pathy with their aims or methods? The signs of this future are already upon us, and this is largely because the universities have been what Mr. Baldridge says they are, and not what they ought to have been. We need to realize that society demands of its educators not that they be just like everybody else—and especially not like its politicians—but that they *clearly* merit, in *some* way or other, *greater* respect.

Mr. Baldridge is himself a university man. One can forgive him a uniform banality of style and lapses of English or of proofreading—"dual parallelism" (p. 115), "the relations between organizations and there [sic] environments" (p. 124), "the faculty's principle [sic] realm of interest" (p. 134)—more readily than indifference to the essential nature of the institution he is studying and to whose welfare he is presumably committed, personally and professionally. I think that this book, if widely read, can only serve to obscure the true understanding of the university and its problems. In the wrong hands—for example, the hands of local, state, or national politicians—it can only help to accelerate the politicalization of the university, not as this term is understood by the young radicals (who in their way are just as befuddled about the university as Mr. Baldridge) but as a politician might understand it, concluding that if university people play politics he might as well play politics with them. The outcome of such a confrontation between professionals and amateurs could only be disastrous for the latter. But in Sacramento, in Albany, in a dozen other state capitals around the country, the game has already begun.

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The Degradation of the Academic Dogma: The University in America, 1945-1970
Robert Nisbet. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1971. $6.95. 252 pp.

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Early in *The Degradation of the Academic Dogma* Robert Nisbet makes a revealing aside about the degradation of literary effort: "Older readers will perhaps remember the luster that once attended the book, before that luster was extinguished in the flood of publication during the past two or three decades, before books became, like steel and automobiles, commodities" (p. 28). Admittedly, I am a younger reader, except as the very, very young would count; but all the same, to me the book, a real book, can still have luster, if written with passion and care to make a significant point. Alas, in this case, the passion has flagged, the care has been compromised, and the point is significant but perfunctory, manufactured from recollections primarily to observe an academic occasion. Dross, not luster, attends this book, for it is a commodity hurriedly produced to capture a share of the market for tracts on the academic crisis.

To be sure, there is an academic crisis, and the position Nisbet takes is rather sound. As he sees it, the academic dogma has been founded on the conviction that knowledge is important, important in and for itself. Those who have shared this dogma have joined together to create and maintain the university, for through it they can pursue, without apology or distrac-

tion, the prizes of their conviction. This academic community has always had distinctive, hierarchical features, which harken back to its medieval origins. And during the last few decades, which fortuitously fall within the span of Nisbet's academic experience, a number of causes have joined to subvert the hierarchy and thus to degrade the dogma.

Money, an excess of money, is at the root of the problem in Nisbet's diagnosis, for the academic dogma was undercut by the academics themselves when they started to accept large-scale contract research. Through it, an academic capitalism has been created, transforming *les hommes de culture* into *nouveaux riches*. With the academic capitalism, all manner of extra-academic loci of power arose within the university, which now teems with bourgeois interlopers who care nought for knowledge in itself. These changes have had practical effects: academic instruction has given way to the cultivation of individual idiosyncrasies, the provision of psychic therapy, and the promotion of personal integration; academic policy has equally given way to a well-meaning but misplaced humanitarianism in which scholars betray their office—knowledge—and take up any and every cause that may be proclaimed by government officials, business men, labor leaders, social reformers, and even professed revolutionaries. With every powerful interest having become accustomed to instant academic service, the university has become profoundly politicized; as a result, on the one hand, many public priorities are in fact quietly determined within the closets of academe, and on the other, academic decisions are increasingly considered according to political, not intellectual, allegiances. All these conditions have finally made the university vulnerable to the student revolution of late, in which those who are by definition ignorant have managed to usurp considerable control; and the great public, which is not taken in as easily as arrogant intellectuals may think, will not stand for such nonsense and may rapidly withdraw its resources from an obviously corrupt institution.

In prescribing for recovery, Nisbet first rules out a number of common remedies, each of which entails, in essence, the unquestioned intensification of one or another cause of degradation. Society can find a better institution than the university to provide the organized research that is needed in modern life. Creative art will not really thrive if officially patronized as the essence of the future university. Likewise, the university can and should be of use to "business-labor-religious-governmental" establishments, but as the occasion arises, and not by such use being taken to be its very *raison d'être*. In the same manner, from time to time the university will be, de facto, a radical critic of society, but not if that function is officially institutionalized in the expectation that the man of the world will tenure his tormentors. The university may, in the course of pursuing its proper business, serve humanitarian ends, but those ends, directly, cannot be its proper business. By the same token, participation in the university may be therapeutic for some of its members, but the provision of therapy to the distraught children of affluence should not be its main endeavor. Instead: "*I suggest that the university's most feasible function for the future is in essence what it has been in the past: that of serving as a setting for the scholarly and scientific imagination*" (p. 207, italics in the original).

Ironically, the shortcomings of Nisbet's book will be most manifest to those who agree by and large with the views expressed in it. The university is a *setting* for scholarly and scientific endeavor. The endeavor, however, is not itself corporate, the endeavor is the work of particular scholars and scientists; the endeavor, in the end, depends on whether or not those performing it are willing to take account of what others have said, whether or not they are willing to take pains in their work, whether

or not they are willing to accept, not the academic dogma, but its standards. And as an example of the standards that should be upheld by those who believe that knowledge *is* important, Nisbet's book will but further degrade the academic condition.

Nisbet, however, distinguishes between prophecy and scholarship, arguing that the rigor of the latter should not be imposed on the former, for fear of limiting its insight, and perhaps he means with this distinction to excuse the numerous shortcuts that he takes in and with his text. I say "perhaps" because he is ambiguous whether or not he considers his book to be a work of prophecy. He claims not to prophesy, but he writes, as he suggests the prophet may, without explicit interest in the work of others, without concern for the usual academic niceties. Nisbet's distinction between prophecy and scholarship is itself dubious, but even without calling it into question, I have difficulty seeing how a prophet of the academic dogma can rightfully exempt his prophecies from its controlling standards, for a prophet, after all, is a man who gives witness to his doctrine not only by the letter of his word, but equally by the spirit of his example. In this work, Nisbet's example belies a latent disdain for scholarship, for knowledge, for the academic dogma. In substance, Nisbet's diagnosis is not new, although he mentions no predecessors, even though some merit mention. One of these is Jacques Barzun, who in 1959 in *The House of Intellect* described with profound penetration how commercialism, how wheeling and dealing and money grubbing, how cults of aestheticism, adjustment, and idiosyncrasy, how excess philanthropy and activism were rapidly dissipating our funded capital of intellect. And the basic diagnosis goes back much further: Nietzsche made it in the 1870s in *Schopenhauer as Educator* and *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions* and Veblen reiterated it for the United States not much later in *Higher Learning in America*. If pressed,

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however, Nisbet might well claim that the substance of his diagnosis has little originality and that such predecessors are to be taken for granted; his main claim instead concerns his perception of the historic significance that the crisis may harbor, and with respect to his claim, his nonchalance about the work of yet other writers has serious consequences.

An historical assertion concerning the character of the Western university provides the foundation of the book: "The prime point is that a certain distinctive kind of community existed [from the Middle Ages to the recent past], with a distinctive dogma its core, and that this community and this dogma required supporting contexts: contexts which were largely destroyed during the period 1945-1960 by the economic, political, social, and intellectual changes I call the Last Reformation" (p. 7). Evidence? Evidence! Why bother? Vigorous assertion will do, along with a little veneer to impress the half-informed, two passages from Hastings Rashdall and one from Charles Homer Haskins. To be sure, the university had medieval origins, as did the state, as Joseph R. Strayer has recently reiterated. But as the state has had a rather significant history since its medieval beginnings, so too has the university.

To ignore the history that intervenes between the medieval university and that which Nisbet began to experience in the 1930s is an evasion, an unscholarly evasion, for that history raises a number of doubts about Nisbet's prime point, doubts that a spokesman for scholarship ought to take up. To begin, a close reading of Rashdall, and studies by Denifle, Kibre, D'Irsay, Leff, and others, would raise the question whether, in fact, the features of the medieval university that long ago died—a separate civil law for members of the academic estate, the organization of students into nations, and the use of cessation and dispersal—were more properly characteristic of the institution than the features that Nisbet claims have survived essentially untouched by time.

Second, attention to the work of Paulsen and others concerned with the modern university would suggest the possibility that the university Nisbet reveres, one in which scholarship is at once advanced and disseminated by the integral connection of research and teaching, has little to do with the medieval university and is instead a nineteenth-century, primarily German creation, built sometimes (but not in the all-important case of Berlin) on vestiges of medieval universities.

Third, consideration of the work of Veysey and other students of the American university would raise the suspicion that the causes of the present academic degradation, which Nisbet characterizes as primarily post-war phenomena, have actually been at work from the beginning in the adapting of the German university to the United States; perhaps these causes are intrinsic to both the well-endowed private and the well-financed public institutions that alone were able to appropriate the German ideal. Finally, a fuller reading of the history of scholarship might indicate that the vigor of academic work does not depend, to the degree that Nisbet implies, on the health of the university: after all, in describing the character of scholarship, Nisbet himself appealed to the example of "the great Scaliger, Erasmus, and their innumerable contemporaries" (p. 32) without, that is, noting the implications of appealing to men who largely brought their scholarship to fruition in conscious opposition to the university.

Precisely how these historical questions would be resolved at the end of a full and careful study is immaterial here. The important matter in raising them is rather to indicate that they exist and that they merit serious consideration in characterizing the history of the Western university. For some reason Nisbet was unwilling to give them that consideration; instead he chose to found his defense of scholarship on an his-

torical caricature, without assuming scholarly responsibility for addressing himself to the intellectual difficulties that attend his interpretation. But a defense of scholarship that proceeds via its practical denial is no defense at all.

This basic disregard for scholarship might be passed off as merely a questionable tactic, if it were not reinforced by a persistent looseness in minor but revealing matters. For one, Nisbet frequently drives home a generalization by appeal to a vivid example of judgment, one that requires evidence but receives none. Thus, in discussing the tradition of seniority in the university that has been lost, he observes confidently that "not even the Congress of the United States is more seniority-ridden than was the old academic community" (p. 52). Perhaps, but there are complications, and the old community spawned quite a number of young university presidents, among them Charles W. Eliot, Nicholas Murray Butler, and Robert M. Hutchins. Thus, too, in discussing the importance of departments in academic governance, he asserts baldly that "great scholars in great universities could hope for, look forward to, even plot and scheme for, the chairman's position. And this was true across the country, Harvard to Berkeley" (p. 96). Plotting and scheming there surely was, but was it really a special penchant of the great, the hallmarks of Veblen, Dewey, James, or Beard? And thus, again, in discussing how politicalization is a function of change, as in the emergence of the modern nation-state, he observes that "then too a class of *politiques* arose—the most profound of which were, of course, Bodin, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. . . ." (p. 138). "Of course," indeed! Only those desperately searching for a dissertation topic would consider putting the case for Machiavelli or Montesquieu or any other superficial scribbler.

While such desiderata abound, and those mentioned are only examples, so too do references that are of questionable accuracy, and together they give the impression that the book was composed in great haste. For instance, is the infallibility of the pope in matters of faith and morals really a "long-held belief," as Nisbet suggests (p. 24), or is it a nineteenth-century innovation? Was the Chaucer scholar, or his Miltonian, Homeric, and other equivalent, each proud in his narrow impracticality, really revered in the pre-World War II university, as Nisbet contends (p. 25), or was such intense humanistic specialization primarily induced by the cult of research that came to flower after the war? Did Woodrow Wilson really revitalize American higher education with the words "Princeton in the nation's service" (p. 34), or was his speech on "Princeton in the Nation's Service" a rather eloquent defense of the social utility that indirectly inhered in the traditional Princeton, the collegiate Princeton? Was one's status in the university of the late nineteenth or early twentieth century really a function of one's accomplishments as a teacher and scholar (p. 50), or were the obscurity of C.S. Peirce and the difficulties of Veblen more than simple exceptions to an otherwise perfect rule? Is it truly beyond question "that within the university there flourished, for some eight centuries in the West, a unique fusion of the quest for knowledge through scholarship and the dissemination of this knowledge through teaching" (p. 58), or did the periods of scholarly sterility and didactic pettifogging occupy the greater part of those eight centuries? Have no distinguished teachers been recently selected to serve major governmental or diplomatic positions (pp. 182-3), or is Charles Frankel, former Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, to be ignored? Was it the salons of the French aristocracy that patronized the *philosophes* (p. 185), or were the salons a substitute court sponsored by the *haut bourgeoisie*? Have all candidates for college admission "immemorially" had to achieve certain minimum scores on the

same entrance examinations until exceptions were first made in recent years for disadvantaged blacks (p. 191), or have the exceptions in a non-very-certain system been the "immemorial" feature, the only change being that the exceptions that formerly were the privilege of the well-born are now being remedially transferred to the children of the once excluded?

Nisbet's prose, furthermore, bespeaks extreme haste in composition and in editorial production. Within two pages he twice tells how a bit of academic jargon became "talismanic," and thus indeed the word itself may be. On page 125 he suggests that the offices of deans of students have become empires, but on page 151 he asserts that administrative staffs have drastically expanded in all areas except those concerning student needs and interests. And then there are the typographical errors: one or two will always be found in even the most carefully edited book, but four in twenty-five pages, involving omitted words, repeated words, and the transformation of the word that he meant into another, indicate an unseemly haste on the part of both author and publisher.

These shortcomings—the evasion of complications, the slack prose, the sloppy production—together exemplify the costs of commercialism: it brings into being premature, even unnecessary, books. The need for new products induces an inflation in the available texts; thus solid essays are puffed into porous books. In this case, all 240 pages of it, the original was a single lecture, the John Dewey Lecture for 1970. In that form, pruned and compressed, frankly presented as an occasional summation of one man's rather rich experience, it was undoubtedly a powerful lecture. One can imagine that on hearing it, Nisbet's friends at Basic Books importuned him to expand it, *quickly*, to get it to the waiting world while the moment was still ripe. Sections of the lecture grew into parts, subheads into chapters, while the substance remained static. Author and publisher assumed that what carried conviction in a spoken lecture could surely stand scrutiny on the printed page. Push it through production, delegate the proof-reading, let the author's reputation and the ad man's effusions supply whatever authority the text itself might lack.

Something of the sort must have happened. And these, and similar practices, are the real degradations of the academic undertaking; they stem in the end from an old and simple failing, that of sloth. And as a function of sloth, in the end they hurt most their perpetrators. Through *The Degradation of the Academic Dogma,* Nisbet dissipates a precious portion of his academic authority by failing to take himself seriously. In his previous book, *Social Change and History,* one which shone with a certain luster, he argued with scholarly seriousness against the propriety of historical metaphors. The conception of progress and development, he contended, was a metaphorical borrowing from biology; and not only was it an improper borrowing, but any indulgence in historical metaphors was dubious and dangerous insofar as it induced in men a false certitude about the future. Personally, I have some difficulties accepting this argument fully, for it seems to me that all discourse is inherently metaphorical and that the danger is not metaphor, but the failure to recognize metaphor for what it is, confusing it with a will-o'-the-wisp positivism.

Be that as it may, Nisbet developed his position with worthy care, demonstrating by example that knowledge is important, and it is surprising to say the least that he should follow this argument with a book founded on a metaphor, a likening of the current academic crisis to the Reformation. The Reformation itself is but a metaphor, one that takes at face value the Protestants' motives and likens their actions to attempts to re-form a substance that has lost its proper shape. To liken the contemporary crisis to this earlier crisis by an extension of the metaphor is to point up certain sim-

ilarities, while it obscures others, not the least of which is the fact that in no localities have the proponents of academic reform, assuming generously that they have a true reforming vision, achieved enduring, definitive predominance at all like that achieved by Lutherans and Calvinists.

But the striking point, and the one that indicates the cost of commercialism and the self-harm of sloth, is that Nisbet has set against his earlier analysis of the improprieties of metaphor a more recent, less careful work built upon a most questionable metaphor. Some might claim a rhetorical rationale for this metaphor in a tract for the times, but it does not make for an effective defense of scholarship, and it substantially detracts from the overall integrity of Nisbet's own scholarship, raising the question for Nisbet's readers of which effort they should take seriously, that of the critic or the purveyor of historical metaphor.

To be sure, Nisbet can perhaps count on the discrimination of posterity, which may grant the seriousness of *Social Change and History* while discounting *The Degradation of the Academic Dogma*. But if that is the case, it will be because posterity will see *The Degradation of the Academic Dogma* for what it is, a symptom, not a diagnosis, of its subject.

Soviet Ethics and Morality
Richard T. De George. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1969. $7.50. 184 pp.

David Lawson
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Professor De George of the philosophy department at the University of Kansas had contributed at least two full-length works on Soviet thought as well as numerous journal articles by the time he became a senior research fellow at Columbia University in 1965-66. It was in the latter capacity that he produced the present volume, which is a study of Columbia's Russian Institute.

Aside from the preface, an introduction, and appended material, *Soviet Ethics and Morality* contains six chapters. The first three are concerned with the basis, structure, and content of Soviet ethical theory, and the latter three with official Soviet morality. This arrangement is in keeping with Soviet ethical theory itself, which regards ethics as the theory of morals, in which respect the direction of the volume is from theory to practice.

Western readers expecting to find much constricting monistic paternalism and lack of imagination in Soviet ethical theory are likely to have such preconceptions reinforced by De George's assessment. Even so, the author emphatically declares that it is not his intention to disprove or refute the Russian philosophical position, but "to point up areas where more critical analysis, clarification and development are required." Such an objective stands in high contrast with official Soviet philosophic method, which characteristically aims at a refutation of non-Marxist-Leninist teachings. Accordingly, while Western philosophic critiques of Soviet ethics and morality will tend to be corrective, Soviet critiques will tend to reject Western positions.

From the standpoint of pluralistic Western ethics with its roots in the clas-