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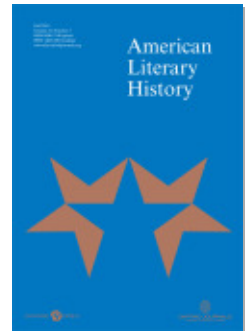
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## **The Post-Welfare State University**

Williams, Jeffrey, 1958-

American Literary History, Volume 18, Number 1, Spring 2006,  
pp. 190-216 (Review)

Published by Oxford University Press



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# The Post-Welfare State University

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Throughout its history, the American university has been a makeshift institution, incorporating various models at hand and adapting to different social needs. Though one might trace its roots to the cloister of the medieval university, it developed according to the iconoclasm of Protestant sects, dotting the land through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with Congregationalist, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist colleges and serving the need of producing literate ministers. Though the American university inherited the classical curriculum of Oxbridge, it adopted the model of central administration from the Scottish university, by which a president ruled, often as the only professor (aided by one or two tutors) in the early college and later ceding his teaching duties to captain the entire enterprise. Though it borrowed from the model of the German research university in the later nineteenth century, the US university expanded to include applied disciplines like agriculture and engineering and professional schools like medicine and law, shifting from the training of ministers to the training of engineers and professionals of the great Industrial Age. And though it has always adverted to high-minded pursuits, it has consistently negotiated with business, particularly from the late nineteenth century on, in the training it has offered its students, in the mission it has promised its constituents, in the practical use of the knowledge it has produced, and in the sources of its funding.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes, in accounts of the university, it seems as if the university has developed from a singular and continuous “idea,” arising full-fledged from Cardinal Newman’s *Idea of the University* (1852) or Kant’s *Conflict of the Faculties* (1798). But, in the actual history of the American university, if there is a principle, it is adaptability.

One can trace five moments punctuating the plot of the American university, the moments ceding to the next sometimes in a gradual evolution and sometimes in a precipitous shift. The first was the sectarian college, which was small, structured like a boarding school (with one or two instructors and 20 or 30 students), ill-funded, and

rarefied, educating less than 1% of the general population. The sectarian college dominated from the inception of Congregationalist Harvard in 1636 and through the eighteenth century, competed with new state universities in the wake of the Revolution, and burgeoned with the religious revival of the early nineteenth century—which saw the founding of more than 200 colleges, especially in less-settled regions to spread the Gospel, many of them eventually failing.<sup>2</sup> The sectarian college was a supporting institution for perhaps the primary, though decentralized, institution of the Colonies and new Republic—religion.

The next moment saw the dominance of the state university, with each state forming its own university or university system and, in a distinctly American way, eschewing an overarching national authority to spread horizontally across the Republic. (George Washington had proposed a national university in 1790 and James Madison did so in 1810, but the idea languished in part because of lack of federal funds and in part because it went against the American idea of states' rights.)<sup>3</sup> Beginning at the cusp of the nineteenth century, state universities started modestly, usually on precarious financial footing. For instance, the University of Missouri, the first state university in the new territories west of the Mississippi, was chartered in 1821 but, without funding, was not able to open until 1839. The state university gained momentum through the century as the US expanded across the territories but did not take full hold until after the Civil War, with the boom in industrial production and the shift from an agrarian to a more fully commercial society. It retooled the college into the training ground for the engineers, agricultural scientists, chemists, and other professionals who designed the machines, built the bridges, and invented the processes that made industry flourish. Another principle of the American university is that it has thrived or faded according to its social utility, and a corollary that it has developed with a decided tropism toward the social sector that funded it and made use of it.

The late nineteenth century is usually considered a turning point in the history of the American university because of the adoption of the model of the German research university; and, indeed, several of the pioneering university presidents of the time received part of their training in Germany and imported its plan of disciplinary organization (replacing the classical quadrivium with the disciplinary structure we still essentially retain). However, this is something of a half-truth, because the German university was a relatively homogeneous and singular institution, whereas the American was heterogeneous and diffuse; the German university was a fully funded national institution, whereas the American version has always been an amalgam of state and private institutions, even state

*A History of American  
Higher Education  
By John R. Thelin  
Johns Hopkins University  
Press, 2004*

institutions relying heavily on donations, and a variegated band of small and larger institutions. The German university was focused on traditional disciplines, whereas the American was capacious in its pursuits and mission, welcoming applied as well as pure disciplines (in the words of Ezra Cornell, embossed on the Cornell emblem, “I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study”). And the German university was open only to a small and elite band of students, whereas the American university has always been more open (if not eclectic) in admissions. Supported by the Morrill “land grant” acts of 1862 and 1890, it fostered very un-Germanic academic pursuits like agriculture. If it was governed by an idea, it was as much influenced by incitements for utility as for pure research, and it served local or regional needs rather than a national culture (which was Wilhelm von Humboldt’s vaunted idea for the University of Berlin). Yet, despite the federal largesse of land grants (which were a substitute for actual funds, as the federal government had little tax base but was rich in lands, especially after its westward annexations), the new university was still a relatively small slice of American experience; in 1900, a minority of the population had finished high school, much less college, and only about 3% of the population had stepped through ivied doors.<sup>4</sup>

All of that changed after World War II. The period roughly from 1945 to 1975 is usually called the Golden Age of the American university. Pumped full of federal and foundation funding, the university grew exponentially, both in the expansion of established universities and the founding of many new state universities. Rather than a rarefied institution, it became a mass institution, inducting returning GIs and then their Baby Boomer children. And rather than a humanistic enclave, it became the national seedbed for technological and other research for the booming postwar economy.

This occurred for several reasons, the most well-known of which was the GI Bill, or the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act of 1944. The student body increased from 1.5 million in 1940 to 2.7 million in 1950 to 7.9 million by 1970, and whereas 12% of the population passed through the university in 1930, 30% did so by 1950, 48% by 1970, and over 60% by 1990. Universities were bursting at the seams—there are pictures of large state universities like the University of Indiana with rows of quonset huts thrown up to bunk the influx—and, parallel to the evangelical revival of the early 1800s, one might call it the educational revival of the 1950s. Part of the success of the GI Bill arose from its being a “single-payer” system, providing tuition charges and stipends directly to students rather than to universities. It was portable, available for any college that one chose, public or private, which benefited the full range of colleges and universities rather than a select few and made universities

beholden to those who would make use of their services. The mass influx of those who took advantage of the GI Bill far exceeded the expectations of its drafters, who budgeted for a modest pool of college-bound veterans but created one of the largest social-entitlement programs in US history (costing \$14 billion for over 2 million in college, as well as nearly 5 million in other forms of education and training). Contrary to the connotation of entitlements, it was also the most profitable, returning, by most estimates, seven times its investment in eventual tax revenues.<sup>5</sup>

An equally important reason for the expansion of the American university was a large-scale federal program of funding for research. The planners of the GI Bill and the postwar university, notably Vannevar Bush, who directed the Office of Scientific Research and Development during the war, proposed in *Science, the Endless Frontier* (1945) that the federal government be the conduit for scientific and technological development and that the university was its best home. This was a dramatic change, because the federal government had previously contracted with independent laboratories for research and mistrusted universities; and, by the same token, universities maintained a kind of clerical distance from funds that might have the taint of undue influence (private as well as public—for instance, in 1925, the University of Wisconsin declined a donation from John D. Rockefeller, fearing its strings).<sup>6</sup>

There are several other reasons for the expansion of the university that created the conditions for the GI Bill and for a federal stake in the university. One was the Great Depression, which induced a change of heart at most universities. During the Depression, many universities were strapped for cash and near insolvency, so after the war, they deliberately courted federal funds.<sup>7</sup> On the other side of the ledger, the federal government not only had the positive inducement of bolstering US technology but the negative inducement of social unrest. The commission that recommended the GI Bill was in part motivated by a now-obscure event of 1932, the Bonus March of about 20,000 unemployed World War I veterans on Washington, DC, to protest the paltry benefits they had received. They set up camp in the Mall, culminating in an infamous battle when Herbert Hoover ordered military action against them, an event that sealed Hoover's prospects for re-election and ushered in Roosevelt and the New Deal. Facing the prospect of the massive influx of returning veterans and the fear, not entirely unwarranted, that the Great Depression would return in full force, the commission recommended a year's guarantee of unemployment pay (the so-called "52-20 club," through which veterans received \$20 per week for one year), housing loans, and college benefits (Thelin 262). Most histories have cast the growth of the postwar university as a heroic

march—which it was, in many ways—but this historical circumstance suggests a slightly different lesson: the university opened its gates not only in the spirit of democracy but as a social salve, if not a measure of control. A further principle of the American university is that it has developed not only in the service of altruism or utilitarian progress but also in reaction to perceived political pressures and fears. This principle goes some way toward explaining the rollbacks of the 1980s and 1990s in reaction to the perceived upheaval of the 1960s, as well the buildup of the postwar years.

Two other, more familiar circumstances providing fertile ground for the postwar university were the carrot of the New Deal and the stick of the Cold War. As R. C. Lewontin explains, “[t]he radically expanded, higher educational infrastructure needed after World War II could only have been provided through the socialization of educational costs” (27), “to assume the cost, unbearable even by the largest individual enterprises, of creating new technologies and the trained cadre required both for the implementation of technology that already exists and for creating further innovations” (3). This large-scale socialization was prepared for by the New Deal, as well as the virtually universal mobilization during the war, and the specter of the Cold War enabled the continuation of a war economy in peacetime, overcoming American “antistate ideology” (10; 27), as Lewontin calls it, and an historical aversion to federal enterprises. The New Deal and the Cold War, blending as liberal anticommunism, created the conditions for the postwar welfare state, and the university became a central institution of the new welfare state. (Though the postwar university represents the democratic dream of equal opportunity, it was also built on the specter of perpetual war, as 1960s radicals and dissidents like Noam Chomsky pointed out.) Rather than the research university, one might more aptly call it the *welfare state university*.

Just as one might trace the continuous history of Proctor and Gamble from a small, early nineteenth century soap maker to its current incarnation, one might trace the history of the current university from, say, Harvard College to its present fruition. But such a narrative thread tends to obscure vast differences; the small storefront is different from P&G not only in magnitude, but in social role and place: it serves and is the manifestation of an entirely different world. The university that the postwar years ushered in represents less the fruition of an idea, whether the German model or Newman’s liberal-arts model, than an articulation of its world, the welfare state. (If it drew on the German model, it adapted its rationalization of knowledge in disciplines to configure the bureaucratic structure of departments for the expanding institution.) The features of mass attendance, of federal and foundation funding, of technological

development, and of faculty provenance directly articulate with the welfare state; and, in turn, they define our horizon of expectation of the university.<sup>8</sup> Our present dismay at the state of the university has a good deal to do with our tacit expectation of the postwar university, which is the horizon on which we judge current events, rather than on the full and mixed history of American universities (for instance, when academic freedom as we know it did not exist).

The welfare state university was a boon for faculty—even those in the impractical humanities—in terms of jobs, salaries, and research funds. In glaring contrast to the present pinched job system, George Levine reports of his experience as an English Ph.D. in the late 1950s, “When I got my degree from the University of Minnesota, almost all my colleagues, no matter how dumb they were, got at least three job offers” (43). By the 1960s, the welfare state university had spurred what Christopher Jencks and David Riesman labeled *The Academic Revolution* in their 1968 book of the same name, when professors first saw themselves foremost as researchers rather than teachers.<sup>9</sup> Research was seeded through the process known as “overhead,” whereby universities received a surcharge to administer any grants, so that even a grant for developing plastics raised all the disciplinary boats in the university harbor. As Paul Fussell recounts in a memoir, “[a]mong the largesse showered on Rutgers in the sixties was a dramatic increase in research funds” (254), enabling him to travel in Europe for a year and to complete two books on early modern poetry. Hand-in-hand with this condition of relative plenty was a fortified notion of academic freedom; part of Vannevar Bush’s postwar plan recommended the autonomy of scientists to conduct research because he believed that science advanced best through measures such as peer review rather than governmental or managerial regulation.<sup>10</sup>

It is now clear that the Golden Age waned through the 1970s and 1980s. Although some of the terms are still fuzzy, the university was part of the strategic defunding of the welfare state from the Reagan Era onwards, and universities have come to operate more as self-sustaining private entities than as subsidized public ones. This has taken a number of paths, most familiarly the pressure for donations, private grants and capital investments (business “partnerships”), and other sources of external funding. Three in particular stand out as departures from the welfare state model. First, the production of directly marketable goods (even if called “knowledges”), enabled by innovations such as the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, which permits universities to hold patents and thus profit from them. (Before, they reverted to the granting agency and were publicly held.) Second, the exponential increase of tuition, construing higher education more like any other service that requires consumers or

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clients to “pay as you go.” (Before, the state subvented far larger percentages of tuition.) And third, the casualization of labor, largely through the use of temporary faculty, who now staff, by some estimates, 60% of courses.<sup>11</sup> (Before, a large majority of faculty, estimated at between 80–90%, held permanent positions.) Without the fiscal cushion of the state, the university has more fully adopted and internalized the protocols of the free market, selling goods, serving consumers, and downsizing labor. Like most other social institutions over the past two decades, the university has seen the erasure of the legacy of the New Deal and its vestiges—notably, socialized tuition and the goal of full employment.

For faculty, the so-called Reagan Revolution overwrote the Academic Revolution. The shift in labor has had the most impact on the traditional liberal-arts disciplines like English, where we rarely garner significant grants or produce commodifiable products. Given that their primary source of revenue is tuition or full-time equivalencies (FTEs), disciplines like English and foreign languages have resorted to a bipartite system of one-half permanent faculty to maintain and administer departments, and one-half temps (without benefits, at low salaries, and so forth), whether called teaching assistants, adjuncts, or lecturers, to cut costs. (Contrary to myth, English is not a money drain but nearly self-sufficient, paying its budget largely through FTEs—my department at Carnegie Mellon pays 100% of its budget—and, in turn, through reliance on casual labor.) Rather than outsourcing labor to offshore sweatshops, the sweatshop has come to us, and the university has internalized its conditions of labor, pay, and “flexibility.” For those fortunate enough to hold permanent positions, the university has internalized the market protocol of intensified productivity, in the humanities through the largely symbolic productivity of books and articles (hence the inflation of publication requirements for tenure), as well as the ensuing pressure for service, given that there are fewer fully franchised faculty members to keep departments running, to make curricular or staff decisions, and other sundry tasks that faculty invisibly do.<sup>12</sup>

The effects of the Reagan Revolution have been just as striking—and, perhaps, more pernicious—for students. Tuition has risen, at three times the rate of inflation, to about \$32,000 per year at elite colleges and exponentially at formerly inexpensive state universities; this is the indirect result of cuts in state and federal funding under neoconservatism (i.e., citizens should pay for services themselves rather than the state paying for them). A large part of this increase has been borne by loans. The Guaranteed Student Loan (GSL) program has grown exponentially since its inception under Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society programs in 1965, from only about \$10 billion in total in its first dozen years to about \$15 billion per



year through the 1990s and over \$40 billion per year now. In 2000, graduating students received not only their degree but a payment book for an average debt of \$18,000, doubled from 1992 and climbing still.<sup>13</sup> Bear in mind that, like a mortgage, the actual amortized amount that students will pay over term is far higher and that some students owe far more, so debt has particular impact on less-wealthy students—and simply precludes others from attending college. While this might be good news for Citibank and its stockholders, it is not for students—or for anyone who cares about access to higher education.

Under the GI Bill, student aid was structured as a direct entitlement to pay tuition and expenses; now, most federal student aid, such as Stafford or Federal Parent Loans (PLUS) loans, is structured as a subvention to pay the interest on student loans for tuition and expenses but not the tuition itself. The federal government pays the interest while the student is in college (plus a grace period of six months after graduation) and guarantees the loans for banks, so, despite the rationale of market capitalism that one merits profit in proportion to risk, they take no risk. From the student side, there is no such safety net, and even in bankruptcy, students are liable for the loans and subject to garnisheed wages. In other words, the present structure of federal student aid is more an entitlement to banks than to students. Aid has been reconfigured as a privatized service of the finance industry rather than as a public entitlement, and students have been recast as individual consumers at the store of higher education rather than a social resource we cultivate for a public good, whether to build better rockets or foster American culture, as it was after Sputnik.

Because most commentary on the university has come from faculty—understandably, since faculty are long-term stakeholders—it has attended far more to the pressures of privatization on research and academic freedom, whereas there has been comparatively little attention to the impact of privatization on students. Given the prevalence of loans, the reporters David Lipsky and Alexander Abrams have defined Generation X as one of “indentured students” (107-25) who agree to future servitude in exchange for their transit through higher education to attain the shores, one hopes, of a decent, middle-class job. We will not know the full effects of this practice for 30 years, although I think that we can reasonably predict it will not have the salutary effects that the GI Bill had. Instead of promising young Americans a leg up, we promise them the shackle of debt.

This new incarnation of the American university is often called the “corporate university,” and some critics have called it the “post-national university,” but I would call it the *post-welfare state university*. Although the corporate university captures the absorption of the university into the protocols of corporate or consumer capitalism, it

is something of a misnomer because the university has always been, by definition, a corporate body. In medieval times, it provided the model for corporatism, and in early America, it provided the legal precedent for corporations as independent entities first staked out in the Supreme Court decision declaring the private control of the public enterprise of Dartmouth College in 1819. Very technically, business corporations are not a model imposed on the university, but the university is the legal model for business corporations. The crux of the Dartmouth decision was the interpretation of the public charter of a corporation; the case law construes the public as being served by the private accumulation of public enterprises, so the more exact distinction is privatization rather than corporatization.

The postnational university also captures something of the tenor of present multinational or global capitalism, but it, too, is a misnomer. It has received its most influential expression in Bill Readings's *University in Ruins* (1996), which argues that the current university reflects the wane of the nation-state and serves the purpose of "excellence" rather than national culture. However, the US state has hardly disappeared but has been reconfigured, moving away from the social programs in health, employment, and retirement, as well as education, that were considered entitlements of the welfare state, and more toward a national security state, indeed, with record-level funding for military.<sup>14</sup> US universities are still articulations of the state, albeit on the model of privatized social services; and, in fact, most universities, educating 80% of the student population, are state universities, legally, financially, and culturally tied to their individual states and regions, as any Buckeye, Sooner, or Bruin will tell you. (One unique feature of the American university is its decentralized system, reflecting the configuration of the nation in a federation of semiautonomous states.) The post-welfare state university more accurately represents the privatized model of the university after the rollback of the welfare state. The problem is not "dereferentialization" (17) from our national culture, which is Readings's diagnosis, for it ushers students into the neoconservative vision of the public sphere as wholly a market – our current national culture, commonly called "Americanism" around the world. Rather, the problem is the distribution of resources. The welfare state university held a substantial role in redistribution; the post-welfare state university holds a lesser role in redistribution and a more substantial role in private accumulation.

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There was a perceptible lag between the new reality of the university and commentary on the university. Most commentators

through the 1980s saw the material changes confronting the university as momentary blips and focused instead on cultural and ideological problems, which they often attributed to the 1960s. Allan Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (1987) was typical of this vein, decrying the corrupting influence of popular culture, especially rock and roll. Others, like Dinesh D'Souza, took aim at theoretical movements like deconstruction or at policy initiatives like affirmative action. While they were correct to observe the decline of the traditional liberal arts (in which majors have declined for the past 30 years), they failed to see that what was shaking the foundation of the university was the abatement of funding, or the rechanneling of funding to a privatized model, which favored the profit-generating business school and medical complexes. Students, however, did notice the change, as business majors increased from less than 10% in 1940 to about 22% now.<sup>15</sup> The fall away from the ideals of the university is usually attributed to a lack of proper attitude of wayward students or wrongheaded professors, but the money trail offers a different explanation. Like detectives, we would do well to follow the money trail.

The most misguided commentary, it is now clear, was about academic jobs. Despite the rollback of full positions from around 1970, there were still projections, most notably the William G. Bowen report *Prospects for the Faculty in the Arts and Sciences: A Study of Factors Affecting Demand and Supply, 1987–2012* (1989), that there would soon be not only an increased number of professorial jobs but a shortage of Ph.D.s to fill them. As Marc Bousquet has shown in "The Waste Product of Graduate Education" (2002), Bowen mistakenly relied on the shibboleth of supply and demand; given the demographic projections that the World War II generation would retire and that the children of the Baby Boomers would crowd college classrooms through the 1990s, the reasoning went, there would be a marked increase in demand for professors. What happened, of course, is that the iron law of supply was reconfigured in plastic ways, and many full positions had been replaced by casual positions. I would add that the problem with Bowen's predictions was not only the assumption of the sanctity of the market but the tacit expectation of the welfare state university. This led him to assume that the same number and kinds of positions provided under the welfare state would continue. While this error had pernicious consequences for many people who entered graduate training on its promise—it is fortunate for Bowen that there is no malpractice for doctors of philosophy who issue diagnoses that cause harm—it was a common misrecognition that many graduate directors of the time repeated. This was also a common sense that most of the major critics

of the 1970s and 1980s who espoused a progressive politics did little to dispel, as they did not especially dwell on the university, nor on the conditions of their and their students' labor, nor did they work much to change them.<sup>16</sup>

By the mid-1990s, commentary started catching up. Indeed, in the past decade, the university has become a central topic in literary studies, as well as in education, sociology, and other fields (with a dozen books appearing in 2003 alone—hence the impetus for this essay). It has moved from a long but specialized line—of reflections on “the idea of the university,” of statistical knowledge about the university (especially of the student body), and of commiserations of retired college presidents—to a major vein of academic research and writing. In literary studies particularly, rather than being a quaint subfield spinning off from Cardinal Newman's reflections, it has become a primary field.

The commentary takes roughly five directions. First, criticism of “academic capitalism.” By the mid-1990s, commentators realized that the changes in the university were not just the result of a downward turn in the economy, a temporary trough that would right itself like the weather, for the economy was strong. A first wave of reports brought to light, with some shock, what Lawrence Soley called “the corporate takeover of academe”. A brisk exposé, Soley's *Leasing the Ivory Tower: The Corporate Takeover of Academia* (1995) presents a series of case studies of businesses exploiting the public resources that universities have to offer and enforcing commercial research at the expense of independent research. In a fuller, scholarly study, Sheila Slaughter and Larry L. Leslie detailed the way that private businesses colonized the university as their new subsidiary research-and-development unit, describing this new modus operandi simply as, in the title of their book, *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University* (1997).

Up to Jennifer Washburn's *University Inc.: The Corporate Corruption of Higher Education* (2005), this vein of commentary has continued unabated, and it is the most prevalent. It generally holds the traditional assumption that universities should have a special status apart from the commercial world, and it variously criticizes marketization, corporatization, commercialization, or privatization. Much of it takes the genre of exposé and investigative report, adducing case studies, statistical shifts in funding, and current news reports. Like most exposés, it alerts its readers to alarming, immediate problems rather than unpacking dense theoretical issues or drawing long-term histories. It has largely come from those in education, public policy, and sociology, as well as from journalists, its idiom aimed at crossing over to general audiences, with many titles published by trade as well as academic presses. In some

sense, it continues the tradition of American muckraking about public institutions, as well as the jeremiad about the role of spiritual over commercial ideals. Despite academe's reputation as otherworldly, higher education is a major public issue.

Washburn's *University, Inc.*, which expands her lengthy Harper's essay "The Kept University" (2000), is the most readable and comprehensive report on "the academic-industrial complex" (43). Washburn demonstrates how commercial practices have permeated the university and how those practices have had pernicious effects, rendering universities more interested in short-term profit, professors more like businessmen, the humanities less central, and teaching devalued. Though a reporter, Washburn conducts an unabashed defense of academic values and disinterested disciplinary knowledge. In more academic precincts, the collection, *The Future of the City of Intellect: The Changing American University* (2002), edited by the sociologist Steven Brint, surveys changes besetting academe, from demographics to credential inflation to digital technology to the fate of the disciplines. One chapter, by a key shaper of the postwar university as president of the California system, Clark Kerr, is a deft overview of the historical functions of the American university. It also foregrounds the important concept of "segmentation" (8ff.), making the point that the American university is not singular but an unruly composite and predicting that the central problem in future will be the further segmentation of higher education on the spectrum from community colleges to research universities. Another chapter, by Brint, is an illuminating account of the rise of applied disciplines, like business, and the decline of the humanities.<sup>17</sup>

Second, criticism of academic labor practices. A related strand of commentary centers on the pinched condition of teaching labor, the shortage of full-time positions and the expansion of casual positions, and the use of graduate students. If the first strand takes aim at the general influence of capitalism, this takes the more specific focus of labor history and the effects of academic capitalism on its workers. It coalesced in the mid-1990s as much on picket lines as in research, especially in conjunction with graduate student organizations, coming to a head with the Yale graduate strike of 1996. It began debunking the apprenticeship model of graduate education, since graduate students teach a high percentage of service courses, like composition, in most departments, receive paltry wages and few benefits, and one-half of those trained do not get jobs. It expanded to call attention to casualization and to the rampant exploitation of "freeway fliers," of adjunct or nonpermanent professors who cobble together several teaching jobs to gain a livable salary. This line of commentary has usually been pragmatic, reporting on specific,

contemporary situations to glean advice and models. Its orientation has been more explicitly activist than criticisms of corporatization, which usually adopt less tone of advocacy and more of scholarly dispassion, and its aim has been, for the most part, unionization. (The title of one essay in Randy Martin's collection *Chalk Lines: The Politics of Work in the Managed University* (1998), by William Vaughn, a University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Ph.D., neatly encapsulates the aim: "Need a Break from Your Dissertation? Organize a Union!") It largely comes from those in the humanities, most likely because they teach the most service courses and rely on funding from them rather than from, say, laboratories with independent budgets and because they adhere to the humanistic ideal of the university.

Much of this commentary has appeared in journals dealing with cultural politics, like *Social Text*, *Radical Teacher*, *minnesota review* (which I edit), and *Workplace*, founded by Bousquet, then one the leaders of the Modern Language Association Graduate Student Caucus and now one of the more prominent analysts of academic employment. Befitting its collective efforts, it seems the literature of collections, notably *Will Teach for Food: Academic Labor in Crisis* (1997), edited by Cary Nelson, which responded to the Yale strike; *Chalk Lines*, which drew on several *Social Text* issues on the influence of business; and, most recently, *Steal This University* (2003), edited by Benjamin Johnson, Patrick Kavanagh, and Kevin Mattson, which gives personal accounts of and advice about unionizing. Gary Rhoades's *Managed Professionals: Unionized Faculty and Restructuring Academic Labor* (1998) provides a sociological analysis of the new terms of labor, with detailed analyses of union contracts, and senior faculty like Cary Nelson, among others, have been unrelenting in calling attention to the issue of labor and of graduate students.<sup>18</sup>

To my mind, Bousquet's work has been the most cogent and convincing about academic labor. His is an overarching critique of the "job system"—"system" to debunk the assumption of the naturalness of the "market" and to stress its being the deliberate implementation of policies—and the strategic overproduction of Ph.D.s to keep labor cheap. He expanded his critique from graduate-student labor to the university overall, which has "informationalized" work to suit the "just-in-time" managers at a desktop. The new "Information University" not only absorbs graduate students and adjuncts but also undergraduates, who work record numbers of hours and finish at a much older average age, and it transforms permanent faculty into a managerial cadre, most evident in composition and other service-course programs. The collection *Tenured Bosses and Disposable Teachers: Writing Instruction in the Managed University*

(2004), edited by Bousquet, Tony Scott, and Leo Parascondola, gives a broad overview of these developments, although the best source of his work, not yet gathered in a single book, is a special issue of *Works and Days*, entitled “Information University: Rise of the Education Management Organization” (2003), edited by Teresa Derrickson, which reprints four of Bousquet’s essays, along with 15 responses.

Third, theoretical critiques. A small but prominent vein of commentary dwells on “the idea of the university.” The idea of the university has a long and venerable tradition in the humanities, generally defending the exemption of the university from commercial and political concerns and asserting the core of the liberal arts, although throughout the 1970s and 1980s it seemed, like most venerable traditions, somewhat staid and quaint, more the province of reflective college presidents than that of the new theorists.<sup>19</sup> The tradition received a jolt in 1996 with Bill Readings’s *University in Ruins*, which argued that the founding ideas of the university, disciplinary reason and national culture, no longer held and had been supplanted by the groundless rubric of “excellence.” Very broadly, Readings responded to the context of corporatization, although his history was more drawn to the conceptual touchstones of Kant and Humboldt than to the concrete details of the actual American university. In a sense, Readings’s lack of historical detail was the book’s rhetorical strength, and its success that it commandeered the rhetoric of the jeremiad from curmudgeonly conservatives like Allan Bloom and combined it with the idiom of postmodern theory (Readings’s first book was a study of Lyotard). It gave a simple, memorable handle for what was going on—“ruin” or “dereferentialization”—that evoked, for all Readings’s poststructuralist savvy, the standard plot of a tragic fall from a better time.<sup>20</sup> For those schooled in theory who sensed something was wrong, it gave a way to talk about the university with poststructural nuance.

This strand is fundamentally conservative in a root sense; it wishes to conserve the university as an enclave, allowing liberal possibilities for thinking without the imperative of utility, much as Kant did in *The Conflict of Faculties* or Newman in *The Idea of a University*. Readings, for instance, proposes that the university be devoted to “Thought,” which, while he calls for a principle of “dissensus” rather than assuming the universal ground of consensus, still retains Kant’s basic faith in Reason. More recent updates, such as Derrida’s late essay “The University without Conditions,” in the collection *Without Alibi* (2002), edited by Peggy Kamuf, and Daniel Cottom’s *Why Education Is Useless* (2003), similarly evoke the traditional view of the university as an enclave that should be exempt from utility. Like many fundamentally conservative lines of

thinking, this strand is politically radical in setting itself against the mandates of capitalism for utility. Still, its focus is more in the domain of intellectual history than material history or policy studies, its solutions are very abstract, and its idiom is academic rather than popular. It is a distinctly humanistic genre, coming primarily from literary scholars (like Readings) and philosophers (Derrida as well as others in the European tradition like Friedrich Kittler), often as part of the new knowledge and information studies. Its tone sometimes veers toward the elegiac, mourning the university lost; sometimes it evokes the jeremiad, denouncing practices that fall far short of the ideal; and sometimes it is defensive, trying to put up a retaining wall to protect the liberal arts against the tide of practical disciplines. Like most theoretical discourses, it claims a guiding role over the vicissitudes of actual institutions, the strength of which is that it posits an ideal or better hope for the university that informs more popular accounts like Washburn's. The weakness, however, is that it tends to suffer from the metaphysical conceit that if we provide the correct idea, all the rest will fall into place, and the political conceit that we as humanists are legislators of social institutions.

Christopher Newfield's *Ivy and Industry: Business and the Making of the American University, 1880–1980* is the most striking recent reconception of the American university. A hybrid of theoretical and historical accounts, it presents an original and compelling argument that the American university developed by adapting American business techniques, which he identifies as “managerialism”. He adds more historical texture to his theoretical model than most ideas (like “excellence”), showing how the university is imbricated in late-nineteenth and twentieth-century American history, the central event of which was the rise of business. Newfield's most unexpected turn is to show that, contrary to the usual distrust of business, managerialism did not impede but protected pure research from market and government interference, especially in the protocols instituted after World War II. The managers ran interference for the scientists and the humanists; they dealt with the Feds, as well as kept the pencils in stock, while the researchers got on with their work. In other words, Newfield determines that Vannevar Bush's plan worked and that the protection of research and intellectual inquiry from the market spurred the best research. Conversely, the protection of research also turned out to be good for the market.

Newfield defines the attitude enabling a separate domain for intellectual research as “humanism,” and one of his more subtle moves is a recuperation of humanism. Humanism, of course, has generally been discredited in contemporary theory, whether by Foucault or Althusser, as a vestige of Enlightenment thinking that “man” stands at the center of the universe. Antihumanism, however,



left thinking about the university, historically a quintessential humanistic institution, at a roadblock. Readings, for instance, could only present a weak solution after assuming the ruin of humanism, the concept of “dissensus,” which is either a placebo, agreeing to disagree when the university is empty, or a backdoor to usher in the humanist codicil of open discussion. Newfield redefines humanism not as the belief in the centrality of man but, in a pragmatist way, as how people describe their freedom and leisure. He attaches it to the rise of the professional-managerial class that sets itself apart from normal self-interest in capitalist profit for the higher aims of “science and truth” (46). Humanism is the better genie of the meritocracy. I suspect that an important line of argument about the university will be the recuperation of humanism rather than the evacuation of it, which leaves the university an open field for business as well as dissensus.

Fourth, apologies. While most commentary has been critical of capitalism and defends the separation of the university, a minor but recurrent strand has been apologist. It ranges from mild accommodation to full embrace of the merger between business and the university. The former purports to balance extremes, as in current politics claiming a middle ground between Left and Right, between radical critiques and corporate celebration. It generally does not defend privatization, but it holds that both the traditional humanistic mode and the capitalist mode can peacefully coexist. Mild apologies come from former administrators—for instance, Yale president Richard C. Levin in *The Work of the University* (2003)—and usually repeat, as most convocation or commencement speeches do, lofty and clichéd ideas of the university, express concern about some of the conditions facing it, but also offer reassurance that things are not as bad as the naysayers make them seem. They deal with some of the current travails of the university as much by omission as confrontation. (Amazingly, in a book entitled *The Work of the University*, Levin does not descend to talk about graduate students.)<sup>21</sup>

The more extreme form of apology holds that privatization is not only here to stay but has substantial benefits and represents the better prospect of the university. It usually comes from administrators out of the hard social sciences or sciences, like former Michigan president James J. Duderstadt in *A University for the 21st Century* (2000), who argue for the rational choice of “partnerships” with business and for job preparation. It takes the tone of realpolitik and dismisses the traditional idea of the centrality of the humanities as out of touch. Though opposing the mainstream of commentary on academic capitalism, it probably most accords with the mainstream of those in state politics who vote on university allocations and see universities as “engines of economic growth,” many parents and

students who understandably worry more about jobs than a familiarity with the classics, and upper-level academic administrators. Related to this strand, there is a prolific subgenre of books on university management, like those in the Open University Press series “Managing Universities and Colleges,” with titles like *Managing the Academic Unit* (2000). (I do not include these in my typology proper because they are not scholarly commentary or critical reports on the university but in the genre of business guides and advice books.) These forego reflection on the status of the privatized university to give practical advice on how to run it. While we might blanch at these kinds of texts, if we wish to criticize the fate or defend the ideal of the university, we might benefit from finding out what those who wear the suits on campus read and think.

Fifth, histories. One other sizeable vein of commentary recounts the history of the university. This vein is less a reaction to or direct comment on the current university and more a continuation of a long historical record. It comes largely from those in American history and in education, and it is generally less conceptual and more empirical, less polemical and more scholarly, and less oriented toward present practice and more toward thick description of the incarnations of the American instance. In their attention to concrete detail, histories tend to complicate the kind of sweeping categorical representation suggested by ideas of the university. For example, Clyde Barrow’s *Universities and the Capitalist State* (1990) recounts the growth of the university during the late nineteenth century, but it does not simply demonstrate the fulfillment of the German research model. Rather, it shows how the university developed by being yoked to business, which fostered professional training and practical disciplines as well as the purer German idea of research, and how the tension with business is not a new one but constitutive of the modern university. (Barrow details, among other things, how boards of trustees experienced a near-complete makeover from being comprised primarily of ministers before 1870 to being nearly entirely made up of businessmen and professionals by 1900.) The historical shift was not so much from liberal arts to research models but more from religious to secular, capitalist practices.

The histories range from wide-angle, comprehensive overviews to close-ups of individual campuses. Among the standard overviews are Frederick Rudolph’s *The American College and University: A History* (1962), which traces the full plot, from sectarian colleges beginning with Harvard, founded in 1636, to the research university of the mid-twentieth century, and Lawrence Veysey’s *The Emergence of the American University* (1965), which focuses on the rise of the research university from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries. These take the genre of what

educational historian John Thelin calls “the saga.” There are also narrower histories of specific eras (like Barrow’s), yet more focused case studies of exemplary campuses (for instance, Harvard or Johns Hopkins) and of the figures who were instrumental in their development, like Charles W. Eliot at Harvard in the late nineteenth century or the innovator Alexander Meiklejohn at Wisconsin in the early twentieth. And, finally, the most localized are campus histories, which sometimes seem quaint but are grist for larger histories, and some are significant in their own right, such as those of Cornell or Hopkins.

Every generation, as the saying goes, rewrites its version of history, and the wave of histories cresting during the 1960s generally represented the expansion of the university as a positive teleology. The recent wave of histories, appearing from around 1990 on, seems more uneasy about that teleology and generally represents a revisionist understanding of the postwar interregnum, particularly the Cold War, now available to hindsight. Of the current wave, two overviews bring the saga of American higher education up to date. Roger L. Geiger has been the preeminent historian of the American university, and his “The Ten Generations of American Higher Education” (published in the 1999 collection *American Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Philip G. Altbach, Robert O. Berdahl, and Patricia J. Gumpert) provides a helpful scheme to understand its stages. Thelin, also a noted historian of the university, has contributed what will probably be the new standard, *A History of American Higher Education*. Its strength is that it corrects many myths and overgeneralizations, although it is oriented more toward general points of academic interpretation than stories and archival research, as Rudolph’s still-fascinating history is. Thelin, for instance, revises the view that colonial colleges were “only concerned with the education of clergymen” (27) but also educated an elite, including many of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, whereas Rudolph spends considerable time narrating specific events, for instance, of students at Princeton tarring and feathering an instructor in the early nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup>

The most substantial band of recent histories focuses on the postwar era itself, notably Geiger’s *Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Research Universities since World War II* (1993), Hugh Graham and Nancy Diamond’s *The Rise of American Research Universities: Elites and Challengers in the Postwar Era* (1997), Rebecca Lowen’s *Creating the Cold War University* (1997), and the collection *The Cold War and the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Postwar Years* (Chomsky et al., 1997). The first two are magisterial studies of the Golden Age and of welfare-state funding, Lowen is a case study of Stanford that richly

exemplifies the shift from prewar to postwar funding and research, and the last presents a more critical look at the Cold War era and its effects on individual disciplines. These seem part of the broader revision of the postwar period in literary studies as well as in history. Because of the concatenation of events of the 1960s, from the effusion of funding after Sputnik to open admissions to the shift to coeducation to campus uprisings, that decade has loomed as the pivotal moment in understandings of the university. But this band pushes the historical magnifying glass back, showing how the structural changes that produced the 1960s were part of the long *durée* of postwar reconstruction. Those changes also built the platform that gave us academic capitalism.

\* \* \*

By and large, the current body of commentary has mounted a powerful rebuke of academic capitalism as well as a defense of the better lights of the university. However, one limitation is a paucity of practical solutions. If there are any, they are usually stopgaps—for instance, the proposal from Michael Bérubé and Cary Nelson in *Higher Education Under Fire* (1995) to shrink graduate programs—rather than proposals for structural change in teaching labor. Or they are idealistic but at some remove from the actual goings-on of the university. Or they are well meaning but finally without teeth, like “dissensus,” which retains the university as it is, in which we are free to disagree with the business school. The ideas we need most, in my opinion, are not abstract exhortations for “Thought” or uselessness but concrete ideas for how to make the university more open so that more people can participate in critical thinking or practical training.

Part of the problem might be the protocols of criticism. We are trained, when we look at poems or cultural phenomena, to “read” them, spotting unities or unpacking inconsistencies. We do not expect to fix them or to offer prescriptions for poets to follow. We tend to take a similar stance toward the university: we read and interpret the events and ideas they suggest, spotting inconsistencies or showing how ideas deconstruct. We need to switch stances, I believe, to a more pragmatic, prescriptive mode. In some sense, even the archetype of formalism, Aristotle’s *Poetics*, is unabashedly prescriptive, because it sees poems as human products that humans make in better or worse ways. I am content to leave poems to poets, but, for the university in which we work and have a stake, we need to distinguish how it is made and what would make it better—without the conceit that only we hold the true ideal but with the confidence that it might be a more democratic institution.

An overriding problem of the university, as I hope no one forgets after reading this, is student debt. I have adduced some of the statistics about student loans, but we should consider what debt actually means in students' lives and how it impacts their futures. If they are traditional college ages of 18–22, their debt will weigh them down until they are 37 (41 if they take the maximum forbearance). If they are older—and the average age of college students has gone up to the late 20s—then they will be encumbered until they are well into their 40s or 50s. Debt permeates many of their lives not only with the shackle of monthly payments but also with the possibilities that it delimits, governing the kinds of jobs they might take and the careers they might imagine. It enforces a rational choice not to become a schoolteacher making \$21,000 per year, nor a social worker making \$26,000, nor a fledgling writer or artist waiting tables for \$12,000 to have writing or studio time during the day. Rather, it enforces the rational choice of going to business school or law school instead of graduate school in literature, so that they will start at a sizeable salary with prospects of yet more. The death of the humanities and the disciplines that promote “thought”—the majors in which have declined in real terms to less than 10% of college majors, with business expanding to 22%—results not from a loss of interest in the humanities but from the material interests that confront students.

The policy of debt is a pernicious social policy because it places a heavy tax on those who wish a franchise in the normal channels of contemporary American life. It is also pernicious because it is counterproductive in the long term, cutting off many possibilities and domains of human production. Finally, it is a pernicious social policy because it perverts the aims of education, from enlightenment to constraint. Especially as teachers who have a special obligation to our students, debt is a policy that we cannot abide.

The best proposal to remedy this is free tuition. Adolf Reed Jr. has promoted in “A GI Bill for Everybody” (2001), an outrageous yet sensible solution: free tuition for all qualified college students. While it might seem far-fetched, it is not impracticable given current levels of military spending. Reed estimates that free tuition would cost between \$30–50 billion per year and notes that necessary federal structures are already in place (in programs like Pell Grants); it would in fact save some money, cutting out the middlemen of banking. To get the ball rolling, he, along with Labor Party organizer Mark Dudzic, has formed the Campaign for Free Higher Education, which is affiliated with and whose policies are a central plank of the Labor Party (see [www.freehighered.org](http://www.freehighered.org)). Even if not immediately in reach, free tuition is the kind of plank to pressure political parties, just as some socialist policies pressured—and eventually were assimilated into—mainstream politics under the New Deal.

My own variant on Reed's proposal would be to extend it to graduate students and to establish a national job corps or other form of public service linked to the abatement of undergraduate and graduate student loans. In North Carolina, where I taught for a number of years, there was a program through which students received a full scholarship and living expenses in return for teaching for three years in understaffed public schools. On the postgraduate level, there are similar programs for medical doctors, who receive tuition or loan abatements in return for practicing in areas without sufficient healthcare. This is particularly urgent for graduate students, since postbaccalaureate debt is now estimated at around \$50,000. This would also benefit faculty, not just to do the right thing but in terms of our own labor. The university experienced better labor conditions after World War II not because it adopted a better idea but because so many people went to college, found it useful, and thus valued it.

There is a maxim, attributed to Dostoyevsky, that you can judge the state of a civilization from its prisons. You can also judge the state of a civilization from its educational institutions and how it treats its young and those entering fully franchised adult life. The practice of encumbering our young with mortgages on their futures is a return to the draconian practice of debtors' prisons. One lesson of the GI Bill is that it created conditions that far exceeded the expectations of those who conceived it. It exceeded their expectations not only in the number of people who took advantage of it, but in the social and economic return. Even from the standpoint of a particularly bearish CPA, free tuition is the kind of investment that we would be foolish not to make.

### Notes

1. On the symbiosis with business, see Clyde Barrow's *Universities and the Capitalist State* (1990); on the early American college, see Russell Blaine Nye's useful précis; on the Scottish model, see Hugh Kearney, *Scholars and Gentlemen: Universities in Pre-Industrial Britain* (1970); and on the transition of the American college to university, see Roger L. Geiger, ed., *The American College in the Nineteenth Century* (2000).
2. Nye remarks on the "wave of evangelical fervor" of the "second Great Awakening" (178) as well as the startling rate of failure of early colleges: for instance, 39 of 46 in Georgia and 26 of 43 in Ohio (179).
3. Benjamin Rush had also proposed a federal university in 1788, and a congressional committee endorsed one in 1816. See the selections in Richard Hofstadter and William Smith, eds., *American Higher Education: A Documentary History* (1961): vol. 1, (152ff.).

4. For a survey of enrollment figures, see Christopher Lucas *Crisis in the Academy: Rethinking Higher Education in America* (1996), (10ff.); for a debunking of what they call “the myth” of German origins, see James Turner and Paul Bernard, “The German Model and the Graduate School: The University of Michigan and the Myth of the American University,” in *Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Universities since World War II*, ed. Roger L. Geiger (1993).
5. See Reed on the GI Bill’s salutary effects; see also Thelin (261–64) and [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov). See Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (1987) on changes in the college population (4ff.).
6. See Louis Menand’s “The Marketplace of Ideas” for the best short account of these changes; see also Nicholas Lemann’s excellent history of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the postwar shift in the university, *The Big Test: The Secret History of the American Meritocracy* (1999); and, on Wisconsin in 1925, see Norman E. Bowie, *University-Business Partnerships: An Assessment* (1994), (5).
7. See Rebecca S. Lowen, *Creating the Cold War University: The Transformation of Stanford* (1997).
8. I take the concept “horizon of expectation” from the reception theorist Hans Robert Jauss, who in turn adapted the hermeneutic philosophy of Hans Georg Gadamer. See my “History as a Challenge to the Idea of the University.” in *JAC* 25 (2005). Clark Kerr’s *The Uses of the University* is still relevant in depicting the influence of federal funding on the traditional “city of intellect.” Kerr famously termed the postwar university “the multiversity,” aptly characterizing its instantiation of several ideas.
9. One could distinguish this as a further moment, the post-Sputnik university focused on research as distinct from the GI Bill university, but I see it as part of the same articulation of the welfare state. Another name for it could be the “Fordist university” in contrast to the “post-Fordist university,” taking into account David Harvey’s broad discrimination of the phases of modern capitalism in *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (1989). For another possible scheme with ten demarcations, see Geiger’s “The Ten Generations of American Higher Education.” in *American Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century* (1999).
10. See Newfield’s *Ivy and Industry* for a discussion of Bush’s protocol for autonomy, in which Newfield finds a humanistic core; rather than the usual disdain for administration, Newfield deftly argues that administration provided a front insulating the autonomy of researchers.
11. Ernst Benjamin offers an apt corrective to the problems of tenure and permanent academic positions; see his “Declining Faculty Availability to Students Is the Problem—But Tenure Is Not the Explanation.” in *American Behavioral Scientist* 41 (1991). On the Bayh-Dole Act, see Newfield’s article “Jurassic U: The State of University-Industry Relations,” in *Social Text* 79 (2004). Which promises a sequel to his *Ivy and Industry*.
12. See Bousquet on the management construal of composition professors in “Composition as Management Science: Toward a University without a WPA” in

JAC 22 (2002), and Katie Hogan on the new protocol of “superserviceability” in “Superserviceable Feminism,” in *minnesota review* 63–64 (2005).

13. See Washburn (xiii) and Reed, “Majoring in Debt” (26). This does not include family contributions—much of which is now being paid through home refinancing rather than savings, which extends the circle of debt, and it is unclear if it includes personal debt from charge cards, which adds a considerable amount at draconian interest rates. At 46, I myself still owe \$35,000 from my graduate school GSLs and from PLUS loans for my daughter’s undergraduate education, for a payment of \$600 per month for the next 10 years, and my daughter, graduated in 2002, owes about \$25,000.

14. While the speed of transport and communication has no doubt increased, as classic histories like Eric Hobsbawm’s *The Age of Capital* (1975) and *The Age of Empire* (1987) show, capital has always been international and global. See my essay “History as a Challenge to the Idea of the University” for a fuller discussion of the Dartmouth College decision.

15. See the tables in “The Undergraduate English Major” by the Associated Departments of English (ADE) Ad Hoc Committee on “The Undergraduate English Major” in *Profession* (2004).

16. One notable exception in literary studies is Richard Ohmann, whose 1976 *English in America: A Radical View of the Profession* stands out as a prescient anomaly.

17. Douglas Kirp’s *Shakespeare, Einstein, and the Bottom Line: The Marketing of Higher Education* (2003) is likewise a readable and wide-ranging report, presenting an array of case studies of different schools, policies, and financial pressures. Stanley Aronowitz’s *The Knowledge Factory: Dismantling the Corporate University and Creating True Higher Learning* (2000), published by the trade press Beacon, focuses particularly on the shift in university governance from faculty to administration and the slide from higher education to job training. See also David Noble’s *Digital Diploma Mills: The Automation of Higher Learning* (2001), which is a well known but somewhat apocalyptic vision of the use of video technology in teaching, and the collection *Buying In or Selling Out? The Commercialization of the American Research University* (2004), which is edited by a former administrator, Donald Stein, and discusses some of the difficulties of commercialization. For earlier reports, see Christopher Lucas’s *Crisis in the Academy*, which focuses on the demographics of the contemporary university. For a more academic picture, see Masao Miyoshi’s “Ivory Tower in Escrow.” in *boundary 2* 27 (2000).

18. Cary Nelson has exerted significant pressure on organizations like the MLA, as well as written about jobs in a number of places, among them *Manifesto of a Tenured Radical* (1997), *Academic Keywords: A Devil’s Dictionary for Higher Education* (1999), and the collection *Higher Education under Fire: Politics, Economics, and the Crisis of the Humanities* (1995), which he co-edited with Michael Bérubé, another fellow traveler of graduate-student concerns. See also Leitch’s “Work Theory.” *Critical Inquiry* article (31[2005])

19. The collection *Logomachia: The Conflict of the Faculties*, edited by Richard Rand (1992), with essays by Derrida, Robert Young, Peggy Kamuf, and others, is an exception, although it has been more common to reflect on the idea of the university in the European tradition than in the American. Like Readings’s account,



the book focuses on the scholarly tradition of ideas (as its title indicates, from Kant onward) moreso than on the actual conditions of the contemporary university.

20. To claim dereferentialization, one has to assume an original reference that grounded the university; Readings ascribes an absence to the recent university, deprived of the presence of the nation-state. In other words, Readings tells a patently metaphysical story, the kind that Derrida persistently exposed. See also Dominick LaCapra's "The University in Ruins?" (*Critical Inquiry* 25 [1998]) which is still the best corrective of Readings's skewed history. Pelikan's *The Idea of the University: A Reexamination* (1992) exemplifies the well-meaning but tame genre of the idea of the university before Readings. See also Gregg Lambert's *Report to the Academy (Re: The New Conflict of the Faculties)* (2001), which, like Readings, is a poststructuralist defense of "critical thinking."

21. See also Richard H. Brodhead's *The Good of this Place: Values and Challenges in College Education* (2004), likewise about Yale, where Brodhead was a dean (he is now the president of Duke). Former Harvard president Derek Bok, in *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education* (2003), criticizes commercialization, although he tries to forge a middle ground. Though I finally see his mode as apologetic, Bok does point out problems of marketization. His earlier *Beyond the Ivory Tower: Social Responsibilities of the Modern University* (1982) is more caught up in debates over cultural issues like affirmative action. Eric Gould's *The University in a Corporate Culture* (2003) offers a series of banalities defending higher education but also advising that we be more pragmatic along the line of Duderstadt. Douglas J. Thoma's *Football U.: Spectator Sports in the Life of the American University* (2003) repeatedly makes the obvious point that football expresses a popular collegiate ideal and thus finds it good, without much investigation of the skewed economy of college sports.

22. Julie A. Reuben's *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalization of Morality* (1996) explains the transition from sectarian college to research university as a shift from a basis on morality through the late nineteenth century to a base in secular knowledge and science roughly by 1930. Adam Nelson's *Education and Democracy: The Meaning of Alexander Meiklejohn, 1872–1964* (2001) focuses on the career of Meiklejohn at Wisconsin, whose chief ambition was not to fulfill the German ideal but to found an "Experimental College." Meiklejohn, particularly as a representative of the model of the Midwestern state university rather than the Ivies or Hopkins, should have more attention.

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