

THE UNIVERSITY:
A BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

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A bibliographical essay about “the university” could easily be as long as many of the books worthy of inclusion. By necessity then, what follows is only a selection of this immense literature. Indeed, entire categories of works have been omitted, to say nothing of specific titles. Although several of the books listed below include references to their European counterparts, for the most part this bibliography focuses on the university in the U.S.

The Essence of the University: Ideas and Institutions

There are numerous ways of defining the university, and all of them have been employed at some time or another. Unfortunately, many explorations of the university’s purpose are guided by competing paradigms of reform, and thus result in a series of dichotomies. For instance, some see the university as a safe haven for free inquiry and uninhibited investigation. For them the knowledge produced, stored, and disseminated by the university is its own end. Others argue that the university should not, indeed cannot, maintain such isolation from its environment. What good is knowledge, they ask, if it serves no useful purpose, or worse, if it undermines social order? Likewise, some argue that historically, the university was understood as a place where only the best and brightest students could pursue knowledge and enlightenment.

The opening up of higher education to more and more students, while noble, has changed the basic activity of the university. Others say that until the university becomes even more democratized, it will never fulfill its potential. Thus, the debate continues. What is the university, and what does it exist to do?

The books listed below may be described as explorations of the *essence* of the university. Several of the authors have spent the better part of their lives in a university setting as students, teachers, and administrators. They not only explore grand questions about the purposes of a university, they also draw on their own considerable experience to discuss ways the university could best accomplish that purpose. The classic statement of this topic is John Henry Newman's enormously influential *The Idea of a University*. Although the lectures from which this book was composed were occasioned by Newman's appointment as rector of a Catholic university in Dublin, the questions he addresses are larger than his particular historical situation. Originally published as separate pieces between 1852 and 1859, *The Idea of a University* has taken numerous forms since then. For a recent edition, coupled with bibliographical notes and discussions of Newman's work, see:

- Newman, John Henry. *The Idea of a University*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.

Newman argued that the university was first and foremost a place for the dissemination of universal knowledge. While many of his modern dialogue partners would reject his rather narrow take on "universal knowledge," his idea that the university exists primarily for the exploration and exhortation of knowledge is still widely embraced. As for what counts as knowledge, and how it can best be disseminated, there is still much to debate. For more recent formulations on the essence of the university, as both an idea and the institution that embodies it, see:

- Barzun, Jacques. *The American University: How It Runs, Where It Is Going*. New York: Harper Colophon, 1968.
- Bok, Derek. *Beyond the Ivory Tower: Social Responsibilities of the Modern University*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.

- Giamatti, A. Bartlett. *A Free and Ordered Space: The Real World of the University*. New York: Norton, 1976.
- Kerr, Clark. *The Uses of the University*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963.
- Lucas, Christopher. *Crisis in the Academy: Rethinking Higher Education in America*. New York: St. Martin's, 1996.
- McCluskey, Neil G, ed. *The Catholic University: A Modern Appraisal*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Idea of the University: A Reexamination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Rosovsky, Henry. *The University: An Owner's Manual*. New York: Norton, 1990.

The History of the University

Higher education in America predates America itself. And of course the history of the university hardly begins with the founding of America's first college. To concentrate on American higher education without acknowledging its predecessors in Europe, particularly Germany and England, is to miss out on a necessary part of the story. Accordingly, historians of the university in America often acknowledge the European roots of their topic. However, even within the United States, the history of the university is hardly uniform. Though not completely independent from one another, research universities and liberal arts colleges have emerged from different evolutionary paths. Accordingly, the following list contains explorations of both research and liberal arts institutions. Some of the books listed below explore specific features of the history of higher education, such as its changing relationship with religious institutions or the profound changes affecting higher education in the post-World War II era, while others are more general overviews of the emergence and development of higher education.

- Bender, Thomas, and Carl Shorske, eds. *American Academic Culture in Transformation: Fifty Years, Four Disciplines*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Brubacher, John S., and Willis Rudy. *Higher Education in Transition: A History of American Colleges and Universities*. 4th ed. New Brunswick: Transaction, 1997.

- Geiger, Roger L. *To Advance Knowledge: The Growth of American Research Universities, 1900-1940*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Geiger, Roger L. *Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Research Universities Since World War II*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Graham, Hugh Davis, and Nancy Diamond. *The Rise of American Research Universities: Elites and Challengers in the Postwar Era*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- Marsden, George. *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Riesman, David. *On Higher Education: The Academic Enterprise in an Era of Rising Student Consumerism*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980.
- Reuben, Julie. *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalization of Morality*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Schmidt, George P. *The Liberal Arts College: A Chapter in American Cultural History*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1957.
- Veysey, Laurence. *The Emergence of the American University*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965.

The Vision of Liberal Education

Anyone who attends more than one commencement ceremony will notice that there are at least two different agendas in mind for educational institutions. When political and business leaders comment on education, they often speak of the need for more technical training. College graduates, they reason, are about to enter a labor force that is driven by technology and specialization, and thus a good education is one that prepares students to participate in that labor force. However, when educators, particularly those in the humanities or social sciences, reflect on education, they stress altogether different concerns. Where in the modern world, they ask, does one ponder the questions of human experience if not in the university? To be sure, both sides have valid points. Most college graduates do enter the workforce after graduation. Accordingly, one would hope that the university would at least take

part in the preparation of students for their careers. But the university is also a place where students wrestle with the questions of human existence: Who am I? What is my place in the world? These are the questions of liberal education.

Defining “liberal education” is more of a challenge than one might think. Historically it was connected to the seven liberal arts of the Middle Ages: astronomy, geometry, grammar, logic, mathematics, music, and rhetoric. Today a liberal education might omit any of these disciplines and substitute others. Whatever the specifics of liberal education might be, there is a broad consensus that it is concerned with the pursuit of truth. But what constitutes “truth” has varied with time and place. From its origin in the Greek philosophical tradition, which assumes truth is universal, all the way through to the postmodern era, which questions the very possibility of truth, the project of liberal education has undergone many challenges and revisions. What follows are some of the classical contributions to, as well as some more recent statements of, the vision of liberal education.

- Aronowitz, Stanley. *The Knowledge Factory: Dismantling the Corporate University and Creating True Higher Learning*. Boston: Beacon, 2000.
- Bromwich, David. *Politics By Other Means: Higher Education and Group Thinking*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Crimmell, Henry. *The Liberal Arts College and the Ideal of Liberal Education: The Case for Radical Reform*. New York: University Press of America, 1993.
- Farnham, Nicholas, and Adam Yarmolinsky, eds. *Rethinking Liberal Education*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Gless, Darryl, and Barbara Herrnstein Smith, eds. *The Politics of Liberal Education*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1992.
- Hancock, Ralph, ed. *America, the West, and Liberal Education*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999.
- Hutchins, Robert Maynard. *The Higher Learning in America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936.
- Kernan, Alvin. *In Plato's Cave*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.
- Kimball, Bruce. *Orators and Philosophers*. New York: College Entrance Examination Boards, 1995.

- Nussbaum, Martha. *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Plato. *The Republic of Plato*. 2nd ed. Trans. Allan Bloom. New York: Basic, 1991.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Emile*. Ed. Allan Bloom. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991.
- Sassower, Raphael. *A Sanctuary of Their Own: Intellectual Refugees in the Academy*. Critical Perspectives Series. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000.
- Wagner, David, ed. *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.

Criticisms of the Modern University

One can hardly consult the pages of any opinion journal without reading that higher education is in crisis. Indeed, diagnosing the “ills” of the modern university has become, as Jaroslav Pelikan put it, an indoor sport. Focusing on everything from the role of political correctness on campus to the growing linkages between universities and corporate America, numerous scholars, social critics, and educators have bemoaned the current state of higher education. But we would be remiss to think that this criticism is new. Earlier observers of American education were also critical of what they saw; Upton Sinclair’s *The Goose Step* and its follow-up *The Goslings* are a case in point.

Some of the books listed below are insider accounts of modern university life. Others are the work of journalists or disaffected scholars no longer working in a university setting. Some explore specific aspects of modern university life, such as the perceived confusion in the humanities, while others are more sweeping indictments of the dysfunction that seems to have settled over academia. Although several of the most famous critiques were part of a culturally conservative attempt to recover what they perceived as lost ground, it would be a mistake to think that all university critics come from the ideological right. Whether the charge is that free inquiry has been suppressed by a narrow political orthodoxy, or that the commodification of learning and the influence

of big business has corrupted higher education, all the critics agree that academic life, particularly in America, isn't what it should be.

- Anderson, Martin. *Imposters in the Temple: A Blueprint for Improving Higher Education in America*. Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1996.
- Bloom, Allan. *The Closing of the American Mind*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987.
- D'Souza, Dinesh. *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus*. New York: Free, 1991.
- Ellis, John. *Literature Lost: Social Agendas and the Corruption of the Humanities*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.
- Kimball, Roger. *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Our Higher Education*. New York: Harper & Row, 1990.
- Kors, Alan C., and Harvey A. Silvergate. *The Shadow University: The Betrayal of Liberty on America's Campuses*. New York: Free, 1998.
- Roche, George. *The Fall of the Ivory Tower: Government Funding, Corruption, and the Bankrupting of American Higher Education*. Washington, DC: Regnery, 1994.
- Smith, Paige. *Killing the Spirit: Higher Education in America*. New York: Viking, 1990.
- Sykes, Charles. *Profscam: Professors and the Demise of Higher Education*. Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway, 1988.
- Veblen, Thorstein. *The Higher Learning in America: A Memorandum on the Conduct of Universities by Business Men*. American Century Series. 1917; Sagamore: New York, 1957.
- Wilshire, Bruce. *The Moral Collapse of the University: Professionalism, Purity, and Alienation*. SUNY Series in Philosophy of Education. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.

The Critics Answered

This literature of criticism has not gone unnoticed or unchallenged. In fact, one of the characteristics of the recent books listed in other sections of this essay is their generally positive outlook about the potential, if not the performance, of the university. Advocates for higher education have emerged from numerous quarters to challenge every aspect of the critical literature. Some of the books listed below are spe-

cific responses to, or explorations of, indictments made by the university's critics. Others seek to look beyond the specific issues to see how the conflict itself could be a sign of vitality for modern university life.

- Bérubé, Michael, and Cary Nelson, eds. *Higher Education Under Fire: Politics, Economics, and the Crisis of the Humanities*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Buckley, William K., and James Seaton, eds. *Beyond Cheering and Bashing: New Perspectives on the Closing of the American Mind*. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1992.
- Graff, Gerald. *Beyond the Culture Wars: How Teaching the Conflicts Can Revitalize American Education*. New York: Norton, 1992.
- Levine, Lawrence W. *The Opening of the American Mind*. Boston: Beacon, 1996.
- Lowe, Eugene Y, ed. *Promise and Dilemma: Perspectives on Racial Diversity and Higher Education*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Nelson, Cary. *Manifesto of a Tenured Radical*. New York: New York University Press, 1997.
- Solomon, Robert and Jon Solomon. *Up the University: Re-Creating Higher Education in America*. Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1993.

The Academic Vocation and Intellectual Life

In *Elmer Gantry*, Sinclair Lewis described the academic vocation as a succession of leisurely afternoon naps interrupted by the occasional reading of third-hand opinions. No doubt, many scholars have encountered similar attitudes from people outside the academy even today. To the uninitiated, teaching on the college level can seem removed from the pressure and stress of the “real world.” But as any young professor approaching his or her tenure review can tell you, the academic life is anything but leisurely. Still, there is a general confusion about what it is that professors do. And that confusion is felt even by those in the profession. The books listed below are explorations of the academic life. Some address the ever precarious balance between teaching and research. Others explore topics such as academic freedom or professional responsibility to students and the community. Still others explore

some of the ethical dilemmas faced by modern professors, such as funding from corporate sponsors or intellectual property rights. One of the themes running through this literature is that the academic vocation is a noble endeavor—some even speak of it as a calling. Of course, not every professional intellectual has ended up in the academy. There is a long and celebrated tradition of intellectual life outside the academy that nevertheless has been in dialogue with university and college life. For explorations of the role of intellectual life both in and out of the university, see:

- Axtell, James. *The Pleasures of Academe: A Celebration and Defense of Higher Education*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.
- Barzun, Jacques. *Teacher in America*. New York: Doubleday, 1959.
- Bender, Thomas. *Intellect and Public Life: Essays on the Social History of Academic Intellectuals in the United States*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.
- Bowie, Norman. *University-Business Partnerships: An Assessment*. Issues in Academic Ethics. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994.
- Cahn, Steven M, ed. *Morality, Responsibility, and the University: Studies in Academic Ethics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990.
- Coser, Lewis. *Men Of Ideas: A Sociologist's View*. New York: Free, 1965.
- Damrosch, David. *We Scholars: Changing the Culture of the University*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Jacoby, Russell. *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe*. New York: Basic, 1982.
- Markie, Peter. *A Professor's Duties: Ethical Issues in College Teaching*. Issues in Academic Ethics. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994.
- Menand, Louis, ed. *The Future of Academic Freedom*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Palmer, Stuart. *The Universities Today: Scholarship, Self-Interest, and Politics*. New York: University Press of America, 1998.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *Scholarship and Its Survival: Questions on the Idea of Graduate Education*. Princeton: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1983.
- Posnock, Ross. *Color and Culture: Black Writers and the Making of the Modern Intellectual*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Shils, Edward. *The Academic Ethic*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983.