

Neoliberalism and the Crisis of Intellectual Engagement

Sophia A. McClennen

On May 16, 2003, only fifteen days after President Bush landed aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Abraham Lincoln* to announce a "Mission Accomplished" in Iraq, Stanley Fish published yet another polemical piece in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Aptly titled "Aim Low," Fish's essay called for focusing on skills and disciplinary competence as the central mission of higher education. Teaching moral and civic responsibility, from Fish's view, is not only a bad idea, it is unworkable (n. pag.). This essay complemented an earlier piece that was equally controversial, entitled "Save the World on Your Own Time," where he stated unequivocally, "my assertion is that it is immoral for academics or for academic institutions to proclaim moral views" (n. pag.). Fish's claims would likely have been divisive regardless of the context within which they appeared, but it is fair to say that their publication in the midst of debates about the morality of the war in Iraq, the curtailing of civil rights in a post-9/11 U.S., and the chilling atmosphere on university campuses caused by the USA PATRIOT Act and other legislation served to exacerbate the ongoing debates about the role of politics, social critique, and intellectual engagement in classrooms.

What perhaps is most surprising about Fish's essays is their lack of reference to 9/11 and to the logical politicization of college campuses that ensues from a state of war. What is more, Fish was well aware of the extent to which higher education had been under attack from right-wing groups such as those led by David Horowitz since 9/11, and he even subsequently published an essay in *The Chronicle* critiquing Horowitz's call for intellectual diversity (February 13, 2004). One finds it hard to recall after reading these essays by Fish that, simultaneous to his remarks, entire departments such as Middle East and women's studies were coming under attack; faculty were being fired and arrested; foreign students were being denied visas; affirmative action was being abandoned; and legislation calling for congressional oversight of curricula and faculty was being introduced—these were only some of the most visible signs of the chilling atmosphere on post-9/11 college campuses. Aside from the McCarthy period, the post-9/11 environment for higher education has been one of the most hostile and contentious moments in U.S. history.¹

WORKS AND DAYS 51/52, 53/54: Vols. 26 & 27, 2008-09

In what follows, I suggest that we read Fish's response to the question of the politicization of higher education as symptomatic of a far broader condition, one that oddly dovetails neoliberalism with certain features of antifoundationalist leftist critique. My first point is that, despite the work of scholars like Henry Giroux, Susan Searls Giroux, Stanley Aronowitz, Masao Miyoshi, Jeffrey Williams, Zygmunt Bauman, and others who have analyzed neoliberalism and the post-civil rights university, we have yet to thoroughly appreciate the impact of neoliberalism on institutions of higher education, on teaching practices, and on faculty and student life.² My second point is that the focus of leftist dissent regarding the assaults on higher education after 9/11 has largely been organized around questions of academic freedom and classroom practices at the expense of debating equally important and politically devastating issues concerning student debt, affirmative action, academic labor, and public defunding of higher education. My argument is that the ideological issues of classroom practice cannot be separated from the material ones and that, in fact, one could claim that the successes of the right's assaults have been due, in large part, to their ability to convince the public that higher education should be a privatized commodity rather than a common good. I conclude by reflecting on how both the encroaching ideologies of neoliberalism and the actual nature of academic work has heralded a crisis of intellectual engagement for university faculty.

For those of us who work in Latin American studies, neoliberalism has long been on our scholarly radar. Dating back to Milton Friedman's "Chicago Boys" and their influence on Augusto Pinochet's economic practices in the 1970s, we have an extensive history of analyzing the ways that neoliberalism leads to the erosion of public services, the substitution of market values for social values, the cult of privatization, and the progressive elimination of the concept of the common good. It would be thanks to the work of Pierre Bourdieu in France and Henry Giroux in the U.S., whose work in particular has focused specifically on the impact of neoliberalism on higher education institutions, that scholarly interest in neoliberal practices would take a broader global view of its social trends. Three key books by Giroux analyze the intersection of neoliberalism, higher education, and the post-9/11 culture of fear: *The Terror of Neoliberalism*, *Take Back Higher Education* (coauthored with Susan Searls Giroux), and *The University in Chains* combine to provide an incisive critique of the authoritarian effects of neoliberalism, the assault on the post-9/11 university, and the increasing militarization of campuses.

Giroux's books are indispensable reading for those of us interested in understanding how neoliberal market mentalities depend on cultural and ideological practices. He explains that the ideology of neoliberalism "makes it difficult for many people either to imagine a notion of individual and social agency necessary for reclaiming a substantive democracy or to theorize the economic, cultural, and political conditions necessary for a viable global public sphere in which public institutions, spaces, and goods become valued as part of a larger

democratic struggle for a sustainable future [. . .]" (*The Terror* xxii). The three books I've highlighted complement one another and address three interrelated features of neoliberalism's impact on higher education. *The Terror of Neoliberalism* analyzes how neoliberalism necessarily leads to the destruction of democracy. The logic of the pure market that drives neoliberal practices converts democratic policies that at one time served the interests of the people into corporate policies that support only the interests of the market. Key to understanding the social influence of neoliberalism is appreciation of its pedagogical function, of the precise ways in which it teaches individuals to live, to understand their place in the world, and to imagine the future. To this end, Giroux casts neoliberalism as a form of public pedagogy. Only by appreciating the way that neoliberalism depends on convincing the public that they have "little to hope for—and gain from—the government, nonprofit public spaces, democratic associations, public and higher education, and other nongovernmental social forces" can we begin to analyze its power to influence all aspects of social life (105).

In *Take Back Higher Education*, Giroux and Searls Giroux focus their analysis on neoliberalism's impact on higher education. The push to privatize all public services has resulted, they argue, in a disintegration of the university as a site of social agency and critical engagement. These shifts are notable in the language used to describe the function of the university "where [. . .] the corporate commercial paradigm describes students as consumers, college admissions as 'closing a deal,' and university presidents as CEOs" (253). Behind this shift in language are the massive material shifts in the economics of higher education and the social changes that have diminished public perception of the university as a site of civic agency and "education as a public good" (254). An ongoing thread throughout the book is the role of faculty in this environment. Noting that faculty have progressively retreated into narrow specialties, have favored professionalism over social responsibility, and have increasingly refused to take positions on controversial issues, Giroux and Searls Giroux argue that more and more faculty have become "models of moral indifference and civic spectatorship" (278).

In *The University in Chains*, Giroux focuses on the role of the military in higher education. He argues that: "In a post-9/11 world in which the war on terrorism has exacerbated a domestic culture of fear and abetted the gradual erosion of civil liberties, the idea of the university as a site of critical dialogue and debate, public service, and socially responsible research appears to have been usurped by a patriotic jingoism and a market-driven fundamentalism that conflates the entrepreneurial spirit with military aggression in the interests of commercial success and geopolitical power" (21-22). While much attention has focused on the corporate role in universities, Giroux argues that these influences are best read in light of what he calls the "military-industrial-academic complex." This book asks readers to consider how the university serves the "warfare state" both in terms of training and support for the military and also in terms of promoting the ideology of an increasingly militarized society. The book reads the military as a central and an often-overlooked source

of assault on the university. He then traces the way that this source intertwines with two other important angles of attack: the right-wing attempt to close down dissent and remove power from the hands of faculty since 9/11 and the rabid corporatization of the university.

I've surveyed these critical interventions by Giroux because I consider him to be the leading scholar of neoliberalism's impact on higher education. Since a complete diagnosis of these effects is beyond the scope of the present essay, I would simply remind readers that Giroux's work is complemented by a number of other scholars, such as Stanley Aronowitz and Jeffrey Williams, who have analyzed the economic, ideological, and social consequences of neoliberalism on university life. Much of this work has focused on the changing ways that the university is funded, structured, and socially perceived. Necessary attention has been paid to what Aronowitz calls the "knowledge factory" where students no longer engage in critical thinking but acquire skills instead. Giroux and Searls Giroux highlight how the changing nature of classroom practices has atrophied the potential for engaged critical debate on campuses—a practice that threatens the "very viability of politics" (251). Williams speaks of the transition in public perception of the university from a "social to an individual good" ("Debt Education" 56).

I want to build on these analyses by highlighting the consequences of such shifts on the life of faculty. Much has been said regarding the increasing fragmentation and contingent nature of academic labor (and I will speak more on this point below), but for the moment I want to draw attention to the ideological impact of neoliberalism by considering its effects on the way that faculty think about their work and their social roles. If we reread the essays by Fish that I mention at the opening of this essay, one notes if not an agreement with neoliberalism's core concepts, then at least a submission to them. In addition to the controversial position that the university should be about education and not about politics, what I find of interest in Fish's essays is his description of the responsibilities of tenure-line faculty. First is his description of the research expectations for faculty:

Researchers should not falsify their credentials, or make things up, or fudge the evidence, or ignore data that go against their preferred conclusions. Those who publish should acknowledge predecessors and contributors, provide citations to their sources, and strive always to give an accurate account of the materials they present. This is no small list of professional obligations, and faculty members who are faithful to its imperatives will have little time to look around for causes and agendas to champion. ("Save" n. pag.)

I have no quarrel with his description of our research duties. What is missing here, however, is a frank admission of why a faculty member who follows such research practices, teaches their courses, and performs university service might not have time for anything else. Tenure expectations continue to rise as the number of tenure-track faculty declines, giving those of us on the tenure line greater service roles than in the past. Add to that the increasing teaching commitments

caused by a student body who understands faculty as providing them with a service and administrations who call on us to teach larger and more numerous sections (while simultaneously asking us to raise money for our own grants, etc.), and it becomes obvious that the question of faculty time and what we may or may not do with it underscores the neoliberalization of higher education. The point I want to make is that Fish's remarks are indicative of a broader trend where tenure-line faculty no longer seriously question what it is we are asked to do and whether or not we should do it. Certainly, there have been questions raised, especially about the importance of books for tenure given the changes in the publishing industry, but it is fair to say that the neoliberal pressures on higher education have resulted in a faculty too fearful or at least too docile to ask questions, challenge, and debate the way that our work has changed. Beyond grumblings at the water cooler, there has been an astonishing lack of serious engagement with the material changes caused by neoliberal practices that leave faculty unable and/or unwilling to "look around for causes and agendas to champion."

This restructured notion of time reflects the power of neoliberal ways of thinking and it is evident well beyond the university. What happens when the public no longer has time to think about politics, to build community, to debate issues, and so on? The neoliberal model pushes us to spend all of our time working or consuming. There should be no time for questions, not even for questions about what our responsibilities are at work or whether we agree with workplace policies. Fish makes this point in the same essay when he imagines a scenario whereby faculty vote on an athletic program:

Let's suppose the issue is whether a university should finance a program of intercollegiate athletics. Some will say "yes" and argue that athletics contributes to the academic mission; others will say "no" and argue that it doesn't. If the question is decided in the affirmative, all other questions—Should we have football? Should we sell sweatshirts? Should we have a marching band?—are business questions and should be decided in business terms, not in terms of global equity. Once the university has committed itself to an athletics program it has also committed itself to making it as profitable as possible, if only because the profits, if there are any, will be turned into scholarships for student athletes and others. ("Save" n. pag.)

Why should casting a vote in favor of such a program necessarily mean that we should want it to be "as profitable as possible?" Fish makes a major assumption that the logic of big business is the right logic, and he presumes it to be beyond question. In addition to assuming that the greater the profit the better, Fish's claim that any profits earned by his imaginary athletics program will translate into scholarships belies his absorption of neoliberal mantras about the benefits of market economies and the ethics of corporate practices (since as we well know increasing tuition costs have not translated into more faculty lines, larger endowments have not translated into more scholarships, and student loan programs have not served the

students). Elsewhere in the essay, Fish states that if we oppose sweatshops, we should not buy clothes made in them, but it is none of our *business* whether our university does business with sweatshops. The idea that the financial practices of the university should not be the business of the people who work in the university is so patently absurd that I will bracket prolonged critique of this claim. I merely want to underscore Fish's vision of faculty who ask no questions as symptomatic of neoliberal ways of thinking. According to Zygmunt Bauman, this uncritical acceptance of the status quo is an essential feature of neoliberalism: "What [. . .] makes the neo-liberal worldview sharply different from other ideologies—indeed a phenomenon of a separate class—is precisely the absence of questioning; its surrender to what is seen as the implacable and irreversible logic of social reality" (127). According to Fish, we should not only avoid teaching our students to ask questions about the world in which they live, since such moral and political questions should not be the task of higher education, but the faculty themselves should also not ask questions about the world in which we live (since we shouldn't have time to do it) nor about the place in which we work (because it is none of our business). It goes without saying that such an uncritical acceptance of social life forecloses the possibility of civic engagement and democratic action. That Fish would write such things as the U.S. public was being told by the U.S. government that they shouldn't ask questions about the torture of prisoners in Abu Ghraib, the motives for the war in Iraq, the dissolution of civil rights, or any aspect of social and political life, is especially disturbing.

I've chosen to focus on how Fish's comments support neoliberal ideologies because I take him to be representative of a much larger trend of left-associated faculty who have become disconnected from political agency and thereby incapable of taking a political stand. The consequence is ironic, since Fish himself never suggested that one could operate absent beliefs. In his famous essay "Is There a Text in This Class?," he specifically explains that "[n]o one can *be* a relativist, because no one can achieve the distance from his own beliefs and assumptions which would result in their being no more authoritative *for him* than the beliefs and assumptions held by others, or, for that matter, the beliefs and assumptions he himself used to hold" (53; emphasis in original). But, alas, as post-postmodernism couples with an advancing neoliberalism, it appears that relativism has become a position that one can occupy. Masao Miyoshi's "Ivory Tower in Escrow" analyzes the way that faculty have retreated from politics, especially in humanities departments. He suggests that the "gradual rejection [by U.S. humanities scholars] of the idea of totality and universality in favor of diversity and particularity among the 'progressive' humanities scholars" has had devastating effects for political resistance (39). He goes on to argue regarding postmodern critique that "[t]his ideological shift seeks to rectify enlightenment collectivism, and it is no doubt salubrious. At the same time, it must be recognized that the idea of multiplicity and difference parallels—in fact, endorses—the economic globalization" (39). The push to debunk master narratives, to disengage language from meaning, to question all forms of knowledge, despite the fact that the theorists

who originally offered such theories often did so at the service of politics, has led rapidly to an inability to formulate any constructive view. The result has been nihilism, skepticism, and antifoundationalism. Most importantly, this view has led more to suspicion of higher education than to advocacy for change. As Miyoshi argues, “[t]he cant of hybridity, nuance, and diversity now pervades the humanities faculty. Thus they are thoroughly disabled to take up the task of opposition, resistance, and confrontation, and are numbed into retreat and withdrawal as ‘negative intellectuals’” (48). The consequences of this negative intellectualism are nowhere more apparent than in university faculty’s reluctance to debate, question, and discuss their own workplace issues.

Donald Lazere has also analyzed the uncanny overlap between relativism and neoliberalism:

Although most of the advocates of [postmodern pluralism] consider themselves and their causes as politically liberal or progressive, their insistence on unlimited proliferation of localism and diversity—coincident with an age of unprecedented concentration of economic ownership, political power, and social control by multinational corporations and the right wing in America—has had profoundly conservative consequences in obstructing the kind of unified opposition that progressive constituencies need to counteract the right. (257)

For years, the mantras of difference, relativity, and deconstruction have dominated left language to such an extent that even scholars who more closely align themselves with radical politics have found themselves focusing on negative critique and a politics of suspicion.³ The postmodern urge to question everything is absolutely essential to any discussion of progressive politics. The problem with faculty engagement is not due to this urge to question, but rather to the motives for such questions and their intended consequences. The key nuance between postmodern political critique and postmodern apolitical critique is that in the former questions are posed in the service of struggle and vision, and in the latter the questions are an end in themselves. In this latter view, not only are there no answers, there are no prospects of dialogue. Moreover, many left-leaning faculty have abandoned efforts to speak to the public, retreating ever more into obtuse language that speaks only to a highly professionalized class, and they have become increasingly reluctant to understand the social implications of their work as educators and as citizens. This turn is especially visible in recent debates over post-9/11 academic freedom.

As I mention in my introduction to this essay, the most significant faculty engagement in critical debate over post-9/11 university life has been regarding the assaults on academic freedom. To summarize, there have been a number of related attacks on “leftist,” “liberal,” or “anti-American” curricula and faculty that roughly break down into investigations and accusations regarding area studies, women’s studies, American studies, the political affiliations and critical perspectives of faculty, and student rights.⁴ The response to these assaults from

faculty was fairly substantial and a number of major academic associations like the Modern Language Association (MLA), the American Studies Association (ASA), and the American Historical Association (AHA) issued statements on behalf of their faculty members that called for an end to these attacks. What interests me most about these faculty responses is the fact that, in general terms, faculty critique consisted of condemning the assaults on academic freedom—positions largely based on negative critique and on a denunciation of governmental interference in classroom practices. Few were the voices that claimed that the assaults on higher education called for not only their rejection, but also a concerted effort to “take back higher education.” As Giroux and Searls Giroux explain in the introduction to their book, “‘Take back’ is an ethical call to action for educators, parents, students, and others to reclaim higher education as a democratic public sphere, a place where teaching is not confused either with training or propaganda, a safe space where reason, understanding, dialogue, and critical engagement are available to all faculty and students” (12). The culture of fear fostered by the war on terror coupled with the culture of complacency and consumption fostered by neoliberalism have combined to wreak havoc on the public’s sense of civic agency and responsibility, and, rather than be at the forefront of debates over how to restore civic agency to our nation, faculty have too often found themselves unable or unwilling to engage in political action.

Signs of this retreat are prevalent, so I will only offer brief anecdotal evidence regarding my own campus, Pennsylvania State University-University Park, a major public research institution with a faculty of approximately three thousand, including tenure- and nontenure-line. First, I offer my experience gathering signatures on campus for an MLA resolution condemning the Academic Bill of Rights in December of 2003. While I was able to gather about ten signatures from faculty and graduate students in literature departments, those that chose not to sign generally explained that they either they did not see the Academic Bill of Rights as an issue that affected them or they did not like the wording of the resolution. The first explanation indicates the degree to which faculty have largely become unaware and uninterested in public issues regarding their work, and the second is yet another example of negative intellectualism, since, rather than suggest alternative wording, these faculty simply used their negative critique as a reason not to be engaged. My second example concerns a meeting held on campus for faculty to discuss legislation based on the Academic Bill of Rights (HR 177) that had been passed in the Pennsylvania State Legislature with Representative Lawrence H. Curry on October 25, 2006. Some three years after I had walked the halls looking for signatures prior to MLA, we now had state legislation that sponsored hearings on campus indoctrination, and a veritable witch hunt was taking place in the state. This was now an issue that seemed to affect us all, and faculty were being given a chance to meet with a Democratic House Representative to discuss concerns. Fewer than fifteen people showed up.

It seems that faculty either did not have enough time or they didn’t feel that the legislation was their business. It may also be true that faculty were reluctant to take any stand on these issues given the

extremely chilling environment on many post-9/11 campuses, where faculty were being fired, arrested, and harassed for doing such things as taking political stands, teaching evolution, or showing documentaries like Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*. This retreat from politics, as disturbing as it might be in a moment that seems to call on us ever more forcefully to defend the principles of democracy and to struggle for the civic possibilities of higher education, does not fully explain, however, the lack of faculty engagement in workplace issues such as contingent labor and student debt. In fact, faculty activism, as paltry as it has been since 9/11, has focused largely on hot-button issues like academic freedom and on challenging right-wing encroachment into the curriculum, ignoring almost entirely other important issues like the assault on affirmative action, rising tuition and student debt, public defunding of higher education, and academic labor. These activities (or their lack) are linked, though, and the link is via neoliberalism's influence on the shape of the university and the role of faculty.

As Jeffrey Williams explains, today's university is best described as the "post-welfare state university" ("The Post-Welfare" 197).⁵ "The post-welfare state university more accurately represents the privatized model of the university after the rollback of the welfare state [. . .] for it ushers students into the neoconservative vision of the public sphere as wholly a market [. . .]" (198).⁶ In his survey of faculty responses to these shifts, Williams notes a "paucity of practical solutions" (208). He concedes that this lack may be a consequence of the "protocols of criticism," what I have described as the uncanny overlap of anti-foundationalism with neoliberalism. Such protocols, according to Williams, are highly problematic and indicate that "[w]e need to switch stances [. . .] to a more pragmatic, prescriptive mode. [. . .]. [F]or the university in which we work and have a stake, we need to distinguish how it is made and what would make it better—without the conceit that only we hold the true ideal but with the confidence that it might be a more democratic institution" (208).

Williams's recent work has argued for more faculty attention and activism regarding the problem of student debt. According to Williams, "[t]he average undergraduate student loan debt in 2002 was \$18,900. It more than doubled from 1992, when it was \$9,200" ("The Pedagogy" 156). And the rise in debt is due to the rise in tuition, a change which reflects the shifting funding for higher education:

The reason tuition has increased is in large part a significant reduction of federal funding to states for education and direct state allocations, in real dollars, to colleges and universities, and states fund a far smaller percentage of tuition costs. In the immediate postwar years, states funded around 80 [percent] of their universities; now the figure is nearer 30 [percent], and at major public universities often nearer 15 [percent]. (159)

These changes are entirely due to the neoliberal practice of privatization, where the state no longer provides higher education as a public good to its citizens, but rather expects each individual to pay his or her own way. Williams analyzes what he calls the "pedagogy

of debt," the way that student debt interpellates students into market mentalities shaping public views of the university as a "consumer service" and of the state as merely a way to "augment commerce" (165). "Debt teaches that the primary ordering principle of the world is the capitalist market, and that the market is natural, inevitable, and implacable" (164). The student debt crisis, which should not be confused with, but should be read in relation to, the student loan scandal, affects all of us who teach in universities. Not only does it gravely impact the career choices, educational paths, and the work habits of our students, but it also has direct bearing on how students, parents, government legislators, university administrators, faculty, and the general public perceive the social role of higher education.

Another closely related issue is the problem of contingent labor. Again, for some time now, we have been facing massive changes in the material realities of academic work, and again, the silence on the part of faculty is distressing. Current statistics suggest that 65 percent of all faculty members do not have tenure and the trend seems to be rapidly moving to an 80/20 split. On this point there has been much steady activism, but too often the nontenured activists have not been joined by their tenured colleagues. Roger W. Bowen makes this point clearly in an article entitled "More Oblige, Less Noblesse":

The AAUP has for a long time argued that without tenure, intellectual and economic security for faculty is problematic if not impossible. What we have not argued as forthrightly is the unconscionable negligence of the tenured to champion the academic freedom rights and the economic security of the untenured and never-to-be-tenured. (135)

Also, as in the case with student debt, the casualization of academic labor must be read in light of its pedagogical implications since it teaches those within and outside of the university about the value and social role of teaching and teachers, about the relationship between teaching and research, and about the relationship between teachers, students, and the public. Most importantly, it implements a structure within the university that impedes understanding the work of faculty collectively. The division between "tenured bosses and disposable teachers" has turned the tenured faculty into a managerial class that oversees an ever-expanding class of teacher-workers and no longer imagines that we share a common mission (Bousquet, Scott, and Parascondola). One consequence of these attitudes is the fact that contingent academic labor is often directly tied to what we call "service departments"—the home departments of many of us who work in the humanities and who work in fields that under neoliberalism appear less and less "valuable." Here the vicious circle comes around, directly affecting the tenured managerial class who are increasingly perceived as service faculty rather than researchers and who find themselves defending the viability of their programs each year in their meetings with the university administration. There is no escape from the impact of these economic shifts—not for students, not for contingent faculty, not for the tenured, and not for society.

I want to close by emphasizing that all of these issues are linked and inseparable. The assaults on academic freedom cannot be separated from the neoliberal restructuring of the university. Faculty responses to these changes need to be read in light of both the internalization of neoliberal ways of thinking as well as the critical trends that have favored nihilism over vision and skepticism over debate. The solution, at least from the perspective of the faculty, is to become engaged. As retrograde as such language may sound today, it is time to revisit such basic political activist ideas as consciousness-raising, intellectual engagement, and dissent. For too long, faculty have allowed the market to dictate the terms of the university, perceiving these shifts as inevitable, intractable, and unstoppable. For too long, faculty have allowed neoliberalism and antifoundationalism to combine to create an ideology of individualism, particularity, and privatization. What would happen if faculty imagined themselves as meaningfully connected to the lives of their students, to the lives of their colleagues, and to the world at large? Bourdieu suggests the possibility of such collective thinking in *Acts of Resistance*:

If one can retain some hope, it is that in state institutions there still exist forces which, under the appearance of simply defending a vanishing order and the corresponding 'privileges,' will in fact, to withstand the pressure, have to work to invent and construct a social order which is not governed solely by the pursuit of selfish interest and individual profit, and which makes room for collectives oriented towards *rational pursuit of collectively defined and approved ends*. (104; emphasis in original)

If we want to challenge neoliberalism, we have to rescue the power of intellectual engagement. If we want to challenge neoliberalism, we will have to do more than "aim low."

Notes

¹ For an overview of these assaults and a comparison with the McCarthy period, please see my essay "The Geopolitical War on U.S. Higher Education."

² See the Works Cited for specific references to these texts.

³ It is beyond the scope of this essay to engage more carefully in the subtleties of these critical positions. I do, however, want to highlight the fact that my treatment of them here deals specifically with their mass-mediated forms, where theoretically incisive modes of critique are watered down and stripped of any critical potential.

⁴ For a more detailed account of these assaults, please see my essay "The Geopolitical War on U.S. Higher Education."

⁵ See his essay for a review of the scholarly books dedicated to analyzing the state of the university.

⁶ One feature of the combined corporatization and privatization of the university that needs to be taken into account is the way that corporations are controlling intellectual property rights.

Works Cited

- Aronowitz, Stanley. *The Knowledge Factory: Dismantling the Corporate University and Creating True Higher Learning*. Boston: Beacon P, 2000.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. *In Search of Politics*. Cambridge: Polity P, 1999.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market*. Trans. Richard Nice. New York: New P, 1999.
- Bousquet, Marc, Tony Scott, and Leo Parascondola. *Tenured Bosses and Disposable Teachers: Writing Instruction in the Managed University*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois U, 2003.
- Bowen, Roger W. "More Oblige, Less Noblesse." *Academe* 93.2 (2007): 135.
- Fish, Stanley. "Aim Low." *Chronicle of Higher Education Online* 16 May 2003. 1 May 2006 <<http://chronicle.com/jobs/news/2003/05/2003051601c.htm>>.
- _____. "Intellectual Diversity': The Trojan Horse of a Dark Design." *Chronicle of Higher Education Online* 13 Feb. 2004. 1 May 2006 <<http://chronicle.com/free/v50/i23/23b01301.htm>>.
- _____. "Is There a Text in This Class?" *The Stanley Fish Reader*. Ed. H. Aram Veesser. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999. 38-54.
- _____. "Save the World on Your Own Time." *Chronicle of Higher Education Online* 23 Jan. 2003. 1 May 2006 <<http://chronicle.com/jobs/2003/01/2003012301c.htm>>.
- Giroux, Henry A. *The Terror of Neoliberalism: The New Authoritarianism and the Eclipse of Democracy*. Boulder: Paradigm, 2004.
- _____. *The University in Chains: Confronting the Military-Industrial-Academic Complex*. Boulder: Paradigm, 2007.
- Giroux, Henry A., and Susan Searls Giroux. *Take Back Higher Education: Race, Youth, and the Crisis of Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Era*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Lazere, Donald. "Postmodern Pluralism and the Retreat from Political Literacy." *JAC* 25.2 (2005): 257-93.
- McClennen, Sophia A. "The Geopolitical War on U.S. Higher Education." *College Literature* 33.4 (Fall 2006): 43-75.
- Miyoshi, Masao. "Ivory Tower in Escrow." *Learning Places: The Afterlives of Area Studies*. Ed. Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian. Durham: Duke UP, 2002. 19-60.
- Williams, Jeffrey J. "Debt Education." *Dissent* (2006): 55-61.
- _____. "The Pedagogy of Debt." *College Literature* 33.4 (2006): 155-69.
- _____. "The Post-Welfare State University." *American Literary History* 18.1 (Spring 2006): 190-216.

V. Reflections and “Tightrope Hopes”

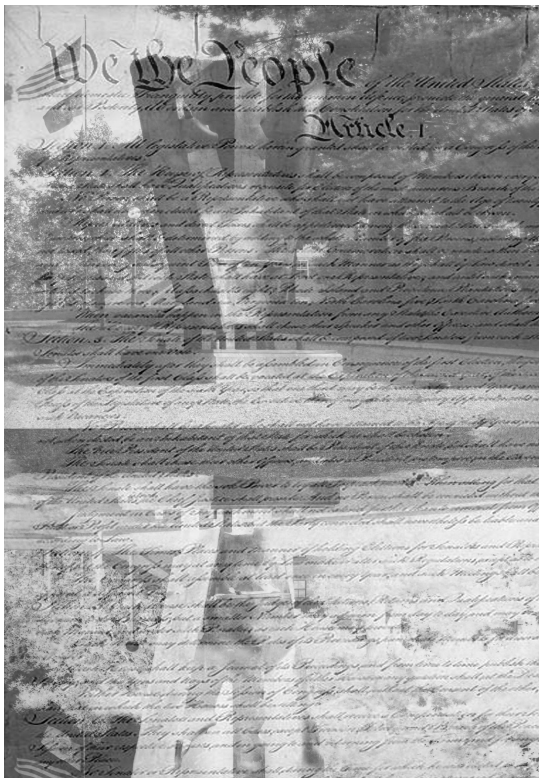


Photo Credit: Edward J. Carvalho

