Ivy and Industry: Business and the Making of the American University, 1880–1980. *By Christopher Newfield.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2003. 290 pp. Notes, index. Cloth, $32.95. ISBN: 0-822-33201-9.

Reviewed by John Servos

I opened this book with modest expectations. We have some fine histories of the American corporation and of the American university, but books on their intersection tend to fall into ruts worn deep by decades of debate about the role of corporations on campus. Case studies tend to be deficient in scope; synthetic works generally are deficient in both empirical content and theoretical imagination. Newfield, however, is neither a truffle hunter nor a knee-jerk ideologue. A professor of English at the University of California, Santa Barbara, he brings an outsider's eye to this history. While occasionally eccentric and sometimes preachy, Newfield conceives his subject broadly and challenges readers, whatever their a priori inclinations, to think anew about institutions that have been, and remain, vital to American society.

The university and the corporation have common roots in law and an interdependence that reaches back into the Gilded Age. Corporate wealth afforded universities essential capital; universities supplied growing corporations with technicians, managers, and scientific knowledge necessary for sustained growth. Newfield recognizes that the relationship carried mutual benefits, but his real interest is in the tensions it has engendered for the two kinds of institutions and for the middle class that was educated in one and often went to work for the other. These tensions were especially prominent in the history of the university, where pre-capitalist traditions of guild labor, emancipatory humanistic study, and intellectual freedom coexisted uneasily with managerial hierarchy, technical education, and efficient service. Was the goal of education to produce cooperative "organization men" or to educate autonomous thinkers? Was intellectual effort to be managed according to economic needs or cultivated as a form of playful exploration of the world and its possibilities? Newfield considers the sorts of answers that administrators and intellectuals gave these questions, ranging from those who unabashedly dismissed collegiate study as an amusement unrelated to adult life to those

who embraced intellectual play as the highest and most productive form of work. His survey includes many of the usual stops in a discussion of American universities, such as the views of Charles W. Eliot and John Dewey, but also traverses terrain that will be less familiar to historians of higher education, including trends in literary criticism, writings on the economics of basic research, and the literature of management gurus such as John Peters. Like the best historians, Newfield surprises readers with unanticipated connections between seemingly heterogeneous phenomena.

As he explores this large subject, Newfield resists the easy temptation to array his sources on one side or the other of some simple confrontation of academic and corporate cultures. Management, he tells us, is neither good nor evil and can serve many goals. Likewise, "humanism," in his telling, is fissionable and expresses many interests. For "managerial humanists," intellectual freedom was the luxury of the few; in their view the cultivated mind could develop best in isolation from the hurly-burly of commerce and politics. Others, "democratic humanists" in Newfield's vocabulary, saw humanistic learning as both liberating and useful and regarded the thinking, self-conscious, and ever-evolving individual as constitutive of a healthy democracy. Nor did academics, Newfield points out, have a monopoly on humanism. College-educated workers, to one degree or another, internalized the values of personal development and intellectual freedom to which they were exposed and carried them into the world of commerce, where those ideals could reemerge in counterpoint to the regimenting tendencies of corporate culture. When, in the 1970s, John Peters exhorted workers to liberate themselves, reimagine their jobs, and invent new opportunities, he was, in Newfield's view, expressing a kind of "corporate humanism" that was consistent with the aspirations of older forms of academic humanism. We can remain free agents in the large organization; we can reconcile efficiency and individual development; we can bring the interests of commerce, the individual, and the community into alignment.

Readers are bound to find lacunae and flaws in Newfield's intricate and wide-ranging history. His knowledge of the history of science and engineering in the academy is thin. He assaults postwar proponents of meritocractic education with intemperate vigor. His assessment of more recent trends toward diversity in the academy (a subject that he plans to treat at greater length in a second volume) seems at best optimistic. More

generally, he issues moral judgments with a confidence seldom encountered in academic history. But then, Newfield is not concerned simply with exploring the past; he wants guidance for the future. He is clearly anguished by the marginalization of the humanities, a condition he attributes as much to humanists themselves as to their critics, and he wishes to demonstrate in writing this history that the humanities have a vital role, not just in the academy, but also in generating solutions to the old problems of reconciling commercial culture and a humane, democratic society. This is to say that Newfield believes, with Dewey, that liberal thought is both revelatory and practical. By showing us contingency in the past, historical inquiry in particular can remind us that, despite constraints, there are always degrees of freedom to our situation, thereby restoring to us a sense of agency. Is the university fated to play a service role in a culture of commerce? Have the humanities become irrelevant to modern institutions? Newfield shows by historical example how influential the university and the humanities have been and, by implication, can be again. His book, then, is intended as an antidote to the malaise that infects humanistic studies, and, as such, it works.

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