

## Humanities, Inc.

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During the 1950s, senior executives at AT&T briefly hoped that the humanities could revitalize their company. Trained mostly in technical subjects such as engineering or business, their midlevel employees, they feared, were narrow in their interests and knowledge, mechanical in their approach to problems, and incapable of independent thought. Thus CEO Cleo Craig initiated a pilot program, The Institute of Humanistic Studies for Executives, designed to enrich and broaden the minds of a select number of employees. Each year starting in 1953, AT&T relieved approximately twenty managers of all work duties for ten months and sent them to the University of Pennsylvania to receive a liberal arts education, free of charge. Participants not only read more than a typical PhD student in a year of graduate work, they visited museums, attended classical music concerts, and mingled with prominent intellectuals over cocktails.

AT&T had tried out a similar initiative in the 1920s. Then president of New Jersey Bell Chester Barnard sent hundreds of his employees to the University of Pennsylvania for several one-week periods to study the humanities, but he decided that the program, to be successful, would need to provide a lengthier, more rigorous experience. By the 1950s, AT&T was finally making the ample profits that Barnard's vision necessitated, and so, under Cleo Craig's recommendation, the president of Pennsylvania Bell Wilfred D. Gillen and his Vice President of Personnel John Markle II reinstated Barnard's program.<sup>1</sup> Morse Peckham, a professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, devised



**Figure 1:** Industrial Psychologist Morris Viteles (second from left, front row) with several participants from the Institute of Humanistic Study (date unknown). [Box No. V68, Folder No.8, Morris Viteles papers] Archives of the History of American Psychology, The Center for the History of Psychology, The University of Akron.

the curriculum, which consisted of courses in philosophy, literature, arts, and science, and guest lectures from major intellectuals including Lewis Mumford, W. H. Auden, Delmore Schwartz, Henry S. Commager, and David Riesman.<sup>2</sup>

The Bell employees appreciated certain aspects of the program more than others. Some preferred learning about politics and economics to learning about art and literature. But they were, on the whole, determined to understand as much as they could of what they encountered. One participant became so frustrated during the several hours he spent trying to make sense of Ezra Pound's *The Pisan Cantos* that he had to take an aspirin and a sedative at two in the morning in order to sleep.<sup>3</sup> And practically everyone, apparently, struggled and fretted tirelessly over the presentations they were required to give on individual chapters of James Joyce's *Ulysses*; one musically inclined presenter, seduced by the Sirens episode, devoted forty-two hours to tracing its themes and motifs.<sup>4</sup> All participants relished the opportunity to meet famous thinkers; getting to "walk with the greats" was an "ego-building experience," according to one survey of the program.<sup>5</sup> And generally speaking the reviews were extremely

favorable, with many alumni calling the ten-month period the most significant and memorable of their entire life.<sup>6</sup>

The program's popularity, of course, was not enough to justify its substantial costs. Its administrators also needed to demonstrate that it would serve the interests of AT&T. To that end, they put forth a series of arguments, in committee reports, at conferences, and in internal memos, designed to establish the usefulness of the humanities to business. They also hired industrial psychologist Morris Viteles and the consulting firm Douglass Williams Associates to study the effects of the program; both gave the Institute positive reviews. AT&T was initially pleased with the results and instituted similar, though less extensive programs at Swarthmore, Williams, Dartmouth, and Northwestern. But support for the program gradually waned, and the new CEO at AT&T Frederick R. Kappel, who took office in 1956, was unconvinced of the Institute's effectiveness and discontinued it four years into his tenure.

Why was AT&T's experiment confined to the 1950s? One key factor was the cold war: during its early years intellectuals working within humanities departments and businessmen were both committed to defending American capitalism. A collective revulsion provoked by Stalin's brutal policies was in part responsible for intellectuals' newfound patriotism, but the McCarthy-spearheaded witch hunt also prompted many to adopt an uncharacteristically sanguine attitude toward their country's political and economic system.<sup>7</sup> While the motives behind such attitudes were diverse and complicated, the sense of a shared cold war mission and a belief that the humanities could serve this mission were parts of the rationale for AT&T's Institute.<sup>8</sup>

But implicit commonalities and forms of mutual dependence between corporations and humanities departments date further back to the end of the 1800s when the two spheres assumed their modern form.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, throughout most of the past century, the liberal arts have served to prepare people for white collar work. And while even supporters invariably noted the Institute's unorthodox character, the premise behind it did not go entirely against the grain of conventional wisdom; during the 1950s, business leaders from a variety of companies lauded the Institute and stressed the need to increase the role of liberal arts in the training of future executives.<sup>10</sup> It is worth considering, then, why the idea did not catch on more broadly, and why it failed to survive at AT&T. If, during the immediate postwar period, the largest public corporation in America held that the humanities constituted essential training for businessmen, why, in subsequent decades, have humanities departments had such difficulty articulating the significance or usefulness of what they teach and why have they found themselves unable to compete with professional schools focused on subjects such as engineering, accounting, and finance? Significantly, the planners of the Institute were committed to the notion of humanistic study as valuable in itself, and yet a central cause of the program's discontinuation was its failure to yield measurable utility for the company. This episode might, then, appear to yield a simple explanation of the humanities' decline over the past several decades

based on the failure of the field to offer marketable forms of knowledge that can translate into company profits, and yet AT&T's experiment, as I hope to demonstrate, offers no such straightforward lesson. Rather, it suggests that striving too hard to satisfy the demands of corporations may be no less perilous a course for the humanities than attempting to ignore these demands.

### **The Rise of Managerial Capitalism**

A central concern for AT&T during the 1950s was an apparent dearth of individuals ready to assume top management positions in the company. Hiring freezes during the Great Depression and World War II had resulted in an age gap between the company's senior leadership and its lower-rung employees. Moreover, a majority of the recent hires had technical degrees in engineering or business administration.<sup>11</sup> While this kind of highly specialized education appeared to serve those in the initial stages of their career fairly well, it limited their ability to succeed in upper-level management positions. As the Douglass Williams Associates report noted, "There seems to exist in the minds of most Bell management people an image—a stereotype, really—of the 'ingrown Telephone man.' The narrow technician, at home only in his own immediate field of competence."<sup>12</sup> Even as most employees were being trained to specialize in a specific field, the world was becoming more integrated; thus a broad-gauge, future-oriented perspective was necessary, AT&T's executive leadership believed, to help the company respond to a set of increasingly interrelated and rapidly changing economic, political, and social conditions. In the minds of people like Chester Barnard, John Markle, and Wilfred D. Gillen, the best preparation for this sort of work was not training in business or engineering, but rather a deep and sustained education in the humanities. As a manager came to oversee a greater diversity of functions, this education, they believed, would serve as an antidote to specialization, allowing him to draw connections between different area-specific challenges and make decisions based on a coherent vision of AT&T's broader mission.<sup>13</sup>

Most companies and most colleges of course operated on the assumption that the humanities had a role to play in educating the future businessman. The typical vocational degree did generally require at least some humanities coursework. A central task of managers, after all, is to acquire, organize, and disseminate information efficiently and transparently, and the teaching of such skills, particularly the ability to use standard English, has traditionally taken place in humanities departments in the United States.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, as the very term suggests, the discipline of the humanities purports to offer knowledge about human beings: how they think, how they act in various situations, and how they organize themselves in relation to each other. "The need of such understanding," Chester Barnard concluded, "is of first importance for the executive; for human relations are the essence of managerial, employee, public, and political relations; and, in most cases, these rather than science, technology, law, or finance are the central areas of executive function."<sup>15</sup>

Barnard and others at AT&T, of course, valued the humanities not merely for the practical skills that they provided, but also for their ability to foster a deeper understanding of the world and a capacity for critical introspection. A broadly shared anxiety at this time was that AT&T and other large corporations were facilitating the transformation of Americans into unthinking organization men. Administrative bureaucracies both within corporations and in the government had grown enormously between 1900 and 1950, and this meant that a much larger percentage of Americans than ever before served as white collar workers in highly specialized, carefully structured departments and performed narrowly defined tasks in accordance with preestablished guidelines.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, those who worked in the managerial strata generally received fixed salaries that insulated them from the immediate short-term profits and losses of the companies that they managed. Sheltered from the vicissitudes of the market, risk-averse, and comfortably ensconced in the suburbs, Americans, particularly middle-class American men, according to midtwentieth-century critics such as David Riesman, C. Wright Mills, and William Whyte, were in danger of losing their rugged, independent character.<sup>17</sup>

The cold war served only to intensify such anxieties. The very system that supposedly distinguished the United States from the Soviet Union, entrepreneurial capitalism, was in danger of disappearing, and its replacement, corporate-managerial capitalism, seemed capable of engendering precisely the kind of group-oriented mentality typically associated with communism.<sup>18</sup> The Institute of Humanistic Studies, as a cold war initiative, encouraged the modes of independent thinking that corporations were thought to discourage, thus aiming to forestall the general drift toward conformity. But it also sought to reinforce an image of the American corporation as hospitable to creativity, innovation, and individual freedom. Given the latter goal, the Institute did not aim to disrupt the standard business practices in any dramatic manner. According to *Nation* reporter David Ray, one of the Institute's university administrators remarked, "They want the stimulation of an unthreatening individualism—of an *appearance* of individualism, not any that would interfere, naturally, with the company."<sup>19</sup> Considering the results of the Institute, the consulting firm Douglas Williams observed, "The 'change,' if any, is internal, singular to the man, and may be reflected more in what he *thinks* than how he *acts*."<sup>20</sup> Though the coordinators of the program did hope that employees' experiences at the Institute would influence their work methods after they returned to the company, many were content to acknowledge that whatever transformation the program inspired would be subtle, perhaps even invisible. If the kind of freedom that purportedly thrived within entrepreneurial capitalism had been a freedom of action, exemplified by those bold and practical individuals who could turn an idea into a concrete enterprise, the kind of freedom that AT&T's Institute fostered, as the Douglas Williams study indicates, was primarily a freedom of pure thought, a capacity to understand and imagine one's world in new and complicated ways that did not necessarily produce any concrete changes in behavior. The latter

mode of freedom was fit for people in highly circumscribed bureaucratic positions; confined to the inner life, its existence could be asserted in the absence of any outward evidence or changes in the status quo.

In some moments, AT&T claimed that a knowledge of the humanities would help its managers direct the company so as to prioritize the public good over immediate profits. Ironically, this agenda was also rooted in an anticommunist ideology insofar as it sought to increase the scope of corporate power. At a forum on the relationship between business and the humanities, Courtney C. Brown, an executive at Standard Oil, remarked, "A fourth and final reason why business is expanding its interest in the liberal arts, it seems to me, is that after several decades of what might be called a defensive posture, business is again in a role of greater political and intellectual leadership in our national life."<sup>21</sup> Gillen made a similar observation at an Institute of Humanistic Studies Conference: "As you know, many thinking business men, educators, and indeed intelligent politicians have been greatly concerned by the waning influence of business leadership during the last 20 years."<sup>22</sup> Gillen attributed this loss of influence to the Great Depression, the widespread distrust of private corporations that prevailed during that era due to the financial collapse, and the central role government had assumed in serving people's needs. But the newfound prosperity of the 1950s alongside the growing fear of state power fostered by opposition to communism lent corporations an opportunity to expand their role in society and to assert the private sector as the sphere most capable of addressing all variety of social ills. Ironically, corporations that adopted this stance were, at least rhetorically, accepting the role imposed upon them by postwar labor organizations, which had been vigorously demanding that they assume greater responsibility for the welfare of their workers.

### **What the Humanities Do**

Although the Institute did not aim to inspire a radical transformation of AT&T's business practices, it did offer the humanities as a way of thinking antithetical to the corporate obsession with economic gain and instantaneous utility. In the various subjects taught at the Institute, executives would discover aesthetic and ethical values while engaging in intellectual pursuits that were not designed to serve any immediate function and were thus conceived as worthwhile in themselves. Remarkably, for Barnard, Markle, and Willen, such modes of thought might serve AT&T's interests precisely by virtue of their impracticality, teaching employees to approach their work from a broader, longer-term perspective. Though counterintuitive, this seemingly contradictory conception of the humanities as useful by virtue of their uselessness was not novel; it had its origin in the way the discipline came to be structured during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, American universities catered primarily to young men from wealthy families, and their humanities curricula

consisted of a study of classical texts in ancient Greek and Latin.<sup>23</sup> The knowledge they offered, while an essential constituent of the cultural capital necessary for members of leisured society, appeared utterly useless to those in pursuit of a practical career, and thus numerous professional schools in law, medicine, and business emerged to meet the needs of the growing middle class. It was only after the Civil War that traditional universities began to adapt in order to attract a broader subset of the population. Administrators reorganized schools into field-specific departments, and as a result the discipline of the humanities began to include the subjects that it includes today: literature, history, fine arts, philosophy, and religion. During this period, the creation of journals, associations, and degree protocols served to professionalize many of these subjects. Perhaps most importantly, following Harvard president Charles Eliot's lead, a majority of universities across the country developed and expanded graduate programs designed to provide specialized professional training in various subjects while making a bachelor of arts degree a requisite for entry into such programs. This ended the competition between these two educational tracks and endowed the discipline of the liberal arts with the ambiguous status in relation to questions of utility that has served both as its peculiar virtue and as its primary limitation throughout the twentieth century.<sup>24</sup> On the one hand, as Louis Menand has noted, this institutional structure relieves liberal arts courses of the responsibility to prepare students for any given profession, since that task has been reserved for a later stage in their education. Thus professors in these courses can subscribe to the ideal of disinterested knowledge, knowledge not designed to serve another purpose, but valuable in itself. On the other hand, the BA requirement maintains that the knowledge offered by an undergraduate education is necessary for a majority of future professionals, thus suggesting that this knowledge will serve some broadly defined purpose.<sup>25</sup>

But what might that purpose be? One difficulty confronting the many teachers, administrators, and students who have tried to answer this question is that no two undergraduate programs are the same in their offerings and their requirements, and thus there is no unified body of knowledge or set of skills that all college graduates are expected to learn. At the same time that undergraduate study assumed an institutionalized position as a prerequisite for entry into the white collar professional class in the early twentieth century, its departments became more specialized and more disparate, and the education they offered became less coherent for any given student and less homogenous across the general population. Lending urgency to questions about what kind of education colleges and universities should offer students was the dramatic increase in enrollments during the early decades of the twentieth century, including thousands of first-generation students—a trend greatly abetted by the passage of the G. I. Bill in 1944.<sup>26</sup> Between 1920 and 1950, several prestigious colleges and universities, including Harvard, Columbia, Dartmouth, Stanford, and Williams, instituted a core curriculum as a part of a general education movement. Though they differed from each other in some important respects, these new

dispensations all attempted to identify a common body of knowledge across several different fields that, in the view of the institution, all students ought to master.<sup>27</sup> The motives behind this movement were similar to those behind AT&T's Institute of Humanistic Studies. In the rationale of both, the humanities, figured as a standard canon of great works and concepts, could serve as an antidote to social fragmentation and intellectual specialization, promoting both a unified set of democratic values and a capacity among students for independent thought. Harvard presented its general education program specifically as a cold war initiative, one that would help defend students against the potential lure of communism.<sup>28</sup>

Deemed useless for any immediate practical purposes, the humanities nevertheless found themselves charged with some weighty responsibilities in cold war America. But what actual effects did they produce on those who studied the humanities within a university setting? Anxious to justify the Institute's existence, the executive leadership at AT&T hired Morris Viteles to answer this question. Viteles administered surveys before and after the experience, and approximately ten years later he distributed audio recorders to all participants and asked them to reflect on how their time at the Institute had influenced them both at work and in their personal lives. The explicit reviews of the program were almost all favorable, but in the variety of responses he received, one can find arguments for and against its efficacy, and in certain frequently repeated admissions the risks of justifying the humanities based on their ability to serve corporate interests become apparent.

Many of the participants believed that their experience at the Institute made them better communicators, better able to grasp the complexity of the problems that they confronted, and better equipped to engage in long-term economic planning. A majority also reported feelings of increased tolerance for other opinions and an awareness that certain questions may yield more than one answer.<sup>29</sup> One commented, "I have a lot more confidence in my own ideas and usually before presenting a position paper, especially in the personnel field, I find myself exploring all the possible alternatives and try to anticipate all objections, whether they be political or content-wise."<sup>30</sup> Such awareness tended to make them more willing to accept the feedback of employees working under them. Several claimed to have become more sensitive to the needs and concerns of those whom they managed. One observed that he spent a year helping an insecure subordinate develop confidence.<sup>31</sup> Some argued that they had become less wedded to preconceptions, more inclined to use reasoning to reach conclusions, and thus they held their views about company decisions with greater conviction. According to one, "I think the process of arriving at a given business decision is now a much slower and I think orderly, organized method and I feel much stronger in my logic because I think now I look at many more facets [*sic*] to make a decision."<sup>32</sup> Others, however, reported the opposite effect; their increased sensitivity to the contingency of any given argument rendered them indecisive and less convinced that they had arrived at the right solution.



“I appear to be having considerably more trouble reaching decisions, that I’ve always been able to see both sides of any question and the Institute reinforced that to a rather marked degree.”<sup>33</sup>

Many employees observed that they had become more independent in their thinking and more critical of AT&T. Some reported reduced ambition; they realized that achieving promotion in the company or furthering its profits was less important than they previously believed. One admitted that he had become “much less interested in advancing the telephone business.”<sup>34</sup> Another stated, “I am more convinced than ever that attainment of higher and higher levels of management is not necessarily the most satisfying reward in life.”<sup>35</sup> A third revealed, “I think that as a result of Pennsylvania, I’m not quite as dedicated to the telephone business as I would have been without that exposure. . . . I’m not such a dedicated Bell ringer.”<sup>36</sup> A few indicated that they had felt deeply unmoored and disoriented upon returning to AT&T, claiming that the Institute had destabilized their priorities.<sup>37</sup> “I seem to recall that at the time I had the feeling I was being plunged unceremoniously back into the business world and that I was fast losing my perspective on what seemed to be larger more important things.”<sup>38</sup> A majority, according to surveys, attached more significance to aesthetic values and less to business values.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, many claimed that they now wanted to devote more energy to their family and personal life and less to succeeding at work.<sup>40</sup> A good number had become more involved in communal and civic activities, and most indicated that their political beliefs became more liberal as a result of their studies. Ironically, this newfound perspective led some to be less critical of alternative political and economic systems, including communism.<sup>41</sup>

If participants became more politically active after their experience, the issue they most often confronted was racial politics. While almost all hesitated to identify the Institute as the sole or primary agent of their changed attitude, several describe serious efforts to promote integration at Bell. One remarked, “The studies of the University of Pennsylvania did impress me with the social responsibilities of business. This was an eye opener to me and when the problem came up of how we should handle minority groups, particularly the colored, I volunteered to be the first one to place colored boys in higher rated jobs, primarily craft jobs and management jobs.”<sup>42</sup> Another discussed his decision not to order a change from a manual switchboard to dial at a plant in Illinois to avoid laying off fifty female workers, most of whom were African American. Although it was the last plant in the state to use a switchboard, he decided “in favor of the social consequence argument.”<sup>43</sup> A third opted to integrate his division despite a Chief Operator’s declaration that “if any nigger comes into this office, I am walking out.” Refusing to capitulate, the manager initiated an “extensive educational campaign” and announced that anyone uncomfortable with the new policy was welcome to retire early.<sup>44</sup> While work on racial integration recurred as the fundamental sign of enhanced liberalism, a few, significantly, also discussed labor relations and their increased tolerance for unions. One ar-

gued that he engaged with workers involved in a walkout with greater sympathy and understanding.<sup>45</sup>

Though they describe an array of new attitudes and behaviors, most participants in the program are reluctant to attribute any of their decisions at AT&T, whether political or not, entirely to the Institute's influence. Over and over again they refuse to identify direct causality often in almost identical terms. "I cannot recall how any specific situation would have been different if I had not participated in the program. This in no way means that I feel my managerial behavior has not been influenced, but it is so intangible that I cannot say whether any specific action directly reflects the impact of the program."<sup>46</sup> "Questions like that are hard to answer, in fact, I think they're almost impossible to answer with any degree of certainty."<sup>47</sup> "Frankly, I'm not able to define any specific decisions which I think were influenced especially by the courses at the University."<sup>48</sup> "It's rather difficult as I reflect to try and pinpoint these things and say precisely because of what took place at Pennsylvania, I am now acting thus and so I doubt seriously if this could ever be said."<sup>49</sup> Given this uniformity among the participants' answers, one might conclude that, if not their practical decisions in the company, then at least their unwillingness to ascribe any definitive positive impact to the Institute was the product of what they learned there. Repeated claims that the program taught them to defer final judgments, to question assumptions, and to recognize the complexity and ambiguity of situations under examination, often voiced in the same breath as their refusal, notwithstanding their extreme enthusiasm, to deliver a final verdict about the value of the Institute, bear out this interpretation. Their humanities training, in other words, seems to have encouraged a resistance to the kind of categorical assertions and straightforward positive appraisals that might have argued in favor of the program's continuation.

### **The Humanistic Corporation**

There were many reasons to believe that the Institute of Humanistic Studies might thrive in the long term, exemplifying the value of liberal arts as a necessary preparation for a career in business. A growing concern during the postwar period was how to train people to be effective managers and how to distinguish those who were well suited for such work from those who were not. In earlier periods, when smaller businesses were the norm, such distinctions were easier to make. The measure of a good manager was simply whether or not his business succeeded; if it failed, he was out of a job. By contrast, the postwar corporate manager, working in a massive organization, could offer a mediocre performance without necessarily undermining either his prospects or those of his company. Once free market realities no longer unambiguously separated the effective from the ineffective, in other words, new forms of legitimation were needed to produce and enforce the invidious distinction between white collar workers and those supposedly qualified only for jobs lower in the social

hierarchy. And one could argue that the humanities were, for better or worse, well equipped to provide the subtle, institutionally sanctioned distinction required for corporate management positions, insofar as they could claim to offer individuals a certain intellectual capacity, a psychological sensitivity, and a subtle polish, while suggesting that these virtues and their consequences eluded rational measurement. One participant in the Institute admitted his reluctance to “put an absolute or solid value on the progress so far as I am concerned.” But the chance to reflect on the program, he continued, “has reconfirmed my feeling that the value is there even though it is difficult to put a finger directly on it.”<sup>50</sup> Although the usefulness of this kind of education for managers was difficult to verify, it was equally difficult to disprove or discount. Managers who were trained in liberal arts could assert their superiority over others who lacked such knowledge while tacitly maintaining that the basis for their superiority was too subtle to be subject to any crude outward demonstration. In his proposal for the Institute, Morse Peckham raised the question, “Of what use are [the humanities] in the business world? How can a ‘good-in-itself’ that needs no justification be translated into a world in which everything must be justified?”<sup>51</sup> While his proposal offered answers to this problem persuasive enough to convince AT&T to fund the Institute, it is worth noting that this notion of the ‘good-in-itself’ is not as alien to the corporate managerial sphere as Peckham makes it sound. A key responsibility of the manager, according to an AT&T internal report, was to ensure that his workers were fulfilled in their jobs: “Mature growth is a continuous process toward the fulfillment of what a person is uniquely capable of becoming.” “The manager, therefore, who helps people to grow is one who can accept the idea of each individual becoming himself—and who makes an effective team out of such people.”<sup>52</sup>

The report emphasizes the emotional and psychological development of the people the manager oversees, their ability to achieve a sense of individual identity through work, rather than their capacity to further company profits. In his analysis of what the liberal arts could offer corporations, Charles A. Nelson, contributor to the *Harvard Business Review*, articulates this priority even more explicitly:

Most executives’ decisions at the top level affect other managers—their lives, their satisfactions in their work, and their ability to perform the kind of job they can be proud of. It is possible to organize a company in which the opposite occurs—in which men are almost of necessity made worse because of their association with the corporation. Executives have it within their power to frustrate the creative energies of most of the men under their direction or to help them to fulfill their capacities.

It was the moral imperative of Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher, that every man must be treated as an end in

himself. This means that men are not tools to be “handled,” for tools are implements for some other end.<sup>53</sup>

The manager, in this formulation, becomes a therapist whose Kantian humanism causes him to reverse means and ends, so that he treats the company as a means of furthering the happiness and fulfillment of his workers rather than his workers as a means of furthering the interests of the company. Like the intellectual tasks that comprise a liberal arts education, Nelson suggests, the tasks of a manager ought to be rewarding in themselves. Thus the white collar corporate sphere becomes the promised terminus of the American dream, a realm of pure, immediate fulfillment, whose activities constitute their own reward.

While some may have accused Nelson of wishful thinking, structural changes in the economy made it possible for him and others to conceive of the managerial sphere in this manner. Significantly, management and ownership of companies had largely parted ways by the middle of the twentieth century. For a variety of reasons—some economic, some political, some legal—large corporations came to depend upon a myriad number of individual stockholders for their capital, each of whom had only a tiny stake in any given company, while the task of running these companies fell to a corps of salaried professional managers, whose compensation remained relatively fixed, regardless of the company’s immediate profits and losses.<sup>54</sup> As numerous observers have noted, this situation meant greater power for managers than owners, and it also meant that the former could seek to further priorities other than the bottom-line interests of the latter. Such autonomy entailed potential risks and potential benefits. On the one hand, as recent developments have shown, managers, especially higher-level executives, could behave irresponsibly, disregarding their fiduciary obligations, draining their company’s funds, gutting the pensions and retirement accounts of small investors, while granting themselves unjustified monetary rewards. On the other hand, however, it meant that managers could, if they were so motivated, make their companies serve not only profits but also the public good—the good of their employees and the good of society, thus turning corporations into benevolent civic agents. Indeed, as Kenneth Liparito has persuasively argued, corporations are structurally designed to direct individual urges toward a “larger collective purpose” and can thus operate to contain selfishness and build character in accord with ideals similar to those propounded by turn-of-the century reformist and utopian movements—some of which in fact incorporated to take advantage of legal protections.<sup>55</sup> One can see how a corporation designed according to this model might be amenable to Kantian ethics and might require workers with a background in the humanities of the kind the Institute sought to offer.

Notwithstanding such idealistic conceptions, many employees did, as critics such as Whyte and Mills observed, find managerial work to be unfulfilling, and thus the Institute sought to offer a rich intellectual life as an implicit compensation for the disappointments produced by an unrewarding job. Indeed, a

study of the humanities did not merely serve as a substitute gratification; it also helped to engender the very mind-set necessary to accept the limited role imposed upon the white collar worker by the corporation. Encountering the wide range of human experiences, struggles, and accomplishments that the Institute sought to crystallize in one year of liberal arts study was mentally enriching, to be sure, but it was also humbling, apt to produce a feeling of individual insignificance. One participant stated that after the program, "I had departed rather abruptly from the technical organizational man approach and secondly [*sic*], I was quite unsure of what I really did know and very insecure in the realization of the limited knowledge that I really had of the world around me."<sup>56</sup> A second admitted, "I am much more keenly aware of my own inadequacies, of the amount that I do not know about things and about the tremendous number of factors that you have to consider in trying to arrive at a reasonable and fair decision."<sup>57</sup> A third remarked, "Some of the things we worry about and strive for in the business in terms of measured performance seemed rather insignificant compared to the sweep of history, the great occurrences of history, such as the Renaissance or the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution and so forth."<sup>58</sup> The individual, as conceived by the Institute, was necessarily a miniscule part of a massive, vastly complicated world, but this was exactly the position that the white collar worker occupied relative to the corporation.

A broadened perspective thus served both to rationalize and compensate for the individual's narrow scope of agency. By increasing participants' capacity to comprehend and make connections between disparate phenomena, the Institute allowed them to gain an intellectual purchase on a wider set of operations and activities, from which they were in practice excluded, including the myriad functions performed by AT&T. The Institute's celebration of the interior as opposed to the practical life, combined with its efforts to encourage an intellectual appreciation of those struggles, ideas, and forces that are greater than any individual, helped equip the executive to recognize and embrace his narrowly circumscribed position as inevitable, but also to identify psychologically and symbolically with the corporation. One participant testified to this effect rather explicitly:

So, I have now many, many, times kind have [*sic*] taken a step backward and looked at our operation which is an ordinary, it's a high speed, it's a daily routine day in and day out kind of a function and yet the information that we're dealing with, the data that we put out, etc., when you look at it objectively and recognize that there is a tremendous [*sic*] romance that runs all through this thing if only we could pause and somehow illuminate this and tell our story in a way that would take the mundane take the routine take the daily chore kind of thing out of it and produce an entirely new elixir of life I guess, Where [*sic*] each day you come in, while you're go-

ing to be doing basically the same thing day in and day out, you recognize that all of the surrounding things that produce this daily media which comes in perfectly standard, normal highly specialized, highly routine form, has about it an aura of romance, an aura of adventure and so forth, that is very, very stimulating.<sup>59</sup>

Wholly aware of the dull, routine tasks that an AT&T employee must perform, the respondent nevertheless believes it is possible to find such work exciting through a modification of individual perspective of the kind brought about by the Institute. Though forced to do “basically the same thing day in and day out,” his awareness of the “surrounding things” of the company as a whole—its tirelessly consistent performance, its scope, its perfectly standardized dissemination of media—enables him to view his job as romantic.<sup>60</sup>

### **Intangible Tasks**

Given these striking, if generally unnoticed, links between humanistic study and the needs of corporations, why did AT&T decide to discontinue the Institute, and why have the humanities come to play such a marginal role in the training of future business executives? It is important to note, first of all, that many of the connections that I have been describing were generally not a part of the explicit rationale for the Institute, and they were incapable of playing this role, since their announcement would foreground potentially unflattering features of both the corporation and the humanities. Management would likely not want to advertise its tendency to downplay the importance of company profits as a basis for embracing the anti-utilitarian outlook of the humanities. Nor would liberal arts departments want to admit that the humbling effect of confronting world history as well as great works of art and literature could ultimately help individuals accept their disempowered position within corporations. And neither would be inclined to acknowledge that a liberal arts education may serve merely as an arbitrary means of legitimation for white collar workers irrespective of any clear evidence that the knowledge learned actually enhances a manager’s performance.

Despite industrial psychologist Morris Viteles’s vigorous support of the Institute backed up by purportedly scientific evidence, the leadership at AT&T eventually asserted the dearth of demonstrable benefits to the company as a reason to end the program.<sup>61</sup> This was an interesting rationale, given that the planners of the program had specifically requested that instructors devise the curriculum without any concern for its corporate utility. In his initial proposal, Professor Morse Peckham noted that many at AT&T would want the course content of the program to underline how the humanities could serve the interests of business. His answer was unequivocal: “It is, then, impossible and undesirable to choose the subjects and direct the teaching in such a way that

the program will have an immediate, obvious, and useful relationship to business.”<sup>62</sup> The executives at AT&T found such claims persuasive. In a “Report of Presidents’ Committee on Management Development,” they described the premises upon which the program was initially based:

- 1) The study of the humanities—unrelated to business—would produce the most constructive effect.
- 2) The faculty that was not conscious of the need for practical consequences would do the best job.<sup>63</sup>

The problem AT&T faced, significantly, was an abundance of technically trained specialists incapable of envisioning the company’s long-term future or concerning themselves with anything other than their day-to-day tasks and problems. To challenge such tendencies, planners of the program, both academic and corporate, offered the humanities as an anti-utilitarian enterprise, as valuable in itself, and as immeasurable in its effects; and they chose the professors and the content of the courses to reinforce this conception. But then upon initiating the program, the company immediately sought to measure its effectiveness, thus hoping to establish the utility of that which it had already defined as opposed to the notion of measurable utility. According to President John Markle II, “We treated [the Institute] like any other business decision; that is we applied a particular approach to a current problem because we felt our money would be well spent and would eventually pay off.”<sup>64</sup>

Ironically, what doomed the relationship between corporate management and the humanities was not a lack of compatibility between the two, but rather a fatal congruity: both involved tasks that were largely intangible and aimed to produce results whose value was difficult to articulate or quantify. As Peter E. Drucker, author of the 1954 seminal text *The Practice of Management*, put it, “Even the people in a business often do not know what their management does and what it is supposed to be doing, how it acts and why, whether it does a good job or not.”<sup>65</sup> A remark by Bell president Chester Barnard bears out Drucker’s statement: “Leaders lead. This implies activity, and suggests the obvious question, ‘What is it they do?’ Now I must confess that heretofore on the few occasions when I have been asked: ‘What do I *do*?’ I have been unable to reply intelligibly.”<sup>66</sup> Describing the job of the executive, one participant at the Institute confessed, “I guess you’d say the leaders don’t do any work, they influence the people who do the work.”<sup>67</sup> His observation echoes the pejorative conclusions reached by sociologist C. Wright Mills in his analysis of the white collar sphere:

Fewer individuals manipulate *things*, more handle *people* and *symbols*. . . . The shift in needed skills is another way of describing the rise of the white-collar workers, for their characteristic skills involve the handling of paper and money and people. They are expert at dealing with people transiently

and impersonally; they are masters of the commercial, professional, and technical relationship. The one thing they do not do is live by making things; rather, they live off the social machineries that organize and coordinate the people who do make things.<sup>68</sup>

Given both the increasingly elaborate structures within which managers operated and the symbolic and psychological nature of the work they performed, objectively measuring what they contributed to the company became difficult.

Since AT&T conceived of the humanities as a discipline by definition devoid of measurable utility, and since the functions and purposes of the manager in a large corporation in the 1950s had become themselves sufficiently intangible as to defy objective assessment, the task of measuring scientifically how the Institute of Humanistic Studies could enhance the managerial capacities of its participants turned out to be well-nigh impossible. No wonder one executive dismissed the claim that the humanities could be of use to a business executive in a memo to Morris Viteles as an “*unproved hypothesis*.”<sup>69</sup> Although supporters of the Institute argued for a view of management as a kind of art and the manager as a creative free thinker, they could not compete with a different notion of management that was becoming increasingly dominant: that of the scientific manager who operated according to empirically verifiable principles.

The postwar period witnessed a remarkable growth in business management education programs. Although professional business schools, such as Harvard and Wharton, had existed since the early part of the twentieth century, the percentage of students majoring in business grew precipitously during the middle of century, from 3.2 percent of all bachelor’s degrees during the 1919–20 academic year to 17 percent from 1949 to 1950, and graduate programs in business studies saw their enrollments rise even more dramatically, doubling between 1953 and 1963 and tripling in the following decade.<sup>70</sup> Accompanying these were numerous on- and off-site executive training programs, of which AT&T was one example. As Kenneth R. Andrews notes in a *Harvard Business Review* article:

The growth of educational programs for practicing executives both at universities and in their own companies has been one of the most conspicuous developments in business education since 1946. But the chorus of enthusiasm for these efforts no longer drowns out skeptical sounds as the wary and the suspicious turn their attention to the “advanced” management movement. Not entirely overwhelmed by the traditional will-ingness of Americans to accept education on faith, this skepticism may well be about to erupt as a demand for proof.<sup>71</sup>



Andrew's interest in proof is telling; in both their efforts to meet the demands of corporations and in their desire to achieve academic legitimacy, business schools during the postwar period increasingly sought to turn the study of effective managerial practices into a rigorous, empirical science.<sup>72</sup>

One possible response to the apparent intangibility and immeasurability of the tasks that a manager performs is to embrace these characteristics and thus refuse all efforts to systematize the profession; the other is to devise ever more elaborate methods for analyzing, assessing, and standardizing that which appears to elude scientific measure. During the 1950s, business schools and corporations collectively embraced the latter. Even Peter Drucker, who supported humanistic training and acknowledged that "management can never be an exact science," said of his project:

This entire book is based on the proposition that the days of the 'intuitive' managers are numbered. This book assumes that the manager can improve his performance in all areas of management, including the managing of a business, through the systematic study of principles, the acquisition of organized knowledge and the systematic analysis of his own performance in all areas of his work and job and on all levels of management.<sup>73</sup>

The emphasis on scientifically measurable management methods entailed a prioritization of efficiency and profitability. As Robert R. Locke has noted, the neoclassical economic theories, which provided a foundation for the scientific paradigm, treat the maximization of profits not only as the goal, but also as the very premise of managerial knowledge, the universal constant that makes economic analysis possible.<sup>74</sup>

This priority in turn entailed a subordination of other potential goals, including the fulfillment of workers or the public good. When the rational assessment of managerial efficacy becomes a central aim of both business schools and corporations, then productivity, efficiency, and profits necessarily become the focus of concern, since they are relatively easy to measure. As one AT&T report noted, "One of the problems that limits the effective use of the available incentives is the difficulty of accurately judging management performance. The result may be an over stressing of the statistical measures of performance in line jobs."<sup>75</sup> To be sure, other factors, including the well-being and psychological health of worker, do not entirely disappear; the field of industrial psychology, which experienced rapid growth in the 1950s, is centered around measuring these; but they are nonetheless harder to quantify.<sup>76</sup> And other more intangible, longer-term, and indirect consequences of a corporation's operations, like the public good or the cohesion of the community are almost impossible to determine scientifically. The widespread embrace of a scientific managerial paradigm, in other words, represented not only a repudiation of training in the

liberal arts, but also of the conception of the corporation as a socially responsible agent, dedicated to building character and ameliorating the ill effects of an unrestrained free market. Though this progressive vision was, as Lipartito has asserted, a structural possibility of the corporation, it remained during the postwar years mostly unrealized, and the refusal of this possibility arguably guaranteed the demise of the Institute and other similar initiatives.

Historian Mark D. Bowles suggests that the Institute's tendency to make its participants more tolerant of anticapitalist thought may have been in part responsible for its discontinuation. While the various assessments of the program conducted by Douglas Williams Associates and by Morris Viteles confirm that participants did become more critical of the United States and less critical of communism, whether or not these results influenced AT&T's eventual decision is unclear.<sup>77</sup> The only rationale indicated by the archival record was the program's perceived inability to demonstrate that it was producing measurable benefits for the company. "The committee believes the System has been moving into liberal arts exposure faster than our knowledge about what this contributes to management development would warrant. . . . The committee also believes that future experimental programs at colleges should be based on an adequate prior investigation of the needs of participants, and adequate assessment of program accomplishments."<sup>78</sup>

The company's decision of course was likely rooted at least indirectly in cold war anxieties. The growth of managerial power and the expansion of both corporate and government bureaucracies inspired, as I have noted, anxieties that the United States was coming to resemble the Soviet Union. The efforts to measure and assess management practices in scientific fashion aimed to trace the causal links between such practices and the company's profits or losses. As Drucker asserts:

Management must always, in every decision and action, put economic performance first. It can only justify its existence and its authority by the economic results it produces. There may be great non-economic results: the happiness of the members of the enterprise, the contribution to the welfare or culture of the community, etc. Yet management has failed if it fails to produce economic results. It has failed if it does not supply goods and services desired by the consumer at a price the consumer is willing to pay. It has failed if it does not improve or at least maintain the wealth-producing capacity of the economic resources entrusted to it.<sup>79</sup>

While efforts at assessment and systematization of the kind recommended by Drucker may have curtailed the very freedom and creativity within the corporation that the Institute, as a cold war initiative, sought to buttress, these efforts also worked to reconnect managerial decisions with measurable consequences

in the free market, thus limiting the modes of bureaucratic authority that many saw as the greatest threat to American capitalism. Though offered as a patriotic endeavor, the Institute tended to further an image of corporate management as less rather than more answerable to the market, and hence it fell victim to the liberal, anticommunist ideology that it was designed to support.

### Humanistic Utility

The tendency to conceive of the work that managers and businessmen perform in narrowly economic terms during the years after the Institute's demise alarmed some of its alumni. One notes, "There was an observation that the young people today in our colleges and universities are not being particularly attracted to business because they are not aware of the challenge of business today. They seem to be of a mind that the only purpose of business is to make a profit and that this is insufficient for them in terms of the fulfillment of their lives in the singular pursuit of a profit motive."<sup>80</sup> Although the respondent expresses concern about the decrease of interest in business among undergraduates, it has been the humanities, not business, that have arguably experienced a crisis in recent decades. While the number of students majoring in business and other vocational subjects has increased significantly in the past forty years, the number of those majoring in the humanities has decreased.<sup>81</sup> Between 1972 and 1988, the percentage of bachelor degrees in arts and social sciences fell from 45 to 27 percent.<sup>82</sup> Meanwhile, the percentage of students pursuing a major in the humanities decreased by more than half, from 17 to 8 percent.<sup>83</sup>

Decreased enrollments among undergraduates represent of course only one problem among many for the humanities. As universities have come to depend more and more on government and corporate grants, the majority aimed at expanding programs in the sciences and business, humanities departments, often regarded as an economic burden by administrators—one that brings negligible value to the university—have had their funding cut.<sup>84</sup> Thus, they have been forced to staff a significant proportion of their courses with underpaid, exploited adjuncts, drawn from the ever growing ranks of graduate students and PhDs, whose precarious situation has become, according to many observers, a necessary and structural, rather than an accidental or temporary, feature of the entire enterprise.<sup>85</sup> Such tendencies seem likely to threaten the very existence of tenure, and as administrators continually usurp power over the operations of humanities departments in the name of economic efficiency, this and other protections for academic freedom now appear to be in jeopardy.<sup>86</sup>

These developments have produced an array of anguished responses and proposed solutions among academics. Some, such as Frank Donoghue, have predicted the demise of the discipline as we know it.<sup>87</sup> Others, including Cary Nelson and Marc Bousquet, have argued that professors need to band together in unions or professional organizations to defend tenure, academic freedom, and the right of faculty to govern themselves.<sup>88</sup> Still others, such as Menand,

have argued that various professional prerogatives have in fact damaged the humanities by shielding scholars' work from the rigors of the market and the demand for broader relevance that such a market would exact. Many have claimed that academics need to do a better job of arguing for the usefulness and value of the subjects they write about and teach, suggesting that professors should articulate how their discipline helps to produce skills necessary for both engaged citizenship within a democratic system and a variety of vocational pursuits.<sup>89</sup> In some universities, humanities departments have attempted to reorganize themselves in order to meet the demands of a corporate culture focused on instantly measurable results, objective assessments, and marketable forms of utility.

The effort to revise the humanities curriculum so as to prioritize marketable skills makes a certain amount of sense. The perception that liberal arts classes do not prepare students for jobs in business and finance is obviously partially responsible for decreased enrollments. And yet it is important to recognize that liberal arts departments are not presently in a state of decline. They suffered their most significant setbacks during the 1970s and 1980s, and these shrinking numbers may have partially resulted from the decision of corporations such as AT&T to embrace a scientific model of management training in the name of free market principles of the kind offered by programs in business and finance. Since then, however, the percentage of humanities majors, as Michael Bérubé observes, has remained constant.<sup>90</sup> Given this relative stability, one might say that the greatest risk to humanities departments is their own urge to overstate the crisis that they are confronting and thus renovate their curriculum and revise their practices in accordance with corporate-managerial standards in a self-destructive effort to save themselves.

The Institute of Humanistic Studies made valiant efforts to measure the utility of its curriculum in order to demonstrate the value it might offer to AT&T, and this, ironically enough, rendered it even more vulnerable to attack, especially given the inability of its participants to explain exactly how their year off had made them more effective workers. Indeed, whatever results the Institute produced were practically guaranteed to disappoint AT&T's management, especially when compared with other business-oriented vocational programs whose curriculum was specifically designed to produce legible indicators of business competence. In fact, one could argue that humanities departments in general simply cannot compete with such programs when they attempt to satisfy criteria articulated within a corporate culture. And when they do make such attempts, they risk sacrificing their specificity—the kinds of knowledge and forms of thought that they are uniquely qualified to foster. This does not mean that humanities departments can entirely declare their independence from the corporation. It is not mere coincidence that both achieved their modern identity at the same moment, in the late 1800s. Whether explicitly or not, the bachelor of arts degree has attracted students by implicitly promising to legitimize their entry into the white collar corporate professional sphere. But liberal arts pro-

grams have been able and will continue to serve this function without cravenly catering to corporate-inspired demands for marketable skills.

Interestingly enough, both the academic and the corporate planners of AT&T's institute held that the humanities were valuable in themselves, regardless of what uses they might subsequently serve, and these planners seemed to celebrate disinterested inquiry for its own sake, *because* they regarded it as an anticorporate value. That the participants in the program discovered intense, unprecedented fulfillment in the intellectual experiences they had while in the program would seem to validate the view, voiced most passionately by Morse Peckham, that humanistic study is an intrinsically good activity. One might note, however, that the experiences of these alumni, in the decades after they graduated, also suggest, albeit anecdotally, the long-term usefulness of what they learned. Significantly, the utility they identify was not corporate utility; they were almost never able to identify any decisions they made on the job as a result of their time in the Institute that contributed to corporate profits. Rather, they describe an effect of their education similar to that envisioned famously by John Dewey in the early part of the twentieth century, and more recently by Martha Nussbaum: their year at Pennsylvania appears to have made them better, more socially responsible, more civically engaged, more sensitive citizens.<sup>91</sup>

Admittedly, the participants were reluctant to attribute their subsequent choices directly to the influence of the Institute, and their responses to Viteles's questionnaire obviously do not offer scientific proof of the value of the humanities. But it may well be that the particular kinds of contributions, the intellectual, ethical, and affective resources that humanistic study offers society, do not lend themselves easily to scientific demonstration or quantification. Moreover to attempt to assess these contributions in such terms runs the risk of capitulating to the very corporate values, centered on immediate measurable utility, against which the discipline of the humanities must, in order to establish its own specific *raison d'être*, define itself. It is worth emphasizing that the participants in the Institute tended to become most eloquent, passionate, and persuasive precisely when they were describing complex and far-reaching changes in their attitude and their approach to various problems whose causal connection to their educational experiences they could not definitively trace: when they described their commitment to integrating their workplaces in the face of racism, when they reported their heightened sensitivity to their subordinates' psychological problems, and even when they struggled to articulate an intangible transformation of their perspective that eluded objective appraisal. However unscientific and tentative, such anecdotal evidence may be the best measure of what the humanities have to offer, and if they hope to survive, it is on this admittedly uncertain ground that they will have to stake their future.

## Notes

1. For a historical overview of the Institute, see Mark D. Bowles, "The Organization Man Goes to College: AT&T's Experiment in Humanistic Education, 1953–1960," *Historian* 61, no. 1, (1998): 15–31.
2. For a detailed description of the curriculum, alongside some of the participants' reactions, see E. Digby Baltzell, "Bell Telephone's Experiment in Education," *Harper's Magazine*, March 1955, 73–77.
3. *Ibid.*, 76.
4. *Ibid.*, 74.
5. Douglas Williams Associates, "Report of Douglas Williams Associates on the Interview Findings on the Institute of Humanistic Studies," in *Report on a Study of the Institute of Humanistic Studies*, April 1957, 46, AT&T Archives, Warren, NJ.
6. See, for instance, Bell Telephone Recordings #39, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 1 (1967), University of Akron, Akron, Ohio; Bell Telephone Recordings #68, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 2 (1967); Bell Telephone Recordings #81, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 2 (1967).
7. In its famous symposium in 1952, the *Partisan Review* testified to the tendency of cold war intellectuals to support American capitalism as the only system capable of guaranteeing individual and artistic freedom. See "Our Country and Our Culture," *Partisan Review* 19, nos. 3–5 (1952): 282–326, 420–50, 562–97. For some accounts of the persecution intellectuals and academics faced during the McCarthy era, see Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998), 395–412; Paul S. Lazarsfeld and Wagner Thielens, Jr., *The Academic Mind* (Glencoe IL: Free Press, 1958).
8. At a conference sponsored by AT&T on the Institute of Humanistic Studies, C. Scott Fletcher characterized the program as motivated by the cold war. He declared, "our education—dedicated to freedom—must be as purposeful and effective as Communist education for servitude." See C. Scott Fletcher, "Continuing Liberal Education for Executive Leadership," Presentation of the Institute of Humanistic Studies for Executives, April 15–16, 1959, Philadelphia, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M2188, Folder 13.
9. For histories of the academic humanities in the United States, see Louis Menand, *The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in the American University* (New York: Norton, 2010); Jon H. Roberts, *The Sacred and the Secular University* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Gerard Graff, *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Robert Scholes, *The Rise and Fall of English: Reconstructing English as a Discipline* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998). For some histories of the modern corporation, see Adolf A. Berle and Gardiner C. Means, *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1932); Alfred D. Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1977); Joanne Yates, *Control through Communication: The Rise of System in American Management* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); Frank Donoghue, *The Last Professors: The Corporate University and the Fate of the Humanities* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008); Christopher Newfield, *Ivy and Industry: Business and the Making of the American University, 1880–1980* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).
10. As Bowles notes, several companies decided to use "the liberal arts as a means to broaden overspecialized managers." The programs designed to introduce executives to the liberal arts included The New England Experiment at Clark University, the University of Akron's Liberal Education for Executives, The Institute for Executive Leadership at Southwestern University, and the University of Denver's Program in Liberal Education for Business Leadership. See Bowles, "The Organization Man Goes to College," 20. See also the *Saturday Review's* symposium on the relationship between the humanities and business, especially Courtney C. Brown, "Human Problems First," *Saturday Review* November 21, 1953, 36; Julian Street, Jr., "One Corporation's Problem," 37; Albert J. Nicerson, "Climbing the Managerial Ladder," 38–39; Gilbert W. Chapman, "The Opportunity Ahead," 46. Other arguments in favor of a humanistic education for corporate managers appear in Robert A. Goldwin and Charles A. Nelson, eds., *Toward the Liberally Educated Executive* (White Plains, NY: Fund for Adult Education, 1959).
11. See Douglas Williams Associates, "Report of Douglas Williams Associates on the Interview Findings on the Institute of Humanistic Studies," April 1957, 8, AT&T Archive; "Present Implications of a Forward Look at Management Development," March 7, 1957, AT&T Archives; Morse Peckham, *Humanistic Education for Business Executives: An Essay in General Education* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), 22–23; Baltzell, "Bell Telephone's Experiment in Education," 73; David Ray "Finishing School for Executives," *The Nation*, December 6, 1958, 426.

12. See Douglas Williams Associates, "Report of Douglas Williams Associates on the Interview Findings on the Institute of Humanistic Studies," April 1957, 8, AT&T archives.
13. For a description of the program's rationale see The Institute of Humanistic Studies, descriptive pamphlet, AT&T Archives.
14. As Richard Ohmann has observed, "Complex industrial firms needed a corps of managers who could size up needs, organize material, marshal evidence, solve problems, make and communicate decisions. Government and other bureaucracies had a similar need for exposition and argument and allied skills. Writing was no longer mainly a private and public art, but a tool of production and management. See Richard Ohmann, *English in America: A Radical View of the Profession* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 93.
15. Chester Barnard, *Organization and Management: Selected Papers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948), 198.
16. Yates's *Control through Communication* and Chandler's *Visible Hand* describe the growth of corporate bureaucracies at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.
17. David Riesman et al., *Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1950); C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951); William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1956).
18. Dwight Macdonald testified to this anxiety: "The tendency of modern industrial society, whether in the USA or the USSR, is to transform the individual into the mass man." See Macdonald, *Against the American Grain* (New York: Random House, 1962), 8.
19. Ray, "Finishing School for Executives," 426.
20. See Douglas Williams Associates, "Report on A Study of the Humanistic Studies," April 1957, 6, AT&T archives.
21. Brown, "Human Problems First," 36.
22. Wilfred D. Gillen, "Why the Institute of Humanistic Studies for Executives," address at a presentation of the Institute of Humanistic Studies for Executives at the University of Pennsylvania, April 15–16, 1959, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12186, folder 13.
23. For an account of how the humanities were taught in the nineteenth century, see Graff, *Professing Literature*, 21–50.
24. See *ibid.*, 55–58; Menand, *The Marketplace of Ideas*, 45–50.
25. See Menand, *The Marketplace of Ideas*, 49.
26. See Frank Donoghue, *The Last Professors*, 3; Glenn Altschuler and Stuart Blumin, *G.I. Bill: The New Deal for Veterans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 86.
27. See Menand, *The Marketplace of Ideas*, 30–40.
28. See *General Education in a Free Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1945).
29. See Morris Viteles, "'Human Relations' and the 'Humanities' in the Education of Business Leaders: Evaluation of a Program of Humanistic Studies for Executives," *Personnel Psychology* 12, no. 1 (spring 1959): 13–22; Viteles, "The Long-Range Impact of a Programme of Humanistic Studies for Business Executives on Managerial Attitudes and Behavior," *International Review of Applied Psychology* 20, no. 1 (1971): 13–18. See also "Report of Presidents' Committee on Management Development," 1958, AT&T Archives.
30. Bell Telephone Recordings #33, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12161, folder 19 (1967).
31. Bell Telephone Recordings #68, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 2 (1967).
32. Bell Telephone Recordings #34, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12161, folder 20 (1967).
33. Bell Telephone Recordings #10, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 2 (1967).
34. *Ibid.*
35. Bell Telephone Recordings #68, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 2 (1967).
36. Bell Telephone Recordings #6, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 2 (1967).
37. According to the Douglas Williams report, "Though more than half of the men appeared to take it in stride, perhaps a quarter were 'thrown' by their programs to varying degrees. Some are less sure of themselves and their values than before, and a few are severely shaken." Douglass Williams, "Report on a Study of the Institute of Humanistic Studies," April 1957, 9, AT&T Archives.
38. Bell Telephone Recordings #5, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 1 (1967).
39. Viteles, "'Human Relations' and the 'Humanities,'" 17.
40. Douglas Williams, "Report of Douglas Williams Associates on the Interview Findings on the Institute of Humanistic Studies," 25. AT&T Archives.

41. *Ibid.*, 25. See also Viteles, "The Long-Range Impact," 6.
42. Bell Telephone Recordings #35, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12162, folder 1 (1967).
43. Bell Telephone Recordings #26, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 2 (1967).
44. Bell Telephone Recordings #6, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 1 (1967).
45. Bell Telephone Recordings #36, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12162, folder 1 (1967).
46. Bell Telephone Recordings #15, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 1 (1967).
47. Bell Telephone Recordings #5, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 1 (1967).
48. Bell Telephone Recordings #13, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 8 (1967).
49. Bell Telephone Recordings #6, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 2 (1967).
50. Bell Telephone Recordings #36, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12162, folder 1 (1967).
51. Peckham, *Humanistic Education for Business Executives*, 29.
52. "Present Implications of a Forward Look at Management Development," March 7, 1957, 7, AT&T Archives.
53. Charles A. Nelson, "The Liberal Arts in Management," *Harvard Business Review* 36, no. 3 (May/June 1958): 96.
54. For some analyses of the causes and possible consequences of this development, see Berle and Means, *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*; James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution: What Is Happening in the World* (New York: John Day Company, 1941). Chandler (in *The Visible Hand*) sees the ownership/management divide as the necessary result of new technologies and the expanded economies of scale that they enabled. By contrast, Mark J. Roe and William G. Roy regard the separation of ownership from management as the result of particular political and legal developments that evolved as a result of specifically American ideological pressures. See Mark J. Roe, *Strong Managers: Weak Owners: The Political Roots of American Corporate Finance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); William G. Roy, *Socializing Capital: The Rise of the Large Industrial Corporation in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).
55. See Kenneth Lipartito, "The Utopian Corporation," in *Constructing America: History, Politics, Culture*, ed. Kenneth Lipartito and David B. Sicilia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 94–119, especially 96–97.
56. Bell Telephone Recordings #81, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 2 (1967).
57. Bell Telephone Recordings #10, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 2 (1967).
58. Bell Telephone Recordings #5, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 1 (1967).
59. Bell Telephone Recordings #39, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 1 (1967).
60. This romantic subsumption of the individual within the machine is, of course, dangerously akin to the feared Soviet mentality. As Bowles notes, the Institute's failure, despite its intentions, to support a cold war ideology may have been partly responsible for its abrupt cancellation. See *The Organization Man Goes to College*, 28.
61. See "Committee Report on Management Development Programs," Bell System Presidents' Conference, Litchfield Park, Arizona, October 27 to November 1 1957, AT&T Archives.
62. Peckham, *Humanistic Education for Business Executives*, 44.
63. Report of Presidents' Committee on Management Development, Appendix D, 1958, AT&T Archives.
64. John Markle, "Widening the Scope of Management Development: The Institute of Humanistic Studies for Executives," *General Management Series* 178, American Management Association, 1955, 53.
65. Peter E. Drucker, *The Practice of Management* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), 6.
66. Barnard, *Organization and Management*, 85.
67. Bell Telephone Recordings #52, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 2 (1967).
68. Mills, *White Collar*, 65.
69. Memo: Critique of Training Program to Viteles from Noel Hansch, February 27, 1954, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12189, folder 2.



70. See Robert R. Locke, *Management and Higher Education since 1940: The Influence of America and Japan on West Germany, Great Britain, and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 161–62.

71. Kenneth R. Andrews, “Is Management Training Effective?” *Harvard Business Review* 35, no. 1 (January–February, 1957): 85.

72. See Robert R. Locke, *Management and Higher Education since 1940*. Locke’s focus is the “application of science to the solution of managerial problems,” which he argues “became the focus of higher education after the Second World War” (1), supplanting a historical paradigm. See also Rolv Peter Amdan, “Introduction,” in *Management Education and Competitiveness: Europe, Japan, and the United States*, ed. Rolv Peter Amdan (London: Routledge, 1996), 1–16.

73. Drucker, *The Practice of Management*, 9.

74. Locke observes, “according to the postulates of neoclassical economics, each firm seeks to maximize profits” (12).

75. “Present Implications of a Forward Look at Management Development,” March 7, 1957, 4, AT&T Archives.

76. For a history of industrial psychology, see Laura Leigh Koppes, *Historical Perspectives in Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997).

77. See note 38.

78. See note 58.

79. Drucker, *The Practice of Management*, 7–8.

80. Bell Telephone Recordings #39, Archives of the History of American Psychology, box M12163, folder 1 (1967).

81. For information about the growth of academic business programs, see Locke, *Management and Higher Education since 1940*, 161–62; Susan Aaronson, “Dinosaurs in the Global Economy? American Graduate Business Schools in the 1980s and 1990s,” in *Management Education and Competitiveness: Europe, Japan, and the United States*, ed. Rolv Peter Amdan (London: Routledge, 1996), 213.

82. See Roger L. Geiger, *Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Research Universities since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 326.

83. See Peter Conn, “We Need to Acknowledge the Realities of Employment in the Humanities,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 4, 2010. <http://chronicle.com/article/We-Need-to-Acknowledge-the/64885/>. Accessed December 2, 2014.

84. See Patricia Cohen, “In Tough Times, Humanities Must Justify Their Worth,” *New York Times*, February 25, 2009, C1.

85. See Bousquet, *How the University Works* (New York: New York University Press, 2008); Donoghue, *The Last Professors*.

86. For some descriptions of the challenges humanity departments face, see David Kirp, *Shakespeare, Einstein and the Bottom Line: The Marketing of Higher Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Donoghue, *The Last Professors*; Cary Nelson, *No University Is an Island: Saving Academic Freedom* (New York: New York University Press, 2010); Christopher Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Martha Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Marc Bousquet, *How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low-Wage Nation*; Jay Gregory, “Hire Ed! Deconstructing the Crises in Higher Ed” *American Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (March 2011): 163–78.

87. See, for instance, Donoghue, *The Last Professors*.

88. See Nelson, *No University Is an Island*; Bousquet, *How the University Works*.

89. See Menand, *The Marketplace of Ideas*; Robert Scholes, “Presidential Address 2004: The Humanities in a Posthumanist World,” *PMLA* 120, no. 3 (May 2005): 724–33; Nussbaum, *Not for Profit*. For a rejection of all attempts to value the humanities in terms of their utility, see Stanley Fish, “Will the Humanities Save Us?” *New York Times*, January 6, 2008, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/01/06/will-the-humanities-save-us/?scp=1&sq=Will%20the%20Humanities%20Save%20US%20Stanley%20Fish&st=cse>; “The Last Professor,” *New York Times*, January 18, 2009, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/01/18/the-last-professor/>; “Crisis of the Humanities II,” *New York Times*, October 18, 2010, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/10/18/crisis-of-the-humanities-ii/?scp=1&sq=Crisis%20of%20the%20Humanities%20II&st=cse>. Accessed December 2, 2014.

90. See Bérubé, “Breaking News: Humanities in Decline! Film at 11,” *Crooked Timber*, November 16, 2010, <http://crookedtimber.org/2010/11/16/breaking-news-humanities-in-decline-film-at-11/>. Accessed December 2, 2014.

91. See John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916).