

The University : A Reluctant Marketplace

J. Hillis Miller begins his comments on the “Transnational University” by lamenting the migration of the institution’s guiding ideology from “ideas” predicated on national service to a notion of “excellence” predicated on labor marketability. In “Globalization and the University,” Masao Miyoshi parallels this focus with a comprehensive history of modern globalization and the consequent exportation of automation, downsizing and the profit motive. While both authors begin their essays by decrying the incorporation of sacred, ivory pedagogies into the voracious, capitalist maelstrom that defines our modernity, each also ends with (hesitant) acquiescence to these sweeping changes while offering possibilities for reform (or rather, escape).

Miller offers his “University of Dissensus” as a counter to an inevitable administrative technocracy; Miyoshi concludes with a call to arms- allying both workers and academics- against the forces of market efficiency. Both regard the increasingly corporate university as a divulsion to the foundations of academia; this author, however, views these changes as an inevitable evolution: a recurrent resuscitation for relevance that marks every object of human making. And this, my colleagues, is a *good* thing.

The infusion of market-driven devices in the administration of academia- along with the increasingly technical execution of pedagogy- marks the University’s evolution from an “Institution” to “Knowledge Industry.” Accepting this fact concedes to the consequences that the collegiate corporation brings (enrollment-driven scheduling is an immediate example); however, it also speaks to the necessity of providing courses that

ably equip students with the requisite cognitive skills which better situate them within the contemporary realities of the post-collegiate labor market. Increasing competition for decreasingly available jobs speaks not to the reduction of academic rigor into mere vocational apprenticeship, but a demand for an intellectual program that both teaches *and* trains.

For example, while Miller argues for the continuation of “literature” as a necessary pursuit, I argue that it is just as important to pursue “literacy,” or rather a critical comprehension of history that also encourages the *creation* of new discourses within current contexts (rather than the mere archival of knowledge, which stasis in “institution” implies). Even the very nature of literature must (and has) evolved: from printed text to television, which, given the emerging generation’s media-centricity, commands paramount consideration in how knowledge is (literally) broadcasted. Only by understanding her role in the totality of textual progression can a student aptly participate in the evolution of a university able to buttress the negative forces of the market while welcoming the changes that said market must bring.

With “Industry” comes “Inclusion” (although admittedly accelerated). While Miyoshi argues against the “corporate buyout of high culture,” I argue that the greater the arts (and academia) are funded *at all*, the better society profits. The arts (and any “high” intellectual product for that matter) are afforded a far more democratic reach through private-public partnerships and corporate socially responsible acts than by the efforts of institutions alone. In rescuing cultural and intellectual artifacts from the exclusivity of collegiate discourse, private industries do not threaten their academic capital; rather, they augment the potency of their deliverance by ensuring their relevance.