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The University at the End of the Last Century: An Essay Review

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Frank, David John, & Jay Gabler (2006). *Reconstructing the university: Worldwide shifts in academia in the 20th century.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

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Levine, Donald N. (2006). *Powers of the mind: The reinvention of liberal learning in America.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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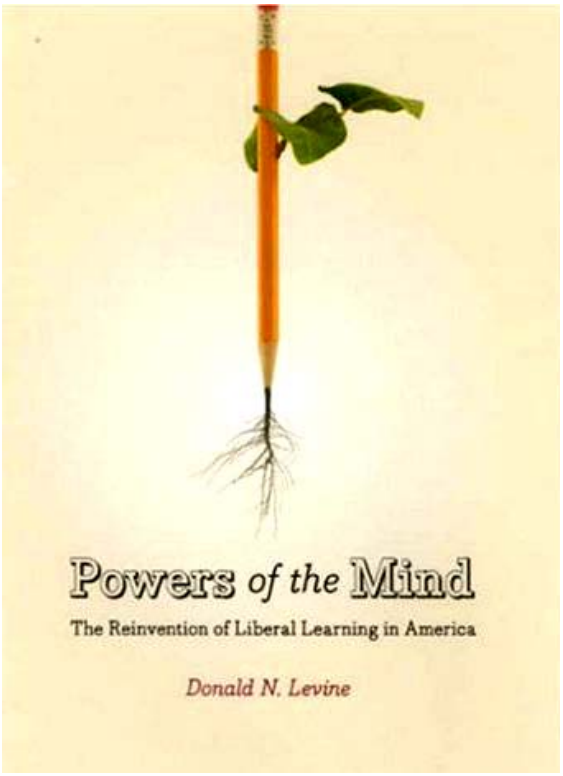
Two books, *Powers of the Mind* by Donald N. Levine and *Reconstructing the University* by David John Frank and Jay Gabler, offer important insight into the changing status of higher education at the end of the twentieth century. While the two books take vastly different approaches to their insights, judgments, and prescriptions, they work together to provide advice and understanding for administrators, faculty, and the general population. Levine offers a fascinating and

detailed insider's view of curricular development and transformation at one of the most influential institutions of higher education in the last century, the University of Chicago. Frank and Gabler's book is not a personal reflection on one institution, but a portrait of several institutions today as well as a multinational curriculum comparison, showing how curricular transformation based on societal shifts have transformed higher education.

Donald Levine wrote *Powers of the Mind* as a reflection of liberal arts/general education at the University of Chicago. Levine spent his career there, serving as professor and dean. Levine begins his book by examining the purpose of liberal education and its current status. According to Levine, a strong liberal education is necessary to prepare adequately the general citizenry who are capable of leading society. Levine differentiated among four layers of learning, from the lowest form of basic socialization, which he refers to as "primary socialization," to the highest form of learning. It is important to note, Levine believes that not everyone reaches the fourth layer. In fact, only a relative few, the "elite," are capable of such achievement. Levine continues to a deeper analysis of "secondary enculturation" and where it occurs. He looks at various cultures throughout history, including the main religious civilizations and classical societies. In his analysis, Levine explores the meaning of liberal arts.



There were similarities among these societies: their education centered on a series of great texts, often religious in theme. As he points out, a transition shifted learning needs from society-focused to self- and spirituality-focused. An additional transition occurred, furthermore, when the classical civilizations, such as China, Japan, and Greece, extended the notion of liberal education into a systematic curriculum. In China, the six topics around which the curriculum was organized were "rituals, music, archery, charioting, writing, and mathematics" (p. 13). Aristotle differentiated between education for the servant class and education for the elite class based on the intent

for which someone pursued learning. The higher form of learning, usually engaged in by the elite class, was for the sake of learning and expanding one's mind, not as a result of any obligation or requirement. Since that time, societies have codified their own versions of a liberal arts curriculum. These adaptations had the following broad ideals in common: math, science (originally astronomy), literature, fine arts, and rhetoric or oratory. The rough outline has changed little or the centuries, with the exception of the slow disappearance of oratory.

Donald N. Levine

Levine argues that the Industrial Age changed the focus of education, including liberal learning. He distinguishes three broad categories of revolutions that transformed modern society: differentiation, democratization, and rationalization. Included in this changing tide is a balance among the social class stratifications related to education access. A new sense of equality, as many philosophers claim, permeated modern society. The field of education shifted gradually as a result of the widespread demand for a technologically educated working class, which led to an increase in vocational/training curricula.

The ever-changing social and industrial landscape of the modern age brought forth a philosophical reconsideration of the purpose and intent of "liberal learning." Levine describes the modern philosophers' beliefs about the purpose of education as focusing on an individual's interests and self rather than a single grand notion of an educated person. The attack on the classical view of "liberal learning" was noticeable in educational reforms. The first elective course system was created at the University of Vermont, and it garnered widespread adoption, especially at Harvard University. This curriculum design was seen as encouraging freedom of learning through student self-expression and exploration.

Levine details how the elective system created interesting dilemmas within higher education by allowing students and faculty to pursue individual academic interests. Students were permitted essentially to chart their own individualized curricula in some cases. The elective system, meanwhile, gave faculty the resources to further

their own research interests. The downside was that when this new system was left unchecked, it promoted undergraduate education without direction or a solid foundation in classical values associated with "liberal learning." A new wave of reform arose quickly as a way to redefine liberal education. The resulting "*general education movement,*" as Levine calls it, was one of the key historical additions to higher education from the United States.

Levine argues that a new system required satisfying five criteria. The first criterion was serving the common social good. Included in this reform was the task of creating a new generation of public and social leaders. The second criterion was navigating the fine line between promoting individual exploration and deterring unchecked investigation. The third criterion was linking knowledge bases leading to an individual with fully utilized intellectual capacity in a strong general education foundation. The fourth criterion was maintaining the high ideals of "liberal learning." And finally, the fifth criterion was encouraging self reflection by students. The question of how to address these criteria in a "liberal learning" curriculum set the stage for the remainder of the text.

Levine analyzes how the University of Chicago addressed these challenges put forth by the general education movement at the turn of the twentieth century with the undergraduate division. He begins with the explanation of the school's early emphasis on graduate education and faculty research. William Rainey Harper, the university's founder, believed in preserving an undergraduate division that would graduate students worthy of the University of Chicago graduate student education. This is not to say, however, that this undergraduate program faced a smooth course without efforts to dismantle it. One hallmark of the University of Chicago is the administrators' willingness and eagerness to continually reflect on and revise curricula through experimentation.

From the curricular changes taking place at the university, Levine draws out a number of underlying themes. University administrators had no desire to engage in remedial education; rather, they believed in holding their students to the highest academic standards. As such, they were able to create a demanding and holistic general education curriculum based on interdisciplinary configuration led by faculty singularly committed to undergraduate teaching. Such a plan is evident in Harper's creation of the major and minor system. Students were required to select a single course of study for the purpose of deep examination. Harper also instituted a separation between the first two years and the last two years of study, first known as the Academic and University Colleges and later renamed the Junior

and Senior Colleges. This idea of a two-year general educational program extending beyond high school represented a departure from the traditional view of a clear distinction between the two entities.

Other themes drawn out by Levine include utilizing a model based on educating students with an eye toward developing certain characteristics essential for democratic citizenship rather than focusing on specific knowledge bases. What dovetails nicely with this particular school of thought was the encouragement of curriculum design to facilitate students' studies at their own customizable tempo. Administrators look to promote inquiry learning among students and a developing sense of participation within a larger "community of scholars." One example is the creation of an undergraduate research program, known as the College Research Opportunity Program (CROP).

The final category of curricular change themes identified by Levine centers on faculty involvement. The university leadership supported research on education and teaching while upholding benefits of diverse viewpoints among faculty. Activities included syllabi reformation and educational assessment that led in part to Benjamin Bloom's famous *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Curricular reform also advocated breadth in opinions and methodologies.

John Dewey and Robert Maynard Hutchins, according to Levine, represented similar yet warring factions in the curricular reform debates. Dewey only stayed at Chicago for a decade but during that time established his famous Laboratory School where teachers focused on active, holistic learning. Dewey believed in a series of developmental stages, each with its own distinct requirements that moved with a seamless flow from one stage to the next. Dewey espoused the linkage of education to students' everyday existence while also fostering their unique characteristics and abilities. Hutchins supported creating a curriculum to address developmental needs while providing the necessary tools for students to engage in social change. However, his curricular reform consisted of a coherent classical general education through the second year of college based on mastery of great books. Hutchins knew that meaningful change was possible only if teachers embraced this new plan through a corresponding shift in creating teaching methods.

With Dewey and principally Hutchins as a foundation for the University of Chicago's general education reform contribution in the twentieth century, Levine continues his exploration by considering contributions from Richard McKeon, a towering figure known to many only through Robert Pirsig's characterization in *Zen and the Art of*

Motorcycle Maintenance. That fascinating portrait obscures McKeon's long term contribution to the curricular debate at the university through his involvement in restructuring The New Plan, the humanities course for the two-year Hutchins College. As Levine points out, McKeon acknowledged three arts within humanities: *appreciation, analysis,* and *criticism*. The faculty committee created a capstone course entitled, "Observation, Interpretation, and Integration" that fully developed and utilized these three arts. In all of these curricular developments, McKeon's leadership was evident. McKeon also backed the plan to divide the existing European civilization course into two distinct classes on humanities and history, as well as championed the creation of a new western civilization course. Other important contributions from McKeon include his education policy papers addressing curricular reform and teacher qualifications.

Joseph Schwab was another faculty member at the University of Chicago responsible for a substantial contribution to teaching and curricular reform from the 1940s through the 1980s. Levine reports that Schwab relinquished a potentially successful career in science research to devote himself to education reform. Both Robert Maynard Hutchins and Richard McKeon served as mentors to Schwab, which provides insight into why Schwab selected his professional path. Schwab was another proponent of education for democracy. Because of his background and appreciation for an increasingly scientific world, he believed firmly in a scientific education to meet goals such as full involvement in democratic society. Schwab warned against the dangers of the elective system and academic majors. His concern was that these systems signaled a return to the previous system that permitted unsupervised studies.

Schwab served on a committee that engaged in lengthy deliberations over science curricula reform. The end result was the creation of a science course of study that relied on class discussion and laboratory work with an eye toward inclusion in the general education curriculum. Schwab, in addition, was a well-respected educator who argued passionately for a new breed of teacher capable of conducting reflective and inquiry-based classes. Like John Dewey, he knew that his curricular reforms were only possible if talented teachers embraced teaching methods more demanding than traditional lectures. He appreciated that only by breaking out of their ruts could teachers escape the cycle of teaching the way that they were taught. A continuing trend with Levine's analysis was the emphasis on the need for a corresponding change and excellence in pedagogy to meet the demands of these curricular reforms.

After his discussions of Joseph Schwab, Levine changes course slightly, focusing on the curricular reform of 1986 that included a required world civilization course. One debate that focused on these courses was the issue of how to separate appropriately the humanities material from the historical perspective. During 1948, the university faculty instituted a required western civilization course that offered a way to incorporate historical perspectives into the curriculum. Globalization, which gained momentum following World War II, called for a reconsideration of civilization studies based solely on Western culture. The institution responded by including coursework on diverse cultures across the world. As Levine argues, the curriculum reform of 1986 was a subtle shift in importance of Western civilization as a capstone course to a comparative foundation course that broaden students' understanding of Western thought in a global perspective. The faculty began to question 1) why emphasis was placed on the Western world and 2) whether to make the civilization course a requirement for all students, not just those enrolled in liberal arts. The faculty's reflections resulted in the civilization requirement of 1986. They believed that this course would address the purpose of a general education to fulfill requirements of developing socially responsible and democratic citizens.

Levine hypothesizes that the University of Chicago as well as other higher education institutions engaged in curricular reform in response to societal changes. He examines outcomes from curricular reform movements across the country to determine how they evolved over time and he identifies four broad categories: "character of the learner," "universe of things to be known," "common heritage of humanity," and "disciplines of knowing and creating" (p. 178). The first category, "character of the learner," is a classical, holistic approach to education that encourages critical thought on a wide range of liberal arts disciplines. This style promoted leadership development especially designed to advance democracy and encourage social change. The second category, "universe of things to be known," upheld the importance of education in wide-ranging topics. Levine points to the Contemporary Civilization course at Columbia University as an exemplary way to cover effectively such breadth and depth in material that went beyond a typical survey course. The third category espoused the need for everyone to have a strong foundation in general knowledge. This concept is an extension of earlier arguments in favor of teaching the great books. The fourth and final category was a continuation of the classical curriculum that included basic studies in rhetoric and logic along with the sciences.

Levine argues that the University of Chicago contributed to the general education movement with its curriculum designed to "cultivate a *determinate range of intellectual skills*" (p. 185). These skills, as he elucidates, were the ability to think critically about art, understand the scientific method, participate in public policy, and appreciate differing world civilizations. Where the university has truly excelled has been the synthesis of these classical liberal arts ideals within modern societal applications. As Levine observes, Richard McKeon was a key player in the fight for Chicago's innovative curricular reform. He led efforts to conceptualize the curriculum based on skills important in the modern world rather than specific disciplines or subjects. Levine spent the following two chapters outlining his interpretation of the "eight powers" (p. 187) involved with these new curricular ideals. Levine's discussion of the importance of the body in education may strike some as novel or unusual for a longtime faculty member at the University of Chicago. Nonetheless, it is what gives his book a particular power as he goes beyond the perennialist curriculum of a Chicago ["of a Chicago"? is there a word missing here?] and unites longstanding religious and spiritual practices in somatic intelligence and learning.

The first of two groups for the "eight powers" was the "powers of prehension" (p. 190) that includes abilities in these areas: "audiovisual," "kinesthetic," verbal comprehension, and world comprehension. Levine discussed his belief in the importance of utilizing aural and visual cues within critical thinking contexts, which can then be applied further in numerous disciplines such as the fine arts and life sciences, as well as everyday living. The kinesthetic power relied on study of the mind-body connection in order to reach a higher self-awareness, principles the students could later apply on a larger scale for the greater good of society. Levine's vision of verbal comprehension follows a course limned in Bloom's Taxonomy. The first step toward understanding began with a student's interpretation of what the message actually represented. The second step involved the student deciphering and comprehending what the message represented within its own environment. Finally, Levine's fourth "power of prehension," world comprehension, requires understanding "the central structural features of any world" (p. 200). It represented the highest form of "liberal learning" through which students learn to appreciate and participate in world civilization.

The second grouping of Levine's "eight powers" was the four "powers of expressions" (p.204), those skills he believes are fundamental to forming a whole person. They comprise "self-formation," problem resolution, knowledge integration, and

communication. Self-formation advanced John Dewey's ideals of understanding one's self and cultivating independent thinking in order to make meaningful contributions to society. Problem resolution also involved a reflection on prior liberal arts curricular ideas, this time rooted in the classical subject of rhetoric. Levine advocates instruction in the complete course of debating, beginning with argument selection, moving next to argument formation, then resolution, and finally proceeding to oration. The entire process of problem resolution fit well with the third power, knowledge integration. This power promotes the application of knowledge and critical thought on diverse fields. The second step in knowledge integration extends to employing these lessons in collaborative ways. Communication, the last "power of expression," works to tie together the previous powers. Levine differentiates between persuasive communication and engaging dialogue. Persuasion requires the student to understand and respect the audience's needs as a way to be fully effective. Dialogue, as Levine describes it, compelled the participant to move beyond respecting the other party to the point where the participant valued and incorporated other arguments. Levine believes that this power of give and take in dialogue was the highest level of his eight "powers of the mind."

Once Levine describes his eight powers essential to a modern liberal arts curriculum, he presents various forms of pedagogy to reach these goals. While Levine argues for teaching as a transmission of information, he also cautions that it be used as a place to start, not as an end in itself. He further encourages the use of instructors well-versed in the particular knowledge areas who are also adept at navigating classroom learning activities created to stimulate development of the "eight powers." Such activities, therefore, require instructors who had mastered these powers and could serve as role models for students. Levine addresses how various teaching methods, both traditional and innovative, might fit within the new "liberal learning" environments.

Levine follows this discussion with an insightful analysis of his own teaching career at the University of Chicago. He begins by encouraging educators to give considerable thought to the questions of what to teach and why is it important to teach it. It is a process that educators should revisit frequently to evaluate new knowledge. He strives to stimulate his students to engage more fully in conversations. He offers eight types of conversation upon which a teacher can base a course. The first type is a complex conversation that forced students to either follow arguments across time or construct an argument. The second type calls for students to validate the existence of a particular

discipline or field of study. The third conversation type offered by Levine requires students to interact with a number of conversations across multiple disciplines, which would utilize a number of the "eight powers." The fourth type of conversation entails the reorganization of arguments under different contexts. Comparison of conversations, the fifth type, leads students through a critical examination of two fields by comparing their scope. The next two types of conversation follow a similar thread. Type six directs students to compare conversations in related or complementary fields. The seventh type applies conversations to students' personal interests, which serve as a form of capstone course. The final type of conversation investigates what conversations have taken place and how they are organized. These types of conversation offer frameworks for teaching within a new form of "liberal learning" curriculum. Levine remains hopeful that students who successfully complete such a course of education, however small the group may be, will use their powers to benefit all of society.

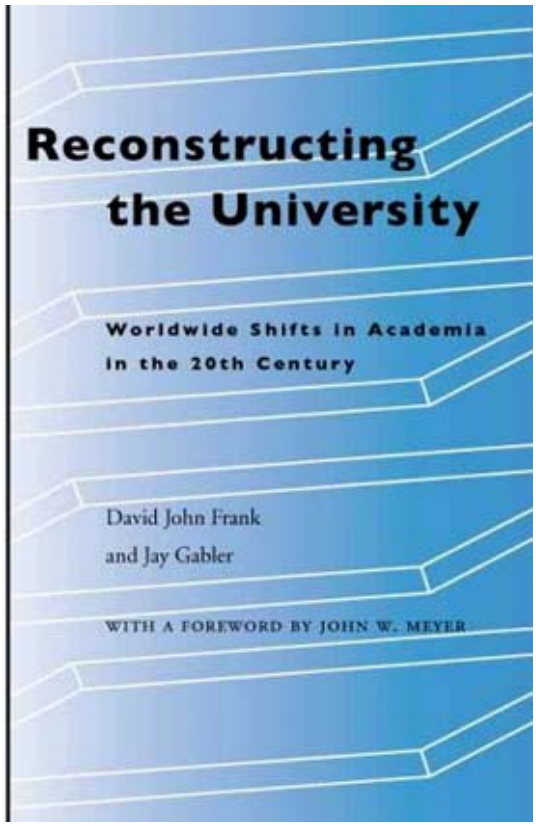
The Levine book offers an insider's perspective to the events and reasoning behind the curricular reform continually underway at the University of Chicago. Levine does an admirable job of laying the historical groundwork for understanding the liberal arts curriculum at the modern-day University of Chicago. The book helps us to understand the importance of Chicago's contributions to liberal learning, through its many curricular reforms.

What Levine does so well is outline how lengthy and time-consuming a process it is to undergo curricular reform. He explains, furthermore, that such a process should embrace continual renewal and self-examination to ensure that an institution is putting forth its best effort, in terms of teacher engagement and student learning outcomes. Strong leadership is important for curricular reform because of the top-down endorsements necessary to institutionalize any real sense of change. A recurring theme throughout the Levine text is a return to earlier models and successes (see p. 43). On the other hand, Levine fails to put events in historical perspective, either in relation to what was happening in Chicago or the state of higher education elsewhere in the United States. The book also fails to provide alternative suggestions or take a critical view of the University of Chicago. Yet, as a detailed discussion of the curricular rationales and transformations at Chicago in the last century, it is perhaps unparalleled.

David John Frank and Jay Gabler take a different approach to the analysis of liberal arts education in their book, *Reconstructing the University*. In the introduction, the authors explain how their study

examines a decline in certain disciplines, notably many in liberal arts, while other disciplines have seen a surge in demand. These changes have led to a slow but steady restructuring within higher education across the world. Frank and Gabler begin by comparing changes in high education across a variety of institutions, for example Oxford University, University of Chicago, and the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. They find that certain changes were common, regardless of institutional type, age, or location. They also realize that societal changes during the twentieth century were responsible, in part, for widespread creation and growth of economics courses while history courses experienced decline. Although the authors recognize the change process as a necessary component of higher education, they nonetheless choose to identify and investigate the underlying causes for these transformations.

Frank and Gabler's treatment of these topics differs from the available literature in three distinct ways. First, they explore effects within multiple academic disciplines as they interacted with one another. They use this method in an attempt to understand more fully how the change in available resources for one discipline may have affected resource availability for other disciplines, assuming that resources are finite at any given institution. Their second variation from traditional research utilizes an international perspective. They explored course offerings across countries and found many similarities. The third and final difference is their perception of higher education as an entity that actively engages in "mapping reality" (p. 14) built on a defined academic foundation. They base these assumptions on the stated missions of such institutions. Prior research has viewed higher education as an entity that responds and adapts passively to changes imposed by society or another influential force. Frank and Gabler, however, believe that changes in the general body of knowledge have brought about shifts in reality, which led in turn to corresponding changes within academe. These entities are dialectically related, and



the university is no more apart from society than the public schools or other institutions.

The authors continue their introduction by highlighting the replacement of religious beliefs as the basis of knowledge by the rising importance placed on secularization and science. They noted that many previously held truths rooted in religion, the creation of man for example, underwent universal fundamental shifts in logic when science became foundational for such study. The new importance placed on science and reason created increased demand for postsecondary education, which was directly responsible for the widespread proliferation of higher educational institutions around the world. The authors argue that the many players: faculty, students, funding agencies, and the like, perform together on a global stage. Such activity is responsible for the marked similarities in institutions across both national and discipline boundaries.

David John Frank

The book's method consists of first exploring historical changes across the three broad fields of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. It then evaluates transformations inside each one of those fields. Finally, the book examines what changes occurred in the single discipline of history.

Frank and Gabler hypothesize that global societal change in the search for truth led to profound and striking impacts on the transformation of higher educational missions during the twentieth century. They expected to see a decline in emphasis for the humanities and natural sciences with a corresponding increase in the social sciences. Furthermore, they anticipated a preference in favor of applied fields rather than basic fields as this is part of how higher education has moved away from a previously fundamental duty to add to pure knowledge "for its own sake" and toward the creation of knowledge for use. Such a state, the authors argue, makes academe vulnerable to outside influences, whether they were market or government forces. But there are forces that drive this change, one being the shift from religiously grounded societies to scientifically and technologically grounded ones. With wider access to higher education,

curricula designed to educate the common man have greater significance. The increased number of faculty in the social sciences, in both percentage and absolute number, supports the authors' argument. Social science faculty numbers increased more than twofold while the other two fields both witnessed decline. Coupled with these changes was the simultaneous shift from basic to applied research. When the authors examined faculty data from institutions in British Commonwealth countries, their findings upheld their hypotheses, both within the respective fields as well as across countries.

Analysis of classical humanities disciplines offers further insights for the field as a whole. The authors examine developments within the following disciplines: classics and archeology, theology, philosophy, history, fine arts, language and literature (Western versus non-Western languages), and linguistics. Classical humanities in particular enjoyed much prominence throughout higher education history. As noted previously from the Levine book, humanities curricula date back to ancient classical civilizations. Frank and Gabler, however, trace the steady decline in humanities during the twentieth century. They argue that the rising attention to emerging cultures and the plight of the common man were largely responsible for displacing scholarly focus away from the classics. They believe that the movement from the sacred to the secular initiated the downturn in resources dedicated to research, and thus faculty and enrollment, within the humanities.

Although the field experienced a downturn as a whole, specific disciplines saw different results. The authors propose that those disciplines with an applied focus that allowed students to engage actively in creative endeavors would fare better than the basic disciplines. These areas, they argued, permitted students control over their studies. Frank and Gabler specifically predict that traditional areas such as classics and archeology, philosophy, theology, and Western languages, would suffer from the flattening of authoritarian structures. As the emerging areas of research gained higher status with the simultaneous rise of the elective system, the authors also predict benefits for history, non-Western languages, fine arts and linguistics. Data from the British Commonwealth countries indicated steep losses in percentage of faculty representing classics and archeology, philosophy, and theology from 1915 until 1995. Moderate losses were suffered in fine arts, linguistics, and Western languages, with moderate losses in history and non-Western languages. The authors interpret these results as evidence of society's perceptions of these fields as either too closely aligned with outdated viewpoints (as

witnessed by large drops in faculty percentages) or capable of transformation (mild drops in faculty percentage).

The authors continue their breakdown of shifting global ideological effects on disciplines within the social sciences: economics, political science, psychology, anthropology, sociology, and geography. They postulate that industrialization would lead to an overall increase in economics, with its business orientation. They predict similar effects for political science, geography, and sociology because of their connection with scientific methods to understanding global phenomena. The disciplines at risk of losing ground were those areas that maintained conventional views of Western and religious domination, chiefly anthropology and psychology. The concurrent presence and acceptance of previously underrepresented groups, entities, and ideas encouraged the shift toward inclusive disciplines. British Commonwealth data upheld these predictions, although it is important to note that all social science disciplines underwent positive growth in faculty between 1915 and 1995. Sociology, geography, political science, and economics each realized more than one hundred percent growth with sociology charting an astounding twenty-fold increase. Anthropology and psychology also recorded positive percentage increases but at more modest levels. The reconstruction of higher education is a testament to its ability to respond to society's changing demands.

The field of natural sciences also underwent change over the twentieth century. The authors note that the transfer of dominance from one natural science discipline to another was more a reflection of a discipline's ability to address the search for truth rather than current fads. With this awareness, they estimate that disciplines addressing the active pursuit of truth, namely biology, chemistry, physics, and geology, would fare better than passive disciplines like botany, zoology, and astronomy. The authors, however, hold that the ivory tower nature of science (theoretical research without thought for applications) would pose a detriment to the field. What some observers might find surprising was the overall decline in every natural science discipline in British Commonwealth countries. The actual results correspond to the authors' forecasts, with the exception of geology experiencing the smallest degree of negative percent change.

Frank and Gabler conclude their book by fine tuning their examination of higher education reconstruction during the twentieth century by looking at a specific discipline, history. One can argue that history is one of the most adaptable of disciplines; as a collection of stories, at its best, it is a pure reflection of time. The authors conducted

this portion of their research by analyzing course offerings at Kansas State University between 1910 and 1990. They found great shifts from Western and American history to global history. The focus within these courses also underwent a shift from the "great men" (p. 177) approach to the study of the common man. Frank and Gabler conclude, additionally, that history research and coursework shifted resources toward modern social problems and away from classical studies. The global course data agreed with their suppositions: ancient Greek and Roman history as well as colonial British and American history both receded in prominence while the emerging areas of East European, African, Latin American, and East Asian history gained attention.

The authors argue that the ebb and flow within disciplines and fields of study correspond to global demands and society's quest for universal truths. The greater the capacity a discipline has to adapt to outside changes, the more likely it is to maintain its standing within higher education. This idea is based on the growing popularity of inquiry-based learning, of which John Dewey was a proponent as Levine noted.

Admittedly Frank and Gabler engage in an enormous research undertaking with the collection of vast quantities of data. They provided the framework for other scholars to fill in the picture of twentieth century higher education around the globe. Further research should examine specific curricula and course offerings to understand better specific movements and points of interests for institutions, faculty, and students. The authors' contribution is remarkable for its holistic study of global higher education. The twentieth century created a new attitude focused on job placement rather than knowledge attainment. Students, and their parents who pay the college tuition bills, have taken an investment banker's attitude toward higher education. They seem to view the college degree itself as a return on their investment in the form of a "good job." The downside to such a business-minded outlook is the loss of appreciation for a liberal arts curriculum. Gone are the days when society truly believed that the mission of colleges was to teach students how to think or how to lead. The prevailing viewpoint envisions academe as a trade school best suited to churning out office workers. Both books highlight the shift in curricula over the past century, including the movement away from classical studies and the Great Books tradition toward the social scientific study of humans in their quotidian existences and the consumption of knowledge by ever increasing numbers of people.

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