



Journal

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*An asterisk means that the book is in print; if you wish to purchase it from our friends at Splintered Light Books call 1.800.979.3310.

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Higher Education

C. John Sommerville's *The Decline of the Secular University* (2006) is published by Oxford. Writing in the 1960s, Canadian philosopher George Parkin Grant diagnosed the growing social irrelevance of higher education in an essay called "The University Curriculum." The dominance of technology in Western societies has led to the assumption that scientific knowledge is the only really public form of knowledge, and such knowledge must exclude any judgment concerning values. "From the assumption that the scientific method is not concerned with judgements of value, it is but a short step to asserting that reason cannot tell us anything about good and bad, and that, therefore, judgements of value are subjective preferences based on our particular emotional makeup." Grant's essay is in the anthology, *Technology and Empire** (Anansi, 1969). Grant revisited the question of the plight of higher education late in life in an essay called "Faith and the Multiversity" (published in *Technology and Justice**, Anansi, 1986), in which he reflected on the ways in which the ideal of scientific, "objective" knowledge reduces the thing known to a manipulable object, thereby eliminating the possibility of love or beauty, which must be at the center of true faith. Wendell Berry addresses similar concerns in his 1984 essay, "The Loss of the University," published in *Home Economics* (North Point Press, 1987). The Fall 2000 issue of *The Hedgehog Review* (published by the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia) was devoted to the question, "What's the University for?" The volume included essays by Jackson Lears, Mark Edmundson, Russell Jacoby, Gerald Graff, Julie A. Reuben, and George Marsden. Also included is a discussion on the moral purposes of the university among Richard Rorty, Julie A. Reuben, and George Marsden. Marsden is the author of two important books on higher education (both of which prompted interviews on the *Journal*): *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Non-Belief** (Oxford, 1994) and *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship** (Oxford, 1997). Julie A. Reuben is the author of the important study *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalization of Morality** (Chicago, 1996). Reuben argues (and documents it persuasively) that late 19th-century educational reformers were eager to sustain a commitment to higher education's traditional moral mission, but felt compelled

to render that mission in forms that were more compatible with the scientific outlook. They "believed that universities could offer their students a modern form of religious education by promoting the scientific study of religion and modern religious practices."

Other Books Mentioned

Catherine L. Albanese's *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion** (2007) is published by Yale University Press. Gilbert Meilaender's *The Way That Leads There: Augustinian Reflections on the Christian Life** (2006) is published by Eerdmans. Michael G. Lawler's essay "Marriage as Covenant in the Catholic Tradition" is in the anthology *Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective** (Eerdmans, 2005), edited by John Witte, Jr., and Eliza Ellison. Christopher Shannon's *Conspicuous Criticism: Tradition, the Individual, and Culture in Modern American Social Thought** (2007) is published by University of Scranton Press. *Ents, Elves, and Eriador: The Environmental Vision of J. R. R. Tolkien** (2006), by Matthew Dickerson and Jonathan Evans, is published by the University Press of Kentucky.



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