4-23-2018

Academia's Past Boundaries in the Present Future

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April 23, 2018

**Submitted to the Faculty of Ursinus College in fulfillment of the requirements for Honors
in the History Department**

Abstract

In the later nineteenth century, Americans trained and acquired history degrees in Europe and Germany. It was in Europe that American scholars developed their understanding of what an "Historian" was. This image was one of a masculine "objective" researcher solving and discovering the "truth" of the past. It was these characteristics that formed the original boundaries of the American historical discipline. These boundaries remain and can be seen in contemporary discourse on academia. In Chapter Two this discourse is discussed and explored focusing on the four groups of scholars, disciplines, institutions, and the public. My research seeks to understand how the boundaries continue to reinforce an inaccessible academia and how these effects are demonstrated in the relationship between these groups. In a discussion of academia it is necessary to discuss academic labor both in how scholars see their own labor, and in how that labor is designed to reinforce existing boundaries.

Introduction

Welcome to the Boundary

The landscape of higher education is institutionally driven. This has never been clearer than in the case of the University of Wisconsin and their plan to drop thirteen humanities majors. The reasoning for this decision is painfully clear; the cuts are to make way for programs with "clear career pathways" and "to address declining enrollment and a multimillion-dollar deficit." [1]

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[1] Valerie Strauss, "A University of Wisconsin campus pushes plan to drop 13 majors — including English, history and philosophy" March 21, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2018/03/21/university-of-wisconsin-campus-pushes-plan-to-drop-13-majors-including-english-history-and-philosophy/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.9b0333cc48fe

The survival of the institution thus takes precedence over the interests of students, scholars, departments, and disciplines. It may even take precedence over the intended purpose of the institution in the eyes of the public.

In this time of dramatic change in higher education, this project seeks to reframe the discourse about academic labor and to better understand the relationship between scholars, disciplines, institutions, and the public. By looking at these four factors in relation to one another we can see the University of Wisconsin's plan in context. We also gain perspective on how higher education functions, and can better consider how we as members of that system want it to function.

The central questions that are the foundation of this study all seek to interrogate common assumptions about the relationship between scholars, disciplines, institutions, and the public. What is the role of the scholar? What is the purpose of scholarship? What is the relationship between scholar and scholarship? Who has the right to expert knowledge, and who controls that knowledge production? How do and should scholars engage with the public? How do institutions and disciplines function in relation to individual scholars? These questions strike at the heart of the complex relationships that determine what academics do and define the system in which they operate.

These questions are also very much central to conversations among institutions and scholars today. It is in the context of these ongoing conversations that I place my analysis and attempt to raise and articulate issues related to academia and all those related to it. I recognize that my position as an undergraduate student situates me as both an insider and an outsider in relation to the issues of scholarship, academics, and institutions. I am a vital part of the academic system as a student, and yet I am not myself a professional academic. While certainly I do not

have the same experiences of those who have been through the Ph.D. process, and I do not know what it is like to work in a professional capacity as an academic, my position as a student affords me signal advantages in undertaking this work. As a student, I have the ability to freely critique my education and the system of higher education without risking my employment. My position as a student also allows me an alternative vantage point; because I have not gone through a Ph.D. program, I do not have the same disciplinary ties that those who are academics possess. Finally, I believe that to change an entrenched system like academia will require academics and non-academics to engage in a conversation on how we want our educational system to function. It is thus important that voices like my own be part of the conversation.

After all, the purpose and function of academia are not solely the purview of academics who comprise the workforce, nor of the public. All have a stake in this discussion since the price of college continues to rise and academic labor conditions—and arguably, academic learning conditions—continue to deteriorate. Predictably, then, this conversation is already underway, especially between scholars, and as I frame in Chapter Two, this conversation is already multifaceted, encompassing a variety of opinions and purposes, revealing the complexity of academic voices and also their common focal points. In this paper, I show how all of these conversations are happening in relation to each other and yet at a distance from each other. Many of these conversations are focused on symptoms of the underlying problem that I have identified: the broader issue of academia's structure.

In Chapter One, I trace the creation of the American historical discipline from its origins in nineteenth-century Europe. Many of the ideas of what "History" was and now are developed in this context. I argue that the American construction of the academic discipline of history was based on the image of masculine, professional, white, and "true" historians. These characteristics

built the boundary of the historical discipline. This boundary then served to exclude those writing history without degrees in America, creating an Othered group that was represented as feminine, amateur, and "false." In addition, Chapter One discusses the early influences of business on academia. From this context in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries I move to a discussion of contemporary events in an attempt to understand how these boundaries still affect our understanding of scholars, disciplines, institutions, and the public.

Chapter Two entitled centers on the calculable relationship between scholars and their scholarship. This relationship connects the work of the scholar to their academic foundations, and explains how the boundaries described in Chapter One continue to exert pressure. Because of these boundaries, many who attempt to change academia instead end up reinforcing structures already in place. In this chapter most of the primary source material comes from public online sources. These sources are used to demonstrate how scholars understand their own work and labor, as well as how they conceptualize their role as individual scholars, as members of scholarly communities, and as academic laborers.

In particular, this chapter uses the field of medieval studies as a case study of how scholars understand public engagement and accessibility. The widespread use of medieval iconography by white supremacists and the effect that has had in prompting conversations by medieval scholars about their relationship to the public and their institutions makes this a particularly valuable case study. It shows a present concern that academics are dealing with, and in their engagement with each other and the public, we have a lens through which we can understand the levels of inaccessibility and prestige upon which academia is built.

In conclusion, I reflect on how academia might change and what an academia without boundaries might look like, if such a thing is possible. My conclusion also discusses some

examples of institutional changes that have been made or are under consideration. These institutional changes should inform out thoughts about the extent to which we can or should change the system of higher education that we currently have.

Chapter One

Creating the Boundary: How history became "History"

Although history is as old as time, History, in its modern American construction as an academic discipline, was only created in the nineteenth century. At the time, American historians had little choice but to be educated in Europe—indeed, in Germany—if they were to be taken seriously. Few American schools provided advanced degrees in subjects like history, and those that did cost vastly more than schools in Europe. Within Europe, Germany was seen as ideal, both in the cost and in its status of excellence within the European historical field. To acquire a degree in America would be several times more expensive than Germany even when including travel and living expenses.[2] Furthermore, this German education focused on a level of scholarly rigor and scientific examination that cemented its international value and significance for a wave of American scholars. Additionally, German scholars demonstrated an attractive example as they earned a significant living wage, and garnered high respect from the public. Because of the high number of American scholars who obtained an education in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, many European ideas about history helped create the American historical profession.

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[2] Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1988), 15-20.

Leading nineteenth-century historians like Leopold Von Ranke, Thomas Carlyle, and Lord Acton developed and debated ideas that their protégées in America steadily built into boundaries around a new discipline that would become History. European historians insisted on an extensive research culture, individual scholarly identity, and cumulative narrative structures, and in so doing, they cut against so-called "amateur" and "feminine" accounts of the past. This divide established traditional boundaries between history and non-history, the historian and the non-historian. As I show in this chapter, "objectivity," masculinity, and the development of a social community of scholars created the American historical discipline. These ideas were then used to create a systematic understanding of "History" which could then exclude because it was designed to do so. These created boundaries provided security and prestige to a new class of American scholars and the historical knowledge they generated.

Finding the Boundary: What American Scholars saw in Europe

In the creation of an American historical discipline, explicit ideas of "objectivity" formed an early foundation. Scholars were "objective" individuals who could and did find historical "truth," and in finding and cataloging this "truth" the discipline determined what narratives to exclude. Making academics "objective" made non-academics the "other" and the "amateur." This emphasis on obtaining "objective" results through the use of scientific research carried with it implications in terms of who was responsible and capable of undertaking and achieving such work, further separating and isolating the historian from the non-historian.

The most historically recognized German historian, who has been seen as creating this "objective" scholarly example to American scholars, was the historian Leopold von Ranke.

While Ranke was certainly not the only scholar of influence and note, he was seen by early American scholars as the embodiment of a pure "objective" historical truth that could be obtained and preserved with rigorous research and scientific methods. The disciplinary understanding of history as a knowable "truth" is seen in the way that American scholars memorialized and understood Ranke's work; "with much objectivity and little partisan or patriotic pleading [American historians] idolized [Ranke's] character and work."[3] As this quote shows, American scholars like William E. Dodd professed their gratitude to the one who they viewed as the originator of their current method, which helped define their disciplinary foundations. Even Dodd's phrasing, including words like "objectivity" and "partisan," stresses the widespread appeal and recognition of Ranke's legacy. Indeed, the American Historical Association (AHA) demonstrated their reverence by making Ranke their first honorary member in 1886.[4] This attitude towards "objectivity" served to show dedication and solidarity of thought in a burgeoning American discipline. What history would mean, how it would be done, and by whom it would be done was already being determined and solidified in the late nineteenth century. And the proliferation of American scholars studying in Germany combined with the methodology and simplicity of the Rankean style of history, particularly in terms of quantitative and qualitative skills, made Ranke's ideas massively appealing to newly minted scholars.

While the discussion of "objectivity" in American scholarly discourse was important to the development of the historical discipline, that does not mean that "objectivity" was the only influential idea borrowed from Europe. Other scholars throughout Europe debated what history was or should be, and how it should be written. What was worthy of being studied? What

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[3] Robert Dallek, *Democrat and Diplomat: The Life of William E. Dobb* (New York, 1968), 19; Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 26.
[4] Novick, *That Noble Dream,* 26.

judgments or claims could a historian make about historical time? But importantly, all of these debates and conflicting views of history continued to emphasis the difference between historians and non-historians; they all emphasized the idea of a boundary.

For example, Augustin Thierry (1795-1856), a French journalist turn historian, professed the romantic nature of history and used it to espouse nationalist ideology.[5] On the other hand, Henry Thomas Buckle (1821-1862) was a self-educated historian who sought through history to find laws which guided human existence.[6] There are many more examples, from positivists to objectivists to scientific historians and biographers.[7] What this multitude of voices conveys is the extensive conversation about history that was happening; it was not inevitable that "objectivity" would become a center piece of American historiography. Furthermore, while there was extensive discourse surrounding the production of historical knowledge, the group engaged in that debate were all contributing to the exclusion of non-historians, most notably non-white, non-male, non-"professional" individuals.

These same characteristics were used to describe the ideal subject of history, too. Thomas Carlyle, a Scottish historian described the history of the world as "the biography of great men."[8] He likened these "great men" to kindling that lit great fires, i.e., that initiated moments of major change. In some ways this idea still persists. Biographies of "great men" are still written and read, and although the scholarly weight may have been removed from this particular vein of work, its value still lingers. At the same time, in an earlier piece published in 1830, Carlyle

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[5] Fritz Stern, *The Varieties of History* (New York: Vintage, 1972), 63. Augustin Thierry, *Letters on the History of France* in *The Varieties of History* ed. Fritz Stern (New York: Vintage, 1972), 64-70.

[6] Fritz Stern, *The Varieties of History* (New York: Vintage, 1972), 120-121. Henry T. Buckle, *The History of Civilization in England* in *The Varieties of History* ed. Fritz Stern (New York: Vintage, 1972), 121-136.

[7] Green, Anna, Kathleen, Troup. *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in History and Theory*. Manchester University Press, Manchester. 1999. Fritz Stern, *The Varieties of History*. (New York: Vintage, 1972).

[8] Thomas Carlyle, *On History* in *The Varieties of History*. ed. Fritz Stern, (New York: Vintage, 1972), 103.

seemingly contradicted his later assertion, claiming that "history is the essence of innumerable biographies." He went on to discuss the impossible nature of this endeavor, since so much of the past has been lost and forgotten.[9] Thus Carlyle both recognized the value of social history and its ability to find "truth" while trying to argue that, since our evidence is limited, the next best thing is to write the biographies of "great men" who embody a period.

Carlyle was defining his boundaries. His history was the history of powerful men, denying women, people of color, and wider society a place. For Carlyle, the "great man" was also the "great white man" of European imperialism. This is demonstrated in his piece on Haiti, where he compared the island to a dog kennel, degrading the humanity of the Haitian people and of all black people in general.[10] Establishing a boundary around history, as Carlyle and others did, increased the power of those who became responsible for producing historical knowledge; it was in their benefit to create and maintain boundaries. Master narratives were thus designed to resolve the confusion of the past by organizing history into a clear single past. The past was to be recreated by those with certain recognized skills and stature, and thus those inside academia were able to deny those "amateurs" outside the academy the ability to engage with the historical narrative.

Those who sought to establish a "true" and "objective" history simultaneously distinguished themselves and their practices against "false" amateur history. This distinction between "professional" and "amateur" helped solidify what the historical discipline was to become. The academic historians who constructed the American discipline built on the existing European models, reiterating the importance of boundaries. This construction "staged the quest

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[9] Thomas Carlyle, *On History* in *The Varieties of History*. ed. Fritz Stern, (New York: Vintage, 1972), 112.
[10] Thomas Carlyle, *Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question*.

of middleclass men for competence and achievement, their will professional power. The practices of professional history carve[d] out a space where scientific history – that is, history as knowledge and as secular truth – could be written, judged, and promoted."[11] This space was to be where the "proper" historical discipline resided. The place where "proper" scholarship could be done was thus constructed and developed for the specific purpose of determining what would and would not constitute scholarship.

Rankean ideas of pure "objectivity" in history and a scientific approach to research found a solid home in the emerging research universities of the United States.[12] These universities and departments were created by the men who had studied in Europe and found disciplinary meaning, power, and stability there. With firm convictions of their purpose and place, they were then able to demonstrate and act on their understanding of history and solidified what it meant to be a historian. A key aspect of the position of "historian" was a requirement to look and live the part as a white, wealthy, Protestant male. Beyond that, "historians" were expected to share a similar background, to believe in the process of cumulative scholarship, and to not speak on the issues of the day but the issues of the past. These are all ideals codified in the initial inception of the discipline and while some have been rooted out explicitly others have managed to maintain their place.[13]

While American historians were holding Ranke up as a pure force of achievable scientific empiricism, ironically, other European historians in Ranke's own academic sphere saw him as the complete opposite. However, due to the fact that Ranke had retired before the majority of American scholars students studied in Germany, and the fact that some of his statements could

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[11] Bonnie Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice*, (Harvard University Press, 1998).
[12] Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 68-69.
[13] Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 68-69.

be translated in a variety of ways and yield one sided empirical affirmations, in America Ranke was held up and accepted as pushing for objective and purely empirical history. One of Ranke's most attributed quote is that historians should represent the past "as it actually happened," clearly supporting "objective" history.[14] Later scholars like Georg G. Iggers have shown that in fact there was more nuance in German and in Ranke's understanding of history, but regardless of Ranke's intended meaning, the point is that "objectivity" became a central theme in the early years of the American discipline of history.[15] It is the acceptance of this "objective" stance that helped solidify and codify academic history and all its distinguishing markers—white, male, European, etc—against outside signifiers—women, amateur, etc. These early choices created boundaries and barriers of access that continue to affect the understanding of who and what qualify as scholars and scholarship.

Early American historians sought to identify "man" with historical and professional scholarship and "woman" with ahistorical amateurism.[16] Bonnie Smith, author of *The Gender of History,* details a significant difference in the early years of scholarship before professional institutionalization. It was not a given that the academic discipline of history would be so gendered, even though the dominant narrative has become one of men as scholars.[17] Novick, details the process of how wealthy, white Protestants came to dominate the historical discipline, but Smith describes the distinctions put in place to solidify the gender of academic history. Smith shows that "professionalism" is itself based on the discrediting of other narratives written by

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[14] Leopold Von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History*, ed. Georg Iggers and Konrad Von Moltke (Indianapolis, 1973), 119.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Smith, *The Gender of History*, 37-40.

[17] Smith, *The Gender of History*, 18-30. For more on amateurism is Europe Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians, and Archeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

women "amateurs." Again we see that the historical discipline distinguishes itself by denying others, creating distance and isolating itself to ensure its own success.

Academic historians rigidly defended what they would and would not accept on a national level, and this was enforced by all levels of the academic ladder from graduate programs, associations, and academics. Smith details how gendered language was used to create a monogamist heterosexual relationship between the male scholar and the female source material, solidifying hierarchy inside and outside of academia while also "eliminate[ing] many people from consensus making."[18] The origins of historians' relationship to their work was thus placed in terms of a calculable and gendered relationship with their scholarship. Simultaneously this forced scholars to recognize "the perils of dissent," whereby deviation from "established orthodoxy" would "put their careers at risk."[19] The academic discipline of history set up a twofold defense whereby work outside the boundaries of academia was eliminated from scholarly discourse, while dissent inside academia threatened scholars' continued existence inside the protected boundaries.

What history had gained in security and position it lost in scope and inclusion. By dictating that a master narrative was required and detailing what those narratives were or should look like, everything else became fringe or non-scholarly history at the discretion of amateurs. Even the construction of knowledge was demarcated: "the fact was not mere information that existed obviously or even naturally. Rather, its status depended on its discovery, scrutiny, and verification by the historian."[20] The discipline thus became cemented and separated in the way it processed and fundamentally understood the world, claiming superiority of method and safety in

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[18] Smith, *The Gender of History*, 128.
[19] Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 68.
[20] Smith, *The Gender of History*, 135.

"objective fact." The necessity of constructing this distinction and creating these boundaries in academia was and is "to ensure those standards […] setting laws and rules, maintaining consensus, and working against threatening interlopers."[21] Those who made these boundaries, these laws, and these consensi are gone, but the structure they built is very much still in place, particularly in its ability to create boundaries. The discipline continues to reflect the idea that academics and their history should somehow be separate and confined.

The Business of Academia

Internal forces of academia in the form of disciplines and individual scholars had power in dictating departmental standards. Simultaneously, outside forces, especially those of business, would also affect how academia would be run and understood. Forces of the business world added to the constraints that were placed upon the system of academia. Those business pressures were seen and acted upon by individual scholars and their departments, leading to discussions of academic freedom and eventually of academic labor. Thus it was the initially opposed external forces of business that encouraged scholars to strengthen the boundaries around their communities to safeguard their disciplines.

In the second half of the nineteenth century universities were a market waiting to be developed. Only four percent of university-age individuals pursued higher education and wealthy groups recognized the value of leading instead of following in the educational field. Frank Donoghue, writer of *The Last Professors*, details how "the great capitalists of the early twentieth century saw in America's universities a set of core values and a management style antithetical to

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[21] Smith, *The Gender of History*, 156.

their own. Not only did they attack higher education, but, perhaps more surprisingly, even a hundred years ago they had already forced academics onto the defensive."[22] This adds to the already growing image of academic historian putting up metaphorical and physical walls, seeking to define themselves against the "negative" image of women and amateurism. Now they had to define themselves against businessmen, too. Scholars could not contend against the private sector as individuals; the protection of a group of scholars was needed. This need for group identity presumably reinforced the idea of a boundary between historians and non-historians.

While business might have attacked higher education for what it was or tried to be, businesses also recognized that they had interests in academia as a vehicle for practical job preparedness. Thus early on there was both a recognition of academia as an enemy, but also a recognition of the future opportunity offered in academia, especially when it came to defining what kinds of research and education were valuable. When Andrew Carnegie, the wealthy industrialist and steel magnate, addressed a graduating class of a business university in 1891, he proudly announced, "I rejoice therefore, to know that your time has not been wasted upon dead languages, but has been fully occupied in obtaining a knowledge of shorthand and typewriting … and that you are fully equipped to sail upon the element upon which you must live your lives and earn your living."[23] Carnegie represents an early and powerful voice of both the distaste for academia and the argument for skills acquisition in higher education. Carnegie espoused the

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[22] Frank Donoghue, *The Last Professors: The Corporate University and the Fate of the Humanities* (Fordham University Press, New York, 2008), 2.
[23] Donoghue, *The Last Professors*, 4. For more on the relationship between business and intellectualism read Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1970). As for businesses perspective see Morris Llewellyn Cooke, *Academic and Industrial Inefficiency: A Report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching* (Boston: Merrymount Press, 1910).

value of education that is "practical" in business and thus in life, disparaging only intellectualism which wastes its time on "dead languages." Carnegie's support of this type of education went beyond speeches, as he founded a technical institution that would bear his name; perhaps ironically, it is well-known today for its humanities departments. Carnegie's understanding of what constitutes valuable research and learning, combined with his wealth, exerted pressure on how academia was seen, and what it has become. The focus on skills is still an argument that is popular today, except it is an argument now used and supported by academics themselves.

With rising prices of college tuition, substantial issues related to academic labor and the demand for education have developed. Combined with the issue of thriving for-profit schools, there has been a national emphasis on measurable signifiers of success. The humanities in particular, faced with nationally declining undergraduate majors, has sought to respond to the chorus of "what can you do with a _____ major" by emphasizing skills. While skills are indeed gained, the conversation has shifted completely to a money-for-skills business model, and crucially, academics are now the ones pushing this argument. Academia has fallen into a trap that helps the business side of the institution, and academics themselves have made it pressing in the minds of their consumers to gain these skills even when on-the-job training is an accepted part of nonacademic businesses.

Thus at the core of the problem is that scholars themselves have accepted this premise and defended their usefulness based on it, that indeed you should primarily trade money for skills instead of knowledge. It is common for academics to place the private sector and academia in opposite corners. As one scholar writes, "the businesslike operation of a university, with its goal of maximum productivity in teaching and learning, stands independent of and implicitly opposed to research culture and the prestige that research culture generates for individual professors and

(by association) for the universities that employ them."[24] Yet I would argue, and Donoghue

seems to allude to this at the end of the quote, that these two forces are not in fact opposed to one

another, because the purpose of the research scholar has been so formed by the business interests

of the institution over the century, and because scholars themselves have adopted the language of

skills acquisition.

Maintaining the Boundary into the Present

The nineteenth-century construction of the American discipline of history grounded in

European imperialism, gender norms, and Rankean "objectivity," continues to inform higher

education today. Historians are still pressured to conform to the mold set by those already inside

the intellectual and social disciplinary boundaries. This codification of the discipline determined

what was allowed to be recognized as products of intellectual labor.

History thus defined acceptable scholarship by maintaining its ability to deny and

demarcate. At the same time, as society and culture changed throughout the twentieth century,

history developed a wider variety of representation as well.[25] How has history achieved this?

Smith explains the process by which "each questioning of the profession's practices was

answered with new ways to express the historian's masculinity and rigor. The fin-de-siècle

ratcheted up the pressures on white men."[26] Instead of crumbling the boundary and starting

anew, "the response was a modernism that incorporated the low, the everyday, the feminine, the

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[24] Frank Donoghue, *The Last Professors*, 9.
[25] Thomas Bender, Philip Katz, Colin Palmer, *The Education of Historians for the Twenty-First Century*, (University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 2004).
[26] Smith, *The Gender of History*, 215.

aesthetic, the statistical, and much much more."[27] Each new topic became incorporated into the same system that previously sought to deny it as amateurish, and each new topic thus became part of the dominant narrative of the masculine historian. It remained decided that history was in fact a private rigorous pursuit best left to the elite few.[28] This continues to have implications on what types of scholarship are recognized by the scholarly community as valuable. This is especially the case when scholars are forced to contend with conflicting desires and understanding of what types of scholarships and to what audience they should be writing.

What histories could be written and what topics were acceptable research material adapted to the changing social climate all while still maintaining the boundary between history and non-history. With the Civil Rights movement and the feminist movement, histories that reflected these groups emerged and gradually became seen as "real" scholarship. This came with a cost, however; coming inside the disciplinary boundary led to silencing. As historian Judith Bennett explains, "as we established a place within the sanctums of history, we have muted our feminist voices. In a discipline in which any talk about patriarchy sounds 'minor, amateurish, overemotional, and uncritical,' we are often choosing to talk about other things."[29] The force of the discipline's boundaries makes scholars mute themselves. Feminist scholars could enter into the traditional realm of the historian and make impactful changes in what constitutes scholarship, but still be coopted into a system dependent on boundaries of acceptability. As discussed in Chapter Two, this is still an issue for scholars who are forced to understand their scholarship in dictated terms and are often placed in paradoxical relationships because of the desires of their community, institution, and themselves.

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[27] Smith, *The Gender of History*, 215.
[28] Terence O'donnell, *Pitfalls Along the Path of Public History*, 239.
[29] Judith M. Bennett, History Matters, 29.

Subfields of history create further disciplinary boundaries by detailing what is "popular" or more important scholarship. In the case of women's history, Bennett discusses how the scope of women's history has swung to focus on the modern West from 1800 onwards. Bennett engages with the trend for institutions to prioritize modern history and for modern historians to look forward themselves. This institutional force creates more opportunity in modern history, which influences feminist scholars to focus more on these histories, adding to a patriarchal narrative that only sees women from 1800 onwards.[30] The original core purpose of the academic discipline—to make boundaries and determine what "real" history looks and sounds like—remains even when beliefs about what constitutes "real," "true," or "worthy" may have shifted. The majority of professional historians are still white men from privileged backgrounds, and while you could argue that that number has decreased, and the number of concentrations has broadened, it would be foolish to look at those numbers as the finish line. Instead the boundaries have simply been reestablished and reaffirmed in new ways.

As a result, even "new" understandings of history may be produced in a disciplinary echo chamber, leading to "new" history with the same old problems. In Michel-Rolph Trouillot's work *Silencing the Past*, he details how the process of creating historical narrative can produce silences, in which every choice of what to include also is a choice of what to exclude. These choices have significant implications for the way historians see their role and their work, and in the power that historical facts and narratives contain. As Trouillot describes the existence of power in historical work, "power does not enter the story once and for all, but at different times and from different angles. It precedes the narrative proper, contributes to its creation and to its

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[30] Judith M. Bennett, History Matters, 29.

interpretation."[31] Given these power dynamics, what is and what should be the role of the

historian in the construction of historical knowledge?

Trouillot ends his book with a fairly stern condemnation of the actions of a significant

number of American historians:

> "…the traditions of the guild, reinforced by positivist philosophy of history, forbid academic historians to position themselves regarding the present….academic historians tend to keep as far away as possible from the historical controversies that most move the public of the day….That silence even extends to debates about the national standards for history that academics seem to have abandoned to pundits and politicians…..at the heart of the noninvolvement of U.S. historians is the guild's traditional attachment to the fixity of pastness."[32]

Trouillot positions the historian in a precarious position where their inability to interact with

diverse groups in society weakens their ability to see continued impact of historical narrative. At

the same time, he recognizes a sense of historical unity and tradition that is supporting the ability

of these historians to be non-interactive. It is this entrenched "traditions of the guild" with their

"fixity of pastness" that further delimits academia even when academics strive to engage with the

groups described. I would go further, as I stress in Chapter Two, arguing that it is the structure

itself that is constraining historians.

In addition to how scholars understand their work, the mental understanding that

academics have about their own labor is changing. Traditional scholarly understandings have

become obsolete and post graduate pressures have led many potential scholars to difficult

conclusions about the nature of their work and passion.[33] The traditional understanding that the

majority of scholars held only a few decades ago deals is that, "professors [are] reluctant to think

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[31] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 29.

[32] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 151-152.

[33] Donoghue, *The Last Professors*, 18-20.

of themselves as workers…. prospective scholars are most likely to succeed in academia if they can construct a highly individualistic scholarly self."[34] So it is not simply the powerful motives of business, or the constraints of the discipline, but the construction of the identifiable "individual" scholar that guards the gate to academia. It is this scholarly identity, combined with the dictates of the discipline, that made feminist scholars change their language as to not appear nonacademic. Combatting this type of boundary could threaten an individual's identity and safety, and it is in part because of this danger that the boundary remains.

Part of the prestige and status of tradition scholarship are now barriers in redefining what academic labor looks like and should be understood as. The fundamentally different way that scholarship has traditionally understood its own labor has added to a slower recognition of the need to protect their labor. This has been doubly harmful to the most vulnerable group of academics: the adjunct instructor.[35] Adjunct instructors who enjoy teaching whatever the cost deny themselves security while placing more pressure on themselves to succeed and produce work at a loss.[36] Furthermore one solution proposed, unionization, still relies on the inaccessibility and prestige of scholarship. Unionization will help those already inside academia, but not necessarily those outside its boundaries.

Even if scholars recognize and come to a consensus on the value of their labor their ability to influence the system at large is difficult to quantify. What would be the changes faculty desire? How would departmental politics enter into the fray? Would not jobs be at serious risk if the status quo was changed? Whatever the case, "the assumption that professors *make* rather than follow university policy is, like the professor as public intellectual, a wild mischaracterization. It

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[34] Donoghue, *The Last Professors*, 19.
[35] Donoghue, *The Last Professors*, 70.
[36] Donoghue, *The Last Professors*, 70.

completely omits the extensive fiscal constraints and administrative policies that fundamentally shape universities as institutions."[37] The position of professor in American academia has and continues to exist inside a controlled system that is policed by outside powers of business and politics while at the same time defined by inside forces of scholarly rigor and standards that constrict the purpose and scope of the contemporary academic.

American historians saw in Europe the ideas and images of what they wanted the American discipline of "History" to be. That meant constructing a divide between their professional and masculine "History" and the feminine, amateur history that was public fare. At the same time business interests saw academia both as an enemy and an opportunity in a developing academic landscape. This affected how scholars performed and operated, as well as how they understood their own positions and their own labor. Scholars today grapple with the continuation of this highly exclusive and conservative system, causing them to question of their own labor and what their role and scholarship means.

Chapter Two

The Boundary in Action: Scholars, their Scholarship, and their Institutions

The previous chapter demonstrated that objectivity, masculinity, and the development of a social community were used to construct a boundary to determine what constituted acceptable scholarship and who could write it. History became—and critically, remains—a discipline that draws and maintains boundaries between history and false information, between historians and

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[37] Donoghue, *The Last Professors*, 81.

the public, and between scholarship and other kinds of knowledge production. As I argue here, these boundaries emphasize distinctions based on both a calculable relationship between scholars and their scholarship, including a particular definition of the individual scholar as gatekeeper, and on the exclusion of people and narratives. Although individuals and groups have attempted to generate change in academia, these efforts have either wound up reinforcing one boundary or another, or have failed due to the pressure of fundamental systemic structures. Ultimately, I show here, inaccessibility, prestige, and the exploitation and cloaking of labor are foundations of academia. It is a system which constantly patrols its own boundaries, keeping people and ideas on the peripheries and solidifying the success of the people inside in order to maintain the cohesion of the system itself. These structural factors render academics less capable of navigating a fast changing world and limit scholarly engagement with the public sphere. They also undermine the ability of academics to educate.

Academics from a variety of disciplines, as well as journalists and the public, have been talking about issues of academic purpose, systematic issues, and possible solutions on online platforms like Twitter as well as on blogs. In these conversations, it is possible to see the constraints and pressures that academia puts on those inside it. The dialogue facilitated by these social media platforms expands the ease with which a scholar can be vocal, at least in the case of individuals with access and desire to use the internet. These online dialogues detail what parts of academia people identify as significant, what changes people want, and how they believe they can or should achieve them. It is for all of these reasons that I use these public sources: social media (especially Twitter), articles, and blogs. Without these sources it would be exceedingly difficult for me to engage with the opinions and ideas about higher education held by academics and the public.

In particular, I have used online sources related to one specific ongoing discussion, namely the discussion of how medieval history is being used in contemporary U.S. politics and how academics should respond. Throughout 2016 and 2017 the alt-right and other white national groups were quite active, culminating in the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, Virginia which occurred from August 11-12, 2017. The visibility and strength of this rally challenged the country, but it also challenged medieval scholars who had to grapple with the historical imagery used by white supremacists. While some scholars were already aware of how medieval icons were being used by white supremacists, for many this moment served as a wake-up call. For medieval scholars, what is particularly challenging is the fact that hate groups have taken and used medieval iconography in order to build and evoke their own narrative of a white Christian past. In response, scholars have begun to question their own role in producing scholarship as well as the broader public narratives that they have created and maintained. After all, decades of overwhelmingly white male scholarship is liked by white supremacists because it supports their worldviews.[38] In the context of white supremacists' appropriation of medieval iconography, discussions about scholars and the public take on new meaning. I seek to use scholars' responses to these events to understand how they think about the nature of their work, how they negotiate the boundaries of scholarship, and what they see as the problem and solution to the use of the past by modern political actors.

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[38] David M. Perry, "What to do When Nazis are Obsessed with your Field: How Medieval Historians can Counter White Supremacy," in Pacific Standard, September 6, 2017, https://psmag.com/education/nazis-love-taylor-swift-and-also-the-crusades.

Scholars and Scholarship: A Calculable Relationship

The academic discipline of history and the status of historical knowledge depends on a calculable relationship between scholars and their scholarship. This relationship reinforces the purported boundary between scholars and the public. It is thus essential to scholarly identity, yet paradoxically, academic historians are asked to both defend and deny this boundary. Scholarship can be defined as the labor of the scholar, and its quality and production is closely controlled and defined by those engaging in its construction. Two dichotomies are thus established: the scholar and the public, and scholarship and non-scholarship.

Examples from recent debates demonstrate how these dichotomies are simultaneously upheld and denounced by scholars and public alike. One example of this happened in October 2017 when several articles were published about an archaeological excavation of a medieval Swedish burial site. In a boat grave, archaeologists discovered a piece of silk decorated with Arabic characters spelling "Allah." While this may not seem like big news to those outside the scholarly community, groups that identify and engage in white supremacist action and activities often focus on and make use of Viking history and culture. Vikings have become so important to these groups because of the socially-constructed perception of Vikings as racially "pure," as well as their ferocity in battle. Predictably, in these groups, many rushed to denounce the scientific or historical merit of the archaeological discovery, writing things like, "NO women Vikings. NO Vikings Muslim. Not innocent tabloid. IS propaganda to rewrite history"[39] and "The title is misleading, the material might of [sic] came from the Middle East, but The Vikings were not Muslim."[40] In particular, the rhetoric of "false history" was repeated: "BBC Trying to Spin

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[39] Von Sheep, Twitter Post, Oct 13, 2017. 8:41 AM. https://twitter.com/vonsheep/status/918834051708047360
[40] LLeata Kenley, Twitter Post, Oct 13, 2017. 8:33 AM. https://twitter.com/ileata/status/918832111829663746

Viking Plunder Find Into a Narrative of Muslim Vikings. No Doubt a Pretext to a False

History."[41]

The public outburst against these findings shows several things. Firstly, it shows the

fundamental connection in the minds of many individuals between the idea of what it means to

identify as "Vikings" today and the history of actual Vikings. These members of the public

sought a "true" history which agrees with their understandings of the world and their

understanding of their own identity. In constructing and agreeing with this "true" history these

individuals are appealing to history's power. Yet the same power that creates, destroys, and if

there is a "true" history, then there must also be a "false" history, one that is being used as a form

of propaganda and which must be combated, as seen in the quoted tweets. If history has this

power to create and change narratives, to influence and interpret the past, then the people who

construct historical knowledge, medieval scholars in this specific case, should have power. But

what kind of power do they actually have? And where does that power come from?

Some scholars assert that historians' power rests in "correcting" bad history. In essence,

they agree with the idea that there is "true" and "false" history. Additionally, some scholars

maintain that they can do this by publishing in traditional venues—the scholarly journal or

monograph. Thus, there are many professional scholars whose research shows how a white

supremacist's understanding of a European racial utopia never existed, and their work is

accepted and seen as valuable by their fellow scholars.

Many scholars also believe that modern scholarship will correct the misconceptions of

the past held by the public. This leads scholars motivated by their detailed and extensive

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[41] ChristianPatriot, Twitter Post, Oct 13, 2017. 3:49 AM.
https://twitter.com/SavetheUSNation/status/918760550674456576

understanding as well as by scholarly passion and human decency to tell these white supremacists that they are wrong and badly informed. Yet it is clear from the example given that while scholarship may be accurate and accepted as such in the scholarly community, scholarship alone is insufficient to change the public discourse surrounding existing narratives.

The problem is that scholarly "corrections" rely on the same binary: "true" versus "false" history. For example, one scholar tweeted, in response to a different set of photos, "this is fake and offensive @historylvrsclub--and certainly not for lovers of history, but rather white nationalists. Everyone should report this account. @historylvrsclub stole this photoshopped image from another bad account @HistoryInPics."[42] The scholar goes on to link to a TIME article discussing how prevalent and popular these accounts are, as well as how including or leaving out small amounts of information can change the context and understanding of a picture significantly. This case specifically is interesting in that is does not appeal to directly to the individual's own scholarly authority as a reason to make these claims. Nonetheless, it repeats the idea of "true" versus "false" history.

Many scholars do believe that academics have a duty to use their knowledge to correct the public. For them, experts exist to create knowledge and explain their understandings, yet there are many other sources of historical narrative outside academia. For some, the answer is to insist on "real" historians in public media: "History Channel doesn't vet talking heads, ensure they're trained historians."[43] Others acknowledge that scholars can themselves be biased. As one posted, "False and misleading accounts of social history should be condemned whether it

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[42] Coe, Alexis. Twitter post. Dec 22, 2017, 5:39 AM. https://twitter.com/AlexisCoe/status/944200719128768513

[43] Jonathan Hsy. Twitter post. Oct 13, 2017, 8:30 AM. https://twitter.com/JonathanHsy/status/918861627671408640

comes from within or outside of the academy."[44] In both cases, scholars are insisting on a clear boundary between "true" and "false" history. Scholars are recognizing that historical narrative production is happening for the public, and there are many who seek a bridge between areas academia and the public. They are failing to recognize that academia and academics profit from their distance, and rely upon the idea of a boundary between "true" and "false" history.

Admittedly, some have tried to correct the situation by engaging the public in a more accessible manner. They clearly think that this engagement will make a difference: "Valerie Wade: I want to see academic historians make a space to talk to the people who are local history buffs. #USIH2017 #twitterstorians."[45] From this perspective, academics are valuable, but need to "make space" to engage with the public. In other words, it is not enough for scholars to correct the misconceptions of the past, especially when those past misconceptions where supported by their predecessors. Scholars also need to proactively engage the public. What is challenging about this suggestion is that while there may be a substantial benefit from accessibility and engagement, the difficulties involved are stacked firmly against the academic when you look at the lack of institutional and disciplinary support provided for this type of engagement. This lack of support also reflects the fact that academia and academics profit from distance and inaccessibility.

Nonetheless, recognizing the necessity of accessibility has led to new forms of scholarship and engagement online which in turn have led to challenging questions about the nature of scholarship. Thus in response to the white supremacist vision of the "racially pure" past, scholars have tried to alter the nature of scholarship. This alternative approach to

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[44] Fleming, Crystal M'baku, Twitter post, Oct 8, 2017, 2:50 PM.
https://twitter.com/alwaystheself/status/917145135305150464
[45] LDBurnett. Twitter post. Oct 26, 2017, 6:19 PM. https://twitter.com/LDBurnett/status/923720695967899654\

scholarship looks at the relationship between scholars, their work, and their audience. For example, the Public Medievalist website has been doing a special series entitled *Race, Racism, and the Middle Ages*.[46] The stated purpose of this ongoing and extensive series is to "present cutting-edge scholarship that explores these issues with depth, nuance, and complexity, and do it in as accessible a manner as possible."[47] What is so interesting about this statement is how it addresses what scholarship looks like and what its function should be. According to this statement, scholarship is supposed to be complex and nuanced, it should push the boundary and present new ideas, and finally, it should be as accessible as possible.

Can scholarship be all those things at once? Should it? What would it look like if it did? Depth, nuance, complexity, and accessibility at the same time are no easy task. Can you have a deep, complex argument that examines a complicated issue like race and nonetheless is "accessible"? If you can achieve that, which seems like no easy feat, will you be able to do it consistently, and finally, who is going to want it? Does the public in fact want this kind of work? Will the public read these pieces and be convinced of the errors of their ways? Will they thus be "corrected" of their "false" history?

Ultimately, few pieces of scholarship can deliver on such a scale; even the website itself fails in many of these criteria. Take, for example, the issue of accessibility. Admittedly most of the articles have accessible points of contact; there are many articles about popular shows like Game of Thrones, events in Charlottesville, and dozens of other unique pieces about race and the Middle Ages that are important to current events in this country.[48] But these articles are

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[46] Paul B. Sturtevant, "TPM Special Series: Race, Racism and the Middle Ages," The Public Medievalist, https://www.publicmedievalist.com/race-racism-middle-ages-toc/.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.

appealing and accessible to their reader base which probably already agrees with the articles before they read them. That is not to say there is no value in this work, only that when discussing the purpose of scholarship using words like "accessibility" and "complexity" it is important to not get blinded by the expectations of the words themselves. It is also important to recognize that the same underlying assumptions are present: that the role of scholars is to present "true" history in order to correct the "false" history believed by members of the public, and that disagreeing members of the public are likely to accept this kind of correction. Furthermore, while these articles are making it easier for people who are not experts to think about these topics in different ways, whether the articles are scholarship or not is still debated.

In fact, the authority of the Public Medievalist is paradoxical. On the one hand, work produced by the Public Medievalist doesn't meet the current standards for academic, peer-reviewed scholarship. By definition, then, it is not necessarily the product of a scholar's labor. This has enormous implications for careers of scholars, especially marginalized/underrepresented scholars with less power in the institutional hierarchy. At the same time, the Public Medievalist's reputation relies on the already-established authority of "scholars"—those whose authority has already been established by producing relatively non-accessible work not intended for wide public consumption. Approaches like that of the Public Medievalist places scholars put in a double-bind: be real scholars by producing traditional scholarship, so that you can then magically produce accessible and yet complex "scholarship" for the public. Academic institutions and the public are also placed in a double-bind, due to the question of what "scholarship" is and how it is recognized by universities and by community at large. A scholar will not become a leader in their field with only short, non-peer-reviewed pieces, which could arguably be written by anyone. Some might say that academia has solved that problem in the form of the PhD. It's true

that academics are considered experts because of this seal of approval, but this doesn't resolve all the issues outlined above.

In this system scholars exist in a calculable relationship to their work. Their work carries with it ideas of prestige and academic rigor, and those qualities are paradoxical when discussing the role of scholarship in relation to the public today. Scholars' work marks them as "real" scholars and thus firmly inside the boundary of academia while trying in earnest to cross the boundary and engage the public. In a paradoxical fashion, academics maintain the boundary in order to provide gravitas and substance to their work, firmly marking them as academics, yet also try to engage a public that is outside their boundary—and that is unlikely to believe them without some mark of their academic prestige.

What constitutes and is accepted as scholarship thus puts scholars in a conflicting position with themselves, their fellow scholars, the universities who employ them, and the public. Academia is in part based on this calculable relationship of scholarship and scholar, as is the public's desire for "true" history. It is this pressure from departments, institutions, the public, and individuals themselves which shapes a scholar's worth in their scholarly community. Scholars may want more public interaction, but still be required to produce traditional scholarship. Furthermore, it is the individual scholar and the constructed and assigned identity of scholars themselves that demand accepted and acceptable scholarship and public engagement, thus perpetuating unhealthy working habits and damaging stereotypes of the workaholic private library researcher. True, some want scholars to remain isolated from contemporary events. In response to events like Charlottesville some "...faculty are being asked to take 'neutral' stances and just teach our disciplines, leaving politics to social media and in-person conversation. Yet for

many scholars, this is our work."[49] In other words, the desires of individual scholars matter less than the institutional pressures, no matter how varied those pressures may be—engage the public or stay aloof.

Furthermore this double-bind is particularly unfair for marginalized or underrepresented individuals, who may be pushed to engage with the public, which can be a real hazard for some. Tressie McMillan Cottom discusses "how woefully underprepared universities are to deal with the reality of public scholarship, public intellectuals, or public engagement," but also how "institutions have been calling for public scholarship […this] attention can be equated with a type of prestige. And prestige is a way to shore up institutions when political and cultural attitudes are attacking colleges and universities at every turn. And, faculty are vulnerable to calls for them to engage."[50] There is a power imbalance inherent in a structure that asks for scholarly articles as a well as public engagement while also not being prepared for the realities of that engagement. In 2017 Twitter comments and scholarly conferences have made multiple academics targets of white supremacists and anti-intellectuals who are able to use numbers and media presence to pressure vulnerable academics: a professor without tenure, a graduate student, or anyone with other racial, gender, and pedigree distinctions that put a person lower on the social and academic hierarchy.

The foundation of an academic's identity and value exists in a calculable relationship to their work, and when more qualifiers of accessibility and public engagement are added to

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[49] Nicole Truesdell, "Front Line in the Fight Against White Supremacy," Inside Higher Ed, December 22, 2017, https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2017/12/22/faculty-trained-speak-about-systems-oppression-should-not-be-required-be-neutral.

[50] Tressie McMillian Cottom, "Everything but the Burden: Publics, Public Scholarship, and Institutions," in Tressiemc.com, https://tressiemc.com/uncategorized/everything-but-the-burden-publics-public-scholarship-and-institutions/.

scholarship, scholars are simultaneously evaluated on and against those norms. We cannot expect scholars to be accessible if they will be adversely judged by their peers or institution because of it or if it will subject them to harm. We also need to acknowledge that academia is designed to deny, to maintain, to build upon its own defenses and reinforce its boundary. What academia allows to change are incidental factors in the overall success of maintaining scholarship and the scholar. The academic system paradoxically asks for public engagement while also condemning or demeaning it.

This is unsurprising; the same boundaries of scholar and scholarship function by promoting the interests of those within and excluding others. Including the marginalized in the system was never a goal. It is the system that academics exist in and themselves perpetuate and enforce that does this. Even those who push back—or attempt to push back—by advocating for public scholarship inadvertently reaffirm the boundaries. While there is power in dictating boundaries, as we have seen, those same boundaries also limit the scope and position of the scholar who may view the public as the ultimate audience for their scholarship. The continued traditional call of research cemented in an understanding of disciplinary dogmatism is constructed, instructed, and enforced to maintain disciplinary foundations as well as to tame and then coopt new ideas of scholarship into an already existing framework. The very inaccessibility of scholarship is attractive in its prestigious nature, attractive even to the public, and this qualifying mechanism that determines who is allowed to produce scholarship is in part how academia can remain fundamentally the same while seeming to change by accepting new ideas of scholarship.

The Public Medievalist sees what they do as scholarship as so do many scholars. As one tweeted, responding to The Public Medievalist, "time for a regular reminder of why

#medievaltwitter #medievalism #medievalstudies is the most cutting-edge relevant public scholarship and intellectual life."[51] There is recognition of the value of the work being done, but the tweet also recognizes a difference by classifying the work as "public" scholarship. This may speak to the different status the work has compared to traditional scholarship, and could be an important distinction that recognizes the work being done as scholarship while setting it in the existing hierarchy of academic work. Public scholarship is clearly seen as important, but in noting that this scholarship is intended for public consumption there is tangible difference in tone and perceived purpose. The use of the word "public" may have been intended as a simple adjective to describe what the Public Medievalist does, but it still represents a characterization separate from "regular" scholarship done by scholars. Perhaps by defining it as "public," scholars can distance and insulate their own work and field from outside forces. After all, when inaccessibility is part of the standard for scholarship, engagement outside the defined boundary may be costly in perceived status and time.

At the same time as academia patrols its own boundary, paradoxically, the labor of the marginalized is still expected, even when they are excluded and their academic identity is denied. A powerful moment in the academic labor conversation came from a recent piece by someone leaving academia in a familiar, but still painful and enlightening way. The article expresses the emotional and physical toll that years of academic life inflict as well as critically addressing how those leaving are treated and what it means when they are forced to leave. Academia operates by being inaccessible and by denying and selecting both narratives and their writers, "ask[ing] people to stay tethered to a community of scholars that has, in many ways, rejected them, and furthermore, asking them to continue contributing the fruits of their labor which we will only

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[51] O Brien, Juliet. Twitter post. Nov 26, 2017, 9:52 AM. https://twitter.com/obrienatrix/status/934842435368206337

consider rigorous enough to cite if they're published in the most inaccessible and least financially-rewarding ways."[52] Inaccessibility, prestige, and labor are foundations of academia. It is a system which constantly patrols its own boundaries, keeping people and ideas on the periphery solidifying the success of those already inside, in an attempt to maintain the cohesion of the system itself. The cost is born by those pushed beyond the boundary. Years of work and entrance into a community creates an identity, and when there is no longer a future in academia, then part of that person's identity is lost too.

This piece and this passage in particular force us to recognize the inhumanity of the academic system. Furthermore, this process of exclusion has been institutionalized to deal with loss and pain by silencing it. Silencing the process and the voices of those leaving compared to those staying creates a one-sided narrative in which academics can unintentionally or intentionally rationalize their inclusion and another's exclusion. Bartram's example is one of academia fiercely defending its boundaries even against those who want to be there in order to maintain a very high level of inaccessibility and prestige. That wall of inaccessibility serves to solidify the success of those who do make it and with their success comes a particular narrative about those who "failed" to reach that level. In no small part academic communities themselves turn academics into traditional scholars by internalizing boundaries of scholarship while also asking for more from those on the margin. Institutions are not first and foremost advocates for their scholars even once they are inside, and the academic system actively turns away scholars it has created, adding to the inaccessibility and prestige of the scholar. The disparities in who "makes it" have a direct impact on the identity of scholars attempting to

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[52] Erin Bartram, "The Sublimated Grief of the Left Behind," erinbartram.com, Feb 11, 2018, http://erinbartram.com/uncategorized/the-sublimated-grief-of-the-left-behind/.

succeed, as Bartram explains: "wasn't this ultimately my failure? If I'd been smarter, or published more, or worked harder, or had a better elevator pitch – if my brain had just been better, maybe this wouldn't have happened."[53] That is a terrible thing for someone to have to consider when they have spent so many years of their life researching and teaching, with the deck so heavily stacked against them.

This can and will continue to happen. In her piece, Bartram continues to deconstruct the responses given to leaving scholars and what those responses actually mean and do. She breaks down popular but problematic reassuring phrases: "'You can still be part of the conversation!' To that I say: "Why should I?" Being a scholar isn't my vocation. But more importantly, no one is owed my work. People say "But you should still write your book – you just have to." I know they mean well, but actually, no, I don't."[54] To those leaving or being pushed out of academia the question take on a different context: "to whom would the value of my labor accrue? And not to be too petty, but if it were so valuable, then why wouldn't anyone pay me a stable living wage to do it?"[55]

The fact that scholars brought up that "you [Bartram] should still write your book – you just have to," is indicative of the connection between scholar and scholarship and the value that these things are seen as having—value that accrues to the institution, not the individual.[56] When this connection is related to "public" scholarship the paradox is painfully apparent especially for new and up and coming scholars. If scholars are evaluated and judged by their scholarship, and if "public" scholarship is viewed as less valuable than traditional scholarship, then the boundary of

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[53] Erin Bartram, "The Sublimated Grief of the Left Behind," erinbartram.com, Feb 11, 2018, http://erinbartram.com/uncategorized/the-sublimated-grief-of-the-left-behind/.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.

academia sets scholars up for failure by pushing them to be accessible and at the same time not recognizing the value of that labor.

To some degree, admittedly, the individual scholar is a different entity from scholars as a group with a defined understanding of scholarship and the scholarly role. Medieval scholars are not the only group of scholars dealing with these issues raised by white supremacists. Classicists have also sought to respond by producing – "a new website that acts as 'a platform where classical scholars, and the public more broadly, can learn about and respond to appropriations of Greco-Roman antiquity by hate groups online.'"[57] The controversy over confederate monuments has pushed groups like the American Historical Association to put out statements.[58] The Medieval Academy also put out a strong response to Charlottesville: "the undersigned community of medievalists condemns the appropriation of any item or idea or material in the service of white supremacy. In addition, we condemn the abuse of colleagues, particularly colleagues of color, who have spoken publicly against this misuse of history."[59] They continue writing "as scholars of the medieval world we are disturbed by the use of a nostalgic but inaccurate myth of the Middle Ages by racist movements in the United States."[60]

These strong condemnation may seem obvious from groups that see the past being appropriated for hateful purposes, but at the same time there are those scholars and groups of scholars who have remained silence. Whether that silence comes from acknowledgment or

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[57] Bonar, Chance. Twitter post. Nov 30, 2017, 1:24 PM.
https://twitter.com/ChanceBonar/status/936345265736470528
[58] AHA "AHA Statement on Confederate Monuments (August 2017)" Historians.org, accessed January 3, 2018.
https://www.historians.org/news-and-advocacy/statements-and-resolutions-of-support-and-protest/aha-statement-on-confederate-monuments
[59] The Medieval Academy Blog, "Medievalist Respond to Charlottesville," themedievalacademyblog.org, August 18, 2017, http://www.themedievalacademyblog.org/medievalists-respond-to-charlottesville/.
[60] The Medieval Academy Blog, "Medievalist Respond to Charlottesville," themedievalacademyblog.org, August 18, 2017, http://www.themedievalacademyblog.org/medievalists-respond-to-charlottesville/.

agreement with white supremacist racial ideology, from a position that history and scholarship should be politically neutral, from complete ignorance of the situation, or from something else entirely, the fact that some organizations of scholars chose not to speak suggests what that scholarly group believes its role to be. The action of scholarly societies choosing not speak has intention. Of course silence, too, is inaccessible. Silence also reinforces the boundary.

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions: The Barriers to Change

The resistance of the traditional boundaries to change is not due to a lack of effort to change by various individuals and groups. It must be recognized that scholars have seen issues related to their scholarship and they continue to pursue change. Many of the ideas already explored about engagement and accessibility have in fact been scholars' attempt to change academia and scholarship by showing and doing what they felt was most necessary. The idea of change exists in individual scholars, but is undermined by the power imbalance between the scholar, their discipline, and their institution. A desire for change without the support of the discipline and institution only continues to solidify the boundaries.

Students, too, seek change. At Reed College students are taking their curriculum into their own hands by protesting a course on western civilization. In their words, "There is no such a thing as "a" "Western civilization". So what about we move on from this anachronistic and reductive construct and pose the question differently for a change?"[61] Others bring up the point of what the courses represent: "The course description on Reed's website uses neither "Western"

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[61] Blouin, Katherine. Twitter thread. Nov 8, 2017, 5:57 PM.
https://twitter.com/isisnaucratis/status/928441265414213632.

or "civilization": http://www.reed.edu/humanities/hum110/index.html … Maybe the issue needs to be confronted more directly?"[62] or "I understand the whole click bait rationale for such course titles, but they are beyond outdated historiographically speaking. They also alienate many students, who do not identify with the "Western" trope."[63] The fact that students and teachers are capable of critiquing their education and profession raises questions about the role of scholars and students in relation to their institution. Do students and faculty have the right to change curriculum? And how much power do students and individual faculty have in creating curriculum versus the institution? It is easy to say that since professors can make and teach courses and they get to decide what is in them and how they operate, and since students can choose not to take those courses, students and individual faculty have power. However, it is far from that simple. Both students and scholars answer to their department and their school.

There are boundaries between what an institution wants, what departments want, and what scholars are trying to do, or want to do, and those boundaries create a power structure that constrains the institution, the faculty who work there, and the students who may or may not know why they are there in the first place. Scholars recognize this point, taking to Twitter with posts like, "Seems like every day we go further down the road of treating universities as just a financial investment not an educational opportunity. Once students are charged, that maybe becomes inevitable, but life-enhancing intellectual benefit in the head gets left out."[64] This statement should not be taken as simply one person's thoughts, since over a thousand people retweeted it, and many commented, creating conversation on the role of academia and

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[62] Dimitri Nakassis, Twitter Post, Nov 8, 2017, 6:30 PM.
https://twitter.com/DimitriNakassis/status/928449621252218880.
[63] Blouin, Katherine. Twitter thread. Nov 8, 2017, 6:08 PM.
https://twitter.com/isisnaucratis/status/928444126508363777
[64] Beard, Mary. Twitter thread. Dec 8, 2017, 2:34 AM. https://twitter.com/wmarybeard/status/939080856760614912

thoughts on its monetization. Some lament that school is seen as a business where students pay to get skills, arguing there are "life-enhancing intellectual benefits" that maybe should take precedence. This is however indicative of the power dynamic which controls academia where institutions have far more power than individual academics. Scholars are teaching students and a have a major hand in what a student will learn, but if the model of their institution is "grab and go," then what power do they have?

How scholars view the problems facing them also details the power that institutions have in dictating labor and understanding. In another example, a department faced with falling numbers of majors saw the issue as their institution did and presented practical solutions. The solutions they proposed relate to how history and the humanities are viewed by the public. Thus, the faculty "toned down the message that history is a path to teaching. Teaching truly is a noble profession, but we found that this association sapped us of the glamor quotient we needed to get the major back where it needed to be."[65] One way forward is for academia to recognize positions outside academia as equally, if not more, valuable and desirable. But still this kind of solution creates internal pressures, as the author recognizes: "We were clearheaded about one thing: somebody at our university had to 'lose' if we were going to return our major to its former proportional level."[66] When everyone in a university community is being judged against one another, when one department's growth is another's regression, all because of an emphasis on the value of prestige and inaccessibility, it creates additional levels of hierarchy, additional boundaries.. This point stands out particularly in the final sentence of the piece: "It's a great time

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[65] Brian Domitrovic, "Major Renovations: Reviving Undergraduate History at Sam Houston State," historians.org, November 2017, https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/november-2017/major-renovations-reviving-undergraduate-history-at-sam-houston-state#.WgaZ-lThouB.facebook.
[66] Ibid.

to be involved in a history department, because there is a beautiful problem to solve: how to restore history to its rightful, sturdy position among majors at our many institutions of higher learning."[67] This ending is cheery yet ominous at the same time. The idea that history has a "rightful" high standing reinforces the hierarchy of disciplines and the competitive nature of academia.

This example of Sam Houston State shows how attempting to expand the boundaries in one way (i.e., the number of majors), nonetheless reinforces the value of boundaries, as well as how hierarchies of power play out through departments and institutions. Department leaders saw the issue of falling history majors by itself as the main concern, rather than as part of a larger problem about how academia seeks to educate. They accepted that the conversation has shifted to both be about skills, and about scholars' responsibility to disseminate those skills and become their own marketing team, even at the loss of their fellow academics and other students. It is easy to focus on the wrong problem because it is in the interest of academia for nothing substantial to change. As these examples show, significant change is impeded by the structural underpinnings of academia and the discipline of history in particular.

Indeed, the process by which ideas and practices are accorded value in the scholarly community starts when new members are brought in, solidifying the exceptional and the nonstandard. The traditional nature of graduate education is more confining than undergraduate education, as you work with your presumptive peers to build the values and abilities that will allow you to be recognized by your discipline. In this process, the internalization of norms (even paradoxical norms) is vital, and challenges to these norms are not tolerated. For example, when

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[67] Brian Domitrovic, "Major Renovations: Reviving Undergraduate History at Sam Houston State," historians.org, November 2017, https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/november-2017/major-renovations-reviving-undergraduate-history-at-sam-houston-state#.WgaZ-lThouB.facebook.

discussing graduate education, one professor gave insight into how change is treated by colleagues: "I once told a former English department colleagues that I thought 40% of the coursework for a graduate degree in English should focus on Pedagogy. Why not? Since at least 40-90% of the work of faculty in English Departments is teaching. I was laughed at."[68] Going on to describe why this is the case, Stommel writes, "Disdain for teaching often gets enculturated in graduate programs, where your first passion is supposed to be research — as something fully distinct from teaching."[69] The entrenched ideology of how scholarship or ability is measured, in this case research over teaching, carries on through disciplines over time and informs how the entire system operates. Of course that does not mean change is impossible or not desired—the very fact that this scholar shared their experience and that others read it and "liked" it shows that there are alternative ideas out there –but institutional barriers continue to make it an uphill battle in which pieces will shift while no advance is made. There is substantial difference between one individual scholar's belief that teaching should be prioritized compared to a departmental shift towards it, let alone an institutional shift towards it. In the same way, as shown in Chapter One, the historical discipline has been able to take in new ideas of what is acceptable historical research while maintaining the overall norms and boundaries of the discipline. Academia can adapt to new demands or desires by making minor alternations, without changing the core of the system itself.

After all, institutions above all else are designed for the consumer and the institution, not the scholar or the student. Thus the interests of the institution may not align with those of the individual scholar or student. This was certainly the case with a graduate student who was acting

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[68] Stommel, Jesse. Twitter post. Dec 21, 2017, 1:08 PM. https://twitter.com/Jessifer/status/943951235723485185.
[69] Stommel, Jesse. Twitter post. Dec 21, 2017, 1:08 PM. https://twitter.com/Jessifer/status/943956844346736641.

as a teaching assistant and posted about a teaching technique that was being used. After the university was flooded with comments from the alt-right and white supremacists, the student-slash-teacher responded by tweeting from her personal account: "Hi Friends. The University of Pennsylvania is issuing a press release condemning me and my teaching practices. It comes out tomorrow. I don't KNOW what you all can do. I don't KNOW what I'M supposed to do. I had the cute idea that Penn could defend me against Nazis haha."[70] She believed both that an institution would seek to protect their students and staff from harassment, and that institutions are prepared to do so. She failed to recognize that institutions are designed to protect themselves, not their members. Others academics tried to support her with remarks like, "Would like to see @Penn, @PennHistory care as much about their own student & colleague as they do about the RW outrage mob lying about her" and "We see what's happening, @penn and @PennHistory. And you should be ashamed. Academe should not cater to bigoted trolls. Yet you are. Why?"[71] But faculty expectations of institutional protection are not reciprocated by the institutions themselves, which exist as a conservative element. For the institution it is beneficial to maintain the status quo and to protect itself above all else, even if that means letting their faculty and students be attacked. Recognizing the value of public engagement, universities not infrequently push for "accessibility" and "public engagement" without always defining what that means and how it will affect the individual scholar in relation to their employer. Others reiterate this shared understanding: "The most important thing i learned in graduate school is that institutions will protect themselves. I hate the fact that it is a lesson."[72]

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[70] Mckellop, Stephanie. Twitter thread. Oct 18, 2017, 5:09 PM.
https://twitter.com/jccwrt/status/920804043378663424.
[71] Gannon, Kevin. Twitter thread. Oct 18, 2017, 6:56 PM.
https://twitter.com/TheTattooedProf/status/920830928749985793.
[72] Heather Froehlich. Twitter post. Oct 18, 2017, 8:11 PM.
LDBurnett. Twitter post. Oct 26, 2017, 6:19 PM.

The example of the Penn graduate student TA also demonstrates the cruel irony of a system that simultaneously exploits student-scholar labor while undercutting and threatening the student-scholar. The labor is valued, while the individual is not. Thus, faced not with new threats, but new realizations, academics are trying to act, but the system continues to curtail the efficiency and impact of that action, because the goals of scholars, students, and institutions are not the same.

Not only are institutions not first and foremost for their scholars once they are inside, as already discussed, the academic system actively turns away scholars it has created, there by adding to the inaccessibility and prestige of the established scholar, while also reinforcing the hierarchy of power in who gets to decide who can cross the boundary into the academic work force. These dynamics are recognized, even by those harmed by them. For instance, Bartram notes that, " I discussed it with non-academic friends, explaining over and over again that yes, this is the way my field works, and no, it wasn't surprising or shocking to me, and yes, this was probably what was always going to happen."[73] Even when the realities of the system are recognized, the desire to do the job, as well as the already substantial amount of work and identity creation that goes into getting to the table, sets people up to be destroyed by the system.

In a discussion on academic labor, the emotional desire that the scholar brings to their work helps us understand how scholars conceive of their labor. Unsurprisingly many have strong opinions, especially in response to recent political events like the tax laws which could dramatically impact graduate students and higher education in general. There are conflicted emotions attached to these changes: "(I love you academia, but taxing tuition waivers is

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[73] Erin Bartram, "The Sublimated Grief of the Left Behind," erinbartram.com, Feb 11, 2018, http://erinbartram.com/uncategorized/the-sublimated-grief-of-the-left-behind/.

apocalyptic only because of how delicately and precisely maximized the exploitation of graduate student labor currently is). Tuition waivers are universities desperately pretending that grad students aren't labor."[74] There is already a recognition of exploitation that is undercut by an emotional attachment to academia and teaching, an emotional attachment that is encouraged by the system itself. Indeed the emotional aspect is already one which holds academics to different standards, as they are willing to go through such a tough and exploitative process in the first place. Others agree, explaining "I tell my graduate students and post-docs that if they're working 60 hours per week, they're working less than the full professors, and less than their peers."[75] Yet some brainstorm ideas to cut back on time spent working. Some do recognize their labor as labor: "Deducting pay from academics working to contract is pure hypocrisy by universities, who know perfectly well that if they issued contracts in which working duties and hours were clearly defined, they would never get all the marking, research, impact, admin, events etc they expect."[76] Even so, it is still hard when you have the expectations of scholarship and your scholarly community combined with the requirements of an institution and the personal desires of scholarship and life itself.

Yet the traditional forces of inaccessibility and prestige in academia are continually recreated and defended in each new generation because the academic system seeks to maintain its own position. In a piece detailing the "true" purpose of the humanities, Justin Stover critiques any focus on teaching: "A school exists to teach. The university is a different kind of thing. It

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[74] Bady, Aaron. Twitter post. Nov 17, 2017, 6:43 AM. https://twitter.com/zunguzungu/status/931533318100619267.
[75] Nicholas Christakis, Twitter post, Feb 4, 2018, 10:01 AM. https://twitter.com/NAChristakis/status/960211767434665984
[76] Jeremey Noel-Tod, Twitter post, Feb 22, 2018, 1:11 PM. https://twitter.com/jntod/status/966782587623657472

channeled what was once a competition for students into what we would now call research."[77] Again traditional notions of the purpose of a university emerge and Stover gives absolutely no recognition of the problems inherent in that system. It does not make sense to position universities as places that should not teach people and should instead continue to make researchers. Even the notion that "a school exists to teach" is problematic if there is no agency on the part of those learning. Instead a school should exist so that students may learn, and higher education should exist so that learning may continue throughout a person's lifetime.

But the continued traditional call of research cemented in an understanding of disciplinary dogmatism is constructed, instructed, and enforced to maintain disciplinary foundations as well as to tame and then coopt new ideas of scholarship into an already existing framework. Stover remarks that, "if scholars in the humanities stopped researching arcane topics, stopped publishing them in obscure journals that nobody reads, and spent all their time teaching, the university itself would cease to exist."[78] Perhaps what he should be asking is why the university does need to exist. Admittedly there is safety in "researching arcane topics" inside the boundary of academia. Indeed the very inaccessibility of scholarship is attractive in its prestigious nature, and this qualifying mechanism that determines who is allowed to produce scholarship is in part how academia can remain fundamentally the same while seeming to change by accepting new ideas. Yet the costs of defending this boundary are damaging to academics and those who aspired to be academics like Bartram.

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[77] Justin Stover, "There is no Case for the Humanities: and deep down we know our justifications for it are hollow," The Chronicle of Higher Education, March 4, 2018, https://www.chronicle.com/article/There-Is-No-Case-for-the/242724?cid=trend_right_a.

[78] Justin Stover, "There is no Case for the Humanities: and deep down we know our justifications for it are hollow," The Chronicle of Higher Education, March 4, 2018, https://www.chronicle.com/article/There-Is-No-Case-for-the/242724?cid=trend_right_a.

While the majority of the article is jejune in its forthright attitude towards the relationship between the humanities and the university, the piece later brings up an interesting understanding of comradery within the humanities. Detailing the group dynamic of academic community, Stover writes:

> "the reality is that the humanities have always been about *courtoisie*, a constellation of interests, tastes, and prejudices that marks one as a member of a particular class. That class does not have to be imagined solely in economic terms. Indeed, the humanities have sometimes done a good job of producing a class with some socioeconomic diversity. […] Deep down, what most humanists value about the humanities is that they offer participation in a community in which they can share similar tastes in reading, art, food, travel, music, media, and yes, politics. We might talk about academic diversity, but the academy is a tribe, and one with relatively predictable tastes."[79]

While I would agree with Stover that humanities disciplines, like history, are rooted in a class with shared common interests and constructed boundaries for membership, I contend that this is hardly something to be praised. As Chapter One showed, as historians solidified their hold on more professional "objective" history they purposefully denied everyone who was not male, white, and protestant. Over time the boundaries shifted to allow new topics in, but there always remained a boundary. It seems to me that the very notion of a collective community of scholars or "tribe" is antithetical to the very purpose of the higher education.

In conclusion, the four characters of this narrative are scholars, disciplines, institutions, and the public. Scholars are judged and understood as scholars by all these groups based on the character of their work. This puts scholars in the conflicted position of being evaluated by multiple varying criteria. Because of these conflicting forces that ask for so much, scholars

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[79] Justin Stover, "There is no Case for the Humanities: and deep down we know our justifications for it are hollow," The Chronicle of Higher Education, March 4, 2018, https://www.chronicle.com/article/There-Is-No-Case-for-the/242724?cid=trend_right_a.

themselves rely on an idea of a boundary around themselves and their work to maintain safety and status. Yet this boundary reinforces an inaccessible academia. Scholars are tasked with then patrolling and protecting that boundary which funnels all conversations about academic life, accessibility, and work into a discourse on the boundaries that are ultimately responsible. It is the very boundaries—that dictate where and what the humanities are—that are flawed, and it is the idea that the humanities can only exist in conjunction with a traditional system of higher education that seals the possibility of alternative processes. Academia must be radically changed. Now is the time to do it.

Conclusion

Leaving the Boundary: A Plan for the Present Future

At this point the current academic system has become wholly inadequate. Academics recognize this, but approach the problem from many different positions that may not take the entire landscape into effect. In this conclusion I offer my idea of how our higher education system might deal with these issues. Furthermore I examine how the new chancellor of Southern Illinois University introduced a plan to significantly change the structure of their university. I have shown how academics and those who try to become academics are placed in a difficult position which mostly forces them to perpetuate the system in which they themselves were created. The issues I have discussed are so closely tied together that altering just one area will fail to change the system itself. That means we need to consider solutions that affect the structure of academia in its entirety—i.e., we need to consider eliminating the current system of academia, or dramatically changing public perception about when and why education is valuable. Changing

the consumer's mind about why and when they are going to college will push institutions to desire change in order to maintain its business, but more importantly, if the boundaries of academia are lowered there can be meaningful conversations between academics and the public about pressing issues. Furthermore, since everyone is involved in our education system, it is critical for scholars to understand why they want to be scholars and what it may mean to be a scholar. I fully admit that this has been a shallow dive, excluding many other parts of the world and other disciplines, but sparking and engaging people in those conversations is in part the purpose of this project.

Those conversations are in fact already underway. At Southern Illinois University, the new chancellor has decided for financial reasons to eliminate all departments across the institution and implement a new administrative structure. When proposing these changes the chancellor announced that the "biggest limitation in our ability to change has been bureaucratic, artificial boundaries created by the way we count effort and resources."[80] For the chancellor the solution "is to eliminate the primary obstacles for multidisciplinary interaction – the financial structure associated with departments. By eliminating departments, we coarsen the delivery of resources to support innovative thinking."[81]   While I agree that departments are artificially constricting enterprises that force work to be done in specific ways, and that eliminating them may allow for more "multidisciplinary interaction," it is unclear how this will alleviate financial woes or bring more students in. What this decision does demonstrate is that major changes are

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[80] Collen Flaherty, "Doing Away with Departments," Inside Higher Ed, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/11/17/southern-illinois-u-carbondale-wants-dissolve-academic-departments-all-them.
[81] Ibid.

happening, there is a recognition of the issues related to entrenched institutional systems, and plans to change academia may not be so farfetched.

At the same time the backlash from those in the institution has been understandably significant. Having been trained in a profession as well as having substantial financial concerns related to a change of this magnitude, faculty have spoken against these proposed measures. The faculty are obviously concerned and skeptical about such a big change. They recognize that "something has to be done to stem an enrollment decline and the campus's financial woes. But many professors object to [...] eliminating every department across the institution."[82] The professors at the university see, "The chancellor [as] pushing this idea quite aggressively."[83] This emphasizes the complexity of the situation in which jobs may be on the line. The reason for initiating change is important; as it is to increase enrollment and revenues there is a possibility that the restructuring is an excuse to eliminate faculty positions.

The response of the national community of scholars is also important when examining how change may occur on a wider scale. For example, Hans-Joerg Tiede, associate secretary of academic freedom, tenure and governance at the American Association of University Professors, described the change as a "rather serious governance concern."[84] Tiede continues to discuss how traditionally "any important decision about departmental structure should be made in concert with the faculty."[85] He is clearly interested in how scholars view their place and power in academia, in contrast with the institution's view. This case study, then, also relates to how

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[82] Collen Flaherty, "Doing Away with Departments," Inside Higher Ed, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/11/17/southern-illinois-u-carbondale-wants-dissolve-academic-departments-all-them.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.

academic laborers are treated in relation to structural changes in academia. Ultimately this example, and the issues I've discussed here, push us to understand and debate what we want to gain from our educational system both as learners and as laborers.

As I hope to have shown, conversations about the purpose of disciplines, scholarship, and institutions are higher education are not new. What is different is the perfect storm of events in the last few years that has made the topic of boundaries so important to an overall understanding of academics and academia. Framing these conversations through the lens of boundaries pushes us to see the continuities in terms of how academia has been created and maintained, as well as how so much of what a scholar becomes is defined by inaccessibility and exclusion. The ease with which voices and narratives are denied by the academic system is quite stunning yet often forgotten. The very history that exposes lost voices and stories also condemns and silences others, not due just to individual choices, but also due to systemic structures.

Ultimately, the foundational boundaries of academia remain and thrive today because they continue to be profitable in many different ways. I have detailed how the context of the historical discipline, how its use of European ideas and signifiers, created categories with which a professional class could be created and protected. It was from these origins of exclusion and prestige, and out of a desire to be privileged, that academics created and maintained their boundaries. The boundaries exist to be inaccessible, exclusive, and provide power to those inside. At the same time, institutions recognized their ability to influence and control academia and academics through both the boundaries and the dynamics of academic labor and scholarly identity. This continues into the present where institutions maintain high numbers of academics as graduate students and adjunct instructors to function as a disposable workforce. Out of necessity, faced with growing social issues, academia again adapts to the changing environment

by putting more pressure on scholars to engage outwardly while also maintaining their boundaries of inaccessibility by curtailing the ability of many scholars to function outside academia. This is a narrative of an ever adaptive and powerful system that has no clear path for genuine or rapid change. But perhaps with more research and detailed analysis someone will be able to lay out a constructive solution to this problem.

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