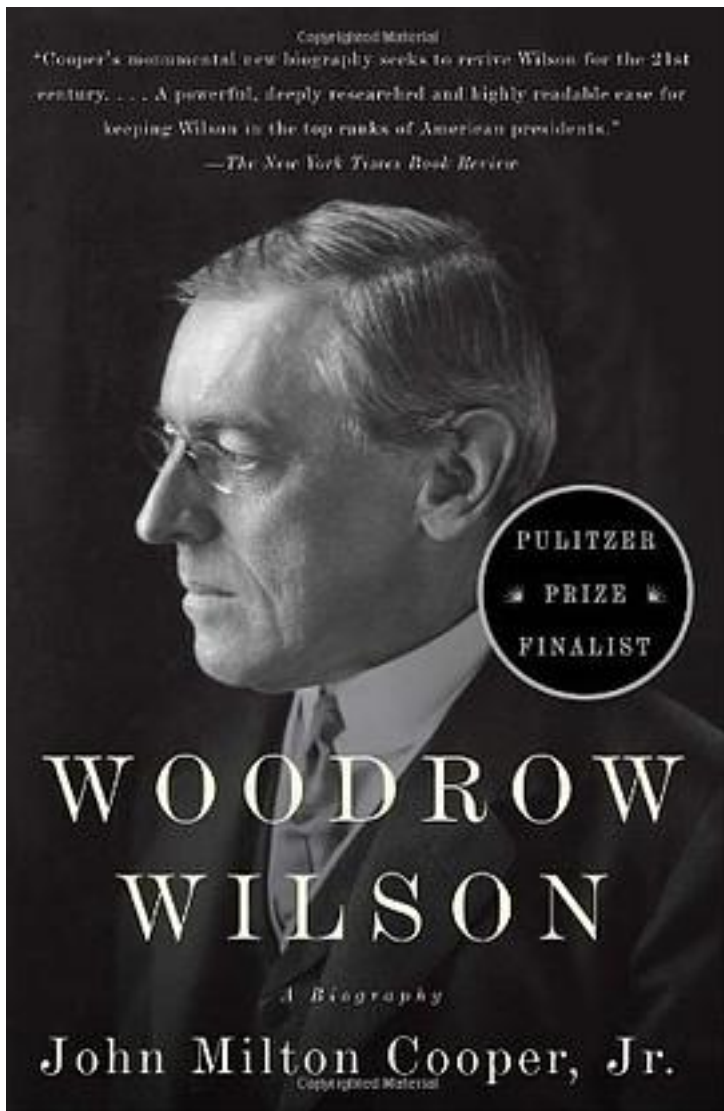


Woodrow Wilson



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Progressive, visionary. Politician who aspired to be a poet. Believer in the triumph of good. American idealist abroad. "The Woodrow Wilson" of this major new biography embodies the French proverb that great qualities and defects are inseparably joined. Internationally known Dutch historian J. W. Schulte Nordholt writes with deep understanding and empathy about America's twenty-eighth president (1913-1921), his administration, and his role in world affairs. This biography, as beautifully translated as it is written, restores the figure of Wilson as an incurable dreamer, a poetic idealist whose romantic world view enshrined organic, evolutionary progress. Wilson's presidency occurred during some of the most brutal, divisive years of our century. In a period of revolutionary social change and conflict, he steadfastly believed that ideas were stronger than facts. This was nowhere more evident than in his eleventh-hour attempts to find a diplomatic solution on the eve of the Great War. His unswerving belief in people's right to self-determination was, sadly, unrealistic in the postwar political framework of the League of Nations. Schulte Nordholt's novel interpretation of Wilson's behavior challenges those who have blamed the president's childhood for his failures. The author reassesses those early years and focuses on Wilson's spirituality and devotion to the romantic poets, particularly Wordsworth. Wilson regretted that he could not be a poet himself and found an outlet for his literary impulses in oratory. But the gift of words, though it brought him fame and popularity, could not produce the better world he imagined. If the story of Woodrow Wilson is a chapter in the history of idealism, the Wilson mode of statesmanship is a textbook of the difficulties America faced, and still faces, in the world of international politics. Should the United States be responsible for the order and peace of the whole world? And can this nation even understand the problems enough to attempt solutions? Wilson's life speaks eloquently of the unresolved American quest to be the world's guiding moral force.

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