 1891 address. As Johnston was complying with the request of President Broun, he included lines of reasoning and supporting material that he believed would appeal to his listeners.

Johnston probably believed that his premises were valid, for he himself opposed the use of myths when trying accurately to portray history. In his 1872 lecture entitled "The Relations of History and Myth," Johnston had noted that

the duty then of the Historian being the recital of truth, to that end he must seek constantly the elimination of error. The essential criterion of History is its truth: it is the representation of the Real. Hence whatever is unreal or untrue must be separated

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Perhaps the greatest source of error in History is the unconscious falsehood, which the weakness of human judgment accepts and perpetuates as true. This unconscious falsehood, which may be designated as the Fabulous, is distinguished from the Consciously False in that it is not devised for deception; and from Fiction because it does not illustrate general truths, but hands down accredited fancies. It exists in all History; in contemporaneous, as well as remote; in detached incidents, and in organic masses. . . . Between that which is absolutely and organically false and what can properly be called History there is a vast intermediate territory. . . . I have said elsewhere that it may properly be divided into Tradition, Legend, and Myth.

In the same lecture, Johnston recounted, "I have heard a soldier say 'I tell you the general looked ten feet high.' In the lapse of time and tongue and tradition a mythic epic would have extolled the gallant commander as actually ten feet tall." And, yet, as adamantly as Johnston advised others to carefully distinguish myth from reality, he himself failed to describe the Old South and Lost Cause in figures less than "ten feet tall."

In spite of his exaggeration of the past circumstances in the South, he was able to predict accurately the problems that inevitably resulted from the industrial revolution in the New South. He also may have helped to spur the awakening of a class consciousness among the rural people, having advocated that Alabama citizens unite to form "a ground swell--a tidal wave--of popular indignation." Such appeals, popular during the late nineteenth century, eventually brought about the formation of the Farmers' Alliance, the Grange, the Third Party, the People's Party, and the Populist Party in nearly every Southern

state. Moreover, the platforms of these parties contained endorsements of universal education,66 the ultimate solution recommended by Johnston in his speech "Problems of Southern Civilization."

D. Summary

During the closing decades of the nineteenth century, William Preston Johnston served as a spokesman for the educational awakening of the New South, delivering specialized messages in several states. In these addresses, he adapted his themes to the needs of the locality and showed that the communities could be strengthened by implementing a scheme of universal education. Having gained success on the local and state levels, Johnston then directed his strategy to acquiring national attention in an endeavor to uplift his region.

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CHAPTER VI

SPEECHES TO NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES

The postbellum educational crusade for the South was in great need of every available means of support. In addition to bringing in prominent national, regional, and local leaders to speak on behalf of the cause, William Preston Johnston himself journeyed to national and international settings to inform concerned audiences about the prevailing circumstances in his region. Describing the impact of these addresses, one educational historian has noted that Johnston's "profound philosophical observations, with his estimate of what should be done for Southern civilization, have been much appreciated by political economists in America and Europe."¹ Johnston's strategy to acquire outside sentiment in favor of the Southern cause apparently began during his early years as president of Tulane University. The agencies through which he carried out his plan included existing professional associations, educational boards, and federal departments. He spoke to members of the National Educational Association when they assembled for their 1884 convention in Madison, Wisconsin,² for their


²Johnston said that he was scheduled to speak in Madison, Wisconsin, on July 14, 1884, but that he had not yet prepared his
1885 special session in New Orleans, and for their 1886 meeting in Topeka, Kansas. He appeared as a guest speaker at the thirtieth convocation of the University of the State of New York, an organization consisting of 440 incorporated institutions of academic and higher education in New York. Besides these prominent groups, Johnston also spoke at two worldwide conventions, including the International Congress of Educators, meeting in New Orleans, 1885, and the World's message. William Preston Johnston to R. W. Johnson, May 26, 1884. Johnston Collection. By the end of June, Johnston apparently had not yet submitted his script for publication in the convention program, as indicated by a letter from the manager of the NEA press department which requested an abstract of his speech. E. C. Carringan to William Preston Johnston, June 21, 1884. Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.


Educational Congress, gathering in Chicago, 1893. Of these speaking engagements, the speeches that best represent his outside campaign are the addresses presented in New Orleans and New York. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the nature of the audiences attending these selected speeches, to analyze the addresses that Johnston presented to them, to assess the impact of his oratory, and to discover the differences between his messages to his colleagues in the South and to those outside of his region. Following a chronological pattern, this chapter begins with the earliest address.

A. World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition

In 1883, William Preston Johnston and other concerned citizens formed the Louisiana Educational Society, to improve the schools in New Orleans and outlying areas. In addition to working within the local network, the association sought help through all possible avenues, including national and international structures. After only one year of existence, the group organized a nationwide campaign to help bring attention and aid to the educational system in the region. Knowing that the city of New Orleans would host the World's Industrial

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and Cotton Centennial Exposition from December 1884 to May 1885, the Louisiana Educational Society decided to sponsor exhibits on behalf of education. In describing the purpose of the show, Johnston told his fellow members of the Louisiana Education Society,

Has not the Great Exposition to be held here next winter already, in response to our suggestions, taken steps to bring here the most influential and the largest educational organizations in the union, to meet with our teachers and let us feel the quickening influence of their ideas and examples? Moreover, its exhibition in the department of education will be the best possible object teaching for our teachers themselves.

In addition to the anticipated impact on teachers, Johnston pointed out that the Exposition could bring about desirable changes within the schools and legislature too.

It is hoped that the combined wisdom of the able and eminent men now engaged in this undertaking will frame for us better laws and constitutional amendments, by means of which we may obtain greater resources, larger local appropriations, more energetic administration, fuller supervision, normal schools and teachers better trained and better paid.

Furthermore, he hoped that the exhibition would affect national decisions pertaining to Southern education. Because "we have made an appeal for Federal aid which has at least reached the ear, and it maybe has touched the conscience of Congress," Johnston believed that special programs at the Exposition would increase the likelihood of Congress passing legislation, such as the Blair Bill, that would provide financial resources for Southern education.9

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To strengthen the quality of the programs on education, Johnston recommended that the Exposition invite the National Educational Association, its Department of Superintendence, and the International Congress of Educators to participate in the functions. Accepting Johnston's advice, General E. A. Burke, director of the World's Exposition, attended the annual meeting of the NEA held at Madison, Wisconsin, 1884, and invited members to join the activities in New Orleans. The invitation was accepted and a special committee of fifty was appointed by the NEA to attend the Exposition. Arrangements were also made for the committee to meet with the Department of Superintendence and the International Congress of Educators. As a member of the local arrangements committee and a delegate of the NEA committee of fifty, Johnston played an important role in coordinating educational programs at the New Orleans Exposition.

When the educational convention opened on February 23, 1885, the various educational associations were given a reception by teachers and local authorities in New Orleans. In a welcoming address, Johnston told his audience, composed of the nation's foremost educators, that the South was striving for better conditions and was willing to learn from their example. He noted that


12 Bicknell, p. 513.
we—the whole South and our young university here—are seeking thoughtfully and earnestly for the best things applicable to our condition, wherever they can be found. We are not ashamed to acknowledge our shortcomings, for we mean to remedy them. We know we are not all alike, and that we can learn from each other, and I confess with all humility that I think we can learn more from Massachusetts than she can learn from us, and she thinks so too. But knowledge, which is more precious than rubies, is a sort of wealth which its holder is always willing to share. Our World’s Exposition is now keeping school for the nations, and Louisiana will, I trust, be one of its aptest pupils. Your presence here to-day we accept as an augury of good. We hope to pump you dry before you leave. We shall spoil the Egyptians of their fine gold of knowledge and their rubies of wisdom, and we expect to be rich enough to go into the jewelry business. . . . I beg to repeat and enforce the hearty welcome which is felt by all the teachers, whose feet are beautiful upon the mountains and shod with the golden sandals of truth. You are the captains and generals who are to discipline that army which twenty years hence will be fighting in the mighty Armageddon, the strife between good and evil. Welcome! soldiers in a good cause, for you bring to us the prescience of a better time coming. May your stay with us be as agreeable to you, gentlemen, as it is to us, and may you take away a pleasant memory of our fair and sunny Southern land.

When introducing another speaker at the reception, Johnston noted that Dr. A. D. Mayo, the prominent educator from Boston, had asked why he was placed on the program to speak, to which Johnston replied that he had been chosen as an apostle to the Gentiles. Having established an appreciative tone, Johnston helped the Northern guests to feel as though they could make substantial contributions to the educational welfare of the people in the South.

The joint convention of the Department of Superintendence and the International Congress of Educators ran from February 24-27, 1885, with the former group occupying the morning sessions and the latter


14 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 24, 1885.
group holding programs in the afternoon and evening.\textsuperscript{15} Presentations by the International Congress included papers on elementary, secondary, and university instruction; special education; architecture and hygiene of buildings for schools, libraries, and museums; and miscellaneous topics. Programs by the Department of Superintendence included papers of general interest, such as William Preston Johnston's "The Relation of the University to the Common School."\textsuperscript{16}

On Tuesday morning, February 24, 1885, Tulane University was host to some of the most outstanding educational leaders in the nation and world, including John Eaton, United States Commissioner of Education; J. L. M. Curry, General Agent of the Peabody Fund; and Dr. A. D. Mayo of Boston. As these prominent guests were to establish recommendations on behalf of Southern education and federal aid by the end of the evening,\textsuperscript{17} Johnston probably realized the importance of creating a favorable impression on his listeners that morning. Unlike his customary addresses at commencement exercises and teachers' conventions, which lasted nearly an hour in length, Johnston was allocated a fifteen-minute time slot which required a brief description of the prevailing circumstances and solutions.

\textsuperscript{15}Bicknell, p. 513.

\textsuperscript{16}Special Report by the Bureau of Education, pp. 3-6, and Part III, pp. 3-4 and 80-85.

\textsuperscript{17}"National Educational Association," Louisiana Journal of Education for Home and School 6 (February 1885): 343.
1. Introduction

Because of the time constraint, Johnston did not open with his usual lengthy exordium; instead, he presented the title of his paper, which was "The Relation of the University to the Common School," and moved directly into his discussion. Observing that to "present the question fully would require more time than your patience or the limitations of the occasion would readily allow," Johnston proceeded to note that "there are some obvious points which occur to me, that may do somewhat toward placing the subject in its true light before this audience."

2. Body

To clarify the points which would shed "true light" on his listeners, Johnston implied the following lines of reasoning:

Educators in the South realize that:
1. Both the common schools and the universities deal with the development of the citizens.
2. Education must be integral, preparing people for the work of life.
3. Education is a continuous process, extending from birth to later years.
4. Education is marked off into successive phases, including the common schools, high schools, colleges, and universities.

We understand these objectives and we are striving for them.

But as the circumstances in the region are unique, we must adapt our schools to meet the needs and abilities of our people....

a. Organization. When selecting, wording, and arranging main points for a presentation to a national audience, Johnston used many of the theories that he taught to his oratory students at Washington College. Johnston had advised that when the question under discussion
was presented to a favorable or unprejudiced audience, the speaker
could directly state his position. But in the reverse case, Johnston
believed that "it may better be deferred, omitted, or only implied in
its consequences." Likewise, when stating the facts, he suggested,
"unless for good reason, they too had best appear by inference,
instead of explication." In his speech "The Relation of the Univer-
sity to the Common School," Johnston used the latter approach, indi-
cating that perhaps if he were to express his views in the same manner
in which he had shared them with the Louisiana Educational Society, he
would have been ineffective in capturing the favor of a national audi-
ence. Because he was trying to gain the confidence of people who
would be enacting legislation affecting the South, Johnston developed
a pattern of organization coinciding with his strategy. As his goal
was to gain support for the Southern movement, he decided to display
the capabilities of leaders in the South rather than to stress the
shortcomings of the region.

Believing that the first part of the narration received the
most attention by listeners, Johnston presented points early in his
discussion that showed his understanding of contemporary educational
philosophy. As the discussion unfolded, Johnston progressed from
implicit assumptions about education to direct statements of his
beliefs concerning the need for individualism in school systems. As
he believed that the second half of a speaker's discussion tended to
be less noticed by audiences, 18 he apparently did not feel the need to

18 William Preston Johnston, "The Preparation of a Discourse."
Handwritten notes, Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special
Collections, p. 6.
continue to be indirect in expressing his position. In fact, by the end of his message, Johnston became straightforward about his beliefs in local decision-making in the schools.

Having only a short time span in which to accomplish his goal, Johnston spent most of his time presenting general points which expressed his progressive educational position. Only during the latter portion did he share particular concerns of the South.

b. Forms of support. Johnston usually supported the main points in his speeches with a variety of expository devices, including examples, illustrations, and analogies. But in "Relation of the University to the Common School," which represented one of his shortest presentations, Johnston did not use his customary forms of support. Instead, he amplified his ideas by primarily using explanations and quotations from his own works.

During the first half of Johnston's brief presentation, he attempted to show the audience that he, as a representative of the South, had an understanding of the principles that governed all phases of education. Knowing that some of his listeners were more interested in certain academic levels, he avoided divisive issues and used statements that would try to unify the interests of his listeners. His technique was most noticeable when he said:

You will be told, and truly told, that universities may exist where there are no common schools, and that the light comes from above; but to have preceded them even, and to have made them possible, is some relation at least. But whether the common schools are the intellectual offspring of the universities, as is the case in all other countries, or, as some may claim in new communities, the universities are the product and flower of the common schools, they deal in both cases with the development of the citizen, the one
beginning and the other finishing his education; the one lays the foundation, the other sets the capstone of the edifice.

He amplified the similarities by explaining that an education should be designed to transfer the training of the classroom into preparation for life. He also discussed the continuity that existed in the consistent phases of education which "are but successive mansions in our Father's house."

While Johnston's discussion about educational philosophy helped to unite and inspire the listeners, they tended to serve an even greater purpose. Realizing that he was speaking to an audience composed of the nation's foremost educators and decision makers, Johnston sought to heighten the guests' assessment of his capabilities. During the first half of the presentation, Johnston used indirection to reveal his educational insights, but during the remainder of his message he directly built his ethos by extensively quoting reports which he had prepared for the boards at Louisiana State University and Tulane University. To introduce his first excerpt, he said, "I take the liberty of quoting from a report which, though printed some eighteen months ago, has not been published." In his abstract, he then described Tulane's plan for making "our work as real, expansive, and manifest, as human fallibility will permit." He presented another excerpt by saying, "In the first report I made as the President of the Louisiana State University, in December, 1880, I set forth the mutual interdependence of all the parts of our educational system and the urgent need of help in securing its blessings to our population."

Having established himself as a credible and concerned speaker, Johnston then moved into the climax of his message.
Johnston's most important point was that while the South welcomed insights from its prominent guests, Southerners must ultimately be the ones to adapt the educational policies for their own people. But instead of separating himself from the audience, Johnston used subtler statements to convey his belief. He indicated that "it is the reiterated demand of this or that educator for a university or a college to adopt his standard of scholastic orthodoxy." He noted that some educators were contending that "you shall follow this method or that method, or issue this degree or that degree, and for such and such courses of study; otherwise you are schismatic, heretical, out of the ring." Realizing that educational systems were in the midst of a changeover in curriculum and that all members in the audience were experiencing the tension that resulted, he suggested that educators "must beware of a slavish adoption of methods." He warned that "to do a thing merely because it has been done somewhere else, is the worst reason that can be assigned, unless we can show that the situations are exactly the same." Knowing that conditions in the South were unique, he then presented three analogies to show that "we must adapt our educational institutions in each particular case to our own wants, and not another's." He compared the work of an educator to that of a tailor, for "you may make your coat of the same material as another man's, because he commends its texture, but you will have it cut to fit yourself, and not by his pattern." Showing that the creation of educational principles was similar to the development of legislative rules, he pointed out that "Solon made not the best code, but the best code for the Athenians." Finally, he noted that "in arranging our
schools, of whatever grade, we have to diagnose the case, as the doctors do."

In the beginning and middle portions of the speech, Johnston had used expository material that was general in nature and that helped to establish his credibility as an educator. But by the end of his address, he had become more specific in his use of supporting material.

3. Conclusion

Because of the time limitations, Johnston did not include a lengthy peroration which summed up his message. Instead, he reemphasized an idea which was presented during the second half of his discussion, namely that schools must maintain their individualism. Having given weight to his major point at the end of the presentation, he then concluded by saying,

We are bound to regard the social culture and the educational condition of the people for whom we legislate... And we need not be discouraged in either common school or university organization and work, if we fall far short of our hopes and plans and ideals. Because he reiterated this portion of his message during the closing remarks, it seems likely that the true theme of his presentation had not been disclosed until the end. Even though he had devoted most of his discussion to proving his integrity as an educator, he had used the earlier points as stepping stones leading up to his major theme.

4. Assessment

In "Relations of the University to the Common School," Johnston expressed views that were consistent with his messages to Southern audiences. But unlike the speeches in his region, Johnston
had to put forth more effort to establish his credibility with a group of people representing the nation's foremost educators. Because he wanted his prominent guests to support the Southern educational movement but not to the extent of excessive patronization, Johnston used methods of indirection to express his premises. When the same concepts had been presented to audiences composed exclusively of Southerners, Johnston had been more abrupt in his opposition to national intervention.

The skill with which Johnston expressed his ideas to the Department of Superintendence and International Congress of Educators helped to make his speech a success. As one reporter noted, "The paper was attentively listened to and called forth several expressions of views." As a result of Johnston's impact on his audience, another newspaper writer said,

Col. Wm. Preston Johnston . . . is one of the noblest men in the country, progressive in his purpose, and will aid greatly in building up a Harvard or Yale in the South. . . . [His proposals] will help develop the wonderful resources of the South and make this land the pride of the entire land.

Not only were the newspaper reporters favorable toward Johnston's views, but other members of the audience expressed similar reactions to the way Southern educators were progressing. That same afternoon, when Professor Bicknell of Boston spoke on the necessity of national aid to education, he shared his optimism and confidence in the South's handling of its educational matters and finances.

I am acquainted with the State Superintendents of Instruction, I believe, in every Southern State. I am acquainted with the State School Board, I think, of every Southern State but two or three. I have studied with great care in the records of all those offices their methods of distribution of money. I believe there is not a set of men in this country who are handling a moderate amount of
money with greater economy, with greater fidelity, than these gentlemen. I believe if there is any set of men in this country that can be trusted to administer a fund of $10,000,000 or $15,000,000 in thirteen or fourteen States with fidelity, it is the school authorities of those States, and, therefore, it seems to me that this money should go directly to the children through the accustomed channels, of course, being guarded by all proper safeguards in the central power.19

Such testimonies helped to reinforce the prevailing climate during the four-day educational conferences at the New Orleans Exposition. When the prominent educators returned to their respective jobs, they carried with them favorable memories which were passed along to other members of the profession. The New England Journal of Education ran the following editorial, indicating their reactions to the conference.

The result of such a meeting as this cannot fail to be felt throughout the land, perhaps even abroad. Every earnest man and woman in attendance will go home encouraged to bear, to hope, to attempt, and, out of it all, to do something better than before. Even the Dominion, the islands of the Sea, and distant Japan, to say nothing of somewhat unimpressive Europe, will feel a new thrill from the hearty welcome to their representatives in New Orleans. And, best of all, the bonds of good fellowship, and, what is more important, mutual understanding between all parts of our Union will be woven more closely from a week of such communion of clear-seeing and right-feeling workers for the children.20

A correspondent for the National Educational Association expressed the same complimentary view:

Allow me to preface my report by saying that the International Cotton Exposition of New Orleans was, as a whole, one of the most remarkable products of our time and country; and in its immense average of buildings, in the magnitude and extent of the general and special exhibits, in the variety and wealth of the material

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19 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 27 and 28, 1885.

from every State and territory of our own country and from almost every civilized land, in the systematic classification and arrangements of the various departments, and in the immense contributions and orderly grouping of the educational work by cities, States, and nations, the Exposition has had scarcely a superior in modern times.

Showing appreciation, the writer expressed that the NEA "committee is under many obligations to President Johnston and his gentlemanly faculty for innumerable courtesies extended." The reporter went on to describe his favorable impressions not only of Johnston, but all Southerners, a reaction which Johnston was ultimately seeking.

We must remember that it was held in that portion of our country which had only twenty years ago emerged from the gloom, darkness, and devastation of the civil war, with its wealth destroyed, its industries prostrated, its energies paralyzed by defeat, with little left but heart and hope with which to press forward into the future; with an ignorant and helpless race of millions on its hands, to cast off or to lift up and educate for manhood and true citizenship. This fact made this Exhibition the more remarkable, and illustrates most wonderfully the uprising, elastic force of a great body of people, delivered from the thraldom of a crushing burden and putting on the free activities which this emancipation conferred more completely upon the white than the colored race. Twenty years of industry, under the productive conditions of free labor, had done more for the South than two centuries of slave-labor. This Exhibition was a revelation of the wealth of undeveloped resources of that vast land and people we call the South, and was the earnest and pledge of the sincerity, the heartiness, and the self-devotion which makes it not only in name but in fact The New South, a land over whose present and prospective prosperity the whole country may well rejoice.21

Because of the success of the educational programs, the United States Bureau of Education published all of the proceedings of the week-long conference held in New Orleans.22 In addition to governmental publications, national professional journals also printed copies of the

21Bicknell, pp. 513-14.

most notable addresses, including Johnston's speech.23 No doubt, the impact of the address, the educational exhibits, and the entire Exposition achieved far greater results than what Johnston had originally anticipated.

B. Thirtieth University Convocation of the State of New York

William Preston Johnston's work through Tulane University, the state campaigns, and the regional movement brought him into contact with the nation's greatest educational leaders. As a result, he was invited by various professional associations to speak on behalf of his work for Southern education. In May 1892, he received an invitation from Melvil Dewey, secretary of the University of the State of New York, asking him to speak at the organization's thirtieth convocation in Albany. In the letter, Dewey said:

Our last two Convocations have been pronounced by such men as W. T. Harris and Pres. Stanley Hall and others the best educational meetings of the year. We hope to more than maintain the standard in July. The Convocation council beg [sic] to extend a most cordial invitation to you to occupy the post of honor this year and to deliver the annual address in the senate chamber. We can guarantee you a fine audience of the best men, not only of the state but a large representation from other states, of leaders in university work. You will be free to select your own topic. President Angel of Michigan and Walker of Boston gave us fine addresses at the recent meetings, and this invitation is considered the highest honor we can offer to distinguished university men outside the state. We unfortunately have no funds from which to make any payments, but can pay the traveling expenses. We should be specially glad if you would speak on higher education in the south, for which we all look to you as the acknowledged head. Will you kindly telegraph, unpaid, if we may print your name for the annual address, as the announcement is wanted for the National

Educational Association, 30,000 copies of the program of which will be printed in a few days.24

Johnston accepted the invitation to speak to the organization, which represented one of the most advanced state educational networks in the country. The University of the State of New York, first incorporated in 1784, consisted of 440 institutions of academic and higher education, university extension, the state library, and the state museum, all of which were governed by a board of regents. Although the corporation met irregularly during the early decades of existence, the University eventually gathered on an annual basis to hold convocations for consideration of subjects of mutual interest, with the ultimate purpose of promoting academic and higher education. During its 1892 session, the University opened its thirtieth convocation on Tuesday evening, July 5, with William Preston Johnston delivering the annual address entitled "Higher Education in the South."25

During the two months that Johnston was given to prepare his address, he apparently considered the invitation to be so important that he wrote more revisions than he had written for his other educational addresses. His first draft, a lengthy handwritten copy, indicated that he wanted to resolve certain questions, including: "What is Higher Education? To Whom does it properly apply? What is its present attitude in our Southern states; its genesis, methods, purposes? Whither does it tend? What will be the result?" In answering

24 Melvil Dewey to William Preston Johnston, May 9, 1892. Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.

25 Regents' Bulletin No. 9, August, 1892, pp. 12-25 and 167-68.
these questions, he had planned to present a philosophical discussion during the first half of the speech, bringing up items that customarily were covered in all of his educational speeches. But in the remainder of the speech, he had considered refuting the extension of higher education to blacks at that time in their cultural advancement. He justified his contention for the following reasons:

I must sum up then as to the question of Higher Education for the Negro in the South by an inference from all I have been saying, that it is my opinion he cannot achieve it until he has passed through a period not to be measured by college curriculums and commencements, but by generations. If school individuals of that race really attain to the higher ranges of thought, which may not be desired, it is to be attributed to the grace of God which works in its own way, or to a concurrence of causes such as produce the phenomenal men of any people. And my practical deduction from all this is not to deny to the Negro his full share of enlightenment, but rather to afford every legitimate opportunity of progress and advance. The primary schools will suffice for a generation at least for the masses of the blacks. Their secondary schools, often styled Colleges and universities with much misapplied effort, are in the main, doing a good work. They are sending out teachers and preachers who can get nearer the heart of their people than any white man can, because they stand on the same plane. These are things that even sympathy and religion cannot absolutely bridge, so that native teachers of the same race always have an advantage over strangers. In my opinion, they are best where they devote most time to manual training, not only because of its practical applications, but because its intellectual discipline is adapted to their plane of thought.26

Such views, considered to be complacent by twentieth-century educators, were not altogether unlike the most progressive Southern thinkers of the era, including Edgar Gardner Murphy, Albert Shaw, and Robert Ogden.27 Even Walter Hines Page, who was eventually expelled

26William Preston Johnston, "Higher Education in the South." Handwritten script, Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections, pp. 11-12.

27Keith Howard Griffin, "A Rhetorical Biography of Walter Hines Page with Reference to His Ceremonial Speaking on Southern
by Southerners because of his liberal thought, questioned the belief by Northerners "that a rudimentary education would at once lift the negro from a semi-barbarous state into intelligent citizenship," for "a generation or two of freedom is necessary for him to learn that practical management of affairs which will make him prudent." Not only were Johnston's views compatible with other white educators in his region, but they were consistent with most black educators as well. Three years after Johnston spoke at the University Convocation in New York, Booker T. Washington was to deliver his famous "Atlanta Exposition Address," which conveyed some of the same notions expressed by Johnston.

Perhaps the reason why progressive Southerners of the nineteenth century were unable to convince Northern educators and national legislators of their sincerity to help uplift the status of blacks was because of the tendency to use divisive, offensive language. In Johnston's rough draft of his New York address, he had planned to conclude his message by shifting the obligation of Negro education away from his region. In a conclusion that would have alienated his audience, he had considered saying:

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But it does seem misdirected energy to devote the benefactions of philanthropists and the toil of faculties toward the esthetic cultivation of the few infant phenomena who could be better provided for by scholarships and fellowships elsewhere, in institutions and communities that would afford an environment better adapted to their rapid and free development; say, in northern colleges which are free from prejudices. This element of the disciple being eliminated, we may come to the consideration of Higher education of the white people in the South.30

At some point between the numerous revisions and the final presentation, Johnston decided to omit the second half of his message which would have refuted the reasoning by Northern educators. Because his ultimate goal was to acquire the favor and financial support of Northern philanthropists and federal agencies, he wisely chose a different strategy.

1. Introduction

After opening his July 5, 1892, address with his customary appreciation for being selected as the guest of honor, Johnston showed himself to be a man of modesty before his Northern audience by noting that "it is . . . with a very sincere distrust of my own ability that I appear here now. The question is so large, so complicated, so fundamental, that any man of ordinary self-esteem would feel a diffidence in grappling with it." He proceeded nevertheless by pointing out that "you have called on me for my views, and I shall offer them frankly and subject to such correction as your wider experience and wisdom may apply to them."

30Johnston, p. 12.
2. Body

Although Johnston deleted his offensive remarks, he retained the questions that he originally planned to cover, including: what is higher education, to whom does it properly apply, what is the present attitude in the South, what are its origins and structures, what is its trend, and what will be its outcome. In answering these questions, Johnston implied the following lines of reasoning:

Higher education ought to be the equitable evolution of organic man, but most people who are striving for its goals are unable to acquire them.

Conversely, there are some people who are seeking the higher education who are unsuited for the type of training it offers. Since we have no tests to determine who should acquire a university education, we must expend our energy on those classes of people who are most likely to succeed.

Because of a common European ancestry, both northerners and southerners represent a race of people who are capable of higher learning. In the South though, unique circumstances have prevented universities from achieving the highest possible standards.

Through the recent southern educational movement though, universities are advancing. Tulane University, through the benevolent contributions of a noble philanthropist, has uplifted the people of Louisiana and outlying areas.

The endowments of such philanthropists constitute the greatest form of Christian servitude.

a. Organization. When addressing the University of the State of New York, Johnston applied his own rhetorical theories when constructing his argument. Realizing that "there are sound arguments that may be useless or even prejudiced to a cause," he decided to omit and ignore subordinate reasons which were ineffective for the particular audience. Suggesting that the "object of oratory is victory, and no part of it, indeed, so nearly resembles the strategy of the
embattled field, as the array of arguments," Johnston organized his discussion so that it would achieve the optimum effects on his listeners.

Even though Johnston appeared to be presenting his discussion in a topical pattern by answering certain questions about higher education, he was actually following a deductive line of thinking. He introduced a generalization about the need to devote university finances in the South to those who were most likely to succeed. In the middle of his discussion, he presented the premise that Anglo-Saxons were the people most capable of attaining a higher education. By the end of his message, he implied that funds should be given by philanthropists in order to support Southern universities, such as Tulane, that would prepare white youths to uplift the region. In his rough draft, he had planned to state at the end that black people in the South were unprepared to acquire higher education, but he chose to omit that remark from his discussion.

Progressing from generalizations about education to an indirect solicitation of financial contributions, Johnston was able to arrange his discussion so that it coincided with his strategy.

b. Forms of support. In his customary manner, William Preston Johnston used a variety of examples, illustrations, analogies, and quotations to amplify his message on "Higher Education in the South."

After saying that education "ought to be the equalable evolution of organic man," he presented a figurative analogy to show that many

people were not permitted to seek higher education. Consequently, "The poor, stunted soul, for the most part, has to struggle toward the light in a stifling atmosphere . . . reaching out whither it may, but warped and dwarfed, feeble and fruitless." He suggested that the work of the educator was to "clear away these and other evil influences and to allow and in a rational way to aid free and healthy growth." To highlight the aim of higher education, Johnston extensively quoted a paper by Timothy Dwight, who had said that the aim should be the culture and development of the thinking mind. Dwight had stated that the opportunity was extended only "to a limited number of persons," which Johnston confirmed through the use of several figurative analogies. Johnston believed that a university education was so rigorous as to infer that it was a form of training for "sturdy wrestlers" and "Alpine climbers" who must undergo "mental gymnastics" in order to avoid "perils" and a "serious fall" on their "uphill road to wisdom."

After discussing the objectives of higher education and the difficult means to achieve it, Johnston then addressed the question, "To whom does it properly apply?" Acknowledging that "there are no certain tests by which we can exactly foresee the individuals who will or can attain to the higher planes of thought," he suggested that "we must be content with large averages to ascertain the classes that will probably be benefited by the upper side of education, and expend on them our energy." In defining the word "class," Johnston pointed out that he was not proposing an artificial one based on wealth, but one based on cultural development. Of all the cultures represented in the United States, Johnston implied that "by the upper class I mean the
thrifty, thinking, God loving, man loving, controlling people who, from whatever European nationality sprung, constitute essentially one homogeneous class in every part of the country, north and south." At this point in his rough draft, Johnston had planned to explain that Southern states could not fully develop their universities due to the burden of providing for the education of the two races. But instead of blaming blacks for the prevailing conditions in the South, he chose a scapegoat common to all regions, namely immigrants. Using loaded language, Johnston attacked foreigners by asking, "What are these people [upper class] going to do with those barbarous and savage groups of immigrants, alien in origin, speech and sentiments, the sew-age of the world, who are now deluging the land?" He noted that his listeners would quickly respond by saying, "Educate the masses," a solution which would work in the North. He pointed out that their plan would work in their own area because "you are richer, your potential machinery has been adapted to the management of free society a century before the South began to use it, and your entire population is in accord as to the methods of redemption." Johnston identified with the good intentions of his audience by saying, "We are agreed that these masses are to be educated," but he noted that even in the North, the plan would not succeed "until some working plan of government is adopted by which, while labor shall receive its just reward, the government shall represent the wisdom, virtue and power of society, not its caprice, ignorance and disintegrating forces." Besides the forces operating in the North, Johnston proceeded to describe the special circumstances in the South, noting that while universities were
available, most people were not aspiring to their high ideals. He also pointed out that financial conditions prevented the South from fully developing its schools, for "it has few millionaires; there is little superfluity of means." Attempting to encourage his Northern audience to endorse financial aid for Southern education, Johnston added, "True, a few noble examples of beneficence have wrought a marvelous change for the better in public sentiment in this regard; but we need more and signal instances to make the way plain."

Having implied that Northern philanthropists were partially responsible for the awakening in the South, Johnston listed other contributing factors to the Southern educational movement. He pointed out that

if I were trying to tell you how much has been done for education in what some are pleased to call the New South, it would be like the catalogue of ships in the Iliad. But it would not record or display the thought, the purpose, the energy, the patient self-denial, the deferred hopes, the struggling aspirations of thousands of our best and truest people.

He particularly thanked his friend, Dr. A. D. Mayo of Boston, and workers in the Bureau of Education, who "have generously shown how much has been done." Confirming that every Southern state had implemented several institutions of higher learning, Johnston chose to highlight the work of Tulane University in reaching the people of the region. After describing Tulane's success, he drew the conclusion that higher education in the South could prove to be effective if funds and home rule were present. As he ended his speech, he reemphasized his hidden motive and called for further benevolent contributions by Northern philanthropists.
3. Conclusion

In most of his educational addresses, Johnston concluded his discussion with a lengthy peroration which provided a capstone for his theme. But in his message to the University of the State of New York, Johnston's conclusion contained a hidden motive, namely the call for financial support of Southern education. Using indirection to solicit aid, he praised the large endowments by Vanderbilt, Tulane, and Newcomb. Then he concluded with a plea to the audience's sense of religious charity by saying,

After all, that word Christian in its best and highest sense is the key note of the whole subject... This is to be realized in the South, as elsewhere by the higher education--the highest education--which culminates in the service of humanity, in forgetfulness of self, in the performance of our duties to others--to all.

4. Assessment

In his speech at the Thirtieth University Convocation of the State of New York, Johnston complied with the wishes of the organization by speaking about higher education in the South. However, Johnston took advantage of the opportunity by making it an occasion to recruit support for the Southern educational movement. Unlike the rough draft in which he would have abruptly shifted the burden of Negro education to his immediate audience, Johnston wisely withheld his remarks about the inferior status of blacks. Assuming that his audience was in agreement with his assessment of foreigners, he chose instead to attack immigrants and to blame them for numerous hardships. In his other educational addresses to Southern audiences, he never discussed immigrants, indicating that he was including what he thought
could arouse the concerns of his listeners in New York. Trying to unite himself with the group, he discussed their common European ancestry and pointed out that they represented the world's most advanced people.

In other statements, Johnston also attempted to adapt to his audience. When speaking to a group in the South a year earlier, he had attacked Vanderbilt as an exploiter, but in his 1892 address in Albany, he praised the philanthropist, saying that he "did a wise, as well as a kind act, when he put a large endowment in the hand of able and pious persons to use for the benefit of men zealous for good works." He also complimented the work of the U.S. Bureau of Education, a federal agency that he had never mentioned in previous speeches. Johnston even went so far as to attack Jefferson's theory of education, noting that "in its fragmentary form, as adopted and carried out, its benefits have been very questionable."

Johnston's appeals to his audience received an immediate favorable response. Following the address, Andrew Draper said to the audience,

It seems to me that this Convocation would be glad to express its appreciation of the presence of the president of Tulane University and of the scholarly and felicitous address which he has given us on a subject in which we are all much interested. With your leave, sir, I move that the Convocation tender to Pres. Johnston its most appreciative thanks for that kindness of heart which has led him to come here, and for that strength of mind which has induced him to give us an address which we so thoroughly appreciate.
After a unanimous vote to Draper's resolution, the formal ceremony ended and a reception began. Although the University had previously said that they were unable to offer payment for their guest speakers, it did send Johnston an honorarium of $100. The University also published Johnston's speech in their regents' bulletin, allowing his message to reach an audience beyond the scope of those who were immediately present.

C. Summary

Johnston's strategy to acquire outside sentiment in favor of the Southern educational awakening led him to speak before national and international gatherings. His most famous nationwide speeches include his presentations at the World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition in 1885 and his address at the Thirtieth University Convocation of the State of New York in 1892. In both speeches, Johnston used forms of support that would appeal more to Northerners than to people from his own region. At times, he even made statements that contradicted the views that he presented to Southern audiences. In the national address, he acknowledged that the North was foremost in education and industry, and he admitted that the South was striving for their objectives. He was forthright when stating his belief that the South would be able to accomplish its goals, but that it needed

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32 *Regents' Bulletin No. 9, August, 1892*, pp. 3 and 25.

33 Melvil Dewey to William Preston Johnston, August 5, 1892. Johnston Collection, Tulane University, Special Collections.

34 *Regents' Bulletin No. 9, August 1892*, pp. 12-25.
national encouragement and financial support for its educational move-
ment. However, as a person committed to states' rights, he contended 
that while the South would accept the aid of outsiders, it would not 
allow them to interfere with the control of the schools. As a result 
of Johnston's messages, he acquired the respect of the nation's most 
prominent educators, who became intensely interested in the Southern 
awakening during the closing decades of the nineteenth century.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The biographer Arthur Marvin Shaw accurately noted that "the historian who attempts to relate the full story of educational progress in the South must give considerable attention to Johnston's accomplishments and to his philosophy of education, which is contained in his published lectures."\(^1\) The purpose of this study was to explore that area untouched by researchers and to test the extent to which William Preston Johnston's postbellum oratory influenced Southern education. Concurring with Shaw's assertion, this investigation concluded that through his speeches, Johnston shaped the destiny of his region, for he was a man with outstanding rhetorical training, unusual historical insights, an understanding of the importance of education, and a gift of eloquence when speaking to audiences.

A. Phases of His Oratory

In the title of his book, Shaw described Johnston as a "transitional figure of the Confederacy," a phrase referring to the change of events and beliefs in his life. The expression also characterizes

\(^1\)Arthur Marvin Shaw, *William Preston Johnston, a Transitional Figure of the Confederacy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), pp. 249-50.
his speaking because he underwent several phases of oratory before finally emerging as a spokesman for the New South.

In the presidential race of 1860, Johnston actively campaigned for the Southern Democratic candidate John C. Breckenridge, making several speeches on his behalf. Typifying Southern oratory of the antebellum period, these addresses exhibited a "rhetoric of desperation." During the years immediately following the Civil War, Johnston moved into a second phase representative of the postbellum period. As one writer points out, four ceremonial occasions were frequently observed during the postwar years, including Memorial Day, dedication of Confederate monuments, veterans' reunions, and academic ceremonies. Engaged in all four of these ceremonial contexts, Johnston practiced a "rhetoric of accommodation," sanctifying the social myths of the Old South, white supremacy, and the New South.

As the South emerged from Reconstruction, Johnston entered his third phase of oratory, displaying a "rhetoric of optimism," which was the focus of this investigation. Although departing from his participation in Memorial Day celebrations, dedication of Confederate monuments, and veterans' reunions, Johnston increased his involvement in

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2Louisville Democrat, September 26, 28, 30, and October 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 17, 1860.


5Braden, ed., Oratory in the New South, pp. 2-3.
academic ceremonies that provided an opportunity to promote the New South. At a time when most Southern orators were using a "rhetoric of exploitation," using myths, supporting lost causes, and appealing to human weaknesses, Johnston adopted a spirit of reform, apparent in his speeches on behalf of universal education. Many historians assert that speaking to promote Southern education was a twentieth-century phenomenon, but Johnston's addresses prove that some spokesmen advocated the concept of universal education decades earlier.

B. Audiences

Promoting an educational awakening, Johnston spoke to international, national, state, and local audiences. While serving on the faculty of Washington College, he addressed various universities and teachers' associations in Virginia. Having acquired an understanding of the educational campaign in Virginia, Johnston transferred his knowledge to Louisiana, where he served as president of two universities. During his sixteen years of service at Tulane University, Johnston delivered nearly fifty speeches on the subject of Southern education. Because of his fame, other Southern states recruited him


as a guest speaker. In his Southern tour, he lectured to audiences in Texas, South Carolina, Alabama, and Kentucky.

Johnston never passed up the opportunity to acquire private contributions from wealthy citizens, to gain the support of Northern audiences, and to seek financial aid from the federal government. He accomplished these goals by speaking to nationwide educational assemblies which were sympathetic to the Southern dilemma. Not only was he willing to host national conventions in his region, he was also "ready to answer the call to speak anywhere." He felt the urge to acquire public sentiment in favor of his regional movement so strongly that he occasionally compromised his beliefs by making statements that were pleasing only to his Northern listeners. When questioned by Southerners who opposed federal aid to education on constitutional grounds, Johnston rationalized that financial support was justifiable on the basis of federal laws which had required the states to educate the newly enfranchised freedmen. In spite of the inconsistencies when speaking outside of his own region, he acquired the respect and support of the nation's foremost educators.

C. Strategy

Whether Johnston spoke to national or local assemblies, he carefully designed his messages so that he would encourage his listeners to favor a universal system of education, which included elementary, secondary, and higher institutions of learning; education for both sexes and races; and normal schools, industrial schools, and university extension. Apparent in his speeches, Johnston used three
sequential steps for achieving these objectives: first, he aroused the support of educators themselves; second, he involved the general public; and finally, he combined the efforts of educators and the general public, thereby producing a groundswell of indignation that prompted reform by legislators. Believing that professionals in the field were the people primarily responsible for educational change, Johnston devoted most of his endeavors to intensifying their concern.

D. Preparation and Delivery

A striking feature of Johnston's oratory is that he applied Whately's rhetorical principles when preparing and delivering his speeches. In the preparation stage, Johnston first derived his thesis, which focused on the adoption of universal education. Then he prepared his discussion, carefully selecting those lines of reasoning which were most effective for his particular audience. To clarify his main points, he used a variety of expository material, usually taken from history, religion, and literature.

To open his discussion, Johnston prepared an exordium that conciliated his audience and led into his subject. To conclude his presentation, he used a lengthy peroration that heightened the importance of his theme.

During a period when the elocutionary movement produced a flamboyant delivery, many Southern speakers acquired the reputation of being "showy." But Johnston adhered to the classical tradition by placing the thrust of his delivery on his message. Consequently, he demonstrated a "think-the-thought" approach.
E. Other Characteristics

Unlike other Southern speakers of the late nineteenth century, the spokesmen for the early educational awakening exhibited special features. As a part of the movement, Johnston resembled his colleagues. First, he recognized that a universal scheme of education afforded the South the greatest opportunity for advancement. Second, he believed that such a system should be funded at public expense. Third, he favored education at all levels and for all people. Fourth, even though he supported education for all races and he avoided the popular social myths, he did express beliefs in white supremacy and racial separation. Fifth, he was perceived as a man of good character, whose trustworthiness influenced public opinion. Sixth, he was well trained in oratory and used his talents when promoting his cause. Seventh, usually avoiding strong emotionalism, he used logical reasoning and evidence when appealing to his audiences. And, eighth, his speaking prompted legislative reform.8

F. Effectiveness

Newspaper reports indicate that Johnston always received a favorable response from his listeners. But Johnston was more concerned about the long-range effects of his message, hoping that his speaking would produce changes. As part of a movement that eventually swept the South, Johnston witnessed beneficial results during the 1880s and 1890s. Numerous professional associations formed, a community pride

8For a summary of these characteristics, see Bradley, pp. 258-74; Gaston, pp. 102-6; and Woodward, pp. 62-65.
in the schools emerged, the number of public schools dramatically increased, the enrollment and attendance in schools skyrocketed, and the illiteracy rate drastically decreased. Although additional improvements were to come through the endeavors of later leaders, the conclusions about Johnston's role as an early reformer dispel the notion that the speaking on behalf of Southern education began in the twentieth century. Partial credit for the social improvements must be given to nineteenth-century orators, such as William Preston Johnston, who laid the foundation for future growth. As Charles Dabney, one of the later reformers, observed about Johnston's oratory, it "affirmed principles in advance of his time and was prophetic of the campaign of the Southern Education Conference of twenty years later. . . . It was an advanced position to take at the time."  


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