

clearly intended to serve as a parallel to the virtual despoiling of libraries that he believes is occurring today.

From the foregoing remarks it should be obvious that Briscoe has written a provocative novella, one that does not shrink from addressing difficult issues about the fate of books and the traditional culture-preserving role of libraries and librarians in the digital age. In many respects, *The Best Read Man in France* is too provocative for its own good: its Manichean vision of the relationship between print culture and digital culture is rather simplistic and often threatens to slide into caricature; its jeremiads about the decline of intellectual standards are overdrawn; and its polemical and elitist undertones, rather unappealing. If one reads it not as a tract for the times, but as the work of fiction that it is, one will find that, despite its somewhat uneven execution, it has much to offer—vivid and loving descriptions of different aspects of the world of antiquarian books and its denizens; a kaleidoscopic selection of interesting bibliographical and historical lore; and a sympathetic portrayal of a historically important and fascinating, yet all-too-neglected pioneer in librarianship, all contained within a story written in brisk prose that can be dispatched within a couple of hours. However, the whole is definitely less than the sum of its parts and it is unlikely that readers will find this book to be more than a brief diversion from more substantial fictional and non-fictional fare.—*Thomas Dousa, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.*

Clark, William. *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University.* Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2006. 662p. alk. paper, \$45 (ISBN 0226109216). LC 2005-15152.

Earlier reviews have made much of Clark's opening statement, "this is an odd book." It is not. It is a difficult, frustrating, and long book, but not odd. The book first was born as a doctoral dissertation for UCLA in 1986, but has little of the stylistic

taint that typifies such productions. William Clark examined the development of the German university from the medieval period to the nineteenth century—a development that has had profound effects on the evolution of universities throughout the world and particularly in the United States.

The modern American university has been described as a nineteenth-century German university atop a seventeenth-century English college. This description is still a reasonably accurate characterization. Undergraduate education lives on the same grounds as graduate research in an uneasy relationship in which the purposes and priorities of both are antithetical. The values of undergraduate programs are education. Those of graduate programs are research.

Prior to the last quarter of the nineteenth century in the United States, students seeking education beyond the ritualized classical curriculum in American colleges had to look to Europe, and particularly to Germany, for something beyond the strict confines of Greek, Latin, and mathematics passed on to succeeding generations of students through memorization and recitation in the classroom. Through the nineteenth century, thousands of Americans went to Germany to complete their education in the German state universities and found there a new vision of learning and freedom that was impossible in the American colleges of the time. American colleges had developed a curriculum that inexorably led from the basic introductory classes to the culminating class in moral philosophy in which the president of the college demonstrated inevitably that all of human knowledge leads to whatever dogma were propounded by the protestant denomination controlling the college. Americans studying in Germany, on the other hand, found a freedom from this predictability in the skeptical inquiry promoted by the research focus of the universities.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, criticism of the collegiate struc-

ture and the ritualized forms of instruction that had been inherited from England put American higher education in a defensive position. The Yale Report of 1828, reasserting that classical languages were the proper object of collegiate education against the claims of those who promoted modern languages, the rejection of the PhD degree by students, and the rejection of the elective systems developed by Brown in the 1850s and Harvard in the 1860s all underscore the hegemony of the classical curriculum in American colleges.

Pressure for reform in American higher education persisted through the century and American universities began offering higher degrees. Yale was the first to award a PhD in 1861 and the common practice of the in-course master's degree began to be considered bad form after mid-century. But the advanced training offered by American colleges was desultory at best, and it was not until the founding of the Johns Hopkins University in 1876 and the establishment of the University of Chicago in 1890 that true advanced education became available in the United States.

The Morrell acts and other legislation forced the first transformations in colleges because of the availability of federal funds. The fracturing of traditional areas of knowledge after mid-century forced an increasing number of courses into the unified curriculum. Undoubtedly, the major force in transforming American higher education was the secularization of the faculty, the presidency, and the trustees of the colleges. While the students returning from Germany after periods of study could not be employed by American colleges as professors because of the taint on their religious orthodoxy, they did attain high places in public service, law, and business where they had a direct influence on the colleges. As professors, they could not be trusted to promote the objectives of the religious denominations controlling the colleges, but they did serve on boards, did contribute substantial sums of money to the colleges, and did raise their

voices in the selection of presidents, in the hiring of faculty members, and in the development of the curriculum.

American graduate education as it has evolved is based on the model imported from Germany at the end of the nineteenth century. It is, however, an imperfect replica. Americans, intoxicated by the freedom of inquiry they found in the German universities, failed to note the constraints under which these universities functioned as instruments of the state.

In Clark's account of the development of German higher education, neither the universities nor the professors were responsible for the emphasis on research and learning. The state and its developing governmental bureaucracies were. It was not a transformation fostered by an evolving sense that higher education meant research, but rather a transformation based on demands for public accountability from bureaucrats that turned German universities from the medieval form into the model imported to the United States.

The thousands of American students traveling to Germany in the nineteenth century found an invigorating sense of freedom in the kind of research being conducted by the faculties of the universities and in the complete absence of standardized orthodox answers. The objects of evidence-based study allowed no room for faith, and the American students, unable to find anything like this environment in the United States, imported a new form of higher learning into the country. However, the students, blinded by the outward freedom of the German universities, failed to dig deeper into the substrate to the essential character of the institutions as governmental agencies. *Lehrfreiheit* was exhilarating, but it was only to be applied in directions that benefited the state.

The American students also failed to appreciate the newness of this new form in Germany itself. The great municipal universities had the trappings of the medieval institutions, but the rituals

and forms they took were comparatively modern and formed not by the institutions or the faculties, but by the emerging civil service in the German states. The university that American students experienced was one defined by the state and not by the unlimited horizons of research possibilities.

The PhD, as the highest academic degree, did not gain honor until the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth when the degree took its modern form as a research degree. It was, as Clark describes it, a long battle that was finally resolved by state ministries authorizing the degree to be awarded and recognizing the doctorate over the master's degree. The modern system of grades for students did not become common until the end of the eighteenth century, again mandated by the state bureaucrats seeking accountability on the part of professors. Faculty appointments based on merit rather than nepotism did not become part of the academic equation until the mid-eighteenth century, again an impulse from the state rather than from the academic community. It was the state, too, that determined that academic appointments and promotions would be based on reputations in the scholarly community and that renown would be measured by publication. It is this last that represents Clark's central thesis: academic charisma was defined by the amount and quality of professorial publication. Places in the universities, offers from other universities (frequently the only route to higher salaries and promotion), and reputations came to be based on publication rather than personal connections and controlled by the state rather than the professoriate.

It is a long, prolix book that is at some points delightful and at others frustrating. Clark ranges from the informally colloquial to the densely academic, sometimes in the same paragraph. His narrative description of the personalities and events in the life of the universities is his strongest suit. His grasp of the issues of academe

and of the historical context is sound, and his documentation is excellent.

Clark views the emergence of the modern university in the larger context of the movement from the enlightenment to romanticism. While a general case may well be made for this, the view begins to break down in specifics. His chapter on libraries is probably the most dramatic in its failure to adequately come to an understanding of what he was writing. His analysis of the movement from the "systematic" catalog (more commonly known as the classed catalog) of the eighteenth century to the author catalog (the dictionary catalog) of the nineteenth century as a manifestation of romanticism, in which the author became more important than the subject, fails to deal with the development of modern cataloging codes in any meaningful way. His attempt to bring Conrad Gessner's work on universal bibliography into the array of evidence for this is, at best, stretching the point. Clark attempts to find a manifestation of charismatic authorship in the emerging catalog of libraries where a simpler explanation lies in the emergence of libraries themselves as primary resources for research. The change was not a philosophical transformation but rather just a mechanism for coping with the mass of materials. The dictionary catalog may serve as a metaphor for romanticism, but it only a metaphor and not the reality.

The concluding section of the book, "Narrative, Conversation, Reputation: On the Ineluctability of the Voice and the Oral," finds Clark largely unmoored from the anchor of historical fact and wandering off in some strange directions—perhaps this is the "odd" of Clark's opening statement. Basing his analysis on various texts, Clark meanders into the realm of literary criticism—a journey that will bewilder some readers. His final chapter, "The Research University and Beyond," is essentially a summary of what he has addressed in the previous chapters, with side excursions into the modern university and the emergence of

the romantic hero (the professor) as an academic entrepreneur.

This is a big, important book that covers much ground. For anyone interested in the formation of the modern university, it will be useful and, perhaps, indispensable. It is, however, a frustrating book with flashes of deep insight and wit interspersed in a great mass of dense prose and torpid exposition. For the reader willing to plow through, it will yield riches. For those unwilling to make the effort, it will prove unreadable. It is a book that calls for an editor—both for content and for the frequent typos—the kind that will not be caught by spell-check. William Terry Couch, head of the University of Chicago Press in the 1940s, would not have let this one go through but would have demanded extensive rewriting that would have brought it in easily under 300 pages. —*Lee Shiflett, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.*

Wershler-Henry, Darren. *The Iron Whim: A Fragmented History of Typewriting.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007. First published in Canada by McClelland & Stewart, 2005. 331p. alk. paper, \$29.95 (ISBN 0801445868). LC 2007-002217.

Modern historiography “relegates the sensational to the sidelines” (Georges Duby) and elevates the commonplace, chronicling changes in mentalities by documenting the way simple artifacts

influence behaviors—changes that then determine history. In the historiography of libraries and knowledge transmission, this trend has been reflected in recent years by books that look at the material culture of our profession, from ancient times to the present. Lionel Casson, in *Libraries in the Ancient World* (Yale, 2001), tells the story of the codex book, called *membranae* by the ancients, and how it displaced papyrus rolls over several centuries, beginning around the time of Ovid. Chiara Frugoni’s *Books, Banks, and Buttons—And Other Inventions from the Middle Ages* (Columbia, 2003; trans. fr. the Italian by W. McCuaig) scrutinizes the impact of the invention of eyeglasses on the technology and importance of reading. Henry Petroski, technology historian and professor of civil engineering at Duke, has written several books with a bearing on libraries and the evolution of information storage and transmission, among them *The Pencil: A History of Design and Circumstances* (Knopf, 1990) and *The Book on the Bookshelf* (Knopf, 1999). Both books focus attention on the development and social and cultural significance of these everyday objects. A final book deserving mention in this context—and still awaiting English translation—is Markus Krajewski’s *Zettelwirtschaft: die Geburt der Kartei aus dem Geiste der Bibliothek* (Engl. “Paper Slip Clutter: The Birth of the Card File out of the Spirit of the Library,” Kadmos [Berlin], 2002), which traces the development of organization and retrieval technologies from the sixteenth century to the very threshold of computerization in the early twentieth century.

Darren Wershler-Henry’s *The Iron Whim: A Fragmented History of Typewriting* is the latest contribution to this ongoing excavation of our technological past. Like the other books just mentioned, it describes the nitty-gritty artifactual details of its subject and their development. But also like these other works, the author of this new book probes the cultural and psychological aspects of typewriting, which include its attitudinal,

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