Review: Is This Where You Live? English and the University under the Lens

Thomas Rickert

Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University. William Clark. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2006. 662 pp. Print.

Buying into English: Language and Investment in the New Capitalist World. Catherine Prendergast. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2008. 180 pp. Print.

How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low-Wage Nation. Marc Bousquet. New York: New York UP, 2008. 281 pp. Print.

Inside the Teaching Machine: Rhetoric and the Globalization of the U.S. Public Research University. Catherine Chaput. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2008. 326 pp. Print.

Bill Readings' semi-classic 1996 book *The University in Ruins* stands as a landmark of sorts: the ushering in of something we might call university studies, with all due respect to the ironies of creating yet another ___-studies for the humanities, or, more pointedly, for English. Other books had come first, including Richard Ohmann's still relevant *English in America* (first published in 1976 and updated in 1996), but Readings helped coalesce a generalized, scattered intuition: the university is changing. That change is often perceived as one of crisis, one that goes hand in hand with the (still) waning fortunes of the humanities, budget decreases, accelerating corporatization, entrepreneurialism, shifts from faculty to administrative power, and deplorable labor practices. To list but a few trends. Such perceived transformation invites self-reflection, and the books I review here join the

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growing number engaged in theorizing, historicizing, and critiquing the university, helping to answer questions such as, How did we get here? What does "here" look like? What is wrong or troubling about it? Such analyses, while certainly interested in the particular fields from which they emerge (English, communications, history), find that their areas cannot be separated from larger issues of economics, nationalism, corporate influence, institutional and state bureaucracy, administration, and especially labor. It may come as no surprise that all four books are concerned with the profound shaping force of capitalism and markets, with three of them taking it as a prime concern. We are implicated.

Although such ideas are not exactly new, we might well pause over their larger meaning for us, even if that meaning is seldom clear. That is to say, it is significant (and symptomatic) that we find ourselves increasingly drawn to these meta-analyses and how they implicate us: we are caught up in exploitative practices, diminution of mission, loss of status, and less than sanguine nationalistic practices on the global stage, and we want to talk about this . . . a lot—like worrying a sore tooth. A defining sense of mission and commitment—we might as well admit it's a moralism—seems jeopardized. Of course, as reading these books demonstrates, the rose had long faded before we caught on. If, as William Clark portrays in *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University*, the faculty grew to be heroes of knowledge in line with the rise of the research university in the Enlightenment-era Germanies, we have known since Readings that administrators are the new heroes. But Clark's portrayal is more nuanced than that, for in many respects, the German policies of cameralism (good policing!) and ministerial demand (regulation, accountability, and *so viel* paperwork) contributed much to our academic rituals and procedures. More on this later. Certainly, the idealisms concerning university life still circulate—the clichéd (un)truism about the life of the mind, a sense of socially responsible work, or, as Marc Bousquet notes, "the last good job in America" (90)—and perhaps these help account for our need to examine academic culpability. Troubling labor practices do not help, either. The moral mission is tainted; it can't hold up, which can lead to the sense that one is just a cog in the great university machine. Who are we then, after virtue . . . after cogness? Before we figure that out, however, the floor needs sweeping, which is one of the main contributions of these books. The fact of our implication in these matters inclines us to further our knowledge of how we got here and what we are to think about it, an inclination borne out in our conferences, journals, and presses.

The current view from humanities academics is that there is little to celebrate right now. For instance, drawing on Marxist analysis, Bousquet's and Catherine Chaput's books examine how the university has been infiltrated by corporate-capitalist interests—and also, according to Chaput, by shifting nationalistic narratives that America developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Despite

their commonalities, though, these two books remain strikingly different. This is obvious even from the cover art. Bousquet's book is emblazoned with a bright yellow and red background highlighting three stylized university students gazing into the future, evoking Soviet constructivist-era poster art. This aesthetic matches the consciousness-raising intent of the book, as noted by Cary Nelson in "Resistance Is Not Futile," his Borg-baiting Foreword: "Marc Bousquet is the Virgil of postmodern academic labor, leading a professoriate in denial through the Dantesque wastes of a system whose sins daily grow more numerous" (xiii). The book is far less grim than Nelson's plug suggests, however—Bousquet provides the feels-good-to-feel-bad hit of the year. He delivers the direst of messages with compulsively readable examples and stylistic zest.

Meanwhile, Chaput's cover is light gray on dark gray and black, picturing the world's continents in an outline, beneath which churn three large metal gears. These gears reflect Chaput's focus on the interrelated arenas of culture, politics, and economics, which come to be the university's new foundations. The gears in their gray on gray reflect Chaput's style, such as it is, which mixes analysis, theory, history, and more, much more on historical materialism. If the thrill is gone, her book nevertheless provides the counterpoint to Bousquet's: raising consciousness may well be rhetorically invigorating, but we can't lose sight of the fact that the American research university has never *not* been in bed with corporate and nationalistic interests (a theme that Clark, too, will weigh in on). Chaput pointedly notes that Thorsten Veblen's criticism of putting businessmen on boards of trustees goes back to 1904 (62–63).

The buzz at the Modern Language Association (MLA), reputedly, is that Bousquet's book is splashy. With a good balance between research and righteousness, easy targets and winning arguments, Bousquet brings academia's administrative duplicity and deplorable labor practices out into the bright noonday sun, showing that these and other aspects of the contemporary university are fully in line with the worst of information-economy capitalism. Along with economic and labor change, management has achieved prominence, not only in numbers and power, but through the acceptance and propagation of corporate new economy principles that now define the academic scene. As Bousquet claims in the Introduction, titled, aptly, "Your Problem is My Problem," campus administrations have "diverged from the ideals of faculty governance, collegiality, and professional self-determination," embracing instead corporate values and practices (1). The result is that academic education increasingly resembles, for instance, health care, another profit-oriented and highly administrated service. Both are increasingly marketized, including within their *modus operandi* the transfer of public funds into private hands; the "acceleration of market behaviors"; strategies that help generate "dizzying inequalities"; and a disinclination to offer quality or even service "to the vast majority of the working class" (1). The calculus

of profit comes to define all, with the result that fewer people get to see medical doctors in HMOs, or professors in academia; doctors/professors have fewer options, and are often pressured by management and corporate interests; critical decisions and activities are performed by lower-paid professionals, such as nurses, adjuncts, or even students; and standards are established not by the measure of lives saved or by quality of education, but by the measure of financial risk or profit obtained (2). New practices necessarily entail new values, an idea encapsulated by an acid remark Bousquet quotes several times, attributed to New York University's Ann Marcus: "[W]e need people we can abuse, exploit, and turn loose" (91).

Bousquet then asks, if education costs are increasing, and yet tenured faculty numbers decline (and their salaries stagnate) and are replaced by far cheaper students and part-timers, "where does the money go?" (4). While it is easy to see that the money would funnel into shareholder pockets in for-profit institutions, the answer is less clear for nonprofits like the public university. But Bousquet argues that we can follow the bouncing benefits; they, too, wend their way toward corporate shareholders, by such means as "shouldering the cost of job training, generation of patentable intellectual property, provision of sports spectacle, vending goods and services to captive student markets, and conversion of student aid into a cheap or even free labor pool" (5). But the money also goes to administration itself, which has grown considerably in size and salary. Further, funds have gone into expansion of facilities, particularly sports (and often losing money in doing so); corporate partnerships; and other venture-capital projects (6–7).

Bousquet's Introduction lays out the themes he explores in more detail in the five chapters and two appendices that follow. The second chapter analyzes the real costs and transformations entailed by the "informatization" of the university, which he presents as fait accompli. Symptoms include the increasing use of technology, emphasizing the old, modernist fantasy of increasing profits via technology while replacing human workers, and more pervasively, the treatment of everything as if it were data (60–61). Beyond the perhaps well-known idea that such reframing transforms education—something akin, historically, to the German notion of *bildung*, that is, progressive, enculturating knowledge—into data acquisition, informatization transforms labor into "casualization," which "means to deliver one's labor 'just in time' and 'on demand,' to work 'flexibly'" (62). Bousquet is often at his best when digging in to describe such everyday realities. "The actual flex-timer," he tells us, "is in constant motion, driving from workplace to workplace, from training seminar to daycare, grocery store, and gym, maintaining an ever more strenuous existence in order to present the working body required by capital: healthy, childless, trained, alert, displaying an affect of pride in representing zero drain on the corporation's resources" (63). The rub is that the costs of low-wage labor do not vanish; they merely disappear from management's accounts, off-loaded onto society in some fashion

(such as through a partner, family, social institution, and/or debt). It's a bitter irony that one needs subsidizing to accept such low pay.

Bousquet's argument throughout the book is that academic labor must organize. One of his slogans is that, simply, "We Work" (31). But the slogan is difficult to actualize as an organized, committed, and action-oriented collectivity. Students, undergraduate and graduate, and other casualized labor face ideological and, perhaps even more important, legal impediments to the right to collective bargaining (31, 67). These are perhaps the strongest parts of the book, where Bousquet contrasts the labor advances achieved since the 1960s and the setbacks since the Reagan-dominated 1980s. Through the examination of Supreme Court and National Labor Relations Board cases, we come to understand that the key factor in labor organization is in fact bargaining laws, which vary widely among the states and between the states and the federal government (113). Cases such as *NLRB v. Yeshiva University* and *Brown University* have had a substantial chilling effect in education, health care, and elsewhere; "by 1989," Bousquet states, "one-third of the colleges that engaged in collective bargaining pre-*Yeshiva* had succeeded in discontinuing that arrangement" (112). The appendices contain the dissenting opinions from these two cases, which work to strengthen many of the book's claims. What is particularly interesting is Bousquet's condemnation of university administration's fights, and the millions spent, against labor organization, including the substantial use of union-busting legal firms, as he portrays with the examples of the University of California, New York University, the University of Illinois, and numerous others. University administrations have fought hard, for instance, to maintain the legal status of "student" for graduate teaching assistants, which effectively denies them the right to organize. Bousquet's ire is palpable: "The will of public-university employers to defy lawmakers and flout the intentions of labor law rivals the most ruthless union busting of any commercial enterprise" (33).

All this is not to ignore some of the disappointments of the book. A big one is the unsympathetic take on rhetoric and composition in the fifth chapter, "Composition as Management Science." Putting this piece into print for at least the third time (how the university works, indeed), Bousquet skewers writing program administrators as middle management stuck in full-on Toyotaist labor mode, running programs built on cheap, disposable labor. Composition itself is undone by its sullied labor practices: "Professional composition," claims Bousquet, "will never feel like 'one of the gang' of disciplines until its labor patterns are more like those in other fields" (168). We see here the limitations of Marxist theory, which can struggle to find an out to its bedrock economic truths, compounded, possibly, by a blindness too often exhibited by English faculty concerning composition's historical emergence as the waste product of literature professors who did not want to teach writing. (Maybe Bousquet could read deeper in Sharon Crowley, whom he cites, or spend time

with Susan Miller's *Textual Carnivals*). Thus, Bousquet's talk of graduate student labor in writing classrooms never touches on how their work frees graduate faculty from teaching composition—a "horrifying situation," as Sharon O'Dair once put it (50)—and reduces their teaching load for pursuits such as research and writing, while ensuring that their graduate seminars are full. In other words, the focus on labor relegates nearly all other issues to the background, even when those issues are directly pertinent, either as contributing causalities to labor problems or as potential blockages to the worker solidarity Bousquet seeks.

Still, we see that Bousquet's intent is to rouse undergraduates, graduate students, staff, and faculty to action, and he furthers that goal with an accompanying website (howtheuniversityworks.com) that extends the book's arguments, providing quick-hit content on the most current of events (for example, an attack on Mark C. Taylor's recent, controversial editorial on tenure and other faculty privileges). Such critique goes hand in hand with the book's more sustained analyses, including the fourth chapter's disemboweling of UPS, whose work-for-tuition programs Bousquet demonstrates to be more debilitating than enabling to student workers. As the chapter title has it, students are already workers—just low-wage, low-benefit workers whose long job hours actively hinder their educational pursuits, leading many of them to stop short of their degrees. As so frequently in the book, the examples galvanize the reader. But, since the book is predominantly concerned with critique, example, and analysis, there is little that concretely addresses *how* one goes about changing university labor practices. Activism is understood almost exclusively in terms of consciousness-raising and unionizing. It's all well and fine, in fact welcome, to deflate academic shell games about the "demands" of the "market," an argument that makes up the culminating chapter, "The Rhetoric of 'Job Market' and the Reality of the Academic Labor System," but at the same time, an implicit call for organization cannot be the only panacea. I need to know more than that corporately aligned university administration drinks my milkshake; that is, I need to have a deeper understanding of how the university works beyond the *ressentiment* that "it feels good to be president" as an explanation for the decisions and actions of those purportedly in power (7). Perhaps the website will come to move beyond these limitations of the book, proposing other ways of achieving change besides unions, and may even delve into other realpolitik complications, such as how unions themselves become troublesome administrated institutions. Nevertheless, all faulting of the book aside, it is good to have fresh *dissoi* to the administration's *logoi*, and in that sense, the book deserves its buzz-bin status.

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Bousquet's fiery readability contrasts sharply with Chaput's proneness to jargon and methodical plod, but there is also a sense in which Bousquet needs Chaput as

counterpoint. Lurking behind Bousquet's arguments is a vision of a collegial, faculty-governed university that never really was, and Chaput steadfastly demonstrates how mistaken this vision is (or, one might quip, how ideological). The American university has ever been permeated by business and nationalist interests—even, and perhaps especially, when it thought it was not. Even "supposedly egalitarian policies like the Land Grant Act (Morrill Act) and the GI Bill serve the changing interests of capitalism" (ix), Chaput notes. In an introduction and five chapters, she unravels and analyzes U.S. public research universities as constituted rhetorically through individual, state, and corporate interests. In her triangulation, "individuals seek community within student bodies and identification through course content; governments look to universities for both the information and the personnel necessary to its [sic] geopolitical interests; and corporations partner with university faculty for much of their research and development" (viii).

Chaput devotes her Introduction primarily to methodology. She grounds her study in historically shifting conceptions of rhetoric that allow her to "explore how rhetoric can negotiate and secure institutional power in our contemporary landscape" (14). She claims rhetoricians have not kept pace with the transformations of the contemporary world; rhetoricians interested in the political sphere in particular have remained wedded to notions of rational communication and a rational, unified subject (14). Though this is disputable—there are plenty of rhetorically inclined scholars working the political from a variety of postmodern and post-Marxist perspectives—it nevertheless sets up pertinent discussion of the contributions and insufficiencies of McCloskey, Gaonkar, McGee, McKerrow, and more. Yet postmodernism does not quite suit Chaput's purposes, either, for although it enables her to stretch rhetoric beyond communications studies' commonplaces of modernist agency, speeches, and public discourse, it lacks the sharp focus on economic power she gets from Marxist-oriented cultural studies. Combining rhetoric and historical materialism in this way is, she claims, á la Donna Haraway, unfaithful to her theoretical resources in a manner potentially productive of "new kinds of rhetorical action," including "promotion of working-class professionalism" and opposition to and recodings of contemporary university meanings and values (25).

Chaput's first chapter examines the nineteenth-century emergence of the U.S. public research university. She considers its multiple roles in "the politics of nation-building, the economics of emerging capitalism, and the cultures of professionalism" (29). The university was instrumental in helping forge a professionalized middle class necessary for moving the United States from being constellations of rural communities to being an industrialized player on the world stage. Urbanization and the growth of the public university system go hand in hand with the "larger restructuring of the U. S. market economy" (42). Crucial here is the abandonment of the democratic ideal that continually resurfaces in narratives concerning the university. This ideal

has never existed, claims Chaput, who then endnotes a lengthy list of books that invoke it (30, 273)—although it is not certain that all the books she lists, including Readings' *The University in Ruins*, actually make this appeal.

Regardless, we see that Chaput jeopardizes at least some of the moral ground that someone like Bousquet stands on. For as universities developed "specialized disciplinary knowledges," they also produced cultural knowledge, in particular the "idea of individual freedom linked to individual social mobility" (44). This is a version of the highly resilient American Dream: success is achievable if one is ambitious, talented, and hardworking enough (45). But such a dream also entailed competition and ranking, hallmarks of the meritocracy, which the university embodied and inculcated; this is an idea, we will see, that Clark historicizes and discusses extensively. Democracy is inflected here, given to favoring a middle class that is itself highly individuated. Against the backdrop of these middle-class values, the teaching of subjects like American literature helped forge national out of local identities, fostering notions of competitive individualism along the way (53).

In light of these arguments, Chaput can claim that federal actions such as the Morrill Act less reflected "localized democratic intentions" than "a need to increase the wealth of the nation and its elite citizenry" (53), which helps explain the enforced standards to which universities were subject in obtaining federal money. Such standards include the types of graduate programs, availability of laboratories, and the pursuit of technical and scientific development (53–54). Universities became sites crucial for the knowledge and technical developments fueling local and national economic and political success. It is here that we see the first trumping of grander educational purposes by the practicalities of utility and the efficiencies of the economic bottom line.

It is no surprise, then, to learn that corporate and business entities were from the start heavily involved in the university. Business leaders were elected to boards of trustees, national organizations were founded to benefit universities, and funds were given to universities, all of which helped shape them and their curricula. Not coincidently, by 1920, sixty-two percent of university governing board members had ties to northeast financial companies. Seemingly philanthropic, such actions and moneys in actuality guided and mandated particular forms of research most serving of corporate economic interests. Nor was this trend, large and growing as it was, the extent of corporate involvement. Chaput cites a 1905 *Atlantic Monthly* article by Harry Pritchett titled "Shall the University Become a Business Corporation?" that described how universities were already modeling themselves on businesses (61). This citing can be fruitfully compared to Bousquet's opening of his book with an epithet from University of Florida President John Lombardi: "We have taken a great leap forward and said, 'Let's pretend we're a corporation'" (1). Though the corporate models being discussed are far from equivalent, being a hundred years apart, Chaput's

point remains sharp. The corporatization of the university is not in the least new, and the overinflated claims about it need tempering. At the same time, the specific changes in corporate business practices—the emergence of Toyotaism as the defining university operating system that Bousquet decries, for instance—require considerable attention. But even there, ambiguities exist: Bousquet sees public universities' use of part-time labor accelerating in the 1970s; Chaput argues that it began in the 1950s, in response to the first wave of funding decreases and the drive to compete fiscally with other universities (102).

Chaput continues in the same vein in the second chapter, demonstrating the hollowness of appeals to a university steeped in democratic ideals shorn of corporate values and economic interests. She reiterates fairly well-known history about increases in administration, the application of Taylorist principles and workplace psychology, the expansion of markets, the creation of new military-industrial technologies, and so on, to which the university duly responded, shaping and regulating departments and their contents, expanding research areas, and acquiescing to demands "to forge and sustain corporate progressivism" (80–81). In such a system, even if university individuals think they are pursuing social goods, the larger system implicitly situates these as "opportunities for profit-making" (88). This move does not make the university a function of corporate power, of course, since the university is always caught among disparate and evolving entities, discourses, and values. Certainly, too, there were people like Thorstein Veblen and Upton Sinclair who criticized the undue influence that powers outside the university maintained in shaping curriculum, policies, research, and funding. Contemporary critics who make similar claims have forgotten this complicity, though Chaput acknowledges that the transition from monopoly to global capital makes glowingly visible the economic link that was perhaps murkier before. Practices such as Total Quality Management and calls for accountability have so much bite today because they were integral not only to the university in its economic, epistemological, and administrative structuring but also to the national culture and its political economy (108, 109).

Chaput understands the U.S. research university to have achieved worldwide hegemonic status—it is not just one national system among many (127). In her third chapter, she distills Marxist, post-Marxist, and post-colonial theories about globalization to sketch the contours and underscore the importance of contemporary political economy. Among other things, we see more clearly the kind of totalizing theory Chaput is prone to, and some of the tensions that result. She can celebrate Dean's Beans, a fair trade coffee company that sends her "e-mail updates on the labor struggles of coffee growers worldwide," and four pages later explain that cultural difference ultimately just makes good business sense, highlighting "the successful commodification of a multicultural aesthetic and the extension of the dominant market forces" (138, 142). Chaput's reliance on Fredric Jameson is freighted with some

significance, then, as his work has consistently exhibited this same tension: whatever it is that you think you are doing, you are still beholden to capitalism and its forces. Try as she might, Chaput's attempt to bring together equally the cultural, political, and economic realms comes up against an implicit prioritizing of the economic, which, just as in Jameson, at some point trumps everything else. Thus, as with Bousquet, one of the primary ways Chaput has of connecting the university to contemporary political economy is through its labor practices, particularly casualization. Further, she acknowledges that although the university from the outset served corporate research and training interests, "the new global form of this university nevertheless distinguishes itself by changing research, curricula, and even its own infrastructure on an immediate, and as-needed, corporate basis" (172).

Accompanying global political economy is a series of market economy discourses that function rhetorically to define and delimit our material realities (174). University mission statements, Chaput shows, are attuned to such discourses and therefore "tend to reflect the needs of global capitalism" (174). This fact is important because theories of higher education, as reflected in mission statements, generate material consequences, such as setting "the agenda for world-wide educational practices" (177). Unfortunately, the deployment of rhetorics of democracy and training still adhere to capitalist needs while obfuscating that function, thereby hobbling democratic promise (183). In short, mission statements are ideological; they work to funnel and transform energies appropriately, on behalf of aims like the containment of protest and activism.

The emphasis on ideology sets up Chaput's final chapter, where she proposes oppositional strategies. In traditional Marxist fashion, "constant and rigorous critique enables the possibility of transformation" (225). This is the politics of unmasking, as it were, which is why a "historical materialist pedagogy is absolutely necessary to facilitating changes in the university," Chaput claims. "I am confident," she continues, "that a pedagogy of historical materialism can be used on behalf of social transformation" (229). The pedagogy she advocates can probably be guessed in advance by any mildly discerning reader: teaching students solidarity via identity as working-class professionals—a strategy also proposed by Bousquet ("We Work"). The goals are to overcome students' passivity (or their inclination towards being, ah, "professional cogs"), to focus attention on cultural and economic specificities, to pursue "the repeated critique of consciousness," and so forth (230). She concludes this lengthy pedagogy chapter with "A Manifesto against University-Industry-Government Facilitated Globalization" that exhorts us to teach, study, publish, and practice differently than we do, and thereby disrupt the university's smooth reproduction of the capitalist status quo (266, 270).

The book, at 271 pages, is overly long, and this reader wanted more than a concluding exhortation to try out critical pedagogies that were old at the end of the

1990s. If wedded to them anyway, we could hope for at least acknowledgement and treatment of the objections to critical pedagogy, which make up a substantial body of work at this point, particularly in rhetoric and composition (which has long been concerned with pedagogy). Chaput's dogged insistence on critique and its potency synergizes with the sniping about postmodern theory sprinkled about the book, and neither of these strands is a strength. Given the strong Marxist thrust of Chaput's book, we might recall one of Jameson's slogans, "Always Historicize." Although Chaput does a real service in ferreting out the rhetorical underpinnings of the evolving U.S. research university and demonstrating with commendable detail how this rhetoric played out culturally, politically, and economically, one wonders if the university can in fact be the seat of the institutional and social transformation she claims it can be. This claim indeed showcases the usefulness of Jameson's injunction, for when we look at Clark's magisterial study of the research university's origins, we learn that the university has never been the agent of great social change. In actuality, the reverse is more true: the shape of the research university is as much the result of governmental ministration as the ideals of faculty governance and agency appealed to by Bousquet and Chaput. It could even be pointed out that Chaput's real lesson is the narratization of over a hundred years of faculty concession to the interests of national, economic, and corporate power.

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William Clark's *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University* covers 500 years of academic history, with special focus on the Germanies and the years 1770–1830. He explains how the modern research university slowly evolved from its medieval forms. Along the way, he shows how and where any number of things academic developed: course catalogs, grades, graduate seminars, majors and minors, departments, examinations, dissertations, the oral defense, degrees, dossiers, professorial chairs, faculty salaries, research and its accompanying pressure to publish or perish, and more. It's a fat book, with nearly 500 pages of text in twelve chapters, and over 150 more pages of appendices (six), notes, an exhaustive bibliography, and so on. Nevertheless, the book earns its length. While Clark packs it with detail, he singles out key events and artifacts to anchor his chapters. I am reminded of Foucault's attention to historicizing from the bottom up. Further, and especially welcome, is the irony that suffuses his narrative; nearly every page has a wry comment or zinging anecdote: "Academics wanted money. The ministry wanted reports" (49); "[Isaac] Newton was a bad lecturer" (82); the surprisingly long list of dissertations on academics, bearing titles such as "On the Wicked Wives of Scholars" (215). Perhaps this irony is already apparent from the book cover, which displays various academic faculty taken from a picture of a 1694 Cambridge academic parade. There they are, preening in full

regalia, marching in strict order of precedence. We are they, Clark intimates, with all our vainglory, pomp, and self-importance—and an ofttimes limited view of the world that comes with that. We can see from the cover art alone that Clark offers ironic meta-critique on the other books I review here, a point underscored by taking up the topic of parades and tying it to the emergence of the lecture catalog in the first chapter after the Introduction.

Clark's primary organizational motif is the (seeming) tension between bureaucraticization and charisma (a term he takes from Max Weber). On one side, we have the story of increased rationalization, commodification, and administrative ordering. On the other, we have the cultivation of charisma, an amalgamation of personality, success, fame, originality, and/or genius, tempered by tradition, invested value, or cultish or prophetic appeal. If the traditional, medieval university abhorred charismatic individuals, it was because the university as an institution was charismatic, crystallized in rituals, objects, apparel, texts, curricula, and so on (17). It was modernization that created the forms of charisma we recognize: in particular, the Enlightenment-era German cameralists and their notions of police science (*Policeywissenschaft*), pursued through regulation, paperwork, administration, disruption of the local, and other modern, rationalized methods. They required of academia that "useful arts, sciences, and crafts were learnt [. . .] that resources were not wasted [. . .] [and that] there was no idleness" (12). The result of this is that charisma did not emerge within any Romantic notions, but through the Enlightenment and its civil proponents ("cold-blooded pragmatists"), so that academia became "an insulated infrastructure of entrepreneurial activity [. . .] Academia was treated like mining" (13). And, of course, there was also the ministerial control of budgeting, by means of which the state exerted tremendous control over the university.

Clark's lengthy and detailed examination of these processes, carried on throughout the book, makes for alternately gripping and embarrassing reading (it is illuminating to be interpellated by events and statements of centuries past). The German state wanted productive students ("servants of the state and upright citizens"), and it would not fund universities simply to improve understanding or broaden human knowledge (13). Put differently, Clark's point is that notions of university autonomy have nearly always been either idealistic or simply false. The two English universities, Oxford and Cambridge, exemplify this point, since they often function as a symbol of "academic paradise lost" in comparison to the rationalized systems of the Germans and Jesuits (22, 24). Clark shows that despite their self-serving revisionary nostalgia and the glory of their architecture, up until the nineteenth century their legacy was "inglorious." He quotes D. A. Winstanley about the "Oxbridge" faculty: "They stand accused of wasting their time and opportunities [. . .] far too many of them led frankly self-indulgent lives and did not trouble to conceal their shortcomings [. . .] Indeed, the pleasures of the table loomed large in their lives [. . .]" (22, 24).

The mix of rationalized administration and academic charisma underpins numerous developments in university history. The lecture catalog slowly emerged, and took on new, rationalized forms, largely as a result of the ministry's demand for paperwork in order to keep tabs on the faculty . . . and ensure they were doing their jobs, teaching the appropriate classes and showing up for them. But charisma was also furthered through academic publicity. Clark wryly notes that there was a good bit of false advertising, too, where advertised courses did not in fact take place—a trend that resulted in, of course, further demands for record-keeping paperwork from the ministries (61–62). The catalog also fostered academic competition, which again was fully in keeping with the desires of state administrators, as it furthered the burgeoning academic meritocracy. It might be recalled, for instance, that despite the withering arguments by Bousquet and Chaput concerning the role of Toyotaism and global capitalism in accelerating casualized labor practices, the first rung of German professorship, the *privatdocent* (lecturer), received no salary; the same also for professors with "extraordinary" status, meaning standing outside ordinary funding. This necessitated the teaching of private classes and collecting fees directly from students, essentially creating a "free market of letters," and a trendy class or charismatic teacher stood to make decent money (Clark 62, 255). Certainly such a life was precarious, and I think Clark invites us to compare it to today's emblem of academic hardship, the adjuncting "freeway flyer." But then, humanities professors (aside from notable exceptions) had "measly" salaries, anyway (192).

As Clark wends his way through the development of the university, he often focuses on material artifacts, or what he calls, evoking Bruno Latour, "crucial little tools" (qtd. in Clark 11). Tables (written and material), rooms, rods (formerly for spanking, now for pointing), paperwork, catalogs, chairs (originally the bishop's *cathedra*, hence both material and symbolic), and more show up as characters in their own right. Particularly notable is the importance of writing, which runs like branches of a stream throughout the book. Some forms of writing, as for instance the transformation of grading from generalized commentary (pupil Christian N.'s ability is "stupid," catechism is "not much" and comprehension is "even worse," and his Oratory is "little") to letters or numbers, reflects the increasing abstraction that goes with rationalized efficiency (122). Professors, of course, resisted this trend, as Clark portrays through exchanges between a Professor Wolf and his overseeing ministry. Wolf feared "such evaluations would alienate [students], especially those whom he would have had to evaluate poorly" (127). Seminar papers (for students) and dissertations/habilitations (for professors) would function similarly, as the means for evaluating progress, ability, and status. At the same, writing papers and dissertations furthered academic charisma, which is one of the reasons that publication came to be mandated by the state, as for instance through Prussia's regulation in 1749 of a minimum of two disputation-dissertations to be a lecturer (259). Publish or perish

has deep roots. (Clark further notes that advertising one's publications became a way, albeit still uncommon, to toy with salary and other university offers—that is, the origin of academic free agency, as it were—going back at least to 1757.)

As a reviewer, I have only scratched the surface of Clark's brilliant, illuminating, and compulsively readable book. Among other notable topics, the idea that academic privilege was warranted because its intellectual challenges were analogous to the three athletic trials of ancient Rome; the emergence of a brutal examination culture at Cambridge and in the Germanies; the role of the Jesuits ("fierce figures"); and more could be discussed. Instead, I'll close with Clark's remarks in his Epilogue on the American university, as that most effectively mirrors Clark's juxtaposition with the other books I review here. I should note that we might well criticize the book about its concluding chapter, which is scattered and unsatisfying, although Clark recognizes how hopeless the task was and resigns himself to "cultural imperialism," which means that Germany gets too much play, a flaw that can be extended to the book as a whole. Regardless, we might recall that Chaput claims that the American university system has achieved world hegemony, and Clark agrees, noting "the subsequent *Amerikanization* of the academia, even in Germany," which has "led to a profound penetration of market ideologies and capitalist values" (464). Before that happened, though, America had imported the German system nearly wholesale beginning in the 1850s, seeing it dominate by the 1870s. It wasn't until near the turn of the century that America "developed its own dynamic" (463), which included the further development, enlargement, and budgeting of departments (as opposed to chairs and institutes). Also of mention is the practice of paying assistant professors a salary, unlike the unpaid *privatdocent*, but at the same time retaining the right to fire them. So, departments "preserved collegial, or, in modern terms, egalitarian aspects of the traditional university" but also allowed for "swift reallocation of resources" and extension of capitalist logics (464)—themes we see given further development in Bousquet and Chaput.

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Unlike the three other books I cover here, Catherine Prendergast's *Buying into English* does not treat the university per se. But it trades in similar themes nonetheless. Prendergast examines English on the global stage as it becomes the common language, focusing on the newly-minted Slovakia, formerly part of Czechoslovakia in the Soviet Eastern Bloc. As Prendergast flatly states, "learning English is virtually a must" for many in the world today, and as such, English becomes both a commodity and the language of commodities (1). Through a critical ethnographic study of several Slovakians who learned and continued learning English, Prendergast reveals that learning English is coterminous with learning capitalism, which in turn reflects

back on the biting pun of her title, *Buying into English*. The university and the English language both present their forms of schooling—a point also made by Chaput, who notes that language is "one of the most important hegemonic tools" (220). Relating details from her teaching sojourns in Slovakia during the 1990s, Prendergast demonstrates that English classes there teach more than just language: "English lessons in postcommunist Slovakia thus conveyed the rudimentary logic of capitalism: how to shop, how to drive, and most of all how to learn ever more English to keep your job" (3). One is already positioned as a consumer in relation to language, and as language, so the world. This, too, is a theme of Chaput, who observes the propagation of "a new consumerized notion of democracy—the idea that individual freedom derives from one's ability to access and purchase a variety of commodities" (126).

One can see other common themes emerging. We learn from Clark how the German research university swept the nineteenth-century world, including America, and brought with it new values concerning teaching, research, and knowledge. And, as Chaput convincingly argues, the American refinement of that German model has now achieved "worldwide hegemony" even as it "structurally reproduces capitalism" (viii, ix). Competition, markets, commodification, relations to corporate business, and a particular notion of democracy, to name but a few values, come with it. Prendergast illustrates how English reflects these values, too. When she discusses some of the ideological content of English language textbooks, she remarks that "English lessons were thus lessons in English's value to economic development and personal security" (77), but her comment encompasses far more than just textbook content. English schools the world. As desirable commodities, academic degrees and English fluency demand money and commitment, offering hope of success in return. Yet they do so not only without guarantees, but by leaving one vulnerable to various forms of exploitation and transformation. English, "the first language of capitalism" as Prendergast dubs it in her Introduction, becomes a "battlefield" whereupon "players in the global economy grapple for property, respectability, and political voice" (9–10).

Prendergast presents her very readable and engaging ethnographic study in five chapters, through the course of which we meet a revolving cast of Slovakians struggling with English, with Slovakia's new nationalism, with Slovakia's precarious position regarding the EU, and, particularly, with capitalism itself. But Prendergast usefully takes one chapter to explore the Soviet communist years, which, fascinating in their own right, make for marked contrast in later chapters about the Slovakians' relation to the English language and its acquisition under capitalism. Soviet power emphasized "the central control of information, the demand for loyalty, the empty rituals, and the danger of punishment" as ways of maintaining control, which of course impacted how English was perceived (26). Although it was not banned or even discouraged, at least officially, English was certainly contained, and efforts to learn and utilize it were undermined. While reading this chapter, I was consistently

reminded of the novels of Milan Kundera, an exiled Czech author, who portrayed with withering insight and irony Czechoslovakian life under Soviet communism, including numerous takes on the 1968 Prague Spring and resulting Soviet occupation. (An aside: this leads to the best joke in the book, told in the Appendix: in a 2003 interview, Prendergast asks Pavol what his occupation was; he responds, "policeman." She then asks his parents' occupation, and he replies, "That would be the Russian occupation" (149).)

Via interviews and exchanges with several Slovakians—including Jan, a well-off corporate lawyer; Peter and Alicia, a married couple involved in software development; and Fero, a university instructor—we learn their firsthand experiences in negotiating the Soviet chill on politics, culture, and English. Prendergast explains that as English was developing into a global language, so that even Soviet citizens might benefit from learning and utilizing it, Soviet dogma dictated that ideology comes first, and thereby stifled attempts to learn it or capitalize on its "growing global value" (28). Such stifling, usually indirect and felt, rather than directly mandated, included the poor quality of English instruction and limited classes; poor and ideology-heavy textbooks; restrictions on travel; and a general denouncement of the decadent, capitalist West and its major language. There was also great fear of reprisal, we learn, as related for example by Alicia. Overt political resistance on her family's part—her father, her mother's uncle—led to job losses, demotions, land seizures, penalties imposed upon the children, such as being prevented from going to university, and more (35).

It is unsurprising that with the fall of communism in 1989 and the "Velvet Divorce" that split the Czech and Slovak Republics in 1993, the status of English would change. Overnight, Slovakians "stopped learning Russian and started learning English" (51). In the third chapter, "Other Worlds in Other Words," Prendergast assesses these transformations. What becomes clear is that, while there was now a great pressure to learn English as the means to get Slovakia ahead in the global market, there was also an idealistic sense of what English would accomplish, for individuals and for the nation. That sense is itself entwined with the promise of capitalism: through talent and hard work, success will come. What Slovakians found instead is that the identities afforded them through acquiring English were conflicted, especially in the face of Slovakia's resurgent nationalism, and, equally important, that it could not meet their image of it. They began learning "[w]hat it did for them, what it couldn't do for them, and in some ways what it did to them" (53). Prendergast describes how Maria, an aspiring artist, claims that the "artist who doesn't speak English is no artist," a statement indicating that "the global dominance of English in the marketplace meant that English and the production and recognition of art had become nearly one" (60). Maria's English struggles and her art pursuits commingle, and when she gets to America, she learns some hard truths: talent and knowledge of English assure her of nothing. She quickly finds herself the starving artist. But she also discovers

that America is quite unable to live up to the ideal she had for it, either in ensuring her the success she desires or even in terms of its overall way of life: "We thought your roads would be better," and "We thought your buses would be better" (64). Worse, Maria finds that America also has its hierarchies and prejudices that belie her former Dreamworld image. Prendergast concludes that such narratives "make a lie of the neoliberal rhetoric of the free movement of people, goods, and services" (73).

Although one could point out that the phantasmatic image of English and what it could do for a Slovakian are naïve, there is nevertheless real pathos present in such stories. They make plain that one does not just learn a language: "languages and worlds are mutually constituting" (66). Given the repression of the communist world, it is understandable that the ideological narratives concerning the power of capitalism would hold particular appeal, even if in the end some conclude, like Maria, that "It's a kind of new slavery, which is of course different from the previous one" (64). The later chapters continue to explore this theme. Slovakians increasingly display an "ambivalence about capitalism and the changes it wrought" (77). The promise of betterment goes hand in hand with the fear of job and financial insecurity (78). Prendergast argues that English lessons not only taught English's value in a capitalist economy, a point reinforced by the replacement of communist with capitalist narratives in the English language textbooks, but the "more unsettling message that anything could be commodified, even a language" (77). Thus, learning English is caught up in the logic of the marketplace, and thereby tempered with the fears of keeping up and having enough, as exemplified in Prendergast's discussion, with accompanying picture, of the English lessons scribbled all over Iveta's kitchen cupboards (87). The commodification of English has national ramifications as well, as demonstrated by Prendergast's discussion of her participation in the development of a national examination, the *maturita*, to test English language acquisition. Despite the exam committee's best intentions, they find that other interests consistently undermine their efforts, including ostensibly benevolent agents such as the British Council.

Prendergast's concluding chapter, "The Golden Cage," brings home the point that while English has become the common language carrying the capitalist utopian promise of equal access and opportunity for Europe and much of the world, the reality is quite different. English also creates opportunity for miscommunication, exploitation, and advantage, all of which have ties to institutionalized power; and, more gallingly for some, English conveys a people's specific place rather than facilitating a "move around and especially up the global order" (128). So-called developing nations are always prey to information disparities, with the predictable results. Rather than obtain the advances English holds out, one learns that one is marginalized, disrespected, relegated to being second rate. Prendergast relates that Slovakia was hailed by the Western press for overcoming its communist backwater status to become a rising star of the new central European order, an elevation keyed to Slovakia's mastery of English (2). But the advances made by Slovakia were, on the

one hand, more advantageous in many respects to the investor nations, who obtained cheap labor, deregulation, and other benefits, and on the other, challenging to those very same nations. Prendergast notes that many Slovakians believe that "the rules they were being asked to follow in order to join the EU existed primarily to protect Western Europe from losing business and employment to the more flexible, hungrier East" (130–31). This situation gives us understanding of the Slovakian couple Peter and Alicia, for instance, who live in England and are quite critical of England's poor performance in keeping pace with globalization, but who are also appalled at the West's portrayal of Slovakia (134–35, 140). And all the while, they worry that their English is not good enough to overcome such prejudices and judgments (141–42). In the end, Prendergast concludes, "idealizations of global English, like idealizations of communism and capitalism," [are] stubborn in their hold on the imagination" (148).

Prendergast's final point is one echoed in all four books: idealizations are troublesome. All four books seek to deflate some idealizations, particularly concerning the university, and even more particularly the globally hegemonic American university and its attendant values and labor practices (indeed, the order of the books in this review implicitly suggests a narrative about this progressive deflation). Nevertheless, these particularities, and the uniqueness and sense of crisis that therefore seem to accrue to the university right now (to which the current glut of books and articles on the university offers further testimony), might give us a sense of solidarity not just with fellow academics and workers, but with the past. Clark discusses an anonymous tract, *Das Universitätswesen in Briefen* (probably written by Friedrich Böll) that satirizes the University of Gottingen. It charges that the university is just a factory ("You, Mr. Curator, are the factory-director. The instructors at the academy are the workers"); the faculty are children ("If you pay heed to their screams, they scream all the louder [. . .] It is better to give them a good whipping [. . .] then they scream no more"); and that while the faculty think the university exists for its own sake, it really exists to serve customers (379). The year of publication for this ripping document? 1782.

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