



The University in Ruins

By Bill Readings

Download now

Read Online ➔

The University in Ruins By Bill Readings

It is no longer clear what role the University plays in society. The structure of the contemporary University is changing rapidly, and we have yet to understand what precisely these changes will mean. Is a new age dawning for the University, the renaissance of higher education under way? Or is the University in the twilight of its social function, the demise of higher education fast approaching? We can answer such questions only if we look carefully at the different roles the University has played historically and then imagine how it might be possible to live, and to think, amid the ruins of the University. Tracing the roots of the modern American University in German philosophy and in the work of British thinkers such as Newman and Arnold, Bill Readings argues that historically the integrity of the modern University has been linked to the nation-state, which it has served by promoting and protecting the idea of a national culture. But now the nation-state is in decline, and national culture no longer needs to be either promoted or protected. Increasingly, universities are turning into transnational corporations, and the idea of culture is being replaced by the discourse of "excellence." On the surface, this does not seem particularly pernicious.

The author cautions, however, that we should not embrace this techno-bureaucratic appeal too quickly. The new University of Excellence is a corporation driven by market forces, and, as such, is more interested in profit margins than in thought. Readings urges us to imagine how to think, without concession to corporate excellence or recourse to romantic nostalgia within an institution in ruins. The result is a passionate appeal for a new community of thinkers.

↓ [Download The University in Ruins ...pdf](#)

📖 [Read Online The University in Ruins ...pdf](#)

The University in Ruins

By Bill Readings

The University in Ruins By Bill Readings

It is no longer clear what role the University plays in society. The structure of the contemporary University is changing rapidly, and we have yet to understand what precisely these changes will mean. Is a new age dawning for the University, the renaissance of higher education under way? Or is the University in the twilight of its social function, the demise of higher education fast approaching? We can answer such questions only if we look carefully at the different roles the University has played historically and then imagine how it might be possible to live, and to think, amid the ruins of the University. Tracing the roots of the modern American University in German philosophy and in the work of British thinkers such as Newman and Arnold, Bill Readings argues that historically the integrity of the modern University has been linked to the nation-state, which it has served by promoting and protecting the idea of a national culture. But now the nation-state is in decline, and national culture no longer needs to be either promoted or protected. Increasingly, universities are turning into transnational corporations, and the idea of culture is being replaced by the discourse of "excellence." On the surface, this does not seem particularly pernicious.

The author cautions, however, that we should not embrace this techno-bureaucratic appeal too quickly. The new University of Excellence is a corporation driven by market forces, and, as such, is more interested in profit margins than in thought. Readings urges us to imagine how to think, without concession to corporate excellence or recourse to romantic nostalgia within an institution in ruins. The result is a passionate appeal for a new community of thinkers.

The University in Ruins By Bill Readings Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #136655 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Harvard University Press
- Published on: 1997-10-30
- Released on: 1997-08-22
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.12" h x .66" w x 6.27" l, .64 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 256 pages

 [Download The University in Ruins ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The University in Ruins ...pdf](#)

Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Books on the future of higher education are a booming business these days. Readings situates his discussion of the modern university in the context of decades of debate over the role of education in the 20th century. He draws on Kantian ideals of the university as a unit dedicated to a single agenda to demonstrate how the modern university's pursuit of "excellence" is a meaningless search. In fact, the very idea of "excellence" is devoid of meaning, he argues, merely a rallying cry to unite the academic troops as bureaucratic administrations attempt to keep their universities financially sound. Once the university was the repository and defender of national culture, but now it is an institution whose decline coincides with the rise of postmodernism. How can universities teach truth and objectivity when the relation between subject and object is in doubt? Unfortunately, there are no new answers here. For decades, academicians have sounded the death knell for culture; Marxist critics long ago decried the corporatization of the university; and discussions of the aim of pedagogy, even those like Readings's that stress the importance of community and obligation, are easy to come by. Readings's proposal, which does not make its full appearance until the final 10 pages of the book, is that the university adopt a course of study that emphasizes how we think and how such thinking intersects with and affects the outside world, but it is incomplete and too optimistic and makes for a disappointing ending to a largely disappointing work.

Copyright 1996 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Review

Readings argues compellingly that the university has outlived its purpose--a purpose defined two centuries ago, when the nation-state and the modern notion of culture came together to make the university the guardian of national culture...What, Readings asks, "is the point of the University, if we realize that we are no longer to strive to realize a national identity, be it an ethnic essence or a republican will?" What happens when the culture the university was meant to preserve goes global and transnational along with everything else? This is an intriguing argument. And...it helps to explain much. From this perspective, for example, Readings is wonderfully insightful on the "culture wars" that have wracked universities and bewildered the public for two decades...Readings offers a call to arms to those of us who live and work in universities as well as to those on the outside--a call to better understand our position in a changing world, to come out of our professional shells, stop pining for a lost world, and actively seek to construct something different...[This is] a remarkable contribution. (David Harvey *The Atlantic*)

The University is a ruined institution, forced to abandon its historical *raison d'être* and enmeshed in consumerist ideology...The task that substitutes for the pursuit of culture is the adherence to Excellence, which relegates the university to the treadmill of global capitalism. It turns out graduates as objects, not subjects, at so much per head, under the scrutiny of the state bureaucracy. That is the nub of Bill Readings's superbly argued pessimism...His essay provides an insight into contemporary vexation as experienced in every form of society and community obliged to exist in the new globalized economy. The university has always suggested an institution immune to wider trends, but Readings...argues very convincingly for its fragility. It is a microcosm caught in the coils of consumerism, and forced to act as a satrap in that kingdom...The dysfunction, as he envisages it, is very deeply pondered and rather brilliantly expounded. (Anthony Smith, President, Magdalen College, Oxford *New Statesman and Society*)

Bill Readings...presents a comprehensible and intelligent interpretation of the status and meaning of the

university today which draws inspiration for its ideas from paradigms as diverse as Jean-Paul Lyotard's seminal *The Postmodern Condition* and the cult movie of the late 1980s, *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*...Anyone who has been through the academic mill in the English-speaking world at any level in the last decade will certainly have no problem perceiving the truth of Readings's observation that corporate-style management has become part of the fabric of university administration. (Natasha Lehrer *Jerusalem Post*)

[A] fiercely intelligent polemic about the contemporary university...Whether they're polishing off the latest bit of research or merely fishing in some desolate sound during the summer break, *The University in Ruins* is a book that's indispensable to everyone working in or attending post-secondary institutions. If they're not in ruins yet, they're certainly under siege. (Stan Persky *Toronto Globe and Mail*)

[An] acerbic, often witty critique of the University...[Readings] would have made a formidable opponent in the debates that his book will surely occasion...[W]e should be thankful [for Readings' book] because it raises precisely the large theoretical questions that university types often prefer to ignore. (Sanford Pinsker *The Georgia Review*)

Bill Readings' scholarly work *The University in Ruins* is one of the most challenging and critical books of this genre. He argues compellingly that there is a crisis of purpose in the modern university...Readings' arguments about the linkages between globalisation, corporatism, culture and the university provide an important insight into the malaise of the contemporary university...This highly intelligent and fiercely written book is a fine epitaph to a scholar of rare distinction. (Mal Logan *Quadrant*)

The University in Ruins is both challenging and accessible. Readings can discuss the German Idealists and Macro-Economists, F. R. Leavis and Francois Lyotard, Beavis and Butt-Head, even Bill and Ted and (of course) their Excellent Adventure-all without obfuscation or condescension. His book offers acute assessments of higher education, its architects, and its critics. There is much material for reflection and debate here; that's the way Bill liked things and what he liked best about the university. (Stephen M. Buhler *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*)

Sadly, Readings died in a plane crash shortly after this acerbic, often witty critique of the University was completed. He would have made a formidable opponent in the debates that his book will surely occasion...But what we have is Readings' book, and for that we should be thankful because it raises precisely the large theoretical questions that university types often prefer to ignore. (Sanford Pinsker *The Georgia Review*)

About the Author

Bill Readings was Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at the Université de Montréal.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Patricia Joyner:

Book is usually written, printed, or descriptive for everything. You can understand everything you want by a e-book. Book has a different type. As you may know that book is important matter to bring us around the world. Alongside that you can your reading proficiency was fluently. A reserve *The University in Ruins* will make you to always be smarter. You can feel more confidence if you can know about every little thing. But some of you think in which open or reading the book make you bored. It is far from make you fun. Why they

might be thought like that? Have you seeking best book or suitable book with you?

Allison Stiffler:

Hey guys, do you would like to finds a new book to read? May be the book with the subject The University in Ruins suitable to you? The book was written by renowned writer in this era. Typically the book untitled The University in Ruins is one of several books that will everyone read now. This book was inspired lots of people in the world. When you read this publication you will enter the new dimensions that you ever know prior to. The author explained their strategy in the simple way, and so all of people can easily to be aware of the core of this reserve. This book will give you a lot of information about this world now. To help you see the represented of the world within this book.

Russell Thomas:

The book The University in Ruins has a lot associated with on it. So when you make sure to read this book you can get a lot of advantage. The book was written by the very famous author. Tom makes some research prior to write this book. This particular book very easy to read you will get the point easily after reading this book.

Joseph Rankins:

Reading a book to become new life style in this year; every people loves to go through a book. When you read a book you can get a great deal of benefit. When you read books, you can improve your knowledge, mainly because book has a lot of information in it. The information that you will get depend on what sorts of book that you have read. If you would like get information about your analysis, you can read education books, but if you act like you want to entertain yourself read a fiction books, such us novel, comics, in addition to soon. The The University in Ruins will give you a new experience in reading through a book.

**Download and Read Online The University in Ruins By Bill
Readings #FAVXBRQNWPU**

Read The University in Ruins By Bill Readings for online ebook

The University in Ruins By Bill Readings Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read The University in Ruins By Bill Readings books to read online.

Online The University in Ruins By Bill Readings ebook PDF download

The University in Ruins By Bill Readings Doc

The University in Ruins By Bill Readings Mobipocket

The University in Ruins By Bill Readings EPub

FAVXBRQNWPU: The University in Ruins By Bill Readings