

Special Section:
The Uses of the University: *After Fifty Years*

Michael A. Bernstein

The Uses of the University: After Fifty Years
Introduction

It is now almost a half century since Clark Kerr (1911–2003) delivered the 1963 Edwin L. Godkin Lectures at Harvard University, presenting what was ultimately recognized as one of the most significant and influential ruminations on the nature of higher education in the United States.¹ This sustained reflection on the modern evolution of the research university, ultimately published by Harvard University Press as *The Uses of the University* (1963), framed discussion and debate regarding the role of what Kerr called “the multiversity” for decades to come. In this endeavor, there was no one at the time better suited to the task. An economist who had served for several years on the faculty at the University of Washington, Seattle, Kerr joined the University of California, Berkeley, in 1945. Appointed Berkeley’s first chancellor in 1952, he was the mastermind behind the enormous expansion (in both capacity and excellence) that marked the campus’s immediate postwar history. By 1958, as the then legendary Robert Gordon Sproul concluded his 28-year duty as University of California (UC) president, Kerr seemed the obvious and best choice as successor.

Much like his tenure as Berkeley chancellor, Kerr's UC presidency mapped a powerfully transformative era in the history of the largest and most celebrated public university system in the country. Kerr oversaw the transition of three campuses to "general campus" status (at Davis, Riverside, and Santa Barbara), the creation of three new campuses (at Irvine, San Diego, and Santa Cruz), and the establishment of three additional medical schools (at Davis, Irvine, and San Diego) to complement the existing two (at Los Angeles and San Francisco). In the case of the medical campus at San Francisco, he turned that site from a local entity into an internationally renowned center of medical education, practice, and research. It was Kerr's vision to decentralize UC, seeing to the assumption by the campuses of a growing array of day-to-day operational responsibilities. But it was the development of the California Master Plan for Higher Education (in 1960) that was his greatest strategic accomplishment. The Master Plan, unique among the 50 states in its thoroughness and foresight, established a strategy for the systematic growth of California's public education networks (K-12 school districts, community college districts, the California State University network, and the UC system)—one that would, in exemplary fashion, serve the needs of a rapidly growing state population for decades. To this day, in both articulated mission and actual execution, the Master Plan stands as one of the truly remarkable and effective demonstrations of how public resources may best be mobilized in pursuit of singularly important and desirable public outcomes. No wonder, then, that its architect's musings on "the uses of the university" garnered much interest and excitement in 1963 and for decades thereafter. All this being the case, it is now entirely appropriate that a considered reassessment of Kerr's observations be made. That such a reconsideration takes place at a time of profound retrenchment and, in some cases, severe financial distress for American higher education only makes more apparent the appropriateness of the enterprise.

The five articles that follow in this special section of *Social Science History* seek to engage us in a consideration not only of the legacy of educational leadership afforded by Kerr but also of a wide array of questions regarding the future of the American research university. The issues they take up are of immense importance. Our nation's educational system is in crisis. Public university systems struggle with a set of fiscal constraints and financial difficulties that have been emerging for decades. Now made vivid by the economic collapse that began in the fall of 2008, the disjunction between the aspira-

tions of public universities and the resource base mobilized on their behalf has become so severe that it threatens both the quality and the sustainability of public education networks. Many venerable state systems struggle with the need to adjust their aspirations in light of severe resource constraints; others find themselves forced to abandon a commitment to subsidization that has enabled them to deliver topflight education and research to generations of citizens at minimal cost to families. Some even contemplate the need to privatize their operations, thereby forfeiting wholesale the legacy of public service that was the inspiration for their founding many decades earlier. The private educational establishment is similarly not immune from these disorders. With tuition bills topping, in some cases, \$200,000 for a four-year degree, only the most elite of these institutions ignore the market pressures that now emerge in what is an increasingly difficult competition for business. For the first time in over 50 years, Americans are beginning to question the cost-benefit calculus that, year in and year out, has sent an ever-rising percentage of high school graduates to college. What indeed are “the uses of the university” in times like these? In Kerr’s efforts to answer this question a half century ago the authors here find an array of significant issues to pursue.

Paul H. Mattingly opens this collection of timely articles with a focused discussion about Kerr himself. He locates the history in which Kerr refined his notions of university governance and of the newly configured university structures that emerged in the wake of the great transformations of World War II and the Cold War. By using the neologism *multiversity*, Kerr wished to draw attention both to the multiple roles the university had come to play—in research, in education, in professional and community service—and to the multiple constituencies it had come to serve: faculty, trustees and administrators (and, in the public context, regents and legislators), students, alumni, community groups, professional societies, nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations, and private enterprise. No longer the bastion of elite access and privilege (let alone simply a “finishing school” for future corporate leaders, political officials, and clergy), the American university had by the middle of the twentieth century become the center of scientific and scholarly advancement for society at large. It had also emerged as the crucible within which socioeconomic opportunity and meritocracy could be pursued on behalf of an increasingly diverse and integrated population. Yet, as Mattingly shows, the very broad contours within which, and by which, Kerr defined the multiversity also allowed for it to fall victim to a variety of political trends and

interventions. In Mattingly's analysis, Kerr's multiversity concept, seemingly so accessible and varied, actually functioned as a highly selective educational normal realized by very few institutions. *The Uses of the University* thus uncritically (and perhaps unwittingly) enshrined an ideological pragmatism as an American educational and social ideal with no genuine sense of its disadvantages and limitations.

The modern American university of the post-World War II era found its greatest traction, and Kerr's vision of the institution's future resonated most with current events, in the realm of economic development and technological change. Indeed, the great success of American higher education in the past seven decades has been primarily due to the artful combination of public resources, federal research grants, private and corporate philanthropy, and rising household wealth that have together spawned the finest research universities in the world. It is precisely that resource nexus that is now faced with such difficult challenges in the rapidly changing economic environment of the early twenty-first century. A great deal of fine scholarship has been deployed in chronicling the history of the American research university in this regard.² Ethan Schrum offers an altogether new contribution to this history by focusing on the emergence of modern social scientific research—in particular, administrative science—in the multiversity of Kerr's vision. By taking a rather novel approach to a previously well-chronicled history, Schrum shows us a frequently overlooked aspect of Kerr's (and of the modern American) view of the role of the research university. As he notes so strikingly in regard to a speech Kerr gave at the University of Pittsburgh in 1957, Schrum reminds us that the modern university was understood by Kerr to be not only a vehicle to preserve the knowledge of the past and prepare us for the needs and goals of the future but also a mechanism by which the present could be managed, administered, and controlled.

Further exploration of the implications of the rise of the multiversity is the theme of Christopher P. Loss's article on the political strategies embodied in Kerr's 1963 classic. Loss makes clear what was perhaps fairly obscure at the time of Kerr's 1963 presentation at Harvard—that the diverse constituencies that defined the new multiversity would not simply militate in favor of a “pluralism” in the guidance and administration of the institution itself. They would also over time articulate an increasingly passionate commitment to the principle of diversity as well. The historical evolution of this point of view, spanning from the Berkeley free speech movement in 1964 through

the impacts of the *Bakke* decision of the US Supreme Court in 1978 to the *Michigan* cases of 2003, has proved difficult and inspiring at the same time. By linking the evolution of the diversity initiatives in American higher education to the pluralistic notion of the university advanced by Kerr 50 years ago, Loss has afforded us a unique and thought-provoking perspective on Kerr's legacy.

Andrew Jewett focuses on the epochal years of the 1960s as the crucial period during which the contemporary trajectory (and difficulties) of the American university were first established. In the student mobilization of those years Jewett locates a wholesale rejection of Kerr's conception of the future of American higher education. Where Kerr saw increasing involvement with the needs of society, student activists rejected such "sellouts" and instead called on universities to remain loyal to what they regarded as a higher code of learning and skepticism—a critical detachment from, and radical assessment of, American society. In an article filled with irony and ambiguity, Jewett shows how the attack on the university's engagement with social and political needs, presented as a critical rejection of mainstream American ideals and corruption, may actually have placed 1960s student activists unwittingly in service to a very conservative ideal. The abiding question with which we are left by Jewett's thoughtful rendering of this history is this: is the detached university better enabled to render meaningful and truly critical interpretations of the contemporary world, or does it in fact become the enfeebled "ivory tower" of the past, the wholly disconnected bastion of privilege and self-involvement that Kerr himself was so determined to confront and dismantle?

Our collection concludes with a complete reorientation of our perception of the rise of the modern multiversity fashioned in light of the global transformation of education in the post-Cold War era. As Margaret O'Mara makes clear, Kerr's linking of the intellectual mission of the modern university with a set of practical and social applications was an agenda anchored in a specific time frame. O'Mara reminds us that the mission of the American research university was powerfully framed throughout the post-World War II era by statist agendas of considerable weight and importance. Universities served as "exporters of democracy" both in their research on public policy and scientific advancements and in their development of curricula extolling the benefits of popular sovereignty, capitalist economic organization, and individual opportunity. Interestingly enough, this role for uni-

versities slowly but surely changed to that of being “global competitors,” platforms from which American economic, political, and diplomatic superiority could be projected and preserved. In the wake of the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001, the international prominence and influence of American higher education was buffeted once again by forces and events far beyond its control. Struggling to recover the balance and competitive advantage they had enjoyed in the recruitment of foreign students, American universities in the “post-9/11” environment have been confronted with the need both to reach out to foreign students aggressively and to rethink how international educational experiences for American students might be best fashioned and used. In the midst of striving to resolve these dilemmas, American higher education finds itself faced with foreign competition—especially from rising research and teaching institutions in East Asia and South Asia—like never before. Globalization, viewed in this context, has become both a great opportunity and an emerging threat for the American multiversity itself.

As these articles amply demonstrate, sustained reflection on the meanings of Kerr’s insightful thinking about the future of the American research university is richly rewarded even at a half century’s remove. In point of fact, the contemporary crises that beset American education at all levels lend a particular poignancy and urgency to just such a reconsideration of a vision elaborated at a time of great growth, opportunity, and confidence for universities nationwide. If nothing else, a reassessment of what Kerr had to say in 1963 reminds us of what it was we once envisioned to be possible for our colleges and universities. The seriousness of our present difficulties should not obscure from view the heady hopes of years ago, nor should it cultivate among us any pessimism or defeatism about our present purposes, goals, and dreams.

Notes

- 1 The Edwin L. Godkin Lectures on the Essentials of Free Government and the Duties of the Citizen are an annual event hosted by the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. First established in 1903, the highly regarded series was named for the founder of the *Nation* magazine.
- 2 Some of the best histories of the rise of the modern American research university, framed by the unique contexts of postwar American politics and economics, are Geiger 1993; Katz 1989; Leslie 1993; Lowen 1997.

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Christopher P. Loss

Social Science History, Volume 36, Number 4, Winter 2012, pp. 525-549
(Article)

Published by Duke University Press



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Christopher P. Loss

From Pluralism to Diversity

Reassessing the Political Uses of The Uses of the University

This article traces the pluralist politics at the heart of Clark Kerr's book The Uses of the University to the present-day politics of diversity. Pluralism was the dominant theory of American politics at midcentury, and Kerr was among its most admired spokespersons. First as a labor economist and strike negotiator, then as chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley, and later as president of the University of California system, Kerr relied on "pluralistic decision-making" to harmonize relations among the multiversity's mix of vested interests. Shortly after The Uses of the University was published in 1963, however, student protesters at Berkeley and at other multiversities like it let Kerr know that they had grown tired of the pluralist politics that he championed. Ironically, in their effort to upend the pluralist status quo and to make politics more participatory, campus insurgents sowed the seeds for the growth of a new brand of pluralist politics known as diversity. By uncovering the relationship between pluralism and diversity, this article reveals the enduring—and surprising—political legacy of Kerr's multiversity model 50 years after he unveiled it.

Social Science History 36:4 (Winter 2012)

DOI 10.1215/01455532-1717163

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Clark Kerr's (2001b [1963]) book *The Uses of the University* can be read in many ways. These days I would wager it is read mostly as an introductory history of the American university. That is how I use it in my classes. While the original book comes in at just under 100 pages, Kerr covers some serious ground. In bold strokes and readable prose he tracks the evolution of Western higher learning from Plato's Academy to the emergence of the Cold War university—what he memorably called the “multiversity.”

Another way to read *The Uses of the University* is as a work of public administration. This makes sense. In 1963 Kerr previewed *The Uses of the University* at the E. L. Godkin Lectures at the Harvard Graduate School of Public Administration—renamed the John F. Kennedy School of Government three years later. This helps explain why the book occasionally reads as a “how to” guide for senior academic administrators. The multiversity was a complex organization, and Kerr thought his fellow administrators needed a map to navigate it; *The Uses of the University* was intended to be that map.

Still, a third way to read *The Uses of the University* is as prophecy. After all, the final chapter of the book is titled “The Future of the City of Intellect.” In it Kerr accurately predicts the central role of the multiversity in the emerging knowledge economy. That Kerr himself viewed *The Uses of the University* in this way was revealed with each of the book's five successive printings and the six follow-up chapters he appended to it in the years after 1963. Though trained as a labor economist, Kerr moonlighted as a historian, really wanted to be a prophet, but spent the better part of his professional life as an academic administrator. To read *The Uses of the University* is to come face-to-face with each of Kerr's different personas.

In this article I want to engage *The Uses of the University* in a fourth way, as primarily a work of American politics. This is a less familiar use for *The Uses of the University* today, though it probably should not be. When it was first published, many skeptical readers gleaned *The Uses of the University* in just such a way. The University of California, Berkeley's, free speech movement (FSM) and the New Left of which it became part turned Kerr and his multiversity into a whipping boy—the very embodiment of all that was wrong with the modern university. While part of this critique grew out of the New Left's hatred of the federal government's capture and bureaucratization of the academic enterprise—the institution's daunting size and frightening impersonalism—another part stemmed from the closed-door, secretive pluralist politics that was used to make the whole behemoth go. Understanding

the foundational role of pluralist politics in the modern university will shed light on the political uses of *The Uses of the University* not only in the 1960s but also in our own time. Explaining the relationship between the Cold War politics of pluralism and the post-Cold War politics of diversity—and what *The Uses of the University* has to do with both—is the goal of this article.

Pluralism

Interest group pluralism was the dominant political theory of the postwar period. At the core of pluralist theory were groups—interest groups, sometimes also called pressure groups or attitude groups—bobbing and weaving through the maze of government in search of political power. The upside of pluralist politics, according to its many proponents, was that the proliferation of groups created a stable if predictable policy-making environment in which dramatic policy shifts were rare and incremental adaptation the norm (Balogh 2005).

Group theory gained steady traction during the twentieth century. In 1908 the political scientist Arthur F. Bentley published his masterwork, *The Process of Government*. Though generally ignored when first published, in part because Bentley, after a failed reappointment in the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago, made his living as a journalist rather than as a professor, *The Process of Government* eventually found a wide audience (Ross 1991). Bentley's depiction of the governmental process as the sum total of the myriad activities of self-interested groups—what Bentley (1908: 447) called “the very flesh and blood” of American politics—resonated with Cold War political theorists. Political scientists from David B. Truman (1951) to Robert A. Dahl (1961) imagined a political universe illuminated by competing constellations of groups in which no one group outshone any other, because opposing groups canceled one another out, resulting in a relatively placid politics free of major upheavals. Not all political scientists were convinced. Elmer E. Schattschneider (1960: 35) pinpointed the chink in the pluralist armor earlier than most, noting that “the flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent.” In other words, not all groups enjoyed the same access to and influence on the governmental process. Business and farmers' groups, for example, exercised real influence in policy-making circles, while African Americans, the poor, and consumers generally did not. In the heat of the Cold War, however, Schatt-

schneider's was a minority view. At a time when political extremism of every variant was deemed suspect, staking out the political middle ground—what Arthur Schlesinger Jr. (1988 [1949]) famously dubbed the “vital center”—was considered absolutely critical for national survival (Brick 1998).

Kerr's commitment to pluralism was prefigured at an early age and grew stronger over time. Born in 1911 into a family of Pennsylvania Quakers, Kerr attended a one-room schoolhouse before heading to Swarthmore College, where he served as debate team captain and student body president. After graduating in 1932, he entertained a career in law but decided instead to study economics, first at Stanford University, where he earned a master's degree, then at the University of California, Berkeley, where he completed a doctorate in 1939. The West Coast's turbulent social and intellectual currents were particularly stimulating to Kerr: after witnessing the brutality of the 1933 California cotton pickers strike, he decided to pursue advanced training in the nascent field of labor and industrial relations (LIR), which gained legitimacy after the New Deal's 1935 Wagner Act granted workers the right to organize and to bargain collectively. Group theory lay at the heart of LIR's intellectual core. Peaceful win-win deals between labor and management were achievable through mediation and compromise. Kerr's stellar record more than substantiated this claim: one of the busiest labor negotiators on the West Coast, by 1946 he had participated in some 500 strike negotiations (Douglass 2000).

By this point, following a brief stint at the University of Washington, Kerr had returned to Berkeley to direct the newly created Institute of Industrial Relations. He quickly climbed the academic ranks at Berkeley, establishing himself as one of LIR's luminaries. His major theoretical contribution—“pluralistic industrialism”—reflected the ascendant pluralist ethos of the era. His theory, as the historian Paddy Riley (2006: 87) has deftly shown, turned on a singular proposition: collective bargaining was an unalloyed good that created “equity and harmony in the industrial economy.” Ongoing, indeed endless, negotiations between opposing groups would bring an end to the struggle between capital and labor while minimizing the need for authoritative oversight, much less involvement, from the central state. Drawing on Hooverian associationalism as well as on pluralist theory, Kerr predicted a future, as he put it in *Industrialism and Industrial Man*, in which “the great battles over conflicting manifestoes will be replaced by a myriad of minor

contests over comparative details” (Kerr et al. 1960: 293). Kerr fervently believed that human problems in large-scale organizations were solved best by sitting down at the table and talking them through.

Kerr never gave up on this idea. Applied pluralism, what he later called “pluralistic decision-making,” guided his every move as a top-level academic administrator (Kerr 2001a: 191–218). Named chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley, in 1952, Kerr was tapped as president of the University of California system five years later. He immediately put his pluralist faith to work and brokered a deal that created the 1960 California Master Plan for Higher Education—what he later described, in his typically pluralist way, as “a process as well as a plan” (Kerr 1993: 9). The plan, which landed Kerr on the cover of *Time*, merged California’s universities, state colleges, and junior colleges into the largest public education system in the world. The three-tiered structure promised all Californians a shot at tuition-free higher education—and for a time it delivered. California’s top high school talent flowed to the universities, while everyone else filled seats in the state’s lower-prestige state and community colleges. In Kerr’s mind, at least, mixing different-caliber students using scholastic capacity (the SAT was adopted systemwide in 1968) at a mix of institutions represented pluralist thinking in action: students from across the state and around the country and world would be merged at one of the various campuses of the University of California system. Coming on the heels of the Sputnik crisis in 1957, which seemed to indicate that the US education system lagged behind that of its Soviet adversary, the Master Plan’s call for total educational mobilization captured the nation’s imagination (Lemann 2000 [1999]).

So did Kerr’s (2001b [1963]) description of the multiversity as a paradigm of pluralism, three years later, in the pages of *The Uses of the University*. Born of the great transformation in state-academic relations during World War II, the multiversity was a pluralist institution through and through. First, the multiversity was an amalgamation of institutional types: it combined the German university’s commitment to research, the British to teaching, and the American to mass access and practical utility. Second, the multiversity was a “pluralist society with multiple cultures”—students and parents; faculty and administrators; local, state, and federal government actors and institutions; and alumni groups, chambers of commerce, and townspeople, to name a few (ibid.: 27). Satisfying the demands of each

of these constituent groups while maintaining the steady production of “the university’s invisible product, knowledge” necessitated a pluralist approach (*ibid.*: xii).

On this point Kerr’s thinking was all but ironclad. The multiversity, he wrote, was a “delicate balance of interests,” and the only way to lead it was by assuming the part of “mediator-initiator” and looking everywhere for “workable compromises” (*ibid.*: 30, 29). To Kerr, there was no real difference between managing labor-industrial relations and academic management. Managing groups in a pluralist fashion was more or less the same regardless of the bureaucratic context, and mediating and redistributing power among contesting interests was the best—maybe the only—way to achieve institutional accord. “The president of the multiversity must be content to hold its constituent elements loosely together,” Kerr (*ibid.*: 30) concluded, “and to move the whole enterprise another foot ahead in what often seems an unequal race with history.”

After World War II, however, American higher education had been moving at a far more rapid pace, despite Kerr’s unusually sober tone. For starters, the birth of the federal-academic research matrix crystallized in the 1950s, when it became apparent to policy makers and the public alike that large-scale, funded academic research was not only a key weapon of national defense but a prime mover of the nation’s economy. Prior to the war the federal government provided little funding to researchers, many of whom were ambivalent and even hostile to such support. The demands of total war changed this calculus entirely. A handful of elite research universities responded energetically to the government’s request for the turnkey production of military research. The University of California, Berkeley, reaped its share of wartime largess. Berkeley physicists, led by Robert J. Oppenheimer, one of the principal architects of the Manhattan Project, led the way. And by the dawn of the Cold War, the University of California’s future as a magnet for large-scale scientific research was set. Not only did the University of California boast two leading research campuses, Berkeley and Los Angeles, but it also managed three federal laboratories at Berkeley, Livermore, and Los Alamos—more than any other institution in the country. By 1960 the University of California ranked first among universities in military contracting (Geiger 1993; Kerr 2003: 6).

In addition, World War II ushered in a period of mass access to higher education in California and across the country. Federal action again played

a key role. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the GI Bill of Rights, helped subsidize millions of veterans' educations after the war. It granted veterans portable financial aid covering up to four years of college or vocational training. Nearly half of the nation's 16 million veterans pursued education under the GI Bill, 2.3 million of them at the college level. Veterans' impact was immediate and long lasting: by 1949 nearly 2.5 million students were in college, 1 million more than in any single year prior to the war, and their widely heralded academic success convinced policy makers that higher education could absorb even larger enrollments. At Berkeley enrollments increased from 15,000 to 25,000 students in a matter of a few years (Kerr 2001a: 7). Concerns over the possible eruption of class warfare between hardscrabble veterans and their better-off civilian peers proved unfounded. Instead, higher education seemed unusually adept at dissolving socioeconomic distinctions, at giving all students, regardless of prior economic station, enhanced social mobility. Institutions were flush with federal funds and more applicants than anyone knew what do with, and the period between World War II and the mid-1970s is often described as higher education's golden age. Based on grant monies, physical expansion, and the sheer numbers of students clamoring to get in, it really was (Frydl 2009; Loss 2012; Mettler 2005).

Yet the growth of American higher education in these decades came at a steep price, especially at research-intensive multiversities like Berkeley. Of this fact Kerr was well aware. Though Kerr could not help but paint a generally "optimistic" picture of the multiversity, he was far from oblivious to its human costs—and perhaps to the shortcomings of the pluralist model he adored. In theory the multiversity promised limitless "freedom" to all its citizens; in practice this rarely happened. Kerr, echoing Schattschneider, recognized that different groups battled it out for scarce resources and political power in the university—there were winners and losers. For students, the multiversity was a "confusing place" filled with "refuges of anonymity"; for faculty, research ruled, not teaching, and increasingly "fractionalized" disciplinary lines meant fewer shared "topics of conversation at the faculty clubs"; and for administrators, continuous intergroup conflict required constant oversight and attention (Kerr 2001b [1963]: 31–32). At the end of the day, life in the "city of intellect" was like life in any old city. "Some get lost in the city," said Kerr (*ibid.*: 31), "some rise to the top within it; most fashion their lives within one of its many subcultures."

Less than a year after *The Uses of the University* hit bookstore shelves, Kerr's worst fears were realized. In the fall of 1964 the pluralist model he advocated began to crack apart. The FSM mobilized to challenge his administration's McCarthy-era ban on student political activity. Though Kerr helped forge a peace with the FSM that greatly enhanced "free expression" at Berkeley, his inability to quell the student protests that followed the FSM eventually cost him his job. Three years later, in 1967, he was ousted by the California regents and the newly elected governor, Ronald Reagan, who had pledged during his gubernatorial campaign to "clean up the mess at Berkeley" (Kerr 2003: 288). The rise of the FSM, following closely and inspired by Freedom Summer, showed not only that student unrest was on the move but also that the multiversity's glow had begun to dim (Cohen and Zelnik 2002; Rorabaugh 1989). Mario Savio (1964), the reluctant head of the FSM, compared the multiversity to a "firm," Kerr to a "manager," faculty to "a bunch of employees," and students to "raw material." The multiversity—like the American political system that housed and nurtured it—was a bureaucratic machine manipulated and controlled by special interests in government, business, and the armed forces.

This complaint was not unique to Berkeley. Midway across the country a similar grievance had been lodged more quietly two years earlier by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in its signature treatise, the Port Huron Statement, authored principally by the University of Michigan graduate student Tom Hayden (1962). Like other members of the nascent New Left, Hayden had been led west and south by his political education. He spent a summer with members of SLATE, an independent student organization that had won control of Berkeley's Greek-dominated student government in the late 1950s, before joining the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in a summer voter registration drive. These experiences awakened Hayden to the thrilling possibilities of political action and to the depressing realities of the modern university—a bureaucratic menace awash in "alienation" and "apathy," as he put it in the Port Huron Statement (*ibid.*). The "business-as-usual" academic experience, Hayden wrote, offered students "no real conception of personal identity except one manufactured in the image of others." It was a stupefying institution, Hayden thought, a purveyor of "stock truths" and "'let's pretend' . . . student government," that shaped pleasing personalities, not politically engaged citizens. "It is a place of mass affirmation of the Twist," he continued, "but mass reluctance toward

the controversial public stance. Rules are accepted as ‘inevitable,’ bureaucracy as ‘just circumstances,’ irrelevance as ‘scholarship,’ selflessness as ‘martyrdom,’ politics as ‘just another way to make people, and an unprofitable one, too’” (ibid.). The modern university, Hayden concluded, was the antithesis of a democracy: a psychologically oppressive place dominated by pluralist politics and mediated decision making—the very embodiment, in other words, of all that was wrong with American life and politics.

The political and psychological perils of mass higher education galvanized student activists. In this respect, Savio, Hayden, and others were influenced by leading 1950s social critics, including David Riesman (1950), William H. Whyte (1956), and C. Wright Mills (1956), who loathed the spirit-breaking “massification” of American life and worried about the long-term prospects of a society consisting of lonely crowds of organization people manipulated from above by power elites. These criticisms resonated with students, a vocal minority of whom had come to think of the university in a similar fashion—as yet another federally controlled interest in a social and political “system” governed by little else. The university was really an appendage of the state itself, they claimed, a key part of the nefarious “military-industrial complex” and thus a legitimate site on which to fight for civil rights, protest the Vietnam War, wield black power, seek women’s liberation—that is, demand all the rights that students thought were being denied them. That was why Savio (1964) compared the university to a “machine” and implored his fellow students “to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus . . . to make it stop.” Throughout the remainder of the decade, students at campuses across the country tried in a variety of ways to do just that.

Initially, the New Left, with the SDS at its center, sought to emulate the nonviolent direct-action tactics of the civil rights movement, and for a time they did at places like Berkeley, where the FSM members engaged in truly civil disobedience, even taking off their shoes before stepping onto the police-cruiser-turned-lectern at Sproul Plaza. But when the New Left lost patience with trying to “name that system . . . and change it,” as SDS president Paul Potter (2007 [1965]: 95) put it, and turned to destroying “the system” entirely, all hope for “One Big Movement”—interracial, cross-class and coeducational—was destroyed with it. “The spectacle of the post-SDS factions hurling incomprehensible curses at one another was not inviting to newcomers,” lamented SDS veteran Todd Gitlin (1987: 417), Potter’s

immediate presidential predecessor. The “turn to violence and mindless disruption,” Gitlin (*ibid.*) explained, wrecked the New Left and scattered its members among a multitude of discrete groups, each with its own narrow agenda.

This was bitterly ironic. The New Left had explicitly rejected interest group politics as secret politics, as antidemocratic politics—as a “politics without publics” (Hayden 1962). Yet this was exactly the type of politics that resurfaced with a vengeance by decade’s end as students divided along racial, ethnic, and gender lines. Having failed to create a mass movement to “change the world,” student protesters were faced with group politics or oblivion. They chose group politics. Though they may have been reluctant pluralists, they were pluralists nonetheless.

Diversity

By 1970 the American university was awash in an ethn racially diverse mix of student groups that resembled the old pluralism but was much more capacious and flexible in practice. Two factors helped expand the pluralist playing field. The first was federal action in higher education. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which barred discrimination at any college or university that accepted federal money, followed by the Higher Education Act of 1965, which turned the federal government into the nation’s preferred financial aid lender, compelled recruiters and admissions counselors to seek out students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. The combination of moral suasion and nearly \$2 billion in federal grants, loans, and work-study helped push minority enrollments steadily upward at institutions across the country. African Americans made some of the biggest gains: in the 10 years after 1965 blacks’ share of the nation’s college-going population grew threefold to exceed a million students. College officials tasked with increasing access for minority applicants coined a new name for the process and product of their efforts: “student diversity” (Borders 1967).

The second factor turned on the organizing activities of this diverse population of students. On arriving to predominantly white-serving institutions, African American students found their new campuses severely lacking. Inside and outside the classroom black students felt alienated and discriminated against. To remedy the situation, they tapped higher education’s existing pluralist framework and organized as identity groups to achieve recogni-

tion and self-respect (Loss 2012). Galvanized by the black power movement and the nascent rights revolution, black students formed student groups and demanded and won classes and programs in black studies at hundreds of schools in a matter of a few years (Novick 1988). The late University of Virginia historian Armstead L. Robinson, then a student at Yale University, was one of the leaders of the black studies movement. He arrived at Yale University in the fall of 1964 by way of the racially divided public schools of his hometown of Memphis, Tennessee. One of 14 black students admitted that year, at the time Yale's largest class of black students ever, Robinson observed little difference between his old southern haunts and his new school. He found his campus inhospitable and lonely, the curriculum irrelevant. So with the help of his fellow black students, he helped found the Black Student Alliance at Yale to press the Yale administration to get black studies on the books and to do more for black students. The administration was persuaded, and in 1968 it approved the country's first accredited undergraduate major in black studies. "We refuse to come here and lose our blackness," Robinson said at the time. "I have some identity that I intend to preserve" (Robinson et al. 1971 [1969]: 385).

The mobilization of black students in New Haven and elsewhere in the late 1960s and early 1970s incited other underserved student groups to make similar demands. Women students were without a doubt the most successful. In the campus wings of the women's liberation movement, for example, female students and their faculty allies joined together to gain educational and social equality. They deployed the same group, mobilizing techniques first used by their black peers. The results were palpable as hundreds of schools added courses and programs in women's studies. "I've never been as interested in academics," explained a female student at Cornell University, home to one of the country's first women's studies programs. "Female studies is a new reference. I have some identity now as a woman" (Isenberg 1971).

With black and women's studies now part of the academic enterprise, there was no real way to prevent additional student groups from staking a claim to a piece of the college curriculum. A host of new groups—Asians, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Slavs, and Jews, among others—asserted their rights to an education all their own in the early 1970s. New courses and programs emerged overnight as institutions sought to become more "relevant" to the diverse student populations they now served. Even white ethnic students got in on the action. Italian, Irish, Greek, Polish, and German stu-

dent groups—complete with black power–inspired rallying cries of “Italian power” and “Polish is beautiful”—found especially supportive environments at urban institutions across the Rust Belt. In what became a predictable pattern, identity groups decried their exclusion from the curriculum and the extracurriculum, and administrators made room for them in both. Professor Isao Fujimoto captured the essence of this political dynamic when he described the birth of Asian American studies at the University of California, Davis, in 1973: “Students from all over are interested in getting classes started. Whenever there are concentrations of Asians, there are attempts to push for Asian-American studies classes” (Ching 1973). To be sure, the pluralist give-and-take between administrators and students in these years transformed the college campus by making diversity of one kind or another an increasingly common experience for the inhabitants of the institution (Levine and Cureton 1998).

Significantly, the diversification of the student body into a radically plural arrangement of distinct identity groups was far from an isolated event, the result of overly idealistic, temperamental, and hormonal college students failing to get along. The same fractionalizing phenomenon was recapitulated across the polity as previously hardened political orderings crumbled into a more and more diverse arrangement of interests. Pluralism begat yet greater pluralism as increasing numbers of groups pressed their demands (Berry 1997). As the political scientist Jack L. Walker (1994 [1991]: 35) astutely observed, group mobilizing and countermobilizing happened at an “unprecedented rate” during the 1960s and 1970s, “bringing many formerly quiescent elements of the population into closer contact with the nation’s political leaders.” Whether public, voluntary, or for-profit in orientation, groups pressed for action not at the local or state but at the national level, setting their sights on Washington, DC, during the 1970s. In the trade and professional association arena alone, for instance, a majority of the biggest and most powerful groups relocated to the federal city, to say nothing of the scads of public interest groups, like Ralph Nader’s consumer group Public Citizen, founded in 1971, that followed closely behind. Like the civil rights movement, these groups relied on a combination of methods—class-action lawsuits, referenda and initiatives, and good old-fashioned electoral politics—to advance their agendas. Most were “liberal” groups. The National Organization for Women, Planned Parenthood, Common Cause, and the American Association of Retired People, to name but a few, gravitated to a Democratic

Party known for taking good care of discrete interest groups—like labor unions and farmers’ organizations—since the New Deal. Arguably the most influential interest groups migrated to Washington from the other side of the political aisle. The National Rifle Association, the Family Research Council, the National Right to Life Committee, the Moral Majority, and other evangelical Christian groups forged a powerful New Right coalition that reinvigorated the Republican Party and carried Reagan to the White House in 1980 (McGirr 2001; Schulman and Zelizer 2008).

Well before Reagan’s inaugural, however, higher education’s role in and reliance on diversity had become a hotly contested political debate in its own right. At issue was the role of affirmative action in higher education admissions. After the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Higher Education Act of 1965, and in an effort to right past wrongs and equalize educational opportunity, admissions directors and equal employment opportunity representatives wrote antidiscrimination policies into their hiring and admission practices. Some of these policies went beyond federal requirements, erasing between opportunity and advantage a line already blurred by the proliferation of minority student recruitment programs and compensatory educational courses and by minority counseling programs and dormitory facilities—“special services” long provided to white students that some white students and their parents now cited as proof of “special treatment” for minorities. Perhaps this was inevitable. In a political and educational universe rife with internecine battles for individual and group advantage, where students fought for a limited number of seats in college and for even fewer jobs afterward, affirmative admissions and hiring policies sparked incredible controversy as the 1970s dragged on and the economy stagnated. There was no way to satisfy everyone. Supporters claimed that historically underrepresented groups had a “right” to higher education; well-organized white middle-class opponents responded in kind. The former clung desperately to the idea of “group opportunity”; the latter, to the idea of individual “merit” (Anderson 2004; Ball 2000; Lemann 2000 [1999]; Skrentny 1996).

Eventually the Supreme Court was forced to choose a side in the affirmative action debate. In *Regents of the University of California v. Allan Bakke* (1978) the court’s split decision turned on yet a third idea: diversity. At issue in the case was the admission policy of the Medical School at the University of California, Davis. The respondent, Allan Bakke, asserted that he had been a victim of “reverse discrimination” and unjustly rejected because of

the medical school's policy reserving 16 seats for minority candidates. Justice Lewis F. Powell wrote the lead opinion in two sharply divided five-to-four decisions that banned quotas, thereby granting Bakke retroactive admission to Davis's Medical School but upholding "race or ethnic background" as a constitutionally protected "element—to be weighed fairly against other elements—in the selection process" (Powell 1978). Citing an amicus brief submitted by Columbia University, Harvard University, Stanford University, and the University of Pennsylvania—one of the record 58 amicus briefs submitted to the court in advance of its deliberations—Powell agreed that a "diverse student body" created an "atmosphere of 'speculation, experiment and creation'" (ibid.). Higher education, he concluded, must be "as diverse as this nation of many people" (ibid.; see also Anderson 2004: 150–55; Harding et al. 1977).

Powell's was far from the last word. Affirmative action melded with a cluster of other hot-button issues—the reeling economy, in particular, but also high taxes and federal spending on the social safety net—to propel Reagan to the White House two years later. His difficult history with the California higher education system was well known, and Reagan's victory sent shock waves throughout the higher education sector. As governor he had lorded over California's public colleges and universities with an iron fist, orchestrating the firing of Kerr, establishing martial law on campuses up and down the state, and taking a hard line with both students and faculty. Would President Reagan behave differently? His campaign pledge to shrink "big government"—to slash spending and taxes, to dismantle the Department of Education, and to unleash the free market—seemingly promised tough times for "big education." Many in higher education predicted that all the gains of the previous 20 years would be washed away. Said the director of financial aid at the University of Massachusetts Amherst: "The 1980's will mark the end of the dream of access, choice and retention for low-income and minority students" (Michalak 1980). Higher education feared for the worst—permanent funding cuts, executive orders abolishing affirmative action, a freeze on lending, and the end of the Pell Grant (Lemann 2000 [1999]; Schulman and Zelizer 2008).

The doomsday scenarios never materialized. After Reagan's victory the state broke with, but did not break, higher education by speeding up the decentralization process begun in the early 1970s. The government set free the free market by cutting taxes, deregulating the economy, and granting

state governments greater control in administering federally funded social programs. Doctrinaire free market beliefs—once limited to a small bloc of neoclassical economists and antigovernment libertarian political thinkers—seized the imaginations of both major political parties, especially the Republican, as well as of average Americans everywhere. By the early 1980s the idea that government that governed least governed best reshaped national governance, and the American people's expectations of government, for the rest of the century and beyond (Collins 2000).

In due course the free market ideology that suffused national- and state-level governance in the 1980s “trickled down” to the marketplace of ideas, paving the way for the institutionalization of a diversity-based academic and organizational structure that closely resembled the pluralist paradigm that Kerr had helped define (Bok 2003; Geiger 2004; Slaughter and Leslie 1997). In the last two decades of the twentieth century the idea of diversity gained traction from corporate America and the voluntary sector both. In 1987 the Hudson Institute released the widely influential study *Workforce 2000* (Johnston and Packer 1987). The thrust of the report was that American business needed to adjust its managerial techniques to better meet the needs of its increasingly diverse workforce. Personnel gurus like R. Roosevelt Thomas Jr. named this “managing diversity.” In an influential *Harvard Business Review* article, Thomas (1990) argued that ethnic, gender, and racial diversity represented a renewable source of corporate energy, creativity, and innovation. “Unlike affirmative action, which was considered a social, moral and legal responsibility,” Thomas explained to the *New York Times* from the Morehouse College headquarters of his American Institute for Managing Diversity, “managing diversity is a business issue” (Schmidt 1988). The idea spread. In 1991 the first meeting of the National Diversity Conference convened in San Francisco. Officials from more than 50 corporations and 20 government agencies attended. They discovered that diversity was an expedient way not only to talk about but also to deal with workforce “difference.” “Diversity management” quickly became a key source of professional power and influence among corporate personnel officers. By the mid-1990s a survey of 50 Fortune 500 companies found that 70 percent had organized diversity management programs. The “diversity industry,” reported the *New Republic*, had become a multimillion-dollar business within American business (Anderson 2004; Kelly and Dobbin 2001; Lynch 1997; McDonald 1993).

But it was higher education where diversity became most entrenched

and most controversial. Conservatives and progressives relived the 1960s all over again, taking sides on a host of “cultural” and “lifestyle” issues dominated by sexual orientation, religion, abortion rights, race, and gender. These identity debates were triggered by a number of factors. The loss of a cohesive “American identity” at the twilight of the Cold War was one. Without an enemy to demonize—a proverbial other—many Americans felt lost. Another was the growing menu of identity options available to Americans after the 1960s. The plethora of identities available for the taking—to be tried on, then revealed and, if need be, discarded—raised fresh questions about whether an all-encompassing “American identity” could be or even should be defined. “In those nether years,” Tom Englehardt (2007 [1994]: x) has perceptively written, “bursts of triumphalism yoyo-ed with unease and self-doubt, with the angry, divisive politics of resentment as well as with roiling identity and culture wars.”

On campuses firefights erupted over the curriculum, speech codes, and, of course, affirmative admissions—in other words, over the very meaning of diversity. Though we remember best the battle cries of diversity’s enemies—for instance, Allan Bloom, Dinesh D’Souza, Charles Murray, Pat Buchanan, Lynne Cheney, William Bennett, and Rush Limbaugh—there is little doubt as to which side won the war. In the late 1980s and 1990s diversity pervaded higher education, from admissions and student life to the core of the disciplines themselves. Administrators and faculty discovered that diversity effectively conveyed the organizational, intellectual, and human complexity of the contemporary university and the society it served. The growth of academic centers, the formation of interdisciplines, and whole new hybrid majors infused every segment of higher education, from two-year junior colleges to research universities. To wit, the numbers of campus-based Native American and Latino groups doubled during this time, while those of gay and lesbian groups tripled, and at many institutions diversity went from a voluntary extracurricular option to an involuntary curricular requirement (Yamane 2001).

The institutionalization of a pluralist framework in which identity was channeled through the prism of diversity occurred nationwide. Administrators led this “quiet revolution,” having learned that granting identity groups a piece of the curriculum and an organizational base from which to operate (commonly overseen by an assistant dean or faculty adviser or both) was worth the effort. Many students thought so. Often accused of political apa-

thy, students mobilized identity groups to gain recognition and respect when they had to. Admittedly, this seldom occurred. At many schools administrators and professors acted preemptively in the name of diversity by gently encouraging the diversification of the curriculum and supporting the formation of allied student clubs and associations. At institutions where diversity was threatened or actively blocked, student groups organized nonviolent direct-action protests to advance their agendas. Far more often than not, students were pleased with the results. Like most Americans since the 1970s, college students got politically energized on an issue-by-issue basis, especially if a given issue intersected with their identity or thwarted diversity (Levine and Cureton 1992; Rhoads 1998; Yamane 2001).

Nowhere did the diversity regime come under fire more than at the Midwest's quintessential multiversity: the University of Michigan. In 1988 Michigan's new president, James J. Duderstadt, launched a strategic planning group to identify how diversity could be cultivated and sustained and to pinpoint its related academic and social benefits. A professor of nuclear engineering and a past dean of the College of Engineering and provost at Michigan, Duderstadt (2007) seemed on paper an unlikely social engineer. Simmering racial tensions on campus and his genuine commitment to diversity, however, forced him to act. Two years of interviewing faculty and students and of assessing Michigan's academic offerings and social climate resulted in the *Michigan Mandate: A Strategic Linking of Academic Excellence and Social Diversity* (Duderstadt 1990). Unveiled in 1990, later revised and updated, the mandate provided a blueprint for diversity management at Michigan and elsewhere. "The leadership of the University of Michigan," the mandate declared, "is firmly convinced that our institution's ability to achieve and sustain a campus community recognized for its racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity will in large part determine our capacity to serve successfully our state and nation and the world in the challenging times ahead" (ibid.: 1). The mandate summarized how Michigan—and American higher education more broadly—had adapted to previous challenges as a way to justify its new mission. The nation was becoming "a truly multicultural society," American life "internationalized," and the economy "knowledge intensive" (ibid.: 2–3). The world was changing in all these ways, and the University of Michigan needed to change with it. Predicting "a cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity that will be greater than we have ever known before," the mandate outlined a strategic vision to meet this challenge head-on (ibid.: 2).

In doing so, the mandate also linked pluralism to diversity and thus the past to the present. Though *diversity* was definitely the preferred term, Duderstadt and his collaborators also used *pluralism*. In describing an early meeting of the committee, for example, Duderstadt noted how it became clear that “a central issue confronting us as an institution and a society is to take action to better reflect the growing pluralism of American society both in the diversity of the people . . . and in our intellectual activities” (ibid.: 11). Later, in the section “Missions and Goals,” the connection was reinforced more strongly when Duderstadt declared that a chief aim of the report was to “build . . . an environment that seeks, nourishes, and sustains diversity and pluralism” (ibid.: 13). The close proximity of these terms was no mere coincidence. Pluralism had always been the root of diversity, as the mandate now made patently clear.

There was a critical difference, however, between the old pluralism and the new diversity. The diversity regime was strategic and proactive rather than reactive and ad hoc. It sought to prevent campus turmoil by building and maintaining a vast network of personnel services and curricular innovations in the university’s core organizational and intellectual structure: the implementation of affirmative action student and faculty recruitment and retention programs, the creation and support of allied advocacy organizations, and the further diversification of the curriculum. Only a multifaceted approach of this sort would achieve the “long-term systemic change,” as Duderstadt later put it, to which the University of Michigan aspired (Duderstadt and Womack 2003: 49–50). “We foresaw the limitations of focusing only on affirmative action—that is, on access, retention, and representation. We believed that without deeper, more fundamental institutional change these efforts by themselves would inevitably fail.”

By most accounts the university made significant progress under the *Michigan Mandate*. Within five years minority representation in the student, faculty, and staff ranks had more than doubled, and minority graduation rates had also increased significantly (ibid.: 52). Moreover, the idea of diversity attracted broad support from across the campus, in large measure because it could be used strategically in almost any context and by any group. Not all groups were thrilled with the results of Duderstadt’s diversity agenda, which by 1995 had expanded to include women and gender, and by the mid-1990s Michigan was besieged by anti-affirmative action forces led by the Center for Individual Rights (CIR), a well-financed conservative public litigation firm.

Fresh off its win against affirmative action at the University of Texas at Austin Law School in 1996, and buoyed by the passage in the same year of California's Proposition 209, which banned affirmative action in public institutions, including public colleges and universities, the CIR set its sights on the University of Michigan (Pusser 2004). In 1997 the CIR filed one discrimination suit against the undergraduate College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and another against the Law School. Both suits eventually ended up on the Supreme Court's docket in 2003—the first time the court had agreed to hear a case on the constitutionality of affirmative admissions since *Bakke*. Like *Bakke*, the Michigan Cases, as they were popularly known, generated an unprecedented amount of interest. Record numbers of amicus briefs poured in from business, the US military, and colleges and universities—nearly 100 in all. And again like *Bakke*, the Michigan Cases turned on the constitutionality of diversity. The Supreme Court agreed that the educational and social benefits of diversity were real and that race—or any other applicant characteristic or attribute for that matter—could be used as a “plus factor” in admissions. “Today,” wrote Justice Sandra Day O'Connor in a five-to-four decision, “we hold that the Law School has a compelling interest in attaining a diverse student body” (Anderson 2004: 271; see also Perry 2007).

That one of the most conservative judiciaries of the last century again found race a “compelling state interest” in university admissions decisions was by far this ruling's most important outcome. But the Supreme Court's endorsement of racial diversity in admissions—and the media's singular focus on it—scarcely captured the extent to which the idea of diversity had become institutionalized in higher education. It shaped not only the student body but also the organization of knowledge, the structure of the extracurriculum, and, perhaps most important, the way that academic administrators and faculty sought to convey the economic, social, and political value of higher learning to the diverse publics their institutions served—publics that increasingly doubted affirmative action but professed to value and support diversity. In short, diversity was more than an idea; it had become a lived experience of millions of Americans and a core value of large-scale public and private organizations, especially colleges and universities. Since the 1960s educating students in the name of diversity has been what American colleges and universities do.

Conclusion

The pluralist politics that Kerr embraced in *The Uses of the University* have endured well beyond their Cold War creation, shaping American politics on and off campus ever since. Within the academy those politics now go by another name: diversity. Not convinced? Access practically any college or university web page and somewhere on that page will be a diversity link. Follow it and enter a world of diversity policies and procedures, initiatives and programming, advocacy groups and allied organizations. These are the new political uses of the university in the twenty-first century (Delbanco 2005; Loss 2012).

Yet there remains an open question: for how much longer? A more voluminous pluralism, diversity, like its predecessor, is also historically contingent. Where the old pluralism purported to recognize all groups but really provided access for and responded to only a select few, today's diversity model seeks to remedy all grievances. This is fine in economic flush times, when adding programs and staff is easily achieved. It is more challenging in economic hard times, when student debt is climbing (\$25,250 on average per student in 2010) and student graduation rates range wildly between selective, elite institutions, where virtually all students finish, and nonselective, broad-access institutions, where most students do not (Hess et al. 2009; Project on Student Debt 2011). At a time when institutions are cutting programs, not adding them, and students are piling up ever more debt while taking longer to graduate, if they graduate at all, it is worth considering: is the diversity regime really on the ropes?

I wouldn't bet on it. The pluralist political order that Kerr so presciently identified some five decades ago is now institutionalized more than ever, and it shows few signs of fading despite continued legal challenges. Were he still alive, I think that Kerr would agree. Though he claimed to regret using the "easily misunderstood" term *multiversity*, likening the role of president to that of a mediator, and neglecting to discuss "the proper uses of the university in serving the wellbeing of students" (Kerr 2001b [1963]: 103, 113), he never gave up on the pluralist process that his book evinced. And in later writings he went to great lengths to exonerate that process as well as his own legacy. In the celebrated collection of essays edited by Robert Cohen and Reginald E. Zelnik, *The Free Speech Movement: Reflections on Berkeley in the 1960s*, published in 2002, a year before he passed away, Kerr tellingly titled his

contribution “Fall of 1964 at Berkeley: Confrontation Yields to Reconciliation.” His is the lone entry under “Administration” in a book that includes 33 separate entries and tallies nearly 600 pages. Although he was outnumbered and confrontation was the “dominant theme” of the other pieces in the book, Kerr (2002: 364) insisted that “conciliation . . . was essential to working out solutions” and wrote about that instead. The FSM episode had taken his job, but the peace he had helped broker by pluralist means had saved the school he loved—a school, he noted with wry satisfaction, that “continued its operation, in peace and in progress,” long after the FSM had become but a memory. “My soft-line approach was accepted by the Regents and the faculty, and the FSM abandoned its confrontations,” Kerr (*ibid.*: 395) claimed, incanting yet again what he still regarded as the core commandment of his pluralist faith.

Whether one shares Kerr’s faith—much less his dubious version of events—is beside the point. Far more than any other student of the American university, Kerr understood well how the politics of the institution mirrored the American political order. On that relationship, Kerr (2001b [1963]: 88) wrote, in the closing pages of *The Uses of the University*: “The total system is extraordinarily flexible, decentralized, competitive—and productive. The new can be tried, the old tested with considerable skill and alacrity. Pluralism in higher education matches the pluralistic American society.”

It still does. We just call it something else now.

Note

I would like to thank the editors of *Social Science History* and two anonymous reviewers for their generous insights and suggestions on this article, Michael A. Bernstein for organizing this special section, and my fellow authors for their creative contributions.

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