# American Academic Culture in Transformation

## FIFTY YEARS, FOUR DISCIPLINES

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# Introduction

The humanities and social sciences in the United States have lately been shaken by debates about both method and mission. Questions have been raised about the nature and definition of American academic disciplines, the role of ideology and political commitment in scholarship, the possibility of objectivity, the status of theory, and the place of knowledge in the larger culture and polity.

Such questioning is not unique to the United States, nor is it unprecedented in our history. Struggling as they have in the past with the cultural politics of their complex and multicultural society, Americans are again presenting urgent societal claims to the educational and scholarly community. Social demand does not, however, adequately explain the current discussion. There is a deeper historical background to these debates that bears examination and deserves attention in its own right. The controversies so much discussed in the past decade grow out of this history, but they do not constitute the whole of its significance. The achievement of new levels of disciplinary professionalism over the course of a half century has generated its own needs and produced its own internal tensions as well as changed relations to the larger public realm. To achieve greater self-awareness of the present circumstance of American academic culture, we need a fuller and clearer sense of the dynamics, phasing, and patterns of its change.

There has been little inquiry into this history, for reasons that are easy to grasp. The world of scholarship is generally oriented toward the production of fresh perspectives and the articulation of new disciplinary knowledge. Hence neither the individual

scholar nor the academy as a whole is inclined to pause from its normal pursuits to take itself as its subject and examine its own transformations and condition. This study, launched by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, presents the yield of a collective attempt at such an examination.

It is a vast topic. Our strategy for addressing it has relied upon a combination of case study method, comparative analysis, and contextualization. We begin by examining selected disciplines separately. We asked scholars of different generations whose own work contributed to the transformation of their fields to write as participants in and witnesses of those changes. In order to identify larger, transdisciplinary patterns, and contextual explanations of changes, we supplemented the internal and self-conscious analysis by discipline with an external, more distanced, comparative one.

This strategy is reflected in the structure of the volume: After a broad historical sketch of the general social, political, and intellectual context of the postwar university in Part I, Part II presents separate essays on individual disciplines, at least two on each. As one moves from one discipline to the next, from one generation to another, one begins to recognize the phasing of change, patterns of persistence and innovation, and evidence of both commonality and difference.

Part III is organized synchronically to make these larger features visible. Utilizing the internal disciplinary narratives, its authors seek patterns across the disciplines in temporal phases, situating disciplinary change in broader cultural and political developments. These synoptic essays also explore the wider causes and implications of academic change. We hope that this combination of firsthand testimony and critical commentary will encourage readers to reach beyond their natural interest in their own or closely associated disciplines to reflect on the relation of disciplinary change to the development of the larger academic enterprise and its societal context.

The inquiry has involved a number of scholars in two formal conferences, one held at the house of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the other at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. The conferences



included participants from a broad array of humanistic and social scientific disciplines, representing several generations, diverse methods, and a range of professional styles.[1]

After the first meeting, we determined that the best way to proceed was to narrow the focus to four disciplines as the foundation of the inquiry; English, philosophy, economics, and political science were selected. Our choices identified what we called pluralized disciplines, which we contrasted with more tightly unified ones. In both the humanities and the social sciences, we selected one discipline with a "strong ego" and inner consensus, and another, more eclectic, even fractured discipline, even one rethinking its foundations. We were also concerned to include disciplines with different relations to a public beyond the academy, from those aspiring to address a general public to those with sharply defined and particular audiences. For the humanities, philosophy represented an example of a firmly bounded and well-policed discipline, marked after 1950 by high self-confidence and a rather limited public face. We understood English to be more pluralistic, inclusive, contested, increasingly seeking to assume a general public role. In a rough sense, economics and political science represent a similar contrast within the domain of the social sciences.

Any such choice is, of course, necessarily limiting, always establishing a particular perspective that at once masks and reveals. Our choices—as well as the half century span of our inquiry—give less prominence than one might expect to many issues that have been widely contested during the past decade. Two of the disciplines we have studied, economics and philosophy, have been among the least affected by the challenges posed by new and often politically driven fields such as feminism, the study of race, or

[1]These participants, some of whom were at both conferences, were: M. H. Abrams, Svetlana Alpers, Annette Baier, Michael Baxandall, Thomas Bender, Marhsall Cohen, Mark Edmundson, Catherine Gallagher, Stephen Graubard, Russell Hardin, David A. Hollinger, Gerald Holton, Barbara Johnson, Mark Johnston, Stanley Katz, Ira Katznelson, Robin D. G. Kelley, David M. Kreps, Charles E. Lindblom, Alexander Nehamas, Joel Orlen, Hilary Putnam, Richard Rorty, José David Saldívar, Carl E. Schorske, Daniel Selden, Philip Selznick, Elaine C. Showalter, Neil Smelser, Rogers M. Smith, Robert M. Solow, Margaret Somers, Catharine Stimpson, George W. Stocking, Jr., Emily D. T. Vermeule, and Michael Woodford.

multiculturalism. On the one hand, this disciplinary silence suggests that common perceptions of the ubiquity of discussions of race, gender, and ethnicity in academe are exaggerated. On the other hand, their silence prompts one to ask why these disciplines have been so oblivious to such pressing cultural concerns.

Despite our awareness of the importance of the natural sciences both in shaping the internal culture of the academy and in establishing the terms of the academy's relation to the larger society and polity, we have not included them here. We decided that extending our inquiry into the natural sciences would so expand the scale of the project as to make it unmanageable. Indeed, we understand this project as an initial foray that will, we hope, encourage further inquiry that may include the natural sciences and other fields not pursued here.

Once the disciplines were selected, a small planning committee was created that included, besides the two editors, specialists in each of the four fields: Catharine Gallagher (English), Alexander Nehamas (philosophy), Michael Woodford (economics), and Ira Katznelson (political science). These disciplinary specialists wrote brief working papers outlining the phasing and patterns of change in their fields. By revealing differences among the disciplines as well as their commonalities of intellectual orientation and the chronologies of change across them, the papers enabled us to develop our plan of work.

The most important cross-disciplinary illumination was the identification of a virtual refounding of all four disciplines in the 1940s and 1950s. The refounding was a complex process, striking for the simultaneity with which a commonality of intellectual style appeared across the disciplines. This redefinition of the human sciences responded in part to the wish to escape the ideological legacy of the 1930s, in part to the new pressures of the Cold War. Yet the changes were also spurred by the appeal of newly available theories and techniques that could satisfy professional aspirations to rigor. This postwar reconstruction and its salience in the fifties in all four disciplines became the baseline for the study.

Following the disciplines from this moment of refounding impressed upon us the further periodization for the project. Between roughly 1960 and 1975, all disciplines were confronted by developments in the larger culture and society, but they responded in different ways. Each had to struggle with the ideals, accomplishments, and limitations of the postwar academic agenda, with its devotion to the model of science, its commitment to objectivity, its confidence in the power of formal analysis, and its dislike and distrust of ideology or any other contamination of disciplinary autonomy and purity. The current condition of academic culture represents the different resolutions of the challenges of that period.



The hold of the discipline over the academic intellect is powerful, as many of the essays in Part II show. Largely self-enclosed, the essays reveal the internal sequential development in a series of scholarly foci. Given their disciplinary commitments, many of the practitioners did not find it congenial to approach the development of their disciplines in a contextual fashion. They largely ignored the possibility of external sources of disciplinary change, whether by way of ideas from other fields or through the influence of broader political, cultural, or social phenomena. This unanticipated pattern in the narratives provides important evidence of the capacity of the disciplines and their protocols to channel the imagination of even the most vigorous academic mind. The notion of academic culture as a whole is surely not entirely imaginary, but it is clear from our study that it has only a limited hold on the academic consciousness of our time.

The project, as developed on the basis of the working papers by Gallagher, Katznelson, Nehamas, and Woodford as well as with guidance from the conventional chronology of postwar American intellectual history, assumed a three-period phasing of academic change: the period of the postwar foundation, the challenges of the sixties, and the present. The structure of the project based upon this understanding of the phases of historical development led us to seek contributors who had come of age professionally during these periods. We expected distinctively generational perspectives, which were to be the basis for historical commentary emphasizing synchronic analysis across the disciplines within the larger context. In fact, the participants, regardless of generation, tend to play down or even omit entirely the middle phase, the 1960s, as an autonomous period of intellectual production. The personal testimonies in Part II show a strikingly high level of agreement on a two-phase rather than a three-phase

model of historical change. By contrast, the historians writing in Part III, more disposed to external forms of explanation of intellectual life, insist upon the separate importance of the 1960s, not so much as a moment of academic revolution but rather as a trigger of changes that would work through the disciplines in different ways into our own historical moment.

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This book largely defines itself in the movement between two modes of inquiry, one emphasizing the practitioner's perspective, which is discipline-focused, the other seeking to map the larger configurations of academic culture across several disciplines and to analyze these in a historical context. What have been the yields of this dual approach to the transformation of academic culture? How much has the strategy illuminated, how much distorted or concealed from view? The reader will form his own answer to these connected questions, but they deserve brief consideration here.

The disciplinary witnesses were chosen on the basis of their representation of the most influential and innovative tendencies of their fields in a given phase of development. This principle of selection obviously privileged the professional mainstream. It resulted inevitably in a simplified picture of the pluralistic reality prevailing in the more divided disciplines, such as political science and English, and in a neglect of the scholarship of the marginalized within the most united disciplines, economics and philosophy. Yet the focus on dominant scholarly tendencies also produced a positive result. It revealed with unexpected clarity first the commonalities, then the divergencies among the disciplines as they responded to historical change. It showed how the first period under review, 1945–1960, witnessed the establishment of the primacy of analytic method and a quest for epistemological certainty not only within each discipline but across the whole spectrum. The strongly positivistic, neo-Lockean intellectual foundations given to all four disciplines in the 1950s—even the New Criticism in English had some of its roots in Lockean language theory—set the terms for subsequent developments in the disciplines. Against this common background in the early Cold



War era, the difference in the responses of the disciplines to the crises of the sixties and seventies stands out in sharp relief. At one end of the spectrum was English, where involvement of the scholars with the moral claims of ethnic and gender minorities occasioned a virtual revolution in the definition of the discipline's aims, scope, and methods. Not only did the formal analytic of the New Criticism come tumbling down, but the very legitimacy of literary art as the center of their profession was assailed by younger literary scholars seeking to establish cultural studies as a metadiscipline. At the other end of the spectrum, economics maintained its method-centered distance from the social problems and issues that, in the 1930s and 1940s, had been important to its mission. Cannot English thus be seen to have assumed in altered form the role of social criticism that economics had abandoned? This shift in roles, if such it was, points beyond the academy to America's two major domestic crises in our century, and the deep differences between them. In the 1930s, the national crisis was economic. Depression vaulted economics and the social sciences to center stage, to lead the academy's response to society's ills and needs. In the 1960s, with capitalism returned to strength and ethnic and gender questions challenging the status quo in fundamental ways, culture replaced the economy as the crisis area. Therewith the humanistic disciplines—especially English and history—became the principal carriers of the academy's social-critical function.

The upheavals of the 1960s that projected cultural and minority issues into the center of American public life fostered a virtual intellectual revolution in the discipline of English. In philosophy and political behavioralism, it evoked a response less drastic, that of reform. Practitioners in both the latter fields, without abandoning the scientific canons of the 1950s, expanded their applications to accommodate issues previously excluded or ignored. The intra-disciplinary narratives in this volume as well as Katznelson's comparative synchronic analysis of the 1960s record these adaptations of the astringent scientific orthodoxies of the fifties to address new societal demands for community and the recognition of minority cultures. Here the developing intellectual substance of the disciplines is shown in a direct relationship with historical change.

In the process of adaptation to new social claims, more flexible inter-disciplinary ties were formed. In political science, economic thinking informed rational choice theory, while analytic philosophy fortified political value theory. Analytic philosophers after 1970 also reached out to address ethical and socio-political questions previously regarded by the strictest of their founding fathers as not properly philosophical. The economists, as their research and teaching expanded into management science, law, and other practical professions, drew once again upon descriptive disciplines such as sociology and anthropology, which mainstream theorists had abandoned as incompatible with their scientific standards. But these excursions did not affect the theoretical and methodological identity established for economics in the early postwar years, when the aspirations of its most creative scholars to scientific rigor narrowed its social scope. The academic intellectuals who espoused the American civil rights and cultural identity politics of the sixties offered no serious critique of economics as a discipline any more than they challenged capitalism as a system, however much they sought to open its opportunities more widely. More than any other field here studied, economics, impervious to the winds of social change, maintained the intellectual foundations established in the early postwar years.

However justified it has proven to be in mapping changes where scholarly identity is largely defined and empowered, the use of the dominant tone-setters in the individual disciplines as the primary vehicle of our account has also resulted in obscuring or neglecting some significant elements in academic transformation. Three of these deserve particular mention: the marginalization of subdisciplines; the changing nature and roles of inter-disciplinarity; and the influence of European ideas.

Wherever the postwar redefinition of an academic field produced the virtual hegemony of a single school of thought, as in philosophy and economics, certain questions and/or approaches to the discipline were soon delegitimized or sidelined. Some subfields were absorbed into other disciplines: the history of economic thought and discarded parts of philosophy found room in history departments; problems of poverty and class, in sociology departments. The host disciplines, however, adapted the immigrant intellectual substances to their own perspectives. In the process, their vital relation to their mother-disciplines was lost.



In the case of pluralized disciplines such as political science and English, our stress on the most salient tendency in the field in each period has resulted in serious underrepresentation of scholarly subgroups of persistent vitality. Thus in politics departments, political theory grounded in classical philosophy not only had a continuous life during the ascendancy of behavioralism, but acquired a new influence in the aftermath of the upheavals of the sixties, when the issues of community and political culture gained an urgency that behavioral science was ill-suited to deal with. In English, where scholarly variety has long been characteristic, the concentration on the problems of the culture wars in this study has, despite our best intentions, produced a reductionist picture of a field whose multiplicity of outlooks has been if anything increased by its crisis of identity.

A second consequence of the project's organization by individual discipline has been an insufficient attention to the role of interdisciplinary formations in our academic culture. Their study would have had great value in tracing the changing relations between different parts of the academy and the sectors of the society their work serves, and in illuminating the emergence of new transdisciplinary scholarly communities that may redefine the academy's intellectual and institutional structures.

While some subject-centered fields were inter-disciplinary by long tradition—classics or oriental studies, for example—two new kinds of programs rose to prominence in the mid-century. In the 1950s, after Sputnik, area studies of foreign societies were established all over the country. Designed to produce a knowledgeable group of scholars and specialists who would increase America's capabilities as a world power, they were generously funded by the government and the Ford Foundation. Social scientists and historians played a leading role in these programs. Such programs have offered a continuing function for scholarly methods marginalized in their disciplines of origin.

American studies, autochthonously generated by the universities, was developed largely by humanists. Literary scholars committed to strengthening the relationship of their discipline to his-

tory when the New Criticism was decontextualizing it played a major role. In contrast to the foreign area programs, American studies, whose origins lay in the New Deal years, drew faculty and students of a socially critical persuasion, in contrast to the more policy-oriented foreign area programs where "experts" were educated. In this respect, both types of programs contributed to the increasing polarization of the social sciences and the humanities that has marked the last half century.

The foreign area and American studies programs have been not so much inter-disciplinary as multidisciplinary. Subject-matter centered, they brought together several disciplines to shed their particular lights on a common object. While they did not fuse methods or create a new metadiscipline, they provided an institutional frame that served as both model and spawning ground for post-sixties cultural identity programs such as women's studies and black studies. This was particularly true of American studies. The special nature of cultural identity problems also stimulated and spurred theoretical approaches that challenged disciplinary identity definitions.

As new common analytic, theoretical, and ideological outlooks penetrated a wide variety of disciplines in the 1980s, metadisciplinarity began to succeed multidisciplinarity. In this study, the essays on English are attentive to this development. The choice of disciplines represented, however, does not do justice to the pervasiveness of metadisciplinary intellectual tendencies in many fields that may yet produce some institutional reorganization of academic culture. David Hollinger's final essay surveys the evidences of the recent search for a transdisciplinary community of discourse. In strongest contrast to the autonomistic thrust that characterized the disciplines in the 1950s, their current porosity suggests that any future study of academic culture would profit from a greater concentration on substantive intellectual trends that work their changes across and despite disciplinary boundaries, and that may yet breed new taxonomies of learning.

Our disciplinary narratives yielded a new awareness of the changing affiliations of American scholarship with European intellectual life. In refounding its academic culture in the early postwar years, as we have noted above, America in its quest to secure both liberalism and intellectual certainty returned to its Anglo-



Saxon philosophical roots. Of continental thought, Austrian philosophical and economic ideas, themselves deriving from English empirical rationalism, were fruitfully absorbed into their respective American fields. French and German influences, however, stifled by Nazism, cut off by the War, and little relevant to the quest for a stable liberal capitalist order at home in the postwar decade, lost their important traditional place in American social science and philosophy. (Max Weber and Tocqueville were notable exceptions.)

When it resumed in the 1950s, the postwar flow of ideas across the Atlantic reversed its direction, switching from west to east as American scholarship in many fields acquired a primacy in Europe that was the intellectual accompaniment of the nation's world power. When issues of culture and community moved to the center of the American stage, however, new continental influences entered American academic culture. The liberal Anglo-Saxon thought of the fifties, oriented toward science, was ill-suited to deal with the problems of community, identity, and affective values that erupted in the sixties and that have been with us ever since. In the ever-widening area of cultural studies, continental philosophic and critical thinking has become a major factor in recasting the function and substance of scholarship. The development of transdisciplinary intellectual discourse and the shifting impact of European ideas of different kinds and provenance have thus become closely intertwined. Both are among the many problems touched upon but not resolved in this study. For, whatever its accomplishments in clarifying the dimensions of the broad but under-cultivated field of academic culture, our inquiry is offered as a beginning only, seeking to draw readers into the issues raised and to prompt further investigation and reflection.

*Thomas Bender*

# Politics, Intellect, and the American University, 1945–1995

By most measures, the half century following World War II has been the "golden age" of the American university.[1] The period was haunted by the bomb, McCarthyism undermined academic freedom, and the Cold War distorted intellectual agendas. Other qualifiers could be named. Yet one cannot but be impressed. The American research university simultaneously adapted and actively furthered a dramatic expansion and significant diversification of its student body and faculty while its research and graduate training capacity was greatly strengthened. It was a remarkable transformation, with both quantity and quality rising. Recognizing new constituencies and opportunities for expansion, universities sought and gained both private and public support. On the government side alone, there was a massive reallocation of resources; between 1950 and 1970 governmental expenditures for higher education rose from $2.2 billion to $23.4 billion, and to $31 billion in 1991.[2]

There was a pattern of leveling up: by 1970 or so, research and training was no longer dominated by a select few institutions—Chicago and the Ivies. Distinction was as likely to be found in major public institutions (Berkeley, Ann Arbor, Madison) as private ones, though recent developments, since about 1985, threaten to reestablish this divide as major private institutions have gained resources relative to public ones.[3] All areas of the country became home to major research institutions, and the number of institu-

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tions with stature as major research and graduate training campuses increased from about twenty to more than 125 in the half century.[4] But if there has been some leveling at the top among the institutions examined in this inquiry, considerable differentiation still marks the 3,600 institutions of higher education in the United States, where a half million faculty teach. Over the past half century this decentralized system has become nationalized even while remaining differentiated, making difference feel more hierarchical now than in 1940 when institutions, including Harvard, Berkeley, and Princeton, were more local, even parochial in outlook.[5]

Before World War I, many of the most ambitious and talented American scientists and scholars had sought advanced training abroad. During the interwar years, however, the American university became self-sufficient, and the academic leaders of the postwar era were mostly American trained, though in some fields they were significantly influenced by the émigré scientists and scholars who fled European fascism.[6]

The American research establishment had taken form during the interwar years, and postwar developments would build upon these foundations. Two characteristics in particular would have struck visitors from major research centers in Europe. First, there was (and is) the American combination of advanced research and undergraduate teaching in a single institution. Second, visitors would be surprised by the number and diversity of decentralized institutions, each organized more by local opportunity than by national policy. Partly from these two circumstances, there was more space and more opportunity in the American system for innovation and for the incorporation of new disciplines and fields. The fact that change could occur faster and with less bureaucratic conflict in the loosely organized American system would become an advantage in the years of growth after the war.

Before the war, national academic systems were rather insular, but the postwar years witnessed the development of an international scholarly community, sustained in part by exchange programs supported by the United States government (e.g., Fulbright scholarships) and major foundations. In the natural sciences, where resources were so important, the United States came to dominate this internationalized research environment, but there was an important international role for the United States in the social sciences, especially in sociology (briefly) and economics (continuing). More recently, the end of the Cold War has promoted a new level of international visibility for American academic experts, and in a broader context the advent of global academic communication has been both advanced and dominated by American research and scholarship.



The quantity and quality of American research cannot be measured with any precision, but some crude indicators are available. For example, 80 percent of all citations in electronic retrieval systems are in English.[7] And the awarding of Nobel Prizes indicates an increasing recognition of American research: before 1946, one in seven Nobel Prizes went to Americans, while between 1946 and 1975 Americans received one in two.[8] Notwithstanding the attention given to a few French ideas recently imported into the United States, American research universities are massive exporters of research and importers of graduate students, mostly in science but also more generally. With no intention of trivializing the matter, one can say that only American scholarship, research, and advanced training have the international stature and appeal of American movies, popular music, software, and basketball.

Yet the public has taken little notice of this success; indeed, in a spirit of disappointment Americans may even be initiating its dismantling. Within academe, moreover, there is a pervasive sense of unease, and the origins of this self-doubt precede the current financial crisis of higher education. In fact, there is a certain paradox in the success of academe. Its recognized achievements (disciplinary excellence in the context of dramatic expansion) have not strengthened academic culture as a whole. It has even produced conflicts about its mission, particularly its civic role, and there has been a weakening of the informal compact between the university and society.

Academe is also a victim of larger transformations in American society. The incorporation of higher learning into the center of American established institutions, including the government, has enhanced the university, but it has also made it vulnerable to a larger disaffection with those institutions. Universities have also been focal points (and sometimes at the leading edge) for increasingly controversial efforts to overcome racial and sexual injustices.

The most compelling aspirations of the universities—whether one speaks of advanced scholarship or progressive social interventions—have prompted more criticism than congratulation.

What follows is a brief and necessarily selective elaboration of the phases and contexts of change in American academic culture. It highlights some of the more important social, intellectual, and political trends that have intersected and affected the trajectory of academe's ascent and apparent loss of standing.

## MAKING THE GOLDEN AGE

The period following World War II was one of two great moments of academic reform in the United States—the other coming after the Civil War, when the sixty-seven land grant colleges were created and the modern American research university was established. In the half century following the founding of The Johns Hopkins University in 1876, educational leaders augmented a substantial university system in the United States. But it still fell short of the highest ambitions of the research community, a point underscored in Abraham Flexner's scathing report of 1930 on the universities of the United States, Great Britain, and Germany.[9] Twenty years later a major appraisal of the state of American scholarship praised progress but saw most of it as very recent. Prewar social science and humanities research, it seemed in 1953, was too often marked and marred by "fact-finding," "over-specialization," and "trivial investigations."[10] Moreover, the style of academic life had begun to change since the war. A genteel profession became more diverse and worldly. Postwar academics were less gentlemanly and more professionally ambitious, fired by aspirations to upward mobility.

There was a strong sense that the postwar era would demand more from universities, both as teaching and as research institutions. Harvard commissioned a study of its curriculum, producing, in 1945, *General Education in a Free Society,* otherwise known as the famous "Red Book." Two years later the President's Commission on Higher Education presented its multivolume report, *Higher Education for a Democracy* (1947). Both envisioned an expansion of education: more students and wider responsibilities for the future direction of society. The Red Book made a case for studying



science and the texts of the European humanist tradition, associating them with freedom and democracy. This argument, framed against the backdrop of fascism and communism, preserved a role for history and the historical disciplines in a blueprint for a higher education oriented to contemporary concerns. The President's Commission pointedly criticized economic and racial barriers to equal education, and the language was strong enough on the issue of racial injustice to prompt several commissioners, including the scientist Arthur H. Compton and historian Douglas S. Freeman, to note their dissent. The report was attentive to the diversity of the American people, and it urged reforms that would make higher education responsive to their various needs and interests but at the same time committed to a curriculum sufficiently unified to nourish a common culture and citizenship. The report explained that "liberal education," the lineage of which was distinctly aristocratic, must be converted into its democratic counterpart, "general education," which is "directly relevant to the demands of contemporary society."[11]

The next half century would witness the predicted expansion of access to higher education, but it is not clear that university faculty expected to make much accommodation to these changes, nor does it appear that any special needs or aspirations of these new students were considered by the faculty and administration. The faculty of elite institutions provided the vision for the Golden Age of the postwar university, and its priorities reflected their interests.[12] Between 1940 and 1990, federal funds for higher education increased by a factor of twenty-five, enrollment by ten, and average teaching loads were reduced by half.[13]

The nationalization of higher education tended to establish a single standard for excellence—the model of the major research university. Ernest Boyer complained that just when American higher education opened itself to a larger and more diverse student body, "the culture of the professoriate was becoming more hierarchical and restrictive."[14] This process seems also to have advanced a growing commitment to (and internalization of) meritocratic standards. Family backgrounds, regional loyalties, and ethnic backgrounds generally counted for less, and the universities became the principal carriers of the universalistic values then described as "modern."[15] One must recognize the historical incorporation of

these values into the core meaning of the university to understand the threat presented by supposed challenges to them today. Much that seems upsetting today might have been less provocative to the interwar American university.[16]

Faculty values—research opportunities, better colleagues, better students, greater autonomy—drove university development and established the standards by which universities were judged and ranked, at least those universities that aspired to distinction (and in a nationally competitive market, more and more were urged toward such aspirations). The goal of raising academic standards in appointments tended to empower elite scholars and departments over administrators, and it reduced the claim of institutional or local particularities. Indeed, the historian Richard Freeland argues that "the central constituencies of the academic culture were the scholarly disciplines and the learned societies they sponsored, for it was these groups that could confer a reputation for excellence."[17] So radical was this transformation that Christopher Jencks and David Riesman called it, in the title of their book of 1968, *The Academic Revolution.*

This pattern of change freed faculty for a stronger research orientation, and it enabled a firmer sense of academic autonomy and disciplinary professionalism. Whereas the Red Book had asked philosophers to investigate and teach "the place of human aspirations and ideals in the total scheme of things," the postwar discipline, embracing the inward-looking and donnish analytical movement, eschewed such a civic role. In retrospect it appears that the disciplines were redefined over the course of the half century following the war: from the means to an end they increasingly became an end in themselves, the possession of the scholars who constituted them. To a greater or lesser degree, academics sought some distance from civics. The increasingly professionalized disciplines were embarrassed by moralism and sentiment; they were openly or implicitly drawn to the model of science as a vision of professional maturity.[18]

The proper work of academics became disciplinary development and the training of students for the discipline. The authors of the Red Book recognized this possibility and pointed out that "one of the subtlest and most prevalent effects of specialism has been that. . .subjects have tended to be conceived and taught with an eye. . .to their own internal logic rather than their larger usefulness to students."[19] Talcott Parsons, who taught at Harvard, reflected the dominant mood in an address to the American Sociological Association in 1959. He argued that as a scientific discipline sociology "is clearly primarily dedicated to the advancement and transmission of empirical knowledge" and only "secondarily to the communication of such knowledge to non-members."[20]



The transformation of academic culture was possible, in part, because the onset of the Cold War mobilized the state to invest heavily in research and scholarship, especially in science and in area studies.[21] One of the great developments of the postwar university, in fact, was the academic enclosure of international studies, which had earlier been widely distributed among missionaries, journalists, and travel writers, and international business.[22]

But the needs of the Cold War state were not the only reasons for investment in higher education. The postwar years were marked by an awareness of expanding resources and a level of abundance that would permit massive investment in the universities, especially the biggest and best ones. After a decade of scarcity, the GNP grew over 100 percent between 1939 and 1945. There was a sharp but brief dip in economic growth between 1945 and 1947, but the rebuilding of Europe and the building of a permanent war economy sustained growth almost without interruption for two decades. The titles of two widely read books capture the mood: David Potter's *People of Plenty* (1954), followed by John Kenneth Galbraith's *The Affluent Society* (1958).[23]

It is difficult today to grasp the magnitude of the infusion of new funds into the university, especially the most select research universities, in the quarter-century following World War II. By far, the greater portion of these investments went to the natural sciences and engineering, but substantial funding went to the social sciences, and this support may well have artificially sustained a very high level of professional development and a sense of autonomy. For the period from 1946 to 1958, foundation support for academic social science amounted to more than $85 million, 48 percent of which went to three institutions (Harvard, Columbia, and Berkeley).[24] Between 1959 and 1964, the big three foundations (Rockefeller, Ford, and Carnegie) bestowed nearly $100

million on political science departments, half of which went to the same three institutions.[25]

But it was not only applied knowledge nor international studies nor politically useful knowledge that was supported. Theoretical work in both the natural and social sciences was nourished, as was humanistic scholarship. Indeed, postwar Americans were newly sympathetic to the claims of scholarship and art, a point noted at the time by the critic Lionel Trilling.[26] The depression had discredited the business elite, who had historically been a major source of anti-intellectualism in the United States.[27] Intellectuals inside and outside of the government gained status, partly because of the policy success of Keynesian economics, an academic theory of acknowledged utility.

In the twenty years following World War II, American intellectuals, according to Edward Shils, were welcomed into the centers of American power and influence.[28] Americans had become vastly more receptive to what Clark Kerr in 1963 called the university's "invisible product, knowledge."[29] Policy studies were developed in major university institutes, but the less practical disciplines were supported as well, as evidence of the cultural achievements of a new world power. John F. Kennedy symbolized this new sensibility, both for the technocrats he brought into his administration and for his apparent cultural sophistication. His interest in art and intellect implied a qualitative liberalism that led to the creation of the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities in 1965.

The new and broadened respect for humanistic learning was important, but the idea of research was especially associated with science. Much of science's appeal derived from its promise of new technologies and economic development, a mantra regularly invoked by university presidents before state legislators. It was a successful strategy in the short run, but over time it left science and the research university vulnerable. Quite unexpectedly, it invited radical critics of the 1960s to blame the university for society's ills and for complicity in the war. Conservatives, who had always had reservations about state support for research except for that in the defense-related category, grew increasingly skeptical. By the 1980s public support had seriously eroded, with serious consequences not only for science but for the standing of academic research in general.



Reference to the G.I. Bill is commonplace in discussions of the expansion of higher education, and I must reiterate its importance here. In 1947–1948, the Veterans Administration paid the tuition for almost half the male college students in the United States, and by 1962 higher education had received $5 billion from that source on behalf of veterans of World War II and the Korean War.[30] Mostly due to the impact of the G.I. Bill, the number of college students doubled between 1938 and 1948. Those who recall the Quonset huts on college campuses will have a sense of the true magnitude of this population increase. But it was an opportunity as well, making new resources available, especially to public universities. The G.I. Bill paid out-of-state tuition rates for soldiers no matter what their residence. This produced windfalls for many universities, especially the University of California, which in 1947–1948 took in more than $12 million from out-of-state fees. That surplus revenue, combined with the general growth of the California economy, supplied Robert Sproul and Clark Kerr with the unrestricted financial resources that enabled them to leverage Berkeley to the premier position it had achieved by 1960.[31]

But enrollment was driven by other forces as well: a new awareness of the value of college degrees and the prosperity to sustain the ambitions of an expanding middle class. The rate of the rise in college enrollment kept accelerating. Between 1960 and 1980 the number of college students tripled, the largest percentage increase since the period from 1875 to 1895, the first era of massive educational reform.[32] The magnitude of this increase no doubt accounts in part for the strains within the university and between the university and society.

Not only did the numbers of students increase, but so did the range of their social backgrounds. Enrollments had been increasing since the late nineteenth century, but as recently as 1940, the student body of American higher education remained largely upper middle class in origin. Only after the war did American higher education become a mass phenomenon, increasing its representative character every decade thereafter. If our campuses as a whole still fail to be genuinely representative, urban campuses, even of elite research institutions, come close. By the 1970s, the changes in class origins, gender ratios, race, and ethnicity were beginning to transform the culture of the university, even as the university

expanded the cultural resources available to increasingly diverse cohorts of students.

As universities grew and moved to the center of American society, so did the professoriate and intellectuals generally.[33] Indeed, the 1950s witnessed considerable self-consciousness among intellectuals. Aware of themselves as a rising class, they wrote endlessly about the role and status of intellectuals in the United States. This enhanced position coexisted with a worry that mass society would provide no home for serious intellect.[34] Intellectuals often portrayed themselves as beleaguered, seeking a haven in a hostile world, and they defended the university as a free space for intellect. With the rise of McCarthyism, such defensiveness and the need for this sort of safe place in universities became all the more important; Richard Hofstadter responded by writing a history of academic freedom that emphasized its legitimacy and importance in the McCarthy era.[35]

## POSTWAR CULTURE

The immediate postwar mood in the United States was one of relief, but it was not a period of relaxation. There was an undercurrent of uncertainty, even terror. The bomb, the specter of an expanding communism, and the ever-present preparation for war transformed the conditions of life. Was the United States, even if more worldly and more powerful, up to the challenges of the era? Public policy and private aspirations both pointed to the promotion of a consumer society, marked by a landscape of corporations, suburbs, and shopping centers that redefined middle-class life. While science offered progress, many worried; while modernity beckoned, there was a pervasive sense of alienation in this new world, something evident in the most notable literature and painting of the period.

Even as Americans embraced a bright and shiny world of consumer products, American intellectuals became more sensitive to the problem of evil than at any time since the seventeenth century. It was almost predictable that Perry Miller, the distinguished Harvard professor of American literature, would in 1949 publish an intellectual biography of Jonathan Edwards that self-consciously made him a contemporary, or that the neo-orthodox theologian Reinhold



Niebuhr would become a beacon for a new "realism" in American liberal thought, even for many nonbelievers.[36] More generally, literary studies rediscovered and celebrated those American writers, particularly Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville, who challenged American optimism, who were sensitive to the power of blackness, and who expressed a tragic sense of life. Freud, who had been misinterpreted in the 1920s as a proponent of sexual liberation, became for intellectuals in the 1950s a darker Freud, the Freud who wrote *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930).[37]

From one perspective, the postwar years are notable for a revival of religion. Among intellectuals Reinhold Niebuhr exerted enormous influence, and at a more popular level church membership was growing rather dramatically. Yet it was also a moment of triumphant secularism in the academy, and by the end of the 1970s the secularism and liberalism of the educated classes and the religiosity of other, less cosmopolitan Americans marked a major fault line in American culture and politics that would be manifest in the political and cultural conflicts of the 1980s and 1990s.[38]

It is too easy to overlook how deeply encompassing Christian academic culture was before 1945. We remember T. S. Eliot's literary prescriptions, but we should also recall his important political intervention in 1940, with a small book on *The Idea of a Christian Society*.[39] The academic humanities were the possession of Christians in the 1940s. Lionel Trilling's appointment in English at Columbia in the late 1930s was highly unusual, and before World War II there were no Jews in any Yale College department. In the context of what David Hollinger has denoted a *Kulturkämpfe* in the United States, scientists and others mobilized in the 1940s against an aggressive and worrisome religious resistance to science, modernity, and cosmopolitanism. It was with such dangers from religious as well as political ideologies in mind that Robert Merton, Sidney Hook, and other secularists sought to establish a cluster of modern, Enlightenment values: science, democracy, cosmopolitanism.[40]

All of this would change after 1945. American intellectual culture, academic and literary, would be de-Christianized.[41] There were rapidly growing religious movements that had significant potential, later realized, for anti-intellectual hostility to the arts and to academic culture, but in 1950, a secular and scientific

culture was established in the American university, enough so that William F. Buckley could make a mark attacking it.[42] Protestant dominance within the faculties of American research universities and elite colleges, especially in the humanities, was dissolved by a dramatic influx of Jewish scholars and scientists and, much later, a smaller influx of Catholics.

In 1936, on its three hundredth anniversary, Harvard altered its university seal, dropping *Christo et Ecclesiae,* leaving only *Veritas,* with three open books. The change signaled the progress of a secular, scientific understanding of knowledge. Heretofore, whether formally articulated or not, religion had provided the moral authority and basis of cultural unity for higher education, even for the new research universities. But by the middle third of the twentieth century, it was assumed that the university would be held together by the ideal of inquiry, which would unify scholars investigating the whole domain of knowledge. This vision was not new; it had been articulated in the United States by Harvard's Charles W. Eliot in the late nineteenth century. But the context was new; now academic culture was thoroughly secular. Under such circumstances, as Julie Reuben has recently argued, the idea of research lacked the capacity to provide the unifying authority to sustain an academic culture that amounted to more than the aggregate of autonomous disciplines.[43] Indeed, it may even be, as she suggests, that this combination of secularization and specialization paved the way at Harvard and elsewhere for the introduction of a formalism in philosophy and other disciplines that fostered a separation of method from a substantive ethics.

The increasing emphasis on scientific method and objectivity, along with a shrinking menu of social questions to be examined, derived in part from the advent of substantial foundation support for the social sciences in the interwar years. To an extent, the emphasis upon objectivity represented an obvious caution about offending powerful donors. But it served scholars in a deeper way: it legitimated political interventions by denying any political character to the act. "If their findings were morally neutral, objective descriptions of institutional and human functions," as Edward Purcell has written, then social scientists did not have to face the question of value or take responsibility for the "actual consequences" of their interventions.[44]



The growth of federal support, beginning with the establishment of the National Science Foundation (NSF) in 1950, led to the elevation of peer review to a sacred level.[45] The policy of peer review protected the academic freedom of scholars and shielded foundations, the NSF, and, later, the National Endowments from criticism. But, by privileging audiences of peers, this development encouraged a focus on the model of science, an emphasis on method, and a narrowness of reference in social studies and humanistic scholarship. The unintended but distinct long-term effect of this reorientation of research authorized disciplinary (even subdisciplinary) autonomy and a certain distancing of academic work from society at large. By the 1990s this structure of self-governance by peers would be characterized in important sectors of the larger public as elitist and irresponsible, and it became the focus of attacks on the National Endowment for the Arts and, to a lesser extent, the National Endowment for the Humanities.

A sense that ideology had made the first half of the twentieth century an age of disaster encouraged a quest for certainty at mid-century. Much as Descartes had been driven to secure a ground for absolute knowledge in the aftermath of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and in the midst of the religious wars of the seventeenth century, intellectuals in the mid-twentieth century, witnesses of war and totalitarian ideologies, may have been drawn to epistemologies of certainty as an antidote. One can imagine, as Stephen Toulmin has, that in such circumstances the dream of certain knowledge as an alternative to ideology, perhaps even to politics, would have an appeal.[46] This impulse is clear in philosophy, political science, and economics; the case of literary studies is more complex, for the New Criticism combined a quest for analytical precision with a hostility to the science from which this program derived its cultural value.

By 1950 the intolerance generated by McCarthyism and the Cold War moved academics and intellectuals generally to make themselves and their work less vulnerable to attack. For example, Marx was replaced by Freud, the word "capitalism" dropped out of social theory after the war,[47] and class became stratification. Economics, in its Keynesian and consumerist emphases, was oriented to growth and consumption, turning away from reform and distribution questions.[48] The creation of the Department of Social

Relations at Harvard in 1946, under the leadership of Talcott Parsons, was an important interdisciplinary initiative, but it also marked a revealing shift in academic outlook, one exemplified by Parsons himself: his interests shifted from history and political economy to sociology, cultural anthropology, and psychology, especially psychoanalysis. Interest in transformative theories of society, in short, waned.

More broadly, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., staked out a progressive position that was clearly distinguishable from Marxism and communism. In *The Vital Center* (1949), he articulated an ideology of freedom that promoted liberal internationalism and domestic reform.[49] But his tract was not quite a clarion call of Enlightenment optimism. Acknowledging the influence of Reinhold Niebuhr's neo-orthodox thought, he stressed human limits. History, as he saw it in 1949, "is not a redeemer, promising to solve all human problems in time; nor is man capable of transcending the limitations of his being. Man is generally entangled in unsolvable problems; history is consequently a tragedy in which we are all involved."[50] Nonetheless, this skeptical or ironic attitude fostered an activist posture in intellectuals committed to the Cold War.

For those who wanted to get on with disciplinary scholarship, such times recommended particular methodologies, more scientific and less engaged. The political scientist David Easton has found in McCarthyism a stimulus for the development of a more scientific and objective political science, for it provided a "protective posture for scholars." It was, he suggests, a gain for political science, even if "for the wrong reasons."[51] But one must be careful in generalizing. A precise sense of chronology and generational succession is needed. For some academics, particularly in the immediate postwar group, talk of method carried a progressive agenda, much as had been the case with the development of the new method of historical economics in the last third of the nineteenth century. But in many cases, increasingly over the postwar decades, the method had its own fascinations.

If such was the path of philosophy and the social sciences toward sharper and more precise models of knowledge, the humanities, or at least parts of history, literary studies, and anthropology, turned in the opposite direction, interestingly, for some of the same reasons. In the face of absolute ideologies, such figures as



Lionel Trilling in literature and Richard Hofstadter in history stressed the extraordinary complexity of social life, urging restraint and a sense of the tragic in history.[52]

Both groups—those seeking simplicity and those stressing complexity—were nervous about the politics of mass democracy. For one group, expertise might obviate excessive participation by the thoughtless masses. The other group, cognizant of totalitarian mass societies in Germany and the Soviet Union and of the worries of émigré scholars about such societies, expressed their distaste for populism, which they demonized, associating it with anti-modern, unrealistic, and intolerant politics.[53] More comfortable with elites than with the masses, these quasi-democrats envisioned a moderate pluralism in which negotiation among elites forestalled enthusiastic democracy and promoted sound policy.[54]

The social sciences seemed to hold special promise for addressing the challenges of the postwar era. Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* (1944), commissioned by the Carnegie Corporation, represented both the ambition of social sciences and the hope invested in them.[55] After Hiroshima, both John Dewey and Robert Maynard Hutchins, combatants on so many educational issues, agreed that social knowledge must now catch up to technological knowledge, with universities taking the lead. Within forty-eight hours of Hiroshima, in an act as comic as it was important, Talcott Parsons and four fellow social scientists submitted a letter to the *Washington Post* asserting that in light of "the startling news of the atomic bomb," the social sciences had a vital role in the now urgent challenge of peace. Human intelligence could solve "human problems as well as. . .those of atomic physics." The letter urged a high-level study to "explore the needs which the social sciences must fill in a world equipped for suicide." Continuing this argument, Parsons later argued successfully for the inclusion of the social sciences in the National Science Foundation.[56] Parsons did not turn his hand to the study of the atomic age; rather he devoted himself to the development of a discipline of sociology. By outlining a general theory of social action and explanations of social development at the societal scale (modernization theory), he sought to endow the social sciences with the status of the physical sciences.

Other social scientists did, however, turn to the task of describing and understanding contemporary culture. Indeed, the postwar era saw the emergence of the "social-science intellectual," and David Riesman, senior author of the best-selling *The Lonely Crowd* (1950), became the most widely known. It was specifically as a social scientist that he appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine in 1954.[57] Byron E. Shafer has recently observed that "the immediate postwar years were to be the glory days for the social sciences.... They had achieved practical wartime applications; they had acquired new research techniques; they possessed nearly unlimited aspirations. They could finally hope to join the 'true' sciences, simultaneously advancing knowledge of social life and addressing real social problems."[58] At this golden moment, method and social purpose worked together.

Only later would method and disciplinary development extrude the civic work so central to the historical aspirations of the social sciences, leading to the circumstance recently reported in the *New York Times*: a survey by the American Economic Association found that nearly two-thirds of graduate economics professors consider their calling "too unrelated to the real world."[59] It is revealing that no present-day social scientists invite the general interest of intellectuals in the way David Riesman, Ruth Benedict, B. F. Skinner, or even Robert Merton, Talcott Parsons, Daniel Bell, or Edward Shils did in the 1950s.[60]

The end of ideology, a common phrase used to describe the political and intellectual orientation of the 1950s, not only assumed the exhaustion of Marxism in the West, but it implied a shift from historical to analytic, process to structural, economistic to culturalist approaches to the study of society and thought. Like the phrase "consensus history," the end of ideology presumed that the big questions were settled. Political conflict, therefore, would be within a consensus, thus inviting a style of social research in what Robert Merton called the "middle range," an approach that elaborated on theoretical questions susceptible to rather direct empirical verification.[61] Parsonian social theory, less empirical, similarly assumed a consensus on core values.[62]

There were similar developments in other disciplines: intense study and theory construction within tight bounds. The New Criticism in English represented, among other things, an increase in professional ambition and a sharpening of the object of study—the literariness of a work. The analytical turn in philosophy abandoned the discipline's expansive Deweyan vision, but it promised verifiable and universal truth. In political science, also, behavioralism eschewed ideology and limited context in order to produce remarkably fruitful middle range problems and theory. Economics moved from institutional analysis and description of the economy to rigorous models and the manipulation of massive data sets newly available after the war.



Academic intellect in the 1950s and thereafter increasingly located itself in a larger international arena and began actively to study contemporary societies beyond the Northern Atlantic, but at the same time it turned inward to the study of the United States. While the influx of European émigré scholars Europeanized certain fields to a degree, ranging from political theory to political sociology, musicology, and the history of art, there was a simultaneous proliferation of interdisciplinary American studies programs that later became the staging ground and model for initiatives on behalf of African-American studies, women's studies, and ethnic studies.[63]

Gradually, but especially in the past quarter-century, the core intellectual tradition of general education that had earlier been presumed to represent the best of European culture was increasingly supplemented by engagement with the art, ideas, and experience of Americans. This shift partly explains the identification of the university with the society in 1968 and afterward, an association implausible during the interwar years. This blending of the university into society (or vice versa) today provides the context for many of the battles over historical representation and literary canons. The "culture wars" as we know them would not be fought on campus had this Americanization of academic culture not occurred.[64]

A commitment to American nationalism grew stronger and more celebratory as well soon after the war, something noted by historian Merle Curti.[65] American nationality was distinctive, exceptionalist; it was at once pluralistic and consensual. Myrdal's famous study of race relations, for example, was built upon a confidence that there was an American consensus, a universally shared American creed. Will Herberg made a similar argument in

his widely read *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (1955).[66] Religious difference need not divide the society, for there was agreement on the idea of religion itself. This complacent and consensual nationalism would be sharply challenged after 1968.

If many leading intellectuals (Reinhold Niebuhr, Arthur Schlesinger, Lionel Trilling, Sidney Hook, George Kennan, and Perry Miller, among others) embraced a humanism marked by a tragic sense, it was also an era of sentimental humanism committed to representing the unity of man. Such was the appeal of Carl Jung's notion of archetype, of Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* (1949),[67] and of the anthropology of Ruth Benedict. Perhaps the most widely known gesture of this sort was the *Family of Man* exhibition. Organized by Edward Steichen at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1954, it broke attendance records at the museum and was seen by more than nine million people over the course of a seven-year government-sponsored international tour. Haunted by the fear of nuclear annihilation (the last segment was a six-by-eight-foot image of the hydrogen bomb), the exhibit acknowledged differences among humans. Yet it was determined, in the words of Edward Steichen, that it would "arrange these pictures so they stress alikeness." Otherwise, "we have lost out."[68]

Even with their deep belief in American exceptionalism, or perhaps because of it, educated Americans after the war were quite receptive to European high culture. More than ever before it seemed to belong to Americans, who had, after all, saved Europe. With the expansion of higher education, a larger part of the American elite became familiar with and sympathetic to the European humanist tradition. The Aspen Institute, founded in 1945 by Walter Paepcke, a Chicago businessman who headed the Container Corporation of America, Henry Luce, the founder of the *Time-Life* empire, and Robert Maynard Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago, provides an example of this superficial Europeanization of American culture. The Institute sought to sustain the value of culture in a commercial society, and it aimed to use art and culture as a salve for a war-torn world. In 1949, it sponsored a festival commemorating the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Goethe, a figure who represented the ideal of a cosmopolitan humanist. Such an event, and others like it, were



expected to heighten the stature of American culture, making it commensurate with its postwar international leadership in politics and economics. Aspen also presaged the movement of artists and progressive business leaders who supported the public art movement, the creation of Lincoln Center and similar institutions in other cities, and the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts in the early 1960s.[69]

The utterly unexpected challenge to assumptions of political consensus and to the authority of European high culture in the 1960s severely weakened the self-confidence and public standing of the social sciences and humanistic scholarship. Many social scientists, recognizing that they had a strong base in the academy, turned inward, focusing more on the development of their disciplines than upon describing, explaining, and participating in the society around them.[70]

Humanists moved in two directions. Some greatly expanded the domain of the humanities, examining a broader range of cultural expression, while others assumed an increasingly defensive posture. The unstable balance between responsibility for the custody of the tradition of European humanism and the task of cultivating the critical intellect did not survive the 1960s. As early as 1961, in a famous essay entitled "On the Teaching of Modern Literature," Lionel Trilling expressed his concern that the critical side might be pressed too far.[71] By the 1980s the two orientations within the humanities that at their best complemented each other became competing academic ideologies.

## TOWARD THE 1960s

The intellectuals of the 1950s had come late to modernism, as Irving Howe once remarked.[72] But modernism had work to do for Howe's generation. It helped to free art from the contamination of politics, a legacy of the ideological wars of the 1930s, and in the midst of a mass culture that fed upon but threatened to devalue art, modernist claims for the autonomy of art established a categorical difference that intellectuals valued.[73] The classic statement of the cultural commitments of these modernists was an essay by Clement Greenberg, "Avant Garde and Kitsch," published in the *Partisan Review* in 1939. Greenberg had no problem distinguish-

ing art from pretenders to art or a poem from a non-poem, and he articulated the formal challenges of modernism in his brilliant art criticism in the 1940s and 1950s.

For Greenberg's generation, the work of criticism was to establish "hard and fast cultural distinctions, exclusions, hierarchies." By the 1960s, this austere, formal, and highly intellectualist understanding of art seemed too limited, too constraining. A new generation, less fearful of contamination by the plenitude of cultural expression surrounding them, more sympathetic to a native tradition represented in literature by Walt Whitman rather than Melville, and more liberationist in feeling, looked to a "redemption of the senses."[74] It was very much in this context that Paul Goodman, Herbert Marcuse, and Norman O. Brown came to be favored intellectuals in the 1960s. Susan Sontag provided the clarifying text in her famous essay, "Notes on Camp," published in 1964,[75] but there were at the same time a number of other important indicators of change: Allan Ginsberg, Andy Warhol, and the Judson Church minimalists all challenged the categories that had seemed so fundamental in the 1950s.

When Allen Ginsberg, who had graduated from Columbia in 1948, returned a decade later for a reading in McMillin Theatre, the stage was set for delineating the difference between the 1950s and the 1960s. Ginsberg had studied the major texts of European humanism with Lionel Trilling, but he had also discovered a native tradition that began with Walt Whitman. His arrival in the sacred precincts of the humanist tradition was a jolt to the prevailing assumptions at Morningside Heights. Diana Trilling, in a famous account that might have been remembered as an anticipation of Norman Mailer's "New Journalism" had it been on the progressive rather than the reactionary side of the cultural divide, recoiled at the proposition that *Howl* was literature and thus properly sponsored (and certified) by the university.[76]

Once Andy Warhol represented a Brillo box and a Campbell's soup can as art, how could Greenberg's categories stand? On seeing the Brillo box and other works of art by Warhol in 1964, the philosopher and art critic Arthur Danto recognized that art could not be treated simply as a matter of vision, of image. In time, he realized that Warhol, more than Marcel Duchamps, more than anyone else, had forced a fundamental question: what is the nature of art?[77] Warhol also knowingly challenged the conventional modernist distinction between art and business. "After I did the thing called 'art,'" he reflected, "I went into business art. . .for business is the best art."[78]



The group of poets, musicians, artists, and dancers who came together at Judson Memorial Church in 1963 mixed all the arts, creating what later came to be known as performance art. For them the fact of the performing body was more important than any objectified genre. Feeling that all things were possible, there was a playfulness, a mixing of high and low, academic and vernacular, physical and spiritual. They sought, as critic Sally Barnes has written, "to *embody* democracy."[79]

Such developments in the larger intellectual and artistic culture posed serious challenges to academic culture in general and the humanities in particular. Most of the humanities disciplines are object-focused, and these larger cultural changes, well before Derridean theories of deconstruction entered the academy, put in question the status of the object of humanist inquiry. Moreover, given the rigidity of the categories that defined not only proper objects of inquiry but also disciplinary terrains, the university found it difficult to engage the contemporary culture. By the end of the 1960s the gap between the university and advanced culture had widened to the point of open conflict.

If these changes in the cultural domain threatened to subvert the ways of humanistic scholarship, political developments overwhelmed the social sciences, which had been preoccupied with notions of pluralist consensus and equilibrium models. Such approaches to social analysis had provided no warning that transformative social movements were taking shape. Economics, which had been celebrated for finding the secret of growth, lost some of its luster when the pervasiveness of poverty was discovered in the 1960s. And as the 1960s became the 1970s and the American economy suffered a condition popularly called "stagflation," economists and the public wondered why their models seemed to lack the capacity to explain what was happening.

Social criticism before 1963 had mostly described the follies of white, middle-class consumers, complaining about suburban life, tailfins on cars, organization men, or "other-directed" moderns. By 1963, when Martin Luther King led the March on Washington,

one can detect a shift marked by Michael Harrington's *The Other America* (1962) and Nathan Glazer's and Daniel Patrick Moynihan's *Beyond the Melting Pot* (1963).[80] Henceforth the focus of social criticism became class, race, and ethnicity, with issues of gender to follow a decade later. The "rights revolution" of the 1960s and 1970s empowered groups, largely because inequalities were often associated with group designations. It was reasonable for groups suffering discrimination to so organize and identify themselves, but Americans began to worry by the 1980s that the much celebrated value of individualism was being threatened along with a broader sense of the civic.

The political origins of the 1960s are in the mid-1950s, when Rosa Parks refused to go to the back of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and when the United States allowed itself to be drawn into Indochina following France's failure there. By the late 1960s, however, the issues of life-style, war, poverty, and race converged, making for a volatile compound that produced riots in cities and divided university campuses. Some academics were radicalized in the process; others retreated to more conservative positions. The middle ground narrowed to the vanishing point. The university is still struggling to accommodate the tensions produced by the continuing coexistence of the rigid categories embraced in the 1950s and the expansive commitments and sensibilities associated with the 1960s.

Perhaps the most important legacy of the 1960s has been a loss of faith in elite institutions, among which universities were included. The failure of the policies advocated by "the best and the brightest" in Vietnam and the "dirty tricks" and casual disregard of law and the Constitution by the Nixon White House produced a legitimation crisis, weakening both political and cultural authority in the United States. Academic experts, once identified with grand hopes, had become a part of the problem, not a part of the solution. It is a chastening story, the course from high optimism about the collaboration of academic expertise and state action reflected in the Full Employment Act of 1946 to the reaction by the Left and the Right against the state and expertise in the 1970s. The demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St. Louis in the mid-1970s came to symbolize the failure of a dream.



Liberal and radical academics, who in varying degrees had embraced a politics of participatory democracy in the 1960s, lost confidence in the conventional political process by the end of the 1970s. Many of these academic intellectuals redefined politics in cultural terms; the campus became the world. This move made academic culture and the syllabus, more than the class system and the conditions of community life, the locus of political energy.[81] There was also a celebration, often quite romantic, of the everyday life of ordinary folk and marginal peoples. Elitism became a pervasive worry, and this sensitivity weakened a commitment to the intellectual culture and disciplinary traditions that were (and are) the principal resources of academic intellect.

The Right, by contrast, mobilized against the government, particularly attacking assistance to the poor, to education and scholarship, and to the arts. The political intellectual, historically associated with the Left, came to be identified with the Right and with a program hostile to government support of art and intellect. In the 1980s, conservative intellectual journalists, ensconced in privately-funded positions, initiated extravagant attacks on academics—damning them either as boring and narrow pedants or as unrealistic leftist revolutionaries.[82]

The ride through and beyond the sixties was sometimes rough. But one can say that along the way intellectual life was opened up and many social and cultural practices were liberalized. It made a difference, as so many commentators have remarked, that students and faculty in universities began to dress alike after the sixties.[83] This weakening of traditional hierarchies and authority had wide ramifications, from classroom practices to the definition of research topics. It mattered, too, that students and faculty had been politically mobilized; no one can doubt that the moral and political commitments of the sixties brought issues of race, class, and gender (and new models of society, conflict, and stability) into academic work. The concern with power and exclusion that was so pervasive in the academy of the 1960s stimulated interest in the relation of the Euro-American center to other peoples and to issues of hegemony, colonialism, and domination. The European intellectual tradition that had provided a foundation for higher education (and freedom and democracy) in the Red Book of 1946 came

to be associated by the academic avant-garde with forms of domination.

But if new critical perspectives and a pluralization of disciplinary practices were authorized, there is also a legacy from the sixties of disillusionment. And there has been a continuing conservative backlash.

The ambitious, white, male, Europe-oriented, and quite privileged professional culture of major research universities that had taken its style and intellectual agenda from the 1950s could not sustain itself through the last quarter of the twentieth century. After about 1971, with some variation by discipline, there was a serious and continuing job crisis in academe, especially in the humanities, and this weakened the claims of established hierarchies. The shortage of jobs, along with federal affirmative action regulations and pressure from women and African-American scholars, transformed the process of academic recruitment. Jobs were openly advertised; the "old boy" network lost legitimacy and its former power to place students. Not only did this change promote greater equality of opportunity among job candidates, but it also reduced the advantage of a small cluster of traditionally powerful departments in each discipline.

There was an influx of women into the professoriate, especially in history and literature; they were followed by a substantial increase in African-American scholars and more generally by men and women of distinctly modest and often ethnic backgrounds. The presence of these new social groups in academe changed its culture and promoted attention to issues of race, class, and gender. But more generally, it produced a more varied and thus more complicated academic culture that found it difficult to speak with one voice. As leadership was fragmented (or diversified), so was scholarship.[84] But this infusion of new talent and the breaking of forms propelled the disciplines, making the era one of remarkable intellectual invention, with new concepts and approaches marking research, especially in history, political theory, anthropology, literature, and art history.



## THE CULTURAL TURN

What I have termed a cultural turn encompasses a number of trends—historicism, the linguistic turn, hermeneutics—that are, of course, distinct and even in conflict. Yet the term captures a leading tendency of the intellectual culture of our time, distinguishing it from the broadly analytic emphasis of the immediate postwar years.[85] The concept of culture, developed by Franz Boas with relativistic and pragmatic implications, spans the century, and by mid-century the idea had been absorbed by many disciplines. Just after the war, a commentator on academic trends in the United States remarked (rightly, as it turned out) that the idea of culture was "one of the most important and emancipating of all twentieth-century contributions to knowledge in the social field."[86]

It was in the 1960s, however, that our present understanding of the cultural approach began to take shape. A profoundly influential challenge to the positivistic and analytical intellectual strategies of the 1950s came in a brief, elegant book by Thomas S. Kuhn, addressing a fairly esoteric issue in the philosophy of science. That book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), was quickly and eagerly read (and often misinterpreted) by scholars in the humanities and social sciences.[87] Kuhn offered a historicist interpretation of scientific knowledge that incorporated rich sociological insight identifying communities of inquirers as the authority for knowledge claims. Although Kuhn (unlike some of his readers) believed in a referential theory of knowledge and the progressiveness of science, the implication of his work was a loosening of the connection between object and the interpretation of it. There was little sympathy for Kuhn's book among analytical philosophers, but it did take some of the glitter off the more extravagant claims of *the* scientific method in the humanities and social sciences. It complicated an earlier generation's assertion of a natural nesting of science, democracy, and toleration. Kuhn's work, moreover, provided a platform for Richard Rorty's more radical critique of the epistemological project of philosophy.[88]

Moving in a complementary direction, Clifford Geertz defined the human experience as interpretive; a human, he wrote in an oft-quoted phrase, is "an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun." Having earlier studied economic development

in Indonesia, Geertz now outlined an approach to social inquiry little concerned with issues of transformation or with the explanation of change over time. Rather, he proposed what he called a "thick description" of cultural moments, most famously a Balinese cockfight.[89] Both Kuhn and Geertz, as well as Quentin Skinner, J. G. A. Pocock, Bernard Bailyn, and others who were deeply involved in this shift toward hermeneutics, emphasized subjective meaning (rather than social causation) as the focus of social inquiry. They understood culture (or language) as constraining, as having deterministic implications, yet, unlike later commentators, they all assumed the possibility of innovation—"revolutions," in Kuhn's phrase. And Kuhn even ventured a theory of scientific change.

With Michel Foucault, whose works were first taken up in American academic discourse in the late 1960s and the 1970s, the deterministic implications of this move were vastly expanded; the human subject tended to disappear, trapped in existing "epistemes" and external linguistic structures. Foucault directly challenged the humanist tradition and the progressivist claims of the Enlightenment.[90]

Foucault built his scholarship on structuralism and went beyond it; much the same happened in the human sciences generally.[91] The key American moment came in October 1966, when The Johns Hopkins University hosted a conference funded by the Ford Foundation on "The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man." This intergenerational, international, and interdisciplinary conference, which eventually included one thousand humanists and social scientists in a two-year series of follow-up colloquia and seminars, established a broad interdisciplinary base for the introduction of French theory into the American academy. The pattern of this infiltration of American academic culture was peculiar. Although much of this thought had its origin in French philosophy, it had almost no impact in American philosophy departments.[92] Nor did it affect economics or political science, save for political theory, a marginal subfield much invigorated by its capacity to absorb theory and contemporary issues. The main impact was in less firmly bounded disciplines—literary study, anthropology, and, to a lesser extent, history.



Surprisingly, perhaps, the impact of French theory coincided with an accelerating increase in the humanistic study of American culture that fostered new fields and new theories. The study of American literature and culture, for example, has moved very near the center of humanistic inquiry in the United States today—something quite unprecedented.[93] The domain of American literature has been vastly expanded in the past twenty years, with new interest in non-canonical texts, in writings by African Americans, women, Native Americans, writers of the southwest borderlands, and other previously marginalized or unnoticed literatures.

It was not simply that American academics began to study race or gender or ethnic identity with a new seriousness, but this work, impelled as often as not by a commitment to identity politics and drawing upon both Foucault and Jacques Derrida, deconstructed presumptively natural categories. Race, gender, and "oriental," for example, were not "natural" or transparent categories but rather historical or cultural constructions that constituted forms of power. Edward Said, Natalie Davis, Evelyn Fox Keller, Joan W. Scott, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Werner Sollors, Carole Pateman, Mary Poovey, Judith Butler, and Anthony Appiah, among others, working in different disciplines and with different methods and perspectives, developed these highly influential critiques.[94] This work, which is often associated with multiculturalism and cultural studies, is strongly supported by American foundations, particularly the Rockefeller Foundation. It has a considerable international presence, more than American humanistic scholarship has had in the past. When foreign scholars turn to American research, especially in the American field, they are quite likely to follow the literature of race, gender, ethnic identity, and the like.

The work of the American pragmatists became the subject of new interest at home and abroad in the 1980s.[95] Only a few American philosophers moved in this direction, but they were notable ones such as Richard Rorty and Stanley Cavell. Literary critics, historians, and political theorists reinvigorated the pragmatic tradition, which offered a moderate response to the Nietzschean challenge promoted by Foucauldians and others.[96]

In some ways, the linguistic turn was a rediscovery of the semiotic theories of an American, Charles S. Peirce, the brilliant and eccentric philosopher who a century earlier was among the founders of

American pragmatism. But his was not the pragmatism of John Dewey, for whom truths were tested by experience and by consequential action in public. Although regard for Dewey's program is increasing today, Peirce's approach to the study of signs, texts, or discourses has been dominant. In this mode of scholarship there is very little indication of an inclination or a capacity to bring textual analysis into relation with the examination of institutions, and that is worrisome. As Edward Said has written of contemporary scholarship in the humanities, there is a danger of collapsing the social into the text; in much current practice there is little or no effort to bridge the gap between academic theory and the local politics of everyday life.[97]

Contrary to the author's intention, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* fed an unease about science and about the Enlightenment legacy more generally. Commitments to universalist categories became problematic in the 1980s, largely because the North Atlantic local had too often been presumed to be a global universal. Species-centered discourse was severely weakened; the emphasis was on *ethnos,* on the situated speaker or interpreter. This shift fairly marks the emergence of academic postmodernism, which emphasizes the local, the particular, the fragmentary.[98] More recently there has been a move—as surprising as it is disturbing—by religious traditionalists to build upon the postmodern critique of the academy's commitment to science and objectivity. For them postmodernism authorizes a challenge to the secularism of the research university. If there is no objectivity in science, they say, then why not give religious perspectives equal credibility with science in the academy?[99]

## PROSPECTS

The biggest changes since 1945 fall under the rubric of demographics: there is now a much larger and, more importantly, a far more diverse professoriate. Greater roles have been taken by women and African-American scholars in setting intellectual agendas, both in the domain of race and gender studies and more generally. Academic culture has in a sense been de-Europeanized. Although European ideas, models, and traditions remain predominant, even for those who challenge them, they are no longer transparent.



They are interrogated and contextualized. The most energetic, even aggressive, work in literature, history, anthropology, and cinema studies is now exploring other cultures and the notions of "difference" and "otherness."

Although the culture wars continue, the theory wars have concluded. There are signs that a reengagement with history is underway, which promises a more dialogic (and fruitful) relation between theory and history in the humanities and social sciences. One sees this development in literature within the broad array of critical practices comprehended, some more historical than others, under the rubric "The New Historicism." In the social sciences, despite and to some degree in reaction to the imperial quest of rational-choice theorists for a simplified and unified social science, there is a renewed interest in institutional approaches and more complex models in economics and political science. Philosophy is the most resistant to the general drift toward some form of historicism, to the point that Richard Rorty, who has made a strong move in this direction and is perhaps the most widely read American philosopher, is no longer considered a philosopher at all by most graduate professors in the discipline. Philosophy also makes the strongest disciplinary claims for self-referential autonomy, rendering its relation to the larger intellectual public the most problematic. In its practice, if not its content, philosophy seems to have moved the least from the model developed in the 1950s.

At present, the humanities more generally seem to be moving in two directions, both under the sign of a cultural or historical turn. One eschews essentialism and emphasizes the contingent; even the most basic conventional categories of identity are treated as unstable, as cultural or historical constructs—race, gender, sexuality. Opening up such questions—provided it does not ignore the various domains of experience and institutional forms of power—has the promise of both scholarly fruitfulness and civic value.[100]

But much current scholarship in the humanities, seemingly guided by the same compass, points in a different direction. A particular deconstructive style rather crudely, and I think unintentionally, restores essentialism: one's situation, especially circumstances of race or gender, all too readily, even tautologically, determines ideology. All unmaskings have tiresomely similar denouements. Many advocates of this version of cultural studies embrace what

they call a postdisciplinary academy, and they are hostile to the notion of disciplines as they have developed since the Enlightenment.[101]

Thus one tendency in the broad domain of culture studies fruitfully combines the methods of the humanities with the topical concerns once identified with the social sciences to open new terrain. Another, however, rather discouragingly closes the circle prematurely. As the space of academic inquiry opens up, as more diverse methods and approaches are adopted, one might anticipate a new cosmopolitanism among humanists. Unfortunately, such is not the case; if anything, there has been, as David Damrosch has observed, "an increase of factionality and coterie behavior."[102]

Looking past such factionalism, one finds a broad divide in academic culture today. One cluster of scholars resides in a variety of humanities disciplines (including history and anthropology). They share weak borders, openly-declared value commitments, and a historical/cultural sensibility, which produces, inevitably, a tendency toward particularism. Another group, identifying mostly with the social sciences—in mainstream economics, political science, law, sociology, and some versions of ethics—is more oriented to tight subfields (often interdisciplinary) and to methods affirmed as objective that attend little to considerations of time and place. The gap between these two interpretive frames, which roughly tracks the borders between the social sciences and the humanities, is more difficult to bridge now than at any time in the past half century.

Taking a longer view, however, one is naturally struck by important continuities, both substantive and structural, especially in the social sciences. Issues of scientism, objectivity, formalism, and the claims of rational-choice theory in the social sciences emerged in the 1920s.[103] The humanities have changed in much more fundamental ways than the social sciences since that decade, when they were archaeological and philological, dealing not at all with the aesthetic issues that are so much the issue today. Whatever the changes in content, however, it is striking how little the structure of the university has altered since the 1920s, when the present pattern of departments and divisions emerged. The department remains the basic organizational unit. Very few new departments have been created anywhere since World War II, and even fewer



have been abolished. The units of university organization no longer clearly denote the actual intellectual work sustained, yet they manage to provide an effective structure for it.

The relations between the university and the public have surely been better at other times. While some disciplines and subdisciplines have established sub-publics (economics, for example, is oriented to government and business elites, and feminist scholarship is oriented to a wider, interdisciplinary, even interactive, but still particularistic audience), the notion of a general public seems to be attenuated. The dissolution of a public sphere and the limited role of academic intellect in whatever survives of that sphere is worrisome. A democratic culture and polity invites and needs an open dialogue on all questions pertaining to the human condition. Restoring a place for academic knowledge in the public culture and a role for public discussion in academic culture ought to be a high priority of both academic and public leaders. Yet we must not dream of a perfect rapprochement, of a seamless web of discourse uniting the language of daily life with that of the academy.

The university ought never be too comfortable in and with society—and vice versa. To say that the university ought to be connected to society is not to say that it might properly be a synecdoche for the world. But neither should it claim a position of transcendence.[104] There ought to be a degree of friction deriving from the critical spirit that is central to academic intellect. Our thinking about the modern university, as Wendy Steiner has recently observed, is contradictory. We imagine it at once "hermetically sealed from reality and centrally constitutive of it." But, she insists, "the value of the university, like art, lies in its simultaneous relevance and irrelevance to reality, in a balance that we continually renegotiate."[105]

## ENDNOTES

[1]See Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 4th ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), chap. 6; Richard Freeland, *Academia's Golden Age: Universities in Massachusetts, 1945–1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Roger L. Geiger, *Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Research Universities Since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); and Hugh Davis Graham and Nancy Diamond, *The Rise of the American Research University* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

[2]Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since World War II* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 155; David Damrosch, *We Academics: Changing the Culture of the University* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 51.

[3]Clark Kerr, *The Great Transformation in Higher Education, 1960–1980* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1991), 35–37.

[4]Kerr, *The Uses of the University,* 149; Jonathan R. Cole, Elinor G. Barber, and Stephen R. Graubard, eds., *The Research University in a Time of Discontent* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 380–381.

[5]On differentiation and the importance of *where* faculty are employed, see Burton R. Clark, "Faculty: Differentiation and Dispersion," in Arthur Levine, ed., *Higher Learning in America, 1980–2000* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 162–178; on localism, see Freeland, *Academia's Golden Age.*

[6]It should be noted that in the 1940s a large number of distinguished European academics joined American university faculties. Between 1933 and 1943, the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars helped 269 academics find positions in the United States.

[7]David L. Featherman, "What Does Society Need from Higher Education," *Items* 47 (1993): 41. Of course, Great Britain, a considerable center for scholarship, and the substantial English-speaking research establishments in the countries of the former British empire both contribute to this figure.

[8]Data on Nobels from Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion,* 155.

[9]Abraham Flexner, *Universities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1930).

[10]Merle Curti, "The Setting and the Problem," in Merle Curti, ed., *American Scholarship in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953), 15.

[11]Portions of the Report are conveniently available in Richard Hofstadter and Wilson Smith, eds., *American Higher Education: A Documentary History,* 2 vols. (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1961), II, 970–990; quotation from p. 990.

[12]See Richard M. Freeland, "Pragmatism Won't Save Us But It Can Help," in Robert Orrill, ed., *The Condition of American Liberal Education* (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1995), 158–162.

[13]Kerr, *The Uses of the University,* 142.

[14]Ernest L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered* (Princeton, N.J.: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990), 12–13.

[15]This is a major theme of Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, *The Academic Revolution* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968).

[16]The ease with which quotas for Jewish students were deployed in the interwar years, particularly at the most elite private universities, is evidence of the weakness of universalist principles in that era.

[17]Freeland, *Academia's Golden Age,* 168.



[18]See René Wellek, "Literary Scholarship," in Curti, ed., *American Scholarship in the Twentieth Century,* 111–145; Louis Wirth, "The Social Sciences," in Ibid., 33–82.

[19]Harvard University, Committee on the Objectives of a General Education in a Free Society, *General Education in A Free Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: The University, 1946), 71, 74.

[20]Quoted in Terence Halliday, "Sociology's Fragile Professionalism," in Terence Halliday and Morris Janowitz, eds., *Sociology and Its Publics: The Forms and Fates of Disciplinary Organization* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 6. Pages 3–12 contain an interesting comparison of the professionalism of Parsons and the more civic professionalism of Morris Janowitz.

[21]On the mobilized state and its contributions to research, see Walter McDougall, *The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

[22]See Robert A. McCaughey, *International Studies and Academic Enterprise: A Chapter in the Enclosure of American Learning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

[23]David Potter, *People of Plenty* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1954); John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1958).

[24]Geiger, *Research and Relevant Knowledge,* 105–106.

[25]Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus, *The Development of American Political Science* (Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), 168–169.

[26]See Thomas Bender, *Intellect and Public Life* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 107; Edward Shils, *The Constitution of Society* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1982), chap. 10, esp. p. 259.

[27]See Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Knopf, 1963). Religion, according to Hofstadter, was the other major source.

[28]Shils, *The Constitution of Society,* chap. 10.

[29]Kerr, *The Uses of the University,* xiv.

[30]James B. Gilbert, *Another Chance: Postwar America, 1945–1968* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1981), 22.

[31]Geiger, *Research and Relevant Knowledge,* 41.

[32]Freeland, *Academia's Golden Age,* 88; Damrosch, *We Academics,* 24.

[33]See Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Daniel Bell, *The Reforming of General Education* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966).

[34]See, for example, Allan Tate, "The Man of Letters in the Modern World," *Hudson Review* 5 (1952): 335–345. Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White, eds., *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957) is both an artifact of the growing awareness and concern about mass culture in the 1950s and a convenient anthology of both commentary and analysis.

[35]Richard Hofstadter and Walter Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955).

[36]Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: W. Sloane Associates, 1949); on Niebuhr, see Richard W. Fox, *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985); for a secularist embrace of Niebuhr's realism, see Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Politics of Hope* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), chap. 9.

[37]Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York: J. Cape and H. Smith, 1930).

[38]See Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion,* 158–163.

[39]T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940). His more important book, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949), sustains this notion, particularly in an appendix on "The Unity of European Culture."

[40]See David Hollinger, *Science, Jews, and Secular Culture: Studies in Mid-Century American Intellectual History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), chap. 8. For two key essays of the time, see Robert Merton, "A Note on Science and Democracy," *Journal of Legal and Political Sociology* 1 (1942): 115–126; and Sidney Hook, "The New Failure of Nerve," *Partisan Review* 10 (1943): 2–23.

[41]Hollinger, *Science, Jews, and Secular Culture,* chap. 2.

[42]William F. Buckley, *God and Man at Yale* (Chicago, Ill.: Regnery, 1951).

[43]Julie A. Reuben, *The Making of the Modern American University* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1996). On the vocation of inquiry in the nineteenth century, see David Hollinger, "Inquiry and Uplift: Late Nineteenth Century American Academics and the Moral Efficacy of Scientific Practice," in Thomas L. Haskell, ed., *The Authority of Experts* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1984), 142–156.

[44]See Edward Purcell, *The Crisis of Democratic Theory* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1973), 26; Bender, *Intellect and Public Life,* 103. See also Mark C. Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible: The American Debate Over Objectivity and Purpose, 1918–1941* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994).

[45]See Henrika Kuklick, "Boundary Maintenance in American Sociology: Limitations to Academic Professionalization," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 16 (1980): 209.

[46]See Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (New York: Free Press, 1990).

[47]John Kenneth Galbraith's *American Capitalism* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1956), which develops the concept in a way that dissolves conflict, confirms my point.

[48]See Gilbert, *Another Chance,* 204; Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).

[49]Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Center* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949).



[50]Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "The Causes of the Civil War," in Schlesinger, Jr., *The Politics of Hope,* 47; originally published in *Partisan Review* (1949).

[51]David Easton, "Political Science in the United States: Past and Present," in David Easton and Corrine S. Schelling, eds., *Divided Knowledge: Across Disciplines, Across Cultures* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1991), 44.

[52]See Lionel Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination* (New York: Viking Press, 1950); Richard Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historians* (New York: Knopf, 1969), 442. Daniel Bell makes this point in his book, *The Social Sciences Since the Second World War* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1982), 51.

[53]See Daniel Bell, ed., *The New American Right* (New York: Criterion Books, 1955); Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Knopf, 1955), esp. chaps. 1–3.

[54]For a classic statement of this pluralism, see Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1961). For critiques, see Michael Rogin, *The Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1967); and Peter Bachrach, *The Theory of Democratic Elitism: A Critique* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1967).

[55]Ellen Lagemann, *The Politics of Knowledge: The Carnegie Corporation, Philanthropy, and Public Policy* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 124.

[56]Paul S. Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 160–173, quotations from p. 168.

[57]David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1950); *Time* (27 September 1954).

[58]Byron E. Shafer, "On Being the Same but Different," *TLS* (29 March 1996): 7.

[59]Richard Parker in *New York Times Book Review* (28 January 1996): 29.

[60]Clifford Geertz may come close, but he makes the point, for it is mainly as a humanist who has assimilated anthropology to literature that his current reputation rests.

[61]For Robert Merton's classic formulations, see Robert Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1949; rev. and enl. ed., 1957). On the appeal of this approach to foundations, see Lagemann, *The Politics of Knowledge,* 148.

[62]See Talcott Parsons, Robert Bales, and Edward Shils, *Working Papers in the Theory of Action* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1953). At the level of high theory, this analysis provided the intellectual foundations for what Shils called "consensual pluralism."

[63]On the role of American studies, see Linda K. Kerber, "Diversity and the Transformation of American Studies," *American Quarterly* 41 (1989): 415–431.

[64]See Michael Geyer, "Multiculturalism and the Politics of General Education," *Critical Inquiry* 19 (1993): 507–508; David Bromwich, *Politics by Other Means* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992), 119.

[65]Curti, "The Setting and the Problem," 32.

[66]Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955).

[67]Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1949).

[68]Quoted in Eric Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition: The Family of Man and 1950s America* (Albuquerque, N.Mex.: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 4.

[69]On Aspen and the cultural movement it represented, see James Sloan Allen, *The Romance of Commerce and Culture: Capitalism, Modernism, and the Chicago-Aspen Crusade for Cultural Reform* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

[70]See Frederick F. Siegel, *Troubled Journey: From Pearl Harbor to Ronald Reagan* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), chap. 8.

[71]Lionel Trilling, *Beyond Culture: Essays on Literature and Learning* (New York: Viking Press, 1965), 3–30; originally published in *Partisan Review* (1961).

[72]Irving Howe, *Selected Writings, 1950–1990* (San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990), 240.

[73]See Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1986), vii-xii.

[74]Morris Dickstein, *Gates of Eden: American Culture in the Sixties* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 4, 9.

[75]Susan Sontag, "Notes on Camp," in Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1966), 275–292; originally published in *Partisan Review* (1964).

[76]Diana Trilling, "The Other Night at Columbia," in Diana Trilling, *Claremont Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1964), 153–173; originally published in *Partisan Review* (1958). See also Lisa Phillips, ed., *Beat Culture and the New America, 1950–1965* (New York and Paris: Whitney Museum of American Art and Flammarion, 1995).

[77]Arthur Danto, *Beyond the Brillo Box: The Visual Arts in Post-Historical Perspective* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1992).

[78]Quoted in Allen, *The Romance of Commerce and Culture,* 4.

[79]Sally Barnes, *Greenwich Village, 1963* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993), 10.

[80]Michael Harrington, *The Other America* (New York: Macmillan, 1962); Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press and Harvard University Press, 1963).

[81]See Jonathan Arac, *Critical Genealogies: Historical Situations for Postmodern Literary Studies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 314–315; Bruce Robbins, *Secular Vocations: Intellectuals, Professionalism, and Culture* (London: Verso, 1993); Bruce Robbins, "'Othering' the Academy: Professionalism and Multiculturalism," *Social Research* 58 (1991): 355–372; the exchange between Andrew Ross and Richard Rorty in *Dissent* (Fall 1991): 483–490 and (Spring 1992): 263–267; and the statement by Ross quoted by Stanley Fish in Stanley Fish, *Professional Correctness: Literary Studies and Political Change* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1995), 117: the academy "is a massive public sphere in itself, involving millions of people in this country alone, and so the idea that you break out of the academy into the public is rather a nonsense."



[82]Of many examples, see Roger Kimball, *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Higher Education* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990).

[83]Geiger, *Research and Relevant Knowledge,* 253.

[84]For an account of this development in the discipline of history, see Thomas Bender, "Wholes and Parts: The Need for Synthesis in American History," *Journal of American History* 73 (1986): 120–136.

[85]Identifying the same cluster of developments, Dorothy Ross uses historicism as an equally useful general identification in "Panel on the Johns Hopkins Seminar of History and Politics," *Studies in American Political Development* 8 (1994): 394.

[86]Curti, "The Setting and the Problems," 5. A key work here was Caroline Ware, ed., *The Cultural Approach to History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940).

[87]Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

[88]See Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), esp. chap. 7.

[89]Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 5, 6. Almost all the essays in this volume were originally published in the 1960s. For the earlier work, see Clifford Geertz, *Agricultural Involution: The Process of Ecological Change in Indonesia* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1963); *Peddlers and Princes: Social Change and Economic Development in Two Indonesian Towns* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1963); and *The Social History of an Indonesian Town* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965).

[90]His key early works include *Madness and Civilization* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961); *Birth of the Clinic* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963); *The Order of Things* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1966); and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969). Even more influential were *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975); and *History of Sexuality,* vol. I (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).

[91]See Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato, eds., *The Structuralist Controversy* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972).

[92]For an interesting study of the pattern of absorption of French theory in the United States, see Michele Lamont, "How to Become a Dominant French Philosopher: The Case of Jacques Derrida," *American Journal of Sociology* 93 (1987): 584–622.

[93]Julie Thompson Klein, "Knowledge, America, and Liberal Education," in Orvill, ed., *The Condition of American Liberal Education,* 146.

[94]See, for example, Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Natalie Z. Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1975); Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985); Joan W. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Hannah F. Pitkin, *Fortune is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of*

*Niccolo Machiavelli* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1984); Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1989); Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990); and K. Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (London: Methuen, 1992).

[95]Jürgen Habermas is the most well-known European student of the American pragmatists, but see also the extremely insightful exploration of American pragmatism as theory by the German Hans Joas, *Pragmatism and Social Theory* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

[96]For a fine historical argument locating pragmatism in this context, see James L. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). See also his recent and important survey of the current place of pragmatism in American academic culture: "Pragmatism: An Old Name for Some New Ways of Thinking," *Journal of American History* 83 (1996): 100–138.

[97]Edward Said, "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community," in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press, 1983), 147.

[98]On this shift, see David A. Hollinger, "How Wide the Circle of 'We': American Intellectuals and the Problem of Ethnos Since World War II," *American Historical Review* 98 (1993): 317–337.

[99]See George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). For a critique, see Thomas Bender, "Putting Religion in its Place," *Culturefront* 3 (Fall 1994): 77–79.

[100]See the somewhat crudely argued but well-targeted warning of Masao Miyoshi, "A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State," *Critical Inquiry* 19 (1993): 726–751, especially his concluding remarks on pp. 750–751.

[101]The issues here are illustrated in the recent and rather messy contretemps surrounding *Social Text* (Spring/Summer 1996): 46–47; Alan Sokal, "A Physicist Experiments With Cultural Studies," *Lingua Franca* (May/June 1996): 62–64; and the responses by Andrew Ross, Sokal, and others in *Lingua Franca* (July/August 1996): 54–64.

[102]Damrosch, *We Academics,* 9.

[103]Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), Part IV.

[104]Here I extrapolate from Michael Walzer's notion of the intellectual as a "connected critic" in Michael Walzer, *The Company of Critics* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

[105]Wendy Steiner, *The Scandal of Pleasure* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 138.

# PART II

## TRAJECTORIES OF INTRA-DISCIPLINARY CHANGE: PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES