

Hugh Davis Graham and Nancy Diamond, *The Rise of American Research Universities* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997). 319 pp. \$39.95.

While today the major American research university is widely recognized as the world's best, Graham and Diamond point out that its emergence did not occur until after World War II and that it did not occur because of the postwar flow of brains and talent to this country alone. The authors deftly explain the ascendancy in terms of American departures from European models: the American tendency toward decentralization; our habit of competition within open markets; the pluralistic opportunities of both public and private systems; and a federal funding policy based on multiple agency sponsors and peer review. They then set out to isolate one function of the resulting institution—research—and trace its flow over the next four decades while assessing the various institutions competing for the enhanced status a research reputation bestows.

The examination reveals few surprises. The rich tend to get richer. Starting with the advantage of prestige and organization—with no obligation to provide grubby service programs (such as agriculture)—private institutions never lose their primacy. Only the explosion of medical school affluence and the political attractiveness of health-related research brings drama to the process, and for the most part it simply reinforces the status quo. After a quick and elegant reprise of American higher education, the authors chronicle the great surge of federal support for research in the sixties, the slowdown of the seventies, and the resurgence of funding driven by concerns of economic development and the emergence of the modern health-sciences center.

Trying to develop finer measures of institutions' research "horsepower," the authors develop a matrix of 1) federal R&D dollars per institution, 2) the number of journal articles published by institutional researchers, 3) the number of journal articles published in top-ranked science periodicals, 4) articles in top-ranked social science journals, and 5) the number of fellowships and grants in the arts and humanities. All are to be divided by the number of full-time faculty in order to arrive at a per-capita index of "performance." Correcting for this and that, the result is a kind of in-house version of the annual journalistic rankings of "quality." It all has a scholastic passion for enumeration about it.

One might ask, who cares? For this is very inbred work. It worships at the shrine of research without any question about what research constitutes, what its role is on and off campus, and whether and why it is worth doing. It is all good. The more

the better. Success is defined by grant-getting and journal publication. That much of what passes for research is interstitial and a kind of intellectual hygiene—assuring everyone that the professoriate is alive and mentally active—never surfaces.

Indeed, viewing it from a pinnacle of assumed success, the book neatly expresses the mindset of fin-de-siecle academia. While the rest of an information-driven society is learning to accommodate dynamic and sometimes chaotic development—while entities and individuals are obliged to continually reinvent themselves—the university remains static, linear, and hierarchial (which is probably why tenure is so passionately resented). Self-absorbed, self-centered, and sometimes solipsistic, the American academy in all its glory can look pathetic in its naive claims for status amid the rush of contemporary change. A Chinese priest, it is said, invented gunpowder in order to enhance the credibility of his idol. Too bad this book is not more inflammatory.

—George W. Johnson

Bogdan Mieczkowski, *The Rot at the Top: Dysfunctional Bureaucracy in Academia* (New York: University Press of America, 1995). 237 pp. \$52.50 hardcover, \$29.50 softcover.

Estela Mara Bensimon and Anna Neumann, *Redesigning Collegiate Leadership: Teams and Teamwork in Higher Education* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1993). 182 pp. \$35.00

The classic writings on universities address first-order questions concerning deals, aims, and purposes. Cardinal Newman's *The Idea of a University* was the prototype. They were philosophical and theoretical, presenting the university as an "ideal form." In England the original models for the university were Oxford and Cambridge—collegiate, cloistered, monastic, and select. In the U.S. there have been more varied forms—from Harvard (Cambridge over the Water), the land-grant universities, and the multiversities. In England and the U.S. the universities are now beset by problems. In England the problems include massification, overdependence on central government, and the threatened "moronisations" of mass "higher" education. In the U.S. the problems include cultural conflicts (political correctness versus democracy and the "closing of the American mind").

In this context there are few *studies* of universities. In Britain even academics are likely to have read more about universities in the form of novels by authors such as Malcolm Bradbury and David Lodge than in the form of research studies. But there is an active Society for Research in Higher Education and a growing list of literature, much of it in the field of policy studies.

These two books are to be welcomed as they make a contribution to the promotion of studies of higher education. The first mainly raises questions. The

second tries to provide some answers. They both focus on what in England used to be called “the Administration,” which now presents itself as “the Management.” Bogdan Mieczkowski has suffered from dysfunctional bureaucracies in a Russian prison, in a German prisoner-of-war camp, and in American universities. A lot of his book is about himself, but the questions that he raises are nonetheless important and all the more pointed for that. He argues that bureaucracies in academia (“the presidents, the deans, and the provosts”) tend to become self-serving, to insulate themselves with protective strata of yes-people, and are “not restrained by any countervailing forces.” “No effective control of the campus bureaucrats exists either from the outside or the inside of the institutions of higher learning.” The bureaucrats “create a caste system” in which new members of the bureaucracy are tried and tested, as they serve time, before being recruited. Some of the recruits are quondam academics—“aspiring bureaucrats among the faculty who are attracted by the perks of bureaucratic power.” Mediocre scholars move to another context in which intellect is viewed as a threat and in which lack of it is an unnoticed norm.

Bensimon’s and Neumann’s book, which is a kind of “social psychology of leadership,” seeks a way ahead through teambuilding and teamwork. Their work is based on interviews with presidents and vice presidents of 15 institutions and partly informed by a “a focused dialogue held in 1989 in which several college presidents participated.” It is addressed mainly to college leaders. Collaborative leadership means more people having access to information and being involved in the processes of agenda setting, consultation, and policymaking, and leadership includes “the shared construction of meaning.” They are aware of different views of the university—as a bureaucracy, as a collegium, as a symbolic system, and as an organized anarchy—but they try to go beyond all these, all of which, they claim, assume that leadership in the property of one person rather than a group. They list the functions of the team and the roles of team thinking—definition, analysis, interpretation, criticism, and synthesis. If Mieczkowski presents the bureaucracy as a nightmare, they present the management team as a dream.

In England (but perhaps not Scotland and Wales—where the culture of education is better), Mieczkowski’s portrayal of the university’s bureaucratic problems seems more familiar, in real life, than Bensimon and Neumann’s proposed managerial “solutions.” My own fear is that the university’s problem is not essentially one of managerial style but rather of “managerialism” in a world where many have lost their bearings. The universities are now unsure of their moral purpose, and the new managerialists, with pragmatism instead of principles, now mislead the institutions of higher education. The groups that make up the society of the university are the teachers and the students, the support workers, and the administration. In England during the last two decades, when government has tried to transmute universities into diploma factories in the cause of “mass higher education” (a contradiction in terms), teachers and support workers have suffered casualization (and become disposable items in a commodified education and a consumerist culture). Students have suffered through the degradation of teachers and teaching.

Campus bureaucrats, exercising a bountiful power of patronage, select for promotion into their ranks those who can be relied upon to follow their wishes. These include the classic types—the “fawning brown-noser,” the creep-bully (whom the Austrians call “a cyclist”—bowing to those above and treading on those below); those who enjoy “working with (= manipulating) people.” The bureaucrats become a brotherhood, a Mafia where Omerta rules. See how they close ranks whenever acts of maladministration are exposed. It seems that the U.S. is like Britain in that there is equality before the law (theory), but not before the lawyers (practice). Academics in conflict with the administration are likely to find themselves up against a body of professionals for whom the case will be part of their work and not a diversion from it. For the scholar the opportunity cost of getting involved in administration is high, as Mieczkowski, an academic economist, points out.

Mieczkowski bases his arguments on case histories, anecdotes, experiences, records, and sample situations. Situations that he describes seem familiar. In Britain, in government and in universities, the bureaucrats are “moving towards a more executive style of management” (as one apologist put it). This means decisions made by small cliques, behind closed doors, in conditions of invisibility and unaccountability. Mrs. Thatcher introduced this style of management and in this respect, at least, Tony Blair is her son and heir. Where prime ministers lead vice chancellors follow—which is not surprising as some vice chancellors see themselves, solipsistically, as the prime minister within the polity of the university.

Mieczkowski’s book is a kind of sociology of administration or a general theory of bureaucracy in British academia. Like James Burnham (in *The Managerial Revolution*, 1940) and George Orwell (in *Animal Farm*, 1945), he views all bureaucracies as similar, being driven by lust for power and a concern for self-preservation and perpetuation. He does suggest some ways ahead—including proper selection, periodic performance reviews, and accountability of the bureaucrats to the faculty at large.

The vice chancellors, with some few exceptions, have been the willing executioners. They have flourished and their coteries have grown. The university is now made up of a professoriate (those tenured professors of yesteryear who still linger with us) and a proletariat (teachers on fixed-term contracts and campus workers on low wages and without job security). The rulers, though, are the feudal landlords (vice chancellors and their satraps), who live off the tithes (now risen from 10% to 40%—which are the overhead charged on the income-generating activities). Vice chancellors now enjoy the benefits of feudalism without its obligations.

I believe that the situation in the U.S. is better—partly because there is a plurality of universities, including liberal arts colleges and private institutions, and because there is a tradition of citizenship and independence. If the academic community is to be rebuilt, the reconstruction of collegiate leadership could be one way ahead. However, the rehabilitation of teaching, as Mieczkowski suggests, may also be a necessary condition.