The Idea and Ideals of the University

A panel session of the 2004 Annual Meeting of the American Council of Learned Societies

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Delbanco • Ehrenberg • Liu • Stimpson
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The essays in this volume began as presentations in a panel session on "The Idea and Ideals of the University" at the 2004 ACLS Annual Meeting. Rebecca Chopp, President of Colgate University and a member of the ACLS Board of Directors (2003-2006), introduced the panel. Her remarks follow. The essays are presented in the order in which they were delivered.

In a panel session on "The Transformation of Humanistic Studies in the 21st Century" at the 1997 ACLS Annual Meeting, historian Thomas Bender observed, "In the West, only the Roman Catholic church has a longer continuous institutional history than the university." The university in America has exhibited much the same durability in our nation's comparatively shorter history.

The U.S. university began to take its current shape in the late nineteenth century, and its outward form has remained substantially unchanged since then. In the twentieth century, the G.I. Bill and the baby boom transformed a system of elite education into one of mass access, but even this democratic transformation did not alter the general form of higher education. Indeed, in the "golden age" of the 1950s and 1960s, the university system became more uniform as the research university became the reigning ideal institutional type. And this ideal type, as the norm for all higher education, contains within itself a tension.

In 1918, just one year before the founding of ACLS, Thorstein Veblin wrote, "In one shape or another, this problem of adjustment, reconciliation or compromise between the needs of higher learning and the demands of the business enterprise is forever present in the deliberations of the university directorate." In the early twenty-first century, tidal forces in the political economy of higher education may be making that reconciliation even more difficult and straining our ideals. Many see within the changes in the teaching force a transformed conception of the social role of the university. No longer conceived as a public good, the university is thought of as providing private individual goods to its students. In this view, a private, profit-making university may provide the most efficient service. Concern about the corporate culture defining the university invites scholars to reflect again about the ideas and values that have constituted the university. What is the role of the learned societies, of scholars, and of academic leaders in defining and interpreting the ethical components of a shared vision of the twenty-first-century academy? To what degree does the case for the university's autonomy carry a concomitant obligation for it to be self-policing? What will be the role of digital technology?

We are fortunate that four distinguished scholars have agreed to help us think through these issues this morning.

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Key Issues Currently Facing American Higher Education

by Ronald G. Ehrenberg

Irving M. Ives Professor of Industrial and Labor Relations and Economics, Cornell University, and Director of the Cornell Higher Education Research Institute (CHERI)[1]

To paraphrase the title of one of my books, tuition keeps rising in the United States. During the last quarter of a century undergraduate tuition and fees have risen at annual rates exceeding the rate of inflation by an average of 2.5 to 3.5%.[2] Faculty salary increases have not been the major cause of increases in tuition—average faculty salaries at four-year colleges and universities in the United States increased by only about 0.5 to 1.0% a year more than the rate of inflation during the period.[3]

The reasons for tuition increases in public and private higher education do not overlap completely. In the private sector, factors include the growing costs of technology, student services, and institutiona financial aid—the unrelenting competition to be the best in every dimension of an institution's activities—and, at the research universities, the increasing institutional costs of scientific research (which I will return to below). In public higher education, all these factors are also important; however, another important driving force is the withdrawal of state support.

In his Cornell Ph.D. dissertation, my student Michael Rizzo documents that the share of state budgets going to higher education has shrunk by over one-third over the last 30 years.[4] Although there is no reason why higher education's share should remain constant over time, the net result of this decline is that per capita state appropriations per full-time equivalent student at public higher education institutions rose in constant dollars from $5,622 in FY1974 to $6,717 in FY2004—an average increase of only 0.6% a year. This occurred during a period when the real costs faced by higher education institutions were rising much more rapidly and when private higher education institutions were relentlessly annually increasing their tuitions by a much greater percentage than states were increasing their appropriations per student. Public higher education institutions responded to their diminishing state support by raising their tuition levels at slightly higher percentage rates than the private institutions did; however, because public tuition levels started at much lower levels, the public institutions generated less income from these hikes than their private counterparts did from theirs. Thus the resource base of public academic institutions fell relative to the resource base of private academic institutions.

As a result, while the average professor at a public doctoral university earned about 91% of what his or her counterpart at a private doctoral university earned in 1978-79, by 2003-04 the percentage had fallen to about 77%.[5] Public institutions increasingly have difficulty attracting and retaining high quality faculty, which surely influences the quality of what

is going on in public higher education where the vast majority of our students are educated.

In the face of persistent rates of increase in tuition that exceed inflation, the changing pattern of financial aid in the United States has had an influence on who gets a college education. In 1982-83, over 50% of federal financial aid was in the form of grant aid, but by 2002-03, this had fallen to 40%.[6] Most federal financial aid now comes in the form of loans and research suggests that students from lower-income families are less willing than other students to take on large loan burdens to finance their higher education. Federal grant aid has not kept up with increases in college costs. During the mid-1970s the average Pell grant received by students was about 46% of the average costs (including room and board) of attending a public higher education institution. In 2003, the ratio was under 30% (the ratio is much lower at private institutions but they have more institutional resources for financial aid).[7] The Bush administration has proposed increasing loan limits (which private higher education institutions applaud) but has shown little interest in across-the-board increases in Pell grant levels.

The share of states' higher education budgets that goes to public academic institutions has also declined over time—putting added pressure on public tuitions—as states are now devoting a greater share of their higher education expenditures to providing grant aid to students.[8] Moreover, this grant aid is increasingly non-need-based. As late as 1993, less than 10% of all state grant aid to students was non-need-based, but the growth of programs such as the Hope Scholarship program in Georgia, which started in 1993, raised this to almost 25% by 2001.[9] Today there are 12 other states that have Hope-type programs. Increasingly financial aid at private colleges and universities in the United States is also "merit"-rather than need-based, as private institutions use financial aid for enrollment management purposes (to attract a class with "desirable characteristics" at least cost) rather than for enabling lower income students to gain access to them. Probably less than 15 to 20 private academic institutions provide financial aid based solely on students' financial need today.

As a result, the United States has not achieved its goal of reducing educational inequality based upon family income levels—differentials in college enrollment by family income quartiles are almost as large today as they were 30 years ago.[10] Additionally, more and more students from lower-income families are being forced, for financial reasons, to enter higher education through public two-year colleges. Given projections of growing college-age populations during the next decade, primarily from underrepresented groups, and limitations on state resources for both operating and capital expenses, we may increasingly see limitations on access to college (such as began happening in California in 2004) and disparities in college attainment based on income and race/ethnicity worsen in the United States in the years ahead.

Recent research also indicates that, on average, only about 10% of the undergraduate students at the Consortium on Financing Higher Education (COFHE) institutions, a set of 31 selective private colleges and universities, come from families whose family incomes are in the lowest two fifths of the distribution of family incomes—the vast majority of their students come from families in the upper tails of the family income distribution.[11] This research was at least partially responsible for Harvard President Lawrence Summers's announcement that Harvard will no longer require families whose family incomes are less than $40,000 a year to contribute anything toward their children's cost of attending Harvard.[12] However, other research that looked at the experience

of Princeton University after it eliminated all loans from its financial aid packages suggests that that policy change had only a very small impact on the probability that students from lower-income families would accept Princeton's admission offers and we might infer from this that Harvard's new program may not have a very large impact.[13] The research of William G. Bowen, president of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, has led him to assert that if selective private academic institutions are sincere about wanting to enroll more students from lower-income families, it will be necessary to give applicants from this group preferences in admission in an analogous manner to the way these institutions currently give admissions preferences to legacies, athletes, and underrepresented minorities.[14]

The importance of scientific research has grown at American universities fueled by major advances in genomics, advanced materials, and information technology and by dramatic increases in governmental and private funding for research. However, in spite of this, a little-known fact is that the costs of research are being born more and more by the universities themselves out of their institutional resources. The share of universities' research and development expenditures coming out of their own pockets grew from 11.2% in 1972 to almost 21% in 2000.[15]

There are many reasons why universities are increasingly bearing the costs of their faculty members' research, but an important one is the magnitude of the start-up cost packages needed to attract new faculty members. At the private Research I universities, these costs average $300,000 to $500,000 for assistant professors and often well over a one million for senior faculty. While universities properly view these costs as investments in their faculty members' scientific research productivity, where they get the money to fund these investments is of great concern. Public universities, more often than private ones, sometimes leave faculty positions vacant until salary savings can generate necessary start-up cost funds; these vacant faculty positions surely have an impact on the quality of undergraduate education at the public institutions.[16] Researchers at the Cornell Higher Education Research Institute (CHERI) have also found evidence that the growing institutional costs of research have led both public and private institutions to increase student/faculty ratios and substitute part-time and full-time non-tenure-track faculty for tenure-track faculty.

In fact, throughout American higher education, institutions are increasingly relying on part-time and full-time non-tenure-track faculty. During the 1990s, the share of full-time faculty not on tenure tracks and the ratio of part-time to full-time faculty both grew significantly. Moreover, the share of newly hired full-time faculty that is not on tenure tracks grew to over 50%.[17] Research findings obtained by Liang Zhang and myself suggest that as the shares of part-time faculty and non-tenure-track full-time faculty grow at an institution, undergraduate students' graduation rates fall. As the share of faculty not on tenure tracks increases, the demand for full-time tenure-track faculty declines, as does the attractiveness of entering Ph.D. study for American college graduates.

This may be one of the factors that explain the increase in the share of Ph.D.'s granted by American universities going to temporary residents of the United States. During the last 30 years, this share rose from 10.4% to 26.3%. In key science areas the increase was more dramatic. In 2002 almost 40% of all Ph.D.'s in the physical sciences and 55% of those in engineering were awarded to temporary residents.[18] As higher education institutions improve around the world and as we make it more difficult for foreign students to enter our country, there is no guarantee that foreign

students will want to continue to pursue Ph.D. study in the United States and no guarantee that those who do will want to remain in the United States for employment. Indeed, applications of foreign students to study in the United States declined dramatically in 2004.[19] Given the decline in the number of Ph.D.'s produced in total by U.S. universities in recent years and the large share of American faculty rapidly approaching retirement age, a major problem facing American higher education is who our next generation of professors will be.

Finally, the growing need to raise revenues from sources other than tuition and state appropriations is leading both private and public academic institutions to increased efforts to expand fund-raising operations, to expand research funding from corporations, and to expand commercialization of their faculty members' research. The resulting growing importance of individual donors and corporations to academic institutions is likely to place more pressure on the institutions to respond to the preferences of donors and corporations, both in the setting of academic priorities and in the institutions' operations. So too is the increasing propensity of presidents of public universities to receive part of their compensation from foundations and other private sources that are not directly under the control of the boards of trustees of the institutions. As the external pressures placed on academic institutions from these forces mount, it is increasingly important that the governance structure of academic institutions—the trustees, the central administration and college administrators, and the faculty—remain fully aware of what the institutions' core academic values are and become better able to articulate these values to external constituents.[20]

Notes

1. CHERI is financially supported by the Atlantic Philanthropies (USA) Inc., The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the TIAA-CREF Institute, and I am grateful to them for their support. An earlier version of this paper was presented at a conference held at the John Deutsch Institute for the Study of Economic Policy at Queens University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada and will be forthcoming in a conference volume.

2. Ronald G. Ehrenberg, *Tuition Rising: Why College Costs So Much* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2002).

3. Ronald G. Ehrenberg, "Don't Blame Faculty for High Tuition: The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession: 2003-2004," *Academe* 90 (March/April 2004): 22-33.

4. Michael J. Rizzo, "State Preferences for Higher Education Spending: A Panel Data Analysis," in Ronald G. Ehrenberg, ed. *What's Happening to Public Higher Education?* (Westport, CT: ACE/Praeger, 2006).

5. Ehrenberg, "Don't Blame Faculty."

6. *Trends in Student Aid* (New York: College Board Publications, 2003), figure 6.

7. *Trends in Student Aid* , figure 7.

8. Michael Rizzo, "State Preferences for Higher Education Spending."

9. *Trends in Student Aid*, figure 10.

10. *Trends in College Pricing*, figure 11.

11. Catherine Hill, Gordon Winston, and Stephanie Boyd, "Affordability, Family Incomes and Net Prices at Highly Selective Private Colleges and Universities," *Journal of Human Resources* 40 (Fall 2005): 769-90.

12. Julie Basinger and Scott Smallwood, "Harvard Gives a Break to Parents Who Earn Less Than $40,000 a Year," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 12, 2004: A35.

13. David Linsenmeier, Harvey Rosen, and Cecilia Rouse, "Financial Aid Packages and College Enrollment Decisions: An Econometric Case Study," *Review of Economics and Statistics* 88 (February 2006): 125-145.

14. Peter Schmidt, "Noted Higher Education Researcher Urges Admission Preferences for the Poor," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 16, 2004: A26.

15. Ronald G. Ehrenberg, Michael J. Rizzo, and George H. Jakubson, "Who Bears the Growing Cost of Science at Universities," in Paula Stephan and Ronald G. Ehrenberg eds., *Science and the University* (Madison, WI: U Wisconsin P), forthcoming.

16. Ronald G. Ehrenberg, Michael J, Rizzo, and Scott S. Condie, "Start Up Costs in American Research Universities," *Cornell Higher Education Research Institute Working Paper* 33 (March 2003) <www.ilr.cornell.edu/cheri>.

17. Ronald G. Ehrenberg and Liang Zhang, "Do Tenure and Tenure-Track Faculty Matter?" *Journal of Human Resources* 40 (Summer 2005): 647-59.

18. Thomas B. Hoffer et. al., *Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities: Summary Report 2002* (Chicago: NORC at the University of Chicago, 2003), table 11.

19 Jeffrey Selingo, "Foreign-Student Applications Decline in US," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 5, 2004: A21.

20. These themes are developed much more fully in Ronald G. Ehrenberg, ed., *Governing Academia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2004) and Derek Bok, *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2003).

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Humanities in the University: Retrospect and Prospect

by Andrew Delbanco
Julian Clarence Levi Professor in the Humanities, Columbia University

Professor Ehrenberg has given us a disturbing picture of what is happening to the entrance fees charged by our institutions of higher education. Elite private colleges have become too expensive for students from low-income families, while the cost of attending public universities is rising even faster beyond their reach.[1] We may not be headed all the way back to the era when college was a birthright for the rich and an unattainable luxury for the poor, but the days when top colleges took their students mainly from the prep-school world that Scott Fitzgerald called "St. Midas" seem less like ancient history than a preview of where we find ourselves now.

Professor Ehrenberg spoke about the very important question of whom the university serves. What I'd like to talk about is what the university owes to those whom it chooses to serve, once it decides who they are.

This question has provoked two fundamentally different answers that have coexisted uneasily over the history of American higher education. That history began nearly 400 years ago, when the founders of Harvard College articulated the idea that education is about the preservation and transmission of knowledge. They established their college, they said, in a mood of dread—dread lest the churches of New England be left with "an illiterate ministry . . . when our present ministers shall lie in the dust."[2] Implicit in that first mission statement (as we might call it today) was the idea that truth is changeless. The Harvard founders were, of course, interested in the changes that constitute human history, but they regarded these changes as the predestined working-out of a plan that exists outside of time in the mind of God—a plan prophesied in scripture and thereby discernible to those who learn how to read correctly.[3]

But if the Harvard founders cared mainly about preserving and transmitting an eternal body of knowledge, they spoke of the need to "advance" learning as well as to perpetuate it. Their brand of experimental Protestantism contained an incipient idea of progress, though this idea did not take hold as a driving motive until the mid-eighteenth century, when we find Enlightenment ameliorists like Benjamin Franklin, who mocked Harvard as a place hopelessly stuck in the past, calling for new institutions that would promote "discoveries . . . to the benefit of mankind."[4] This new concept of a college as creator of knowledge was eventually embodied in the University of Pennsylvania, whence it spread over the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to many other institutions. After the Civil War, the idea of hastening and improving the future inspired the land-grant colleges

and (if I can risk the agricultural metaphor) came to fruition in the research universities of the later nineteenth century. We hear it in the 1870s, for instance, in the words of Daniel Coit Gilman, first president of Johns Hopkins, for whom the point of a university was to show students "how to extend, even by minute accretions, the realm of knowledge." By the 1890s, progress had become the standard by which universities measured themselves. "Are we taking up the new branches of knowledge as they come successively into existence," asked the president of the new Northwestern University in 1892, or "are we simply guarding ancient truth?"[5] (You can hear the pejorative tone in that word "simply," as if defending truth were a simple task.)

In these new universities dedicated to the future, the teaching function and the research function became essentially one and the same. Education was no longer about replication. It was about advancement and innovation, since—as Charles W. Eliot, the man who forced Harvard College to become Harvard University, explained—a true university must keep "a watchful eye upon the new fields of discovery." As for its obligation to its students, it must "store up the accumulated knowledge of the race" so that "each successive generation of youth shall start with all the advantages which their predecessors have won."[6] On this view, history becomes a sort of relay race, in which no runner retreads trodden ground—an idea fundamentally at odds with the meaning of humanistic knowledge, which must be relearned by each generation and put to the test of individual experience.

Among the effects of the new research university was the transformation of the faculty's role from a pastoral to a professional one. In 1842, Emerson remarked that "a college professor should be elected by setting all the candidates loose on a miscellaneous gang of young men taken at large from the street," and he went on to propose a hiring strategy quite different from today's recruitment procedures: "He who could . . . interest these rowdy boys in the meaning of a list of words" should get the job.[7] Emerson was still alive when Eliot, in his inaugural address as president of Harvard in 1869, remarked that teaching remained a professor's first obligation, and that only "two kinds of men make good teachers—young men and men who never grow old."[8] Yet even as Eliot reiterated these sentiments from a former world in which the professor, no less than the minister, was to be an awakener, university teachers were becoming something quite different. They were becoming certified professionals, complete with a peer review system and credentialing standards—which one of Eliot's faculty members, William James, referred to as the "Ph.D. octopus." They began to benefit from competitive recruitments in what was becoming a national system of linked campuses; and when some rival university came wooing, the first thing to bargain for was, of course, a reduced teaching load. Seven years after Eliot's inauguration speech, the Harvard philologist Francis James Child was exempted from grading undergraduate themes in response to an offer from Hopkins.[9]

The real innovators of the new university were the scientists, whose knowledge of natural phenomena was advancing with ever-accelerating speed and who required an entirely different structure for disseminating and testing their hypotheses. Humanists tried, somewhat frantically, to refashion themselves on the scientific model; they made minute descriptions of human artifacts, searched for laws in the chaos of history, proposed theories by which the inner workings of language and literature might be explained. The footnote became a requisite symbol of sound empirical research. Professional organizations (American Historical Association [AHA], Modern

Language Association [MLA]) arose, and the site of scholarly exchange—for humanists no less than for scientists—shifted from the local campus to the national peer group, such as the many constituent societies that ACLS now represents and coordinates.

Watching these developments early in the twentieth century, Thorstein Veblen concluded that faculty members were judged on how much coin of the academic realm they brought into the local treasury. That coin, according to Veblen, was prestige—something one earns not in the classroom but at the conference or symposium. Today, more than a century after Veblen made his observations—and especially since passage in 1980 of the Bayh-Dole Act, which permits universities to hold patents for inventions supported by public funds—the competition for prestige has become fiercer than ever, and the big winners are those who bring into the university coffers that still-harder currency: money.

We've all heard some version of this story of the corporatization of the university, of which Veblen wrote the first chapter in a book ironically titled *The Higher Learning in America* (1918). His subtitle was "A Memorandum on the Conduct of Universities by Business Men." The story inevitably involves the marginalization of the humanities, whose "outcomes" cannot be measured numerically, if at all.[10] The fact is that we humanists have never quite made the transition to academic professionalism (I say this with some trepidation, and possibly some perversity, before this audience), at least not without a certain sense of incongruity and debilitation in the process. Our best historians have never quite convinced themselves that the shift from the grand narratives of amateurs like Thucydides, Gibbon, and Parkman to the meticulously researched academic monograph was an altogether gainful thing. Our best professors of literature have never quite shaken the feeling of being parasites on those who produce literature itself.

With the rise of the professionalized university, there came a search for expedients by which the university could keep its two functions—teaching and research—from splitting apart. At an old institution such as Harvard, which had been founded as an undergraduate teaching college, an elective system was introduced by President Eliot that permitted the faculty to teach its specialties. Ever since, at Harvard—from the electives of the 1870s to the so-called Core Curriculum of the 1970s—the great figures on the faculty have been encouraged to talk about whatever interests them, in large rooms filled with undergraduates who, it is hoped, are listening. In his book *The Reforming of General Education* (1966), Daniel Bell quotes an anonymous Harvard faculty star as saying, "We expose the students to a great mind and hope, then, that they will educate each other."[11]

At my university, a more prescriptive "Core Curriculum" was formed early in the twentieth century, and our Core classes continue to be taught today in small discussion groups. But lest we Columbians congratulate ourselves for a more enduring commitment to mentoring the young, our most recent historian points out that the Columbia Core was created with relatively little faculty resistance precisely because undergraduate education had already been consigned to a teaching faculty made up essentially of second-class university citizens.[12] From the outset, the "real" faculty was relatively indifferent about whether or not there was a Core—and I'm afraid it still is. In his classic book *The Uses of the University* (1963), Clark Kerr, then president of the University of California, and formerly chancellor at Berkeley, remarked on the "cruel paradox" that a "superior faculty results in an inferior concern for undergraduate teaching." Kerr

called this paradox "one of our most pressing problems."[13] Forty years later, it still is.

These strategies—specialty teaching and hiving off undergraduate courses to a secondary college faculty (increasingly, today, a part-time adjunct faculty)—helped old institutions like Harvard and Columbia grow into modern research universities. Newer institutions, like Hopkins and Clark, which initially tried to make a go of it without any undergraduates at all, discovered belatedly that it was impossible to fund their research programs without a college revenue stream. Today, Hopkins is developing a nationwide enrichment-education program for gifted high-school students, from whose number it hopes to get its share of future undergraduates.[14]

I have been talking about what might be called the structural effects of the professional research model on humanistic teaching, learning, and writing. One of these effects has been to marginalize the undergraduates. Another has been to push the faculty toward the academic and away from the intellectual. I use these terms in the sense that David Riesman and Christopher Jencks used them in their book *The Academic Revolution* (1968), which defined "an academic question" as "one raised by some lacuna or ambiguity in the data or interpretations of a . . . discipline. It is a question asked by one's colleagues or on their behalf, and answered primarily as a service to those colleagues." An intellectual, by contrast, is a kind of amateur. He or she asks questions not about internal professional debates but about experience; and his or her natural audience is the broader public within and beyond the university, including, especially, the young.[15]

One notable trend in the academic humanities in recent years has been a yearning to retrieve this amateur spirit. Even as pressure grows for early professionalization (it is now virtually a job requirement to publish at least one peer-reviewed article before leaving graduate school), there is a sense, I think, that the humanist experiment in scientistic professionalism is running down. The age of theory seems to be over, and interest is growing in the ultimately subjective experience of aesthetic pleasure. On the faculty side, several once-prominent literary theorists have renounced the field and turned to writing fiction or poetry.[16] On the administrative side, universities are making at least token efforts (teaching prizes and the like) to resist the pull away from the classroom that professionalization exerts. Indeed, the whole structure of professional assessment in the humanities is up for review, since the well-known crisis in scholarly publishing seems to be at least partly a revolt by publishers against the trend by tenured faculty to "outsource" the work of evaluating their junior colleagues to anonymous readers at some university press whose imprimatur is a required tenure credential. The publishing crisis also suggests that academic humanists have a serious problem of overproduction, since the decline in sales to individuals as well as to libraries indicates that we ourselves hardly read one another's books. We seem to be coming to the end of a long process of institutional development of which I have tried to sketch a few salient features, and there is a feeling in the air of being on the verge of something new—or, perhaps, the return of something old.

I cannot predict what forms this renewal will take; and by recommending that we be frank about the costs and constrictions of professionalism, I do not mean to say that we should revert to the cheap liberties of dilettantism. Still, it might be useful, in closing, to mention a few of the opportunities as well as the challenges implicit in our situation. For one thing, as we turn back to undergraduate students, it will be necessary to face the fact, as Arthur Levine,

former president of Teacher's College, has recently put it, that "today's students are coming to college overwhelmed and more damaged than in the past."[17] It is equally obvious that the rhythm of postmodern life is inimical to the practices we value: reading, contemplation, revision, reflection. What we do, and what we want our students to do, is at odds with the wired world in which, like it or not, we all are living.

Yet in our dissidence is an opportunity. We are at a moment of relative equilibrium in the academic humanities. The Culture Wars have quieted down. The initial craze for the digital delivery of information to paying customers in some metacampus seems to have gone the way of the dot-coms. There is a great appetite among the young for exposure to literature, art, music, history—from which young people still hope to get help in finding their bearings in a world of unprecedented confusion.

Finally, and most important, we have obligations that have only become more urgent. In his beautiful book *Liberal Education and the Public Interest* (2003), the late Dartmouth president James O. Freedman uses old-fashioned terms like "redemptive potential," "common destiny," and "common good" in speaking of the eternal purposes of humanistic education—the purpose of tempering self-love with a measure of self-doubt, the purpose of balancing the desire for self-fulfillment with an awareness of our connectedness to others. In the last analysis, humanism must always be simultaneously backward-looking and forward-looking and entails an obligation, as Freedman says, to teach our students that the word "perhaps" must always follow close upon whatever certitude we have just uttered.

However much we may disagree about method or interpretation, we surely agree that to open the newspaper today is to see how much we need citizens and leaders who know the meaning of that word "perhaps"—who know how to temper illusory certainties about the human future with a cautionary knowledge of the human past. Our work is cut out for us, and we should get on with it.

Notes

1. As need-based financial aid declines in favor of various forms of merit aid (from "differential packaging" in the Ivies to publicly funded merit scholarships in the states), our two richest universities have taken small steps to redress the problem. Princeton has eliminated all loans in favor of grants, and Harvard has announced that students with family income below $40,000 will no longer be required to contribute to the cost of their education. But former Princeton President William G. Bowen, now president of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, argues cogently that only an "affirmative action" approach, i.e., preferential admissions for economically disadvantaged students, will begin to redress the problem. Bowen discusses these issues in the second (April 7, 2004) of his 2004 Jefferson lectures delivered at the University of Virginia, "The Quest for Equity: 'Class' (Socio-Economic Status) in American Higher Education," available on the Mellon Foundation website, <www.mellon.org>.

2. *New England's First Fruits* (1643), in Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Founding of Harvard College* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1935) 432.

3. The chief aim of education was therefore moral: to learn to shape one's life according to revealed truth. Since that truth had been at least partly foreshadowed before the incarnation of Christ in the teachings of pagan philosophers, especially Aristotle, there was an important place at seventeenth-century Harvard for classical as well as Christian learning.

4. Franklin, "A Proposal for Promoting Useful Knowledge among the British Plantations in America" (1743), *Benjamin Franklin: Representative Selections*, ed. Chester E. Jorgenson and Frank Luther Mott (New York: Hill and Wang, 1962) 181. The satire of Harvard is in *Dogood Papers* 4 (May 1722), reprinted in Jorgenson and Mott, 99.

5. Gilman, quoted in Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987) 57. Henry Wade Rogers, quoted in Graff, 58.

6. Charles W. Eliot, *Educational Reform* (1898), *American Higher Education: A Documentary History*, vol. 2, ed. Richard Hofstadter and Wilson Smith (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1961) 711.

7. Emerson, quoted in Burton Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism* (New York: Norton, 1978) 265.

8. Eliot, *Inaugural Address,* in Hofstadter and Smith, 616.

9. Graff, *Professing Literature*, 41.

10. It has lately been told in a spate of books, including two especially thoughtful studies by Derek Bok (*Universities and the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2003]) and David Kirp (*Shakespeare, Einstein, and the Bottom Line* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2003]).

11. Daniel Bell, *The Reforming of General Education* (New York: Columbia UP, 1966) 48.

12. Robert McCaughey, *Stand, Columbia* (New York: Columbia UP, 2003) 287.

13. Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 4th ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1995) 49.

14. The Hopkins program is called "Center for Talented Youth." Its website address is <http://cty.jhu.edu>.

15. Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, *The Academic Revolution* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1968) 242-43. A wide-ranging discussion of "the amateur professional and the professional amateur" is to be found in Marjorie Garber, *Academic Instincts* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2001).

16. I am thinking, among others, of Frank Lentricchia and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.

17. Levine, quoted in Eric Gould, *The University in a Corporate Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2003) 43.

The Idea and Ideals of the University
Delbanco • Ehrenberg • Liu • Stimpson
American Council of Learned Societies
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The Humanities: A Technical Profession[1]

by Alan Liu
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I have been involved for some time in academic initiatives that bring information technology into the humanities. In ways both wonderful and painful, I have learned that information technology (IT) opens an unusually direct conduit between the perspective of the academy and those of other sectors of society. I would like to harvest this experience for the present occasion by reflecting on what might be called the "technical" relation between the contemporary academy and society—a relation that serves as a testbed for broader speculations on the role of the academy today.

Let me begin with a supposition. Suppose that "humanities computing," "digital humanities," "technology in the humanities," "media arts and technology," and other such awkwardly named associations and programs will one day fulfill their mission. That mission, phrased broadly, is to integrate information technology into the work of the humanities so fully and in so entangled a manner—at once as tool, perspective, and theme—that it would seem just as redundant to add the words "computing," "digital," "media," or "technology" to "humanities" as it was previously to add "print-based." Information technology will simply be part of the business of the humanities along with all its other business. What then?

Then, I surmise, it will make a great deal of difference whether the incorporation of information technology in the humanities—its business, I called it—occurred with or without critical awareness of the specifically *professional* meaning of such technology in relation to other professions in which IT has a defining role. The difference I indicate, which bears on the larger situation of the academy, may be identified through a sequence of exploratory theses as follows:

1. *Humanities scholars are also knowledge workers.* Ours is the age of the "rise of the symbolic analyst" and "intellectual capital," Robert B. Reich and Thomas A. Stewart declare, respectively, in two of the many books of popularizing economic discourse that appeared in the 1990s to dedicate the new millennium to the work of knowledge.[2] The distinguishing feature of such knowledge work is that it is governed by an increasingly common set of institutional, disciplinary, communicational, technical, and other practical (as in the notion of "best practices") protocols for managing productive thought. Whether as tightly wrapped as an Internet transmission protocol or as fuzzy (yet nevertheless prescriptive) as "corporate culture," these protocols include all the host of standards, specifications, declarations, procedures, routines, and functions that now bind the workers of

the so-called professional-technical-managerial "new class" to the postindustrial program of efficiency-cum-flexibility.[3]

As the full title of Stewart's book (*Intellectual Capital: The New Wealth of Organizations*) indicates, the dominant protocols of knowledge work are those of business. Yet we should recognize that there are now no natural, outer bounds to business.[4] All of the following social sectors, for example, have been touched by the logic and discourse of postindustrial corporatism: the military, the health industry, government, and even nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Thus consider the odd conjunction between the new, logistics-driven U.S. military with its just-in-time forces and communication networks and the antiglobalist NGOs with their own just-in-time protest forces mobilized through IT as well as "Managing Your NGO" business instruments provided by the Association for Progressive Communications (financial spreadsheets, worksheets, analysis forms, case studies, etc.).[5] To this list of institutions influenced by postindustrial business, we can add the academy, including the humanities in higher education. It is not a stretch of the imagination, after all, to see that scholars increasingly perform analytical, managerial, administrative, and other kinds of professional work that seem ripe for corporate-inspired just-in-time and total-quality reforms.[6]

2. *The professions are increasingly bound to the protocols of knowledge work specifically by information technology*. As Alexander R. Galloway points out, "protocol" derives from Greek *proto* (first) + *kollēma* (glue): "the first leaf of a volume, a fly-leaf glued to the case and containing an account of the M.S."[7] From its first usage on, that is, "protocol" was an information device, a technology not just of data but metadata that anticipated what Shoshana Zuboff, in her *In the Age of the Smart Machine*, calls "informating," the accretion through computerization of ever thicker and more multiple layers of "information about information."[8] I would call special attention to the "glue" in protocol, which emblematizes the essential "stickiness" of information technology, otherwise celebrated for its liquid, even ethereal virtuality. Precisely its liquidity, we recognize, makes IT the perfect superglue with which to coat any profession to make it adhere to the common knowledge-work model. Consider, for example, the fusion of "information" and "knowledge" in the first sentences of Stewart's book:

> Information and knowledge are the thermonuclear competitive weapons of our time. Knowledge is more valuable and more powerful than natural resources, big factories, or fat bankrolls. In industry after industry, success comes to the companies that have the best information or wield it most effectively. [9]

"Information" and the ability to "wield" it (i.e., IT) here stick to "knowledge" so closely that there is effectively no space of separation at all, no more so (in Stewart's figure) than deuterium and tritium after hydrogen fusion. TCP/IP, FTP, SMTP, HTTP, and so on—these and other IT protocols are now our ultimate "glue" or, staying with Stewart's metaphor, fusion elements, networking everything together in the runaway fusion explosion called the Web.

In our specific context, this means that the protocols of knowledge work embedded in IT are one of the main vectors by which corporate assumptions now enter the academy. Copartnership, coresearch, contractor, donor, and other official relations established between major information technology firms and institutions of learning from K-12 through higher and for-profit education are just the macro side of the phenomenon. The micro side consists in the way that

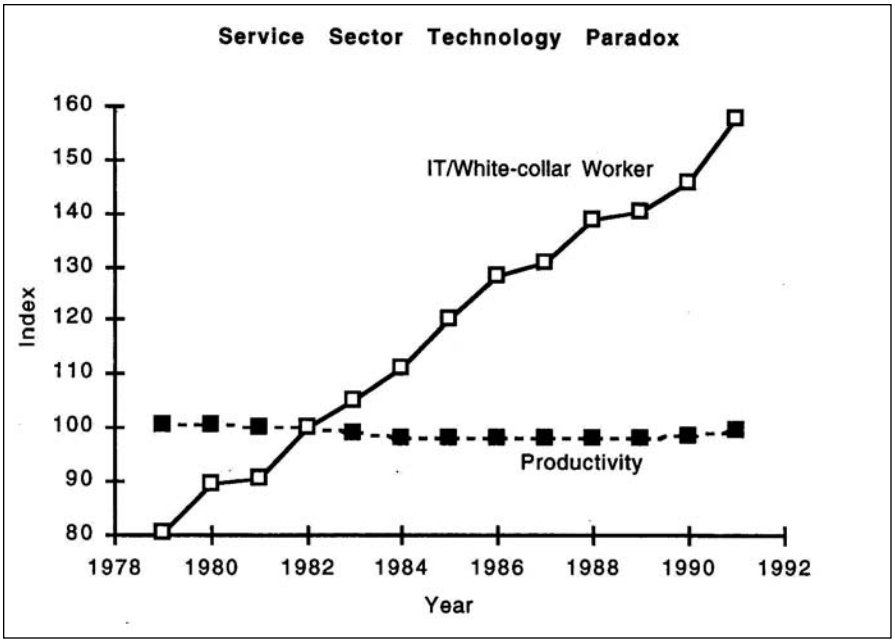

Figure 1.
"IT capital and productivity in the service sector (non-goods-producing industries). While IT investment went up rapidly, productivity growth slowed."

Source: Thomas K. Landauer, *The Trouble with Computers: Usefulness, Usability, and Productivity* (MIT Press, 1995), 31; © Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

the ordinary work of the humanities now depends on proprietary IT platforms and applications.[10] Just try, for example (as I have done in a letter to the editor), to get *PC Magazine* to review products from an education-industry rather than corporate perspective even on a once-a-year, single-story basis. "It's not our focus," was the succinct conclusion of then editor, Michael J. Miller, in an otherwise kind and enlightened response.[11] The fact that the majority of humanities scholars now use an application suite named "Office" to write "files" (as opposed to essays, chapters, or books) indicates the sway—subtle yet tidal—that business protocols exert.

3. *But IT is not just functional in knowledge work; it is allegorical*. We can take a page here from Martha S. Feldman and James G. March's study "Information in Organizations as Signal and Symbol."[12] Feldman and March argue that rational choice theory alone cannot account for the enormous appetite of business for gathering and communicating excessive information that has "little decision relevance," is too late for the decision at hand, or is never considered at all. Such information dependency, Feldman and March suggest, can best be understood through an "information behavior" approach that views information technology as in great part a "symbolic" or "ritualistic" *performance* of rational decision making. IT, in other words, is not just functional in the economy of knowledge work; it is also representational—a fact never more clear than during the so-called productivity paradox of the late 1980s and early 1990s when massive business investment in IT led to no, or even declining, productivity (figure 1). As I have argued in more detail elsewhere, business kept the faith in IT during these years because the true function of IT was to serve as a speculative mirror allowing the corporations to envision whole new ways of distributed, decentralized, networked, nonhierarchical, teamworked, and otherwise "restructured" work.[13]

Speculative vision, after all, has been a trope of business IT from the beginning. As Zuboff documents in her interviews, early corporate adopters of computers consistently described IT in terms of a phenomenology of transcendental vision: IT was what let them "see it all."[14] A 2003 IBM ad campaign for its middleware and information services continued the tradition. In the ads (figure 2), which appeared in clustered versions (several at a time on consecutive recto pages in *Business Week*), workers stand like prophets with physical eyes shut but mental eyes wide open, just imagining the promised land of networked connectivity. "Can you see it?" reads the slogan.[15] At once operational and imaginary, IT is what might be called a "functional allegory" or, equivalently, an "allegory of functionalism."[16] IT is our preeminent form of contemporary *poiesis*, or fictive making.

Coming now to the possible *difference* of humanities IT—to the different way IT can influence the humanities as a profession—I will close this set of theses with two in the mode of prescription:

4. *The humanities should therefore embrace the poiesis of IT for alternative ends—first of all at the level of organizational imagination.* If IT is a poiesis, after all, we would do well to remember that humanities scholars specialize professionally in the history, forms, tropes, and, just as importantly, contradictions of *poiesis*, whether literary or—in the expanded, Percy Shelleyan sense—social. The humanities, then, should not just adopt IT but use it in synchrony with its own traditions to imagine a society of knowledge that overlaps with, but is not necessarily the same as, current postindustrial capitalism. The place to start, I think, is close to home—in the alternative society that is the academy itself, where the humanities must first take care of business before it can persuasively make a case about business elsewhere.

There are two main levels on which the humanities can use IT to reimagine the protocols of the work of education. One is organizational. Business uses the functional allegory of IT to "restructure." The humanities can, too—even if (and especially if) the business it needs to restructure is in crucial ways not the same as corporate business. Here I come to what I perceive to be one of the frontiers of IT in the humanities. That is the far territory on which the many, scattered humanities computing programs, centers, projects, and so on that have used IT as a catalyst to reorganize the normal disciplinary work of the humanities evolve from ad hoc organizational experiments into strategic paradigms of interest to the profession as a whole. In general, we must acknowledge, the profession of the humanities has been appallingly unimaginative in regard to the organization of its own labor, simply taking it for granted that its restructuring impulse toward "interdisciplinarity" and "collaboration" can be managed within the same old divisional, college, departmental, committee, and classroom arrangements supplemented by ad hoc interdisciplinary arrangements. The common denominator of many of these well-intentioned but institutionally insecure interdisciplinary and collaborative hacks is that they create organizational shells within which the now ingrained, individual research and teaching of the humanities can continue unchanged—with hardly any of us, for example, actually coteaching or coproducing research with anyone else in ways that exceed well-established humanities protocols (e.g., "colloquia," "conferences," or "panels"). This is despite the fact that we live in an era of declining sponsorship for individual humanities research as it has been channeled through the obsolete organizational form of the "fellowship." Relatively few humanities scholars thus try for large-scale projector institution-based (rather than individual) funding

Figure 2.
"Can you see it?"
IBM advertisements,
Business Week,
November 17, 2003.

from the government and corporations to build structurally interdisciplinary and collaborative programs. And even fewer seek to initiate the systemic campus-, division-, or department-wide reorganization of the humanities that would be needed to fold interdisciplinary and collaborative work *structurally* into normal work (to the point, for example, of establishing course relief for grant-raising and project-management duties or tenurable rewards for junior faculty working on collaborative projects).[17]

Could IT in the humanities make a difference? Those in the humanities who have started funded, collaborative projects know that IT is a potential channel for refunding and reorganization.[18] There are ways of using IT to claim a place at the table where campus or external funding agencies assign monies that have worked, and many other ways that the humanities have not yet learned how to work (especially in the direction of cross-disciplinary ventures with the arts and with engineering and the sciences). One of the main tasks of those establishing programs in humanities technology, I suggest, is to use IT to refund and reorganize humanities work with the ultimate goal *not* of instituting, as it were, Humanities, Inc., but of giving the humanities the freedom and resources to imagine humanities scholarship anew in relation both to academic and business molds. The relation between narrow research communities and broad student audiences, for example, need not be the same as that between business producers and consumers. But unless the existing organizational paradigms for humanities work are supplemented by new models (e.g., laboratory- or studio-like environments in which faculty mix with students in production work, or new research units intermixing faculty from the humanities, arts, sciences, engineering, and social sciences), it will become increasingly difficult to embed the particular knowledge of the humanities

within the general economy of knowledge work. It will be difficult, for instance, to make a case before a legislature, funding agency, and ultimately the general public for the study of historical knowledges deemed obsolete by business, for the analysis of data through such massively inefficient methods as close reading, or in general for the investment of resources in the half-baked, buggy, never-ready-for-IPO products symptomatic of education (e.g., student projects, dissertations, faculty Web sites).

5. *The other level on which the humanities should embrace the poetic power of IT for alternative ends is technical.* Search, query, sample, select, scan, filter, sharpen, blur, cut, paste, insert, sum, average, tag, encode, mark up, upload, download, attach, export, import, configure, install, save, back up, reboot, reinstall, write, read (figure 3). These are some of the verbs on the top-level menu of technical skills that business workers, and others participating in the common protocols of knowledge work, now need to command. By contrast, here is the usual top-level menu of the operations systematically or explicitly addressed in higher-education literature classrooms (to take an example from my own native discipline): read, write, close read, contextualize/historicize, interpret, and critique (with the subskills required for these operations taught only unsystematically or implicitly; delegated to lower levels of education and IT staff; or addressed not at all). Of course, there are crucial overlaps between the two menus, especially "read" and "write." But there is also a fundamental disparity in the levels, explicitness, number, and granularity of technical skills.

Given the contemporary importance of technical protocols, I suggest, the time has come for the humanities to face up to its future as a technical profession like others. Only then will it be able to give its students the necessary skills for professional life *and* (adding its normative values to those of other professions) impart the imagination of such skills capable of sustaining a more humane business—and, ultimately, culture—of knowledge. In short, if *technē* is where *poiesis* now lives—something that both business and the "cool" users of the newest, bleeding-edge technologies attest—then that is where the humanities must go.

Above all, I believe, the humanities can only teach a broader sense of culture in the age of corporate culture by demonstrating that the contemporary instinct for technical competence need not be oblivious to the sense of history that is the primary means by which the humanities at once reinforce and critique culture.[19] Technique, in other words, cannot be surrendered up to the forces of productivity as a matter of purely practical skills and competencies extrinsic to serious humanistic study. Educators may have been intent since at least the time of the Russian Formalists on showing that the humanities can be methodologically technical (raising the ire of those who accept the need for technical "jargon" in every single other field of contemporary knowledge except the humanities). But the point of this effort must be, ultimately, to equip educators to reverse the field by insisting on the humanity of technique. The best way to do so is to bring to technique an awareness of historical techniques. Here are the kinds of questions to be posed in the humanities considered as a technical profession:

How might knowledge workers be educated both in contemporary information technique (the collection, verification, and collation of data; comparative and numerical analysis; synthesis and summarization; attribution of sources; use of media to produce, manipulate, and circulate results) and in archaic and historical knowledge technique (e.g., memorization, storytelling, music, dance, weaving and other handi-

Figure 3.
"Menu" of knowledge-work skills in business and humanities

craft, iconography, rhetoric, close reading), with the ultimate goal of fostering a richer, more diverse, less self-centered sense of modern technical identity?

What and how did people "know," for instance, when cultures were dominated technically by orality, manuscripts, or print?

How, in other words, is the progress of knowledge constituted from broad, diverse, and always internally rifted negotiations with historical knowledges, such that every "bleeding edge" innovation creates in its shadow not just a dark hemisphere of obsolete peoples ("residual," "subcultural," "throwaway") consigned to the social margin, but also a repurposing and recirculation of the knowledges of the people of the margin (the true bleeding edge)?

My suggestion, to conclude, is that while the humanities must begin to teach the technical skills needed to flourish in today's society, such "competence" is most valuable, both to individuals and society, when wed to a full sense of the technical relationship between contemporary knowledge work and the history of human life. The humanities, a technical profession: "Can you see it?"

Notes

1. This essay originally appeared in Michael Hanrahan and Deborah L. Madsen, eds., *Teaching, Technology, Textuality: Approaches to New Media* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2006). It includes material that originally appeared in Alan Liu, *The Laws of Cool* (U of Chicago P, 2004). Reprinted by permission of Palgrave MacMillan and University of Chicago Press.

2. Robert B. Reich, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st-Century Capitalism* (1991; New York: Random House, 1992). The quote is the title of part 3 of Reich's book. Thomas A. Stewart, *Intellectual Capital: The New Wealth of Organizations* (New York: Doubleday, 1997).

3. I follow Alexander R. Galloway's *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization* (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 2004) in adopting an elastic usage of "protocol" in this essay. "Protocol" refers most precisely to the technical descriptions that standardize and regularize data formats and transmission rules allowing computers to "talk" with each other (often including both

low-level and high-level formatting rules). An important example is the TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol) that regulates the transmission of data packets across the Internet. Depending on context, however, I also include "standards" and "specifications," each with its own technical meaning, within a broader, more generic notion of "protocols." The purpose of such elasticity of definition is to allow "protocol" to scale up in generality from its technical meaning to what Galloway analyzes as its formal and social or political significance, as expressed, for example, in the notion of a negotiated "diplomatic protocol." (On the "diplomatic protocol," see Galloway, p. 7; on the formal and socio-political dimensions of "protocological" control, see Galloway, esp. chapters 2 and 3.)

4. One of the key witnesses, and/or causes, of such an outward propagation of the notion of "business" was the explosion of popularizing economic and business discourse in the 1980s and 1990s via the new genre of the "business bestseller" and the rising popularity of business journalism. (For a survey and analysis of this phenomenon, see John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, *The Witch Doctors: Making Sense of the Management Gurus* [New York: Random House, 1996].) As I describe in my *Laws of Cool: Knowledge Work and the Culture of Information* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2004) 77-78 and passim, this is the period when the values of "production culture" increasingly colonized "consumer culture" so that an ever larger proportion, both literally and symbolically, of private life began to simulate working life.

5. NGOs, the Association for Progressive Communications says, also must "balance sustainable business practice with their missions." "Managing Your NGO," December 21, 1999, June 10, 2000 <http://www.apc.org/english/ngos/business/index.htm>.

6. The very theories of decentered meaning adopted by the poststructuralist humanities, Arif Dirlik has argued, are uncannily close to those of postindustrial capitalism; see his *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997), especially the chapter "The Postmodernization of Production and Its Organization."

The "corporatization of the university" has been much discussed of late. Critics of the corporatization of the university have included: Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard UP, 1996); J. Hillis Miller, *Black Holes* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999); Paul Lauter, *Canons and Context* (New York: Oxford UP, 1991), especially 175-97; Christopher Newfield, *Ivy and Industry: Business and the Making of the American University, 1880-1980* (Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 2003); Wesley Shumar, *College for Sale: A Critique of the Commodification of Higher Education* (London: Falmer, 1997); Jeffrey Williams, "Brave New University," *College English* 61 (1999): 742-51; and Kevin Robins and Frank Webster, *Times of the Technoculture: From the Information Society to the Virtual Life* (London: Routledge, 1999) 168-218. For a more extensive bibliography of both scholarly and journalistic works dealing with the topic, see the "Academe and Business" section of the "Suggested Readings" on my *Palinurus* Web site*; Palinurus: The Academy and the Corporation (Teaching the Humanities in a Restructured World)*, March 1998, University of California, Santa Barbara, October 19, 2000 <http://palinurus.english.ucsb.edu>.

7. I quote the *OED*; see also the *American Heritage Dictionary*. Galloway refers to the etymology of "protocol" in his *Protocol*, 7.

8. Shoshana Zuboff, *In the Age of the Smart Machine: The Future of Work and Power* (New York: Basic, 1988), 9-10.

9. Stewart, *Intellectual Capital*, ix.

10. In recent years, back-end servers at universities have increasingly shifted to open source operating systems and software. However, it will be some time, if ever, before the front-end software of most academic users—that is, the programs on actual desktops and laptops—are non-proprietary. The situation is exaggerated among humanities users, whose ordinary technology work—for example, word processing, browsing, or presenting—occurs almost wholly within proprietary standalone or client programs more or less removed from the networking, distributed authorship, or programmer communities where open source software has made headway.

11. E-mail to the author from Michael Miller, June 11, 1998.

12. Martha S. Feldman and James G. March, "Information in Organizations as Signal and Symbol," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 26 (1981): 171-86. For further citations and discussion of the symbolic (or, as I analyze it more precisely, allegorical) approach to information, see my *Laws of Cool*, 153-55.

13. On the information technology productivity paradox, see Thomas K. Landauer, *The Trouble with Computers: Usefulness, Usability, and Productivity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1995); and Paul A. Strassmann, *Information Payoff: The Transformation of Work in the Electronic Age* (New York: Macmillan, 1985). For further sources on the productivity paradox as well as discussion of its symbolic or allegorical implications, see my *Laws of Cool*, pp. 152-54.

14. See, for example, the remarks of one of the businesspersons that Zuboff interviewed, p. 163: "We'll be able to see what's happening. Not only will we have numbers, but we'll be able to see the dynamics for yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Using the projection capability, you can see immediately the impact on earnings or the portfolio. We'll be able to see the business through the terminal." For a discussion of "vision" in Zuboff with further examples, see my *Laws of Cool*, 108-10.

15. See, for example, the multipage instance of the IBM "Can You See It?" campaign in *Business Week*, November 17, 2003: 107, 109, 111.

16 The term "allegory" may be preferred to Feldman and March's "symbolism" because we are dealing not with the iconic fusion of IT and knowledge work but instead with a contingent relation between IT as an emergent "mode of development" and knowledge work as our currently dominant "mode of production." (For the theory of mode of development, see Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* [Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1996-97] 1:16-18.) As in the influential de Manian analysis, allegory implies not deep fusion or integration but a shallow, congenital slipperiness or contingency like that of mask on face. (Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, 2d ed. rev. [Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983]; see also "Autobiography as De-Facement" and "Shelley Disfigured," in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* [New York: Columbia UP, 1984].) IT may "stick" to contemporary knowledge-work production, that is, but not with the necessitarian telos heard in the titles of such books of information-technology prophecy as Michael L. Dertouzos, *What Will Be: How the New World of Information Will Change Our Lives* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998) or Bill Gates (with Nathan Myhrvold and Peter Rinearson), *The Road Ahead* (New York: Viking 1995; rev. ed. 1996). Rather, the representational agency of IT makes it oxymoronically sticky-and-slippery. IT as allegory harbors the imagination not just of optimal knowledge for present conditions but potentially also of other kinds of interfaces or masks, other kinds of knowledge, other kinds of work, even other kinds of life. Such is the semi-autonomous "culture of information," as I have argued in my *Laws of Cool*, that results in the current mask of information technology as "cool." Cool people know that IT (and technology generally) serves the master of production; but they also imagine that it can represent, if only virtually, freedom—like using a workstation at the office, paradoxically, for the massively unproductive purpose of browsing cool web sites, playing online games, etc.

17. Since I originally wrote this essay, Cathy N. Davidson and David Theo Goldberg have published their important "A Manifesto for the Humanities in a Technological Age," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (*Chronicle Review* section) 50, no. 23 (13 February 2004): B7 (<http://thinkingwithshakespeare.org/Shakespeare/shakesTexts/shakesHumanities.htm>). Davidson and Goldberg make a point similar to mine here:

> Although humanists, for example, often engage in multiauthor, multidisciplinary projects (such as collaborative histories, anthologies, and encyclopedias) with the potential to change fields, universities and their faculties have been slow to conceive of new institutional structures and reward systems (tenure, promotion, etc.) for those who favor interdisciplinary or collaborative work. We believe that a new configuration in the humanities must be championed to ensure their centrality to all intellectual enterprises in the university and, more generally, to understanding the human condition and thereby improving it; and that those intellectual changes must be supported by new institutional structures and values.

Also relevant is Davidson and Goldberg's "institutional point":

> [N]ew humanities require new structures. As we think through the revolution in electronic communication, we need to create new models for researchers to work across disciplinary boundaries, making use of databases and resources that no one scholar, or department, can maintain. That requires planning at an institutional level. We need, too, to stop talking around the issue of the single-author monograph as the benchmark for excellence, and to confront what new kinds of collaboration mean for tenure review, accreditation, and more.

Davidson and Goldberg's manifesto coincides in general direction and several particular points with my view of the relation between the humanities and technology. The one significant issue upon which I differ, as will be clear below, concerns such observations as follows in Davidson and Goldberg:

> If all we want is expertise, industry is a far better place to learn science and technology than a university. But, in fact, industry, more than anyplace else, wants not only highly trained scientists; it wants scientists who can also understand applications, intellectual property, issues of equity, human awareness, perspective, and other forms of critical analysis and logical think-

> ing that are specifically the contribution of humanistic inquiry. The university that loses its foundation in the humanities loses, in effect, its most important asset in making the argument that "education" and not "vocational training" is worth the support of taxpayers, foundations, and private donors.

The basis of my own view of the humanities as a "technical profession" is that we are well past the era when such a clean, binary distinction can be made between the humanities and industry. (Indeed, I will argue for something like an education in the humanities *through* vocational training.) Even as the humanities have become increasingly technical, industry in its postindustrial personality as knowledge work has reciprocated by becoming increasingly humanistic. The contemporary difference of the humanities, then, cannot be understood unless we first acknowledge commonality in first principles with the new industry. That commonality sets the horizon within which the operative difference of the humanities at the present time can be discerned.

18. I cite the close-to-home example of the National Endowment for the Humanities-funded, collaborative research and peda-gogy project I started with several colleagues at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 1998 called *Transcriptions: Literary History and the Culture of Information*, which spun off an undergraduate specialization for English majors titled "Literature and the Culture of Information" (LCI) and works in league with several other IT-related departments or programs on the UCSB campus including Art, Media Arts and Technology, and Film Studies. See the project home page, <http://transcriptions.english.ucsb.edu>, and the LCI home page, <http://transcriptions.english.ucsb.edu/curriculum/lci/index.asp>.

19. The following section of this paper adapts and compresses an argument from my *Laws of Cool*, 307-8, 312.

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What Do I Really Think About the Corporate University?[1]

by Catharine R. Stimpson

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The very idea of the corporate university stirs people up. It enrages some but inspires others. For some, the corporate university is the devil's handiwork. For others, the corporate university is an angel's vision. These polarized attitudes are sincere, but only on one level are they a response to the modern university. More profoundly, they can also be a symptom of polarized attitudes toward contemporary corporations and capitalism. Like all polarities, these are symptoms of extreme, contrasting clusters of thought and feeling.

The contentious debate about the corporate university has ceased to be a struggle between polarities and become a concern of the center, both in the United States and abroad. This is one reason for the importance of Derek Bok's *Universities in the Marketplace*, a sober warning about the pervasive commercialization of higher education, seen in such areas as big-time sports, corporate funding of research, and e-learning, all leading to an erosion of academic values.[2] The messenger, a past president of Harvard, a widely respected figure, cannot be easily dismissed. This mainstream concern permeates all the disciplines, not just the ever wrought-up humanities.[3]

Every one of us who cares about higher education must engage in this debate, and every one of us who works in higher education must act on his or her beliefs about the corporate university. What do I really think about the corporate university? I am at once very skeptical and open-minded. I do not think any university will survive unless it is financially sound. I take it as axiomatic that financial soundness depends—in part—on complex partnerships with government and private enterprise, the adoption of practices of modern management, and revenue-generating enterprises. What, after all, is so necessarily awful about patenting a disease-fighting drug—unless one is unalterably, reflexively opposed to the drug industry? But what principles should frame these activities? I want to ask what the term "corporate university" might actually mean and end with an old-fashioned appeal to values that might shape a response to this mutating institution.

For me, the corporate university is a nonprofit institution that embodies at least one of the following three features: 1) an overweening commitment to modern management styles and rhetoric; 2) an overweening respect for corporate values and corporate associations, for example, limitless naming opportunities; and 3) an overweening solicitude for profit-making opportunities. The mere presence of corporate elements does not transmogrify a university into a corporate university. So defined, the corporate university differs from two other important

variations on the theme. One is the university within a corporation—such as Motorola. How admirable these institutions are depends upon their intrinsic educational integrity. How powerful these institutions are depends upon the willingness of the home corporation to fund and shelter them and their ability to offer credentials (degrees and certificates).

The second form is that of the university as for-profit corporation or a subsidy of a for-profit corporation. The words "University of Phoenix" leap unbidden to one's lips. These are, bluntly, up-to-date versions of older proprietary educational institutions. They succeed insofar as they serve the needs of a particular constituency. My fear is not that they are going to become the dominant model of the university in the United States. The tradition of the nonprofit university is too strong. Moreover, the bursting of the dot-com bubble also burst the edu-com bubble that was the most glimmering globe in the universe of edubiz.

No, my concern is about the role that for-profit universities might play internationally. One of the most vital developments in higher education outside of the United States is the growth of the private university. I think, for example, of the Central European University in Budapest. The private university can offer an alternative to a public system that is stifled by the state or that is corrupt or financially starved or all of the above. Many private universities, like the Central European University, are nonprofit institutions, but others are for-profit proprietary institutions. They can have the educationally bankrupt quality of the propriety medical schools that Abraham Flexner so rightly eviscerated in *Medical Education in the United States and Canada: A Report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching* (1910). I would very much like to see the equivalent of the Flexner Report, funded by a foundation, about private universities outside of the United States.

Of the texts that treat the idea of the modern corporate university, by far the most vivid is that hilarious classic of an academic satire *Moo* by Jane Smiley. It dramatizes the polar responses to the corporate university that are now being pulled into the middle. Its setting is a Midwest land-grant university, a child of the Morrill Act. Inexorably, given the political economy of its times, *Moo*'s university is becoming more corporate. Its privileged genres are less the scholarly monograph than the memo, the budget, the grant proposal, and the contract. The administration is expanding, with federal relations officers and smarmy but overbearing management experts, one of whom asserts, "An organization is a delicate thing. I like to think of it as a field of balanced dynamics."[4] State budgets are cut, then restored, then cut again—a yo-yo of allocating and rescinding. To supplement the state, the university is to woo and seduce the private sector. The blustery governor is the guardian of education as enlightened business. "Education is an investment," he declares. "The trouble is, they don't run it like an investment over there, with the students as customers, because that's what they are, you know. Now they run it like welfare, but I'm telling you, if they won't turn it around themselves, we've got to turn it around for them. This administration believes strongly in education."[5]

In the midst of intrigues and hijinks by students, faculty, administrators, alumni, taxpayers, politicians, and businessmen, two faculty members are locked in a particular struggle. One is Dr. Lionel Gift of the Economics Department, the highest paid professor on campus, who also rakes in lucrative contracts and consulting fees. The blinkered, narcissistic, and anal descendent of Adam Smith, he is a true believer in the "the divine market" and unfettered

competition.[6] His classes are filled with young men who "tended to be self-confident and to look forward to lives of wealth and power. It all agreed reassuringly with every myth and fairy tale."[7] On tenure committees, he is suspicious of the arts and humanities.

The other figure locked in struggle is Chairman X, the chair of Horticulture, a tenured radical who loves the ecologically correct garden he plants with his students around Old Meats and who thumbs through *The Nation* and *The Progressive*. Although Chairman X has gradually become a member of the consuming middle classes, he stills sits in his office "mulling over the triumph of consumerism, selfishness, technology, leisure, meat eating, localism, competitiveness, and appetite."[8] To him, Gift is "that slinking, fat-faced, low-life, bloodsucking lickpenny from the economics department striking here, striding there, ever smiling, ever calculating, ever buying low, ever selling high, everlastingly trampling rare glass frogs underfoot."[9]

Gift parodies one polar, polarizing response to the idea of the corporate university, that it is an angel's vision. I have met my share of Lionel Gifts: the head of the Horticulture Department in an agricultural college (known colloquially as Hort), who warned me, then a new dean, not to "mess with" Hort because it had rooted, fertile relations with the state's cut-flower industry, the third largest in the state. Then there was the dean who compulsively and perkily asked if we were following the "best practices of our industry," and then there was still another dean, this time of a business school, who informed the graduate school of arts and science that if it ever gained the capacity to do a spreadsheet, it would discover that it was a sinkhole of debt and that it should then close up shop and stop taking subsidies from the business school. The advocates of the corporate university can coolly, even chillingly, deploy the discourse of modern management.

However, the tone in which the positive idea of the corporate university is presented is less apt to be cold than commonsensical, and is typically framed as an appeal to both elites and ordinary citizens to see where the future and our future well-being lie. Deliberately or inadvertently, this rhetoric, utopian at its most self-deluding, propagandist at its most audacious, is congruent with one of the university's historical roles—to be socially useful. This rhetoric assures us the world economy is speeding away from the dirty, polluted lands of the industrial age to the clean, pure, microchipped shores of the information age. Listen, for example, to a 1987 report of the Science Council of Canada, an advisory group to the government: "Teaching and basic research are major roles of the university and must remain so. But as knowledge replaces raw materials as the primer of the world economy, the universities' part in creating wealth—too often understated—becomes crucially important. The intellectual resources of the university are needed to help revitalize mature industries and generate the product ideas needed to create new ones. Canada's future prosperity increasingly depends on designing effective ways to integrate the university and the market place."[10] Given the glowing promise of plenty of such a partnership, the government must help to broker it. Indeed, this promise of plenty is so glowing that a tone of common sense can give way to one of irrational hope and exuberance. And thus the lineaments of the dream of the corporate university become drawn in acrylic colors, a vision for the boys in Professor Gift's oversubscribed courses and another chapter in the annals of marketing.

The purveying of this dream is ubiquitous. Let me cite but one case study—from that sober if brightly illustrated monthly magazine *Scientific American*. In the September 2002 issue is a special advertising section, glossy enough to have been sponsored by the

fashion or tourism industry. Fifteen pages long, its title is "Italy: Technology and Innovation." Its purpose is to sell technology centers and research campuses in northern Italy. Their purpose is to provide "breakthrough innovation in . . . high-tech" that has both global and local applications. Universities, state and regional governments, and industry strive toward this goal seamlessly. Although the portraits of the older academics are reassuringly frumpy, the settings are either sleek or glamorous, and the younger workers movie-star handsome. The ad refers knowingly to the latest in academic trends. A hospital/scientific research complex in Pisa deploys "A Multidisciplinary Strategy for Medical Research and Patient Care." The Emilia-Romagna region promises "emerging clusters like the multimedia sector in Bologna," the site of one of the two oldest universities in the world. Bowing to English as the global language of research and commerce, The Politecnico di Milano Technical University (PdMTU) combines Italian and English in its very name. The compelling fantasy of the supplement is that the innovations of northern Italy will contribute—not just to the development of Pisa or Bologna or Milan—but to all of human progress. This is the globalization of both hype and hope. These innovations will stabilize the Leaning Tower of Pisa, lessen human labor through robotics, cure AIDS and cancer. Only a churl could question them.

Chairman X, of course, parodies such a churl. For him, the dream of the corporate university is a nightmare. Few critics of the corporate university reject money per se. They know that money can be spent for good as well as ill. They can think of the founding of the University of Frankfurt and its radical division, the Institute of Social Research. The nightmare is about being a financial have-not, about being under corporate control, and about rationalized, hierarchical, bottom-line management practices. Interestingly, Derek Bok begins his cautions and warnings from the center with a memory of his 1988 Harvard Commencement address. There he offered a "wholly fictitious set of dreams"[11] in which he, as president, makes a Faustian pact with a Satanic and very rich alumnus. Harvard goes on a spending spree, but unable to pay its debts, it becomes more and more commercial, ending with the proposal to set aside 100 places in every entering Harvard class to be auctioned off to the highest bidder.

The nightmares dramatize a long-standing suspicion of ties between American universities and commerce and business. In 1925, a member of the Massachusetts State Legislature charged that Harvard University "was in the meshes of financiers, that professors dared not speak up on behalf of real scholarship, that 'big business' is in the saddle, that business was exercising an alarming tyranny over the entire university, that freedom of speech was dead, and that big business was forcing scholars to say only things approved by J. P. Morgan."[12] Although one can take examples of an unrelenting critique of the corporate university from the political left, let me say again that the dislike of the idea of the corporate university is no longer limited to the political left, but emerges from a large body of academics from across the disciplines. They fear the loss of our academic soul and the trashing of an often ahistoricized, idealized, but foundational medieval tradition—that is, an idea of the university as an association, a company of masters and students, of teachers and learners. Exacerbating their dread is the lingering demoralization caused by the attacks on the universities during the so-called Culture Wars of the 1980s and 1990s. Like floodwaters, these wars have receded, but they have left damage and debris.

The most influential dramatization of the corporate university as nightmare is Bill Readings's *The University in Ruins*. I have asked myself why it has such currency among academics and concluded that its appeal lies in its subtlety; in the foreboding and apocalyptic rhetoric that gives voice to free-floating campus anxiety; in its romantic antiauthoritarianism; and in the accuracy with which it nails the more fatuous and manipulative features of the modern university.[13] Readings does perceive national differences among universities, but his imagination is archetypal. That is his strength. His University in Ruins is a posthistorical state of decay. The historical university, embodied in the University of Berlin, was to realize a national culture identity. Its hero was the "liberal, Reasoning subject." However, globalization, which he too easily conflates with Americanization, destroyed the nation-state, imposed "a rule of the cash-nexus in place of the notion of national identity as determinant of all aspects of investment in social life" and established the University of Excellence.[14] Readings skewers the claims that "We Are Excellent" that pervade university agitprop. For him, being excellent is self-justification by an institution that is an "autonomous bureaucratic corporation" where the administrator has replaced the faculty member as hero.[15] The administrator dominates a faculty that is a workforce. Students are consumers; knowledge is a product. All that resisters can do is to form a remnant community, a "dissensual community," which serves thought itself, calls the disciplines into question, and values teaching as an "interdiscursive" activity. However, Readings's archetypal imagination is also his fatal weakness. For globalization has not destroyed the nation-state. Nor do universities—in their complexity and hybridity—match his nightmare. He is less map than warning, an appeal to conscience.

In brief, the dream of the corporate university offers the integration of the university and the corporation—with government compliance—as a supreme value. The nightmare of the corporate university strips the corporation of value and prophesizes the death of any university that would seek its fatal embrace. Where, between the polarities of dream and nightmare, are the realities of our waking lives? Surely, a more grounded analysis of universities in modern industrial democracies links together several realities. To reduce and conflate them under the unflattering rubric of "the corporate university" is an ineffectual defensive mechanism for dealing with the trauma they may have caused and—and this is crucial to me—a dangerous deflection of our attention away from sobering and difficult truths. Perhaps the most important truth is the simplest. Universities must survive financially if they are to survive. There is no free lunch for universities. There never has been. They have always had an economic dimension, no matter how veiled, in the operations and the hopes of their masters, students, and benefactors. Universities do not live on manna from heaven. They never have. They do not do so now. As Edward Shils writes, "No modern university has ever lived entirely from the sale of its services. Universities have received subsidies from the church, the state, and private philanthropists as individuals and foundations. The fees paid by their students for tuition have only in a very few cases come close to covering the costs of conducting a university."[16] As Bok writes, commercial practices are "hardly a new phenomenon in American higher education. What is new is . . . their unprecedented size and scope."[17]

Many people in universities wake up every morning wondering how to cover these costs. I worry far less about the corporate university per se than about the general financing of education—how to

deal with increasing austerity, how to maintain access to higher education in a democratic society, how to keep a class system among institutions from growing more and more rigid. Some of the people who wake up every morning worrying about the budget are trustees; some are administrators; some are scientists looking for the next grants for their laboratories. The hostile cries about the corporate university that perhaps most rankle me are from tenured faculty who don't have to worry about paying the bills, for example, the ever-rising infrastructure costs of their computers and Internet hookups. Only a tiny handful of universities are wealthy enough—through endowments and investments—to be comparatively free of financial anxieties. The rest of us are versions of Mastercard advertisements, totting up the cost of this and that, figuring out revenue streams to wash away these costs—and all the while deeply believing that universities are intrinsically priceless.

The next reality is that the United States university, if it is to remain intellectually vibrant and financially hale, must avoid being ground to pieces between two great social forces. The first force, which I celebrate, is the immense growth of the modern university since the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century, old disciplines were reformed, new disciplines created, and new professional schools invented, a process that has continued with awesome and exhilarating consequences. Although the subject is beyond my scope at the moment, the history of business schools is a fascinating chapter in the relations among modern capitalism, modern corporations, and the university. After World War II, universities began to grow demographically—and dramatically. This growth, this expansiveness and inclusiveness, has been a historically important melding of the university and democratic values. In and of itself, growth has resulted in organizational complexity, and this has imposed managerial demands. One billion dollar budgets need more than an abacus to be handled. Demographic growth was not a capitalist plot, but the pervasive, valid recognition that higher education is a benefit for members of all economic classes, races, nations, and genders.

I am less cheerful about the second great force, which both reinforces and collides with the first. It is that set of socioeconomic relations that have developed since World War II. A nonfictional counterpart to *Moo*, their narrative is now being told by highly competent historians and social scientists who respect its complexity. As I read them, I feel ambivalent. On the one hand, I admire the modern university's ambition, resilience, realism, and innovative responses to the post-World War II moment. I have willingly devoted much of my life to this institution. On the other hand, I too fear—from time to time—that universities spent hundreds of years killing the Christian God that dominated them in order to install Mammon.

The narrative that is emerging about the United States—and which I will repeat very briefly—tells of a university system that became the best in the world after 1945. The number of international students it attracted—at least until post–9/11 visa policies and the rise of strong university systems elsewhere—is but one sign of its success. Some causes of this success were financial, including the federal government's decision to invest heavily in medicine and university-based science. Other causes were structural. As Hugh David Graham and Nancy Diamond argue, United States universities were decentralized and pluralistic.[18] This allowed a prominent role for private institutions. However, the academic market was also united by common organizational forms and professional standards. This permitted a healthy competition among campuses that bore family resemblanc-

es for students, faculty, and sources of funding.[19] Arguably, the 1960s were a Golden Age for American research universities, before the times then turned much grayer. Symbolized by the word "1968," campus revolts—cultural and political—created "popular distrust."[20] Even harder to manage were slowing enrollments and the inflation of the 1970s.

The subsequent financial difficulties led to what Roger L. Geiger has named "an age of privatization," "a process of change toward greater dependence on private actors and resources and less dependence on government."[21] The defining features of the age of privatization are "a shifting of the costs of higher education onto the shoulders of students and their parents; second, the privatization of academic research, both in its funding and its utilization; and third, a growing entrepreneurialism on the part of universities, both in external engagements and in internal management."[22] Moreover, as Masao Miyoshi has persuasively argued, privatization is also the result of the "ascendance of the so-called global economy." With the end of the Cold War, "financial and industrial capital no longer needs the confinement of the nation-state for its operation." It can go anywhere, and wherever it alights, it influences social and cultural institutions.[23] The public sphere is reorganized and integrated into the private sphere. And into technology/research centers in northern Italy.

Despite privatization, government has hardly disappeared. In the United States, the results of its actions have been, at best, mixed. Federal funding is still strong for biomedical research. Moreover, the Bayh-Dole revision of patent law in 1980 gave universities the right to patent discoveries made with federal grants, leading both to the technology transfers that at once help universities financially and result in greater commercialization. However, as Graham and Diamond point out, academic earmarking—a bipartisan excitement—is subverting the peer review process that ought to control the awarding of what grants there are.[24] Crucial federal agencies are spending less money on research. Overhead rates are declining. On the state level, with their budgets in trouble, governments have hoped both to damp down expenses and grow revenues. Graham and Diamond write, "Political and business leaders developed state-level versions of industrial policy for higher education, designed to implement both cost-cutting consolidations and strategic plans to involve universities in regional economic development."[25] Both federal and state governments have imposed regulations, the legal equivalent of unfunded mandates, that are expensive to implement, in part because institutions must expand their bureaucracies in order to do so.

As my advertisement supplement about Italy illustrates, and as Miyoshi's analysis proves, aspects of "the age of privatization" appear in countries outside of the United States. More specifically, partnerships among government, industry, and universities are an international phenomenon. In their study of universities in the United States, Canadian, Australia, and the United Kingdom, Sheila Slaughter and Larry L. Leslie investigate such partnerships as one important element of what they have influentially named "academic capitalism." Although Slaughter and Leslie are far more empirical, reliable, and hopeful than Bill Readings, "academic capitalism" resembles—to a degree—the idea of the University in Ruins. Between 1970 and 1995, Slaughter and Leslie write, academic labor changed radically because of the globalization of the post-World War II political economy. As state finances changed, universities had to seek more sources of funding and strip away layers of insulation from the market. Faculty members were asked to become more entrepreneurial. Simultaneously, corporations needed new products. Slaughter and

Leslie write, "The shift occurred because the corporate quest for new products converged with faculty and institutional searches for increased funding."[26] The market became a test of academic success.

The affects of the "age of privatization" and "academic capitalism" are real. However, I would suggest, their presence is not overweening enough to change universities into the corporate university that is the dream of some, the nightmare of others, and an anxious concern of still others. One reason, in the United States, is the combination of stability and flexibility that pluralism and decentralization offer. Similarly, even though sports are powerful and problematic on American campuses, most American campuses are more than sports arenas. Moreover, the dangers of privatization are no secret. Not only radical critics but more centrist participant/observers in higher education have been keenly aware of them. Higher education is full of self-scrutiny.

For example, Jonathan Cole, the sociologist who spent many years as provost of Columbia, incisively analyzes the problems with the partnerships among government, industry, and the research university. Industrial support is uncertain. It is difficult to balance "investments in high economic payoff research against sustained effort in more basic and intellectually challenging research." Some faculty members are tempted by large economic gains, but others have no hope of them, unless a monograph in the humanities suddenly becomes a HBO drama series. The training of graduate students can be corrupted by putting them to work on potentially profitable rather than intellectually vital projects. Indeed, if I may urgently add to Cole's warning, it is in graduate school that training in deep academic values must begin, a training that will provide some inoculation against the heady toxins of the corporate university. Finally, and so crucially, relations with both domestic and foreign businesses can undermine "a commitment to open science" because of business demands for proprietary rights to scientific discoveries. In brief, the commons of intellectual property may become a very private, gated community.[27] If and when this happens, I would add, the university has bought the rope with which to hang itself.

Armed with such knowledge, what are we to do? My intuition is that the financing of health care must be changed and that our great medical centers with their teaching hospitals must be more fully supported, but this is a subject that others, more expert than I, must address in detail. Another possibility: as Donald Kennedy, once the president of Stanford University and now the Editor-in-Chief of *Science*, recommends in his deontologically charged *Academic Duty*, we might reclaim a service ethic in every fundamental aspect of our work. My own suggestions are less systematic. The first is about rhetoric, a cry for a constant, optimistic statement and restatement of our core values: the commitment to learning, discovery, and creativity; to teaching; to freedom of thought and speech; and to faculty powers. Part of the success of Reaganesque American conservatism was its constant, optimistic statement and restatement of its core values. Despite their difficulties, follies, and errors, American universities should do no less. We need not abandon the language of universities either to the barbarisms and blandness of officialese or graffiti scrawled on ruined walls. If pressured, we must press back, offering hope but not hype in our work

My second suggestion is about money and financial aid. Students are now leaving college, graduate school, and professional schools with often intolerable levels of debt. We see this among our recent alumni and alumnae (if students do graduate), in our own families, and among our friends. As a matter of public policy, we must return financial aid to more

grants and fewer loans, a strategy that represents an investment in the next generation and in, to be blunt, the competitiveness of the American research university. If financial aid is not expanded, we will place students in our twenty-first-century version of Adam Smith's description of their plight under the decadent corporatism of the late eighteenth century: they simply will not be free. However, their chains will not be forged by lazy professors in educational monopolies, but by interest-accumulating loans students have taken out because educators convinced them they need higher education in order to succeed. Or, an alternative scenario that I have presented elsewhere. We will all be citizens of the Information Age and use information technology, but we will gradually build a four-tiered structure of higher education: handsome, residential higher education for the elite, with programs of financial aid for less affluent students who are to be brought into the elite; mass-produced, on-site higher education for many, often in proprietary institutions; exclusive e-education for students who are taught electronically, whose student center will be a chatroom; and finally, an inexpensive hybrid of mass-produced on-site and electronic classrooms.[28] The lower the tier, the more economic opportunities will exist to run a university as a profit center.

My final suggestion is about the curriculum. Some professional schools value the arts and sciences or the liberal arts. For example, literature is now taught in about 40% of American law schools. I teach such a course. On the basis of this experience, I call for even more faculty and curricular connections between the arts and sciences and the professional schools. Yes, the combination of the power of professional schools, of the belief that the liberal arts lead only to a stony and unprofitable career path, and of elements of privatization have notoriously joined to wreak havoc on the humanities and on the humanistic social sciences. As we all know, if the humanities go, there go our memories, our languages, our imagined worlds, our sense of social and cultural complexities, our gods and goddesses, our making of meanings—in brief, there we go. Unless universities attend to these great clusters of disciplines, their attenuation will only increase.[29]

However, I suggest that we need not go, in the sense of "go away," if we go in the sense of "go forth" and create "strategic alliances" with the professional schools. Easy to do? Not always, but not impossible. The links between medicine and anthropology are one credible sign of possibility. Necessary to do? Yes, and quickly. More genuine connections are there to be made, and if they are, a genuinely powerful ideal of the university as our best place of teaching and learning can be more widely asserted, and our academic values more profoundly shared.

What do I really think about the corporate university? It is here, but even larger monsters loom that must be defanged and nullified. Some of our weapons, in an age of Hummers and lasers, is to speak with hope about teaching and learning, to insist upon public investment in our students, and to recreate the liberal arts as a necessary node in our great systems of learning, a node connected to other nodes and radiating imagination and intelligence.

Notes

1. A version of this presentation was originally written for a conference at the Society of Humanities held at Cornell University on "The Idea of the University," October 18-19, 2002, and revised for presentation at the annual meeting of the Society for Criticism and Theory, University of Chicago, April 23, 2004.

2. Derek Bok, *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2003) 233.

3. A good overview of the concerns in the sciences is Richard Horton, "The Dawn of McScience," *New York Review of Books*, March 11, 2004: 7-9.

4. Jane Smiley, *Moo* (New York: Knopf, 1995) 379.

5. *Moo*, 112.

6. *Moo*, 174.

7. *Moo*, 141.

8. *Moo*, 154.

9. *Moo*, 278.

10. Quoted in Sheila Slaughter and Larry L. Leslie, *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1999) 53.

11. Bok, *Universities in the Marketplace*, vii.

12. Carter A. Daniel, *MBA: The First Century* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP, 1998) 109.

13. This foreboding and apocalyptic rhetoric is a feature of right-wing attacks on the university as well.

14. Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1996) 3.

15. Readings, *University in Ruins*, 35.

16. This was written before the University of Phoenix and other for-profit institutions, but the point remains for nonprofit institutions.

17. Bok, *Universities in the Marketplace*, 2.

18. Hugh Graham Davis and Nancy Diamond, *The Rise of American Research Universities: Elites and Challengers in the Postwar Era* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1997).

19. Graham and Diamond, *The Rise of American Research Universities*, 11-12.

20. Graham and Diamond, *The Rise of American Research Universities*, 85.

21. Geiger has published several books about the modern university. The text I am using in this paper is Roger L. Geiger, "The American University at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century: Signposts on the Path to Privatization," *Trends in American and German Higher Education*, ed. Robert Adams (Cambridge, MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences [with the support of the German-American Academic Council in collaboration with the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities], 2002) 33-84. The quote here is on p. 36.

22. Geiger, "The American University," 38.

23. Masao Miyoshi, "The University and the 'Global' Economy," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 99:4 (Fall 2000): 671.

24. Graham and Diamond, *The Rise of American Research Universities*, 215-20.

25. Graham and Diamond, *The Rise of American Research Universities*, 202.

26. Slaughter and Leslie, *Academic Capitalism*, 7.

27. I first cited Cole's warnings in Catharine R. Stimpson, "Myths of Transformation, Realities of Change," *PMLA* 115:5 (October 2000): 1146.

28. Catharine R. Stimpson, "The Culture Wars Continue," *Daedalus* 131:3 (Summer 2002): 39-40. My thanks to Terry Sullivan for her 1992 presidential address at the Association of Graduate Schools showing the dangers of accumulating debt for baccalaureate students.

29. The 2003 report of the Task Force on the Humanities of the Association of American Universities is a crucially important intervention, an overdue act of sustained attention to the humanities.

The Idea and Ideals of the University
Delbanco • Ehrenberg • Liu • Stimpson
American Council of Learned Societies
ACLS Occasional Paper No. 63
http://www.acls.org/op63.pdf

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Catharine R. Stimpson is dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Science and a University Professor at New York University. Dean Stimpson was director of the MacArthur Foundation Fellows Program from 1994 to 1997. She has also served as University Professor at Rutgers, where she was dean of the graduate school and vice provost for graduate education from 1986 to 1992.

Stimpson is a former chair of the New York Council for the Humanities and the National Council for Research on Women, and president of the Modern Language Association. She was president of the Association of Graduate Schools in 2000-01. Her many publications include the book *Where the Meanings Are: Feminism and Cultural Spaces* (1988) and the Library of America's *Gertrude Stein: Writings*, volume 1, 1903-1932, and volume 2, 1932-1946 (1998).

Stimpson was the first director of the Women's Center of Barnard College and of the Institute for Research on Women at Rutgers. The author of a novel, *Class Notes*, she is the editor of seven books and has published over 150 monographs, essays, stories, and reviews in the *Transatlantic Review*, *The Nation*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *Critical Inquiry*, *boundary 2*, and many other journals. She was the founding editor of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* from 1974 to 1980 for the University of Chicago Press.

Educated at Bryn Mawr College, Cambridge University, and Columbia University, Stimpson holds honorary degrees from several universities and colleges, including Upsala, Bates, Hamilton, and the University of Arizona, and has been awarded a Rockefeller Humanities Fellowship.