

“c’est à l’étudiant, parce qu’il sait mieux que quiconque où il en est et où il veut et peut en arriver, à décider ce qu’il fera pour étudier [. . .] et comment il le fera” (p. 85); “c’est à lui de se fixer ses propres objectifs. . .” (p. 86). Pour André Lefebvre, l’enseignant “n’a pas à enseigner mais à aider l’enseigné à s’enseigner quelque chose lui-même avec ce qu’il est, à partir de ce qu’il a” (p. 126). Alors que selon Karsz, “prendre les motivations des étudiants comme voie royale (non questionnable, non analysable) de l’apprentissage, suppose que l’étudiant ne soit pas porteur des théories, des idéologies et des politiques réalisées dans les *Appareils Idéologiques d’Etat* [. . .] Les étudiants sont pris ici pour des ‘bons sauvages’ . . .” (p. 37). Et de conclure: “A qui sert que les étudiants ne sachent pas dans quel monde réel, c’est-à-dire économique-politique-idéologique, ils vivent? Qui tire profit de cette ignorance socialement non innocente? Qui gagne avec cette pédagogie (vraiment) libérale qui *conserve* la division entre ceux qui savent et ceux qui ne savent pas, et qui le fait avec le consentement même des ‘bénéficiaires’?” (*id.*)

Soulignons enfin un dernier aspect de l’ouvrage. Plutôt que de partir de théories pédagogiques générales, et habituellement américaines, comme c’est souvent l’usage dans les milieux de la pédagogie universitaire, *Essais de pédagogie universitaire*. . . prend les points de départ de ses réflexions dans les disciplines d’enseignement. On semble ainsi mieux se protéger d’une tendance à la pédagogie technicienne, et mieux poser les problèmes fondamentaux. Nous montrer cette avenue n’est pas le moindre mérite de l’ouvrage.

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John S. Brubacher, *On the Philosophy of Higher Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1982. 168 pp.

Any writer who sets out to establish relationships between philosophy and higher education – the former highly theoretical in nature, the latter predominantly practical in orientation – may adopt one of two possible approaches. On the one hand, the basic doctrines of comprehensive philosophical systems such as realism, pragmatism, or existentialism can be examined for their deductive implications for educational theories, policies, and practices. While this approach combines the virtues of elegance and consistency, its relative isolation from the realities of everyday problems posed by a rapidly changing social and educational environment severely limits its practical utility. On the other hand, a more fruitful endeavour is to submit to critical and analytical scrutiny the fundamental concepts and presuppositions underlying a variety of current issues. Although this

approach lacks the formal coherence of the other alternative, it has the advantage of incorporating within a wider frame of reference a diversity of philosophical orientations and often conflicting views.

In this revised edition of his earlier book, first published in 1977, John S. Brubacher wisely adopts the second alternative in the face of the plethora of philosophies, policies, and practices in higher education today. He concentrates on several contemporary issues in a variety of interrelated areas, invoking formal philosophical theories only when they throw some light on problems of current practice. The major topics chosen for treatment are: the philosophical authentication of higher learning, the limits of academic autonomy, the justification of academic freedom, the criteria of selection for admission to higher education, liberal education and vocational education, pedagogical issues, and the ethics of scholarship. The concluding chapter, which discusses the modern university as a secular church, is followed by a brief bibliographical essay which identifies landmark works and some distinguished authors in the field of higher education, and categorizes these sources according to several prominent schools of philosophy.

At the outset, Brubacher dismisses any attempt to formulate a comprehensive common philosophy applicable to all aspects of higher education and its various institutions by distinguishing between epistemological and political philosophies. The former, largely value free in their adoption of an objective criterion of truth, treat knowledge as an end in itself; the latter, anything but value free, justify the search for knowledge on the basis of its application to the understanding and solution of complex problems in society. While these seemingly incompatible orientations exist side by side in most university settings, the apparent dualism can be undercut by adopting Dewey's view of a continuity between thought and action. In general, however, the predominant justification of higher education is political, reinforced by strong pragmatic considerations arising from the complex web of social forces within which universities exist.

While epistemological philosophies are compatible with claims to academic autonomy in areas of teaching and research, political considerations exert a modifying influence. The traditional autonomy of the university has never been absolute, and recent social conditions have strengthened the shift of the locus of power from within the university to the public domain, more so in the case of publicly rather than privately funded institutions. An uneasy equilibrium between the conflicting claims of academic autonomy and public accountability is reflected in various systems of academic governance ranging from elitist to representative democracy, affirmative action legislation, collective bargaining, and in debates over the nature and extent of student participation in academic affairs.

The justification for the exercise of academic freedom is grounded not only in the epistemological position that freedom is a prerequisite of the search for truth (not that knowledge of truth is a prerequisite of the exercise of freedom), but also in the political aspect of constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech. Here again, however, tensions between intellectual and economic considerations, and between social criticism and accountability, conspire to place certain limits

on academic freedom. Such issues as neutrality on controversial topics, loyalty oaths, scholarly censorship in church-related institutions, the justification of tenure, and the validity of student power movements, can be understood only through a recognition of the often conflicting demands of epistemological and political philosophies.

The evolution of admissions policies of colleges and universities from an early elitism to recent demands for open admissions raises some intriguing issues about higher education as a privilege or a right and about the implications of theories of meritocracy and egalitarianism for matters of social justice. The court decision in the famous *Bakke* case, in which reverse discrimination was intended as an affirmative action to compensate a minority group for past inequities, is an example of how the application of a concept of justice affects not only the individual but the welfare of the wider society as well. Alternative standpoints on this and similar issues depend on adherence to one or another varieties of egalitarian theory. If higher education today is regarded primarily as a social investment, student admission guidelines are required which will involve considerations of both justice and equality, while at the same time justifying the existence of an intellectual aristocracy within a democratic political system.

Recurrent disputes over the respective merits of liberal and vocational education depend for their resolution on some philosophical insights into the nature of the human person, whose complete development is said to be an aim of the educational process. Traditional views which stressed self-realization and self-fulfillment independent of the social environment have been eroded in the face of modern conceptions of human nature as the product of a complex interaction of biological, psychological, social, and historical forces. Accordingly, exalted rationalistic educational curricula, such as that defended by Cardinal Newman in the nineteenth century, have been supplanted by ones having a more pragmatic orientation, reflecting the shift from liberal to general education. Today's evolving curriculum, incorporating interdisciplinary studies and a greater range of electives, is better suited to the achievement of a variety of objectives: understanding a rapidly changing society, specialized training for success in a highly technological world of work, responsible citizenship, and the constructive employment of leisure. More radical reconstruction of liberal and general education is advocated by members of the counterculture, whose existentialist commitment to "freedom" and "authenticity" has generated such solipsistic and anti-intellectualistic phenomena as sensitivity training, encounter groups, and situation ethics.

Brubacher deals with a variety of pedagogical issues through a discussion of the selection, organization, and structure of the curriculum of higher learning. Student demands for "relevance" in the curriculum, pressures for electives over prescribed studies, the tendency to stress theoretical components of all disciplines, synoptic and architectonic curricula designed to overcome the relative isolation of disciplines, increased interest in problem-oriented interdisciplinary studies, the teaching-research dilemma of faculty members, and the academic grading system are among the chief contemporary concerns that, in the final analysis,

can be traced to assumptions about the aims of higher education itself, whether epistemological or political in nature.

Considerations of academic autonomy and freedom, which occupied the opening chapters of the book, find further expression in the concluding account of the ethics of scholarship. This particular issue, more than any other which Brubacher discusses, has been responsible for raising public awareness of universities and higher learning in recent years, due to the publicity surrounding government supported war-related research and other projects which pose a threat to human welfare or to the environment. Among the difficult moral issues involved here are the obligations of researchers to their discipline and to society, the locus of responsibility for socially detrimental results of research, openness versus confidentiality in professional activities, conflicts of interest generated by research grants from external agencies, and the legitimacy of financial investments in foreign governments practicing racial discrimination or political repression. The use of sanctions, such as the strike, to protect the professional interests of university faculty members is also a matter of ethical controversy. As professionals seeking to maintain their valued academic autonomy, scholars must assume the grave responsibility of self-discipline in these matters, for they are not only the custodians of higher learning but also of the codes of ethics governing its use as well.

Brubacher's idea of what counts as "philosophy" in this book is very broad indeed. While a number of the authors referred to are academic philosophers, other commentators have their academic roots not in philosophy, but in literature, economics, law, psychology, sociology, and history, and include several distinguished college and university presidents. This eclectic approach, then, includes not only familiar philosophical systems of thought, but also a range of beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and practical policies regarding higher education, whose basic presuppositions remain unexplored.

The relative brevity of the book mitigates against a sustained analysis of fundamental issues in many cases. On occasion, discussions terminate prematurely on a plane of unsupported generalization, for example: "academic freedom is nonnegotiable"; "What may be needed to replace [the current university] is an existentialist university"; "adding up tenure's advantages and subtracting its disadvantages leaves a definite balance in favour of its retention"; "the difference between the higher learning and postsecondary learning is not one of kind but of degree." Brubacher's own position on these and other issues often is unclear, since he delivers few conclusions bearing the stamp of strong personal conviction, preferring to let the alternatives he sets forth provide the grounds for the reader's own judgment.

The book's nontechnical approach is an advantage in that it will provide a wide audience — students, administrators, members of academic governing bodies and the general public — with an understandable introduction to the philosophical issues embedded in a wide range of problems affecting higher education today. It is a stimulating work, although not one that should be approached in the expectation of discovering final solutions. True to the spirit of philosophy, it

is the quest for insight, clarification, and understanding that constitutes the book's chief value.

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Alfred A. Hunter, *Class Tells. On Social Inequality in Canada*. Toronto: Butterworths; 1981, ix + 264 pp.

Twenty years ago the number of professional sociological studies about Canadian society, any aspect of Canadian society, was paltry indeed. The situation in Quebec was more impressive, that part of the country having had an indigenous interest in the sociological understanding of itself which stretches back further. In the last ten years or so, however, there has been a very significant blossoming of activity in Canadian sociology which has turned its attention increasingly to the sociology of Canada. This activity has manifested itself in a gathering torrent of monographs, journal articles and textbooks, the latter designed both for specific courses and as introductory sociological texts in which the focus is upon Canadian society (in 1973 there was less than a handful of the latter; today the publishers' competition for introductory course adoptions is intense: you now need at least five or six hands to count the array of Canadian content introductory texts).

This burgeoning of interest in the nature of Canadian society has had salutary effects. We are becoming much more knowledgeable about, and aware of, the intrinsic nature of a society which cries out for analysis. There is still a lack of studies and interpretations which embrace the whole of Canadian society (the disjunction between Francophone and Anglophone sociology remains very evident) but the awareness of the limitations of a sociology which fails to redress this problem is certainly growing.

Much of the impetus for devoting sociological attention to Canada, for reasons which would themselves make for an interesting study, has come from sociologists who see themselves as broadly in the 'political economy' tradition or who subscribe in a general way to some variant of Marxian modes of socio-economic analysis. This has meant that a good deal of the sociological work on Canada has concentrated on issues of class analysis and the elucidation of sources of inequality in society. Alfred Hunter's *Class Tells* is a fruit of such concentration in which we have a very useful compilation of information and analysis concerning Canada as a society divided in terms of many socio-economic dimensions. Furthermore, the book is about Canada as a whole, not just the non-French component (although one might note that in an otherwise excellent bibliography of approx-