

Academic Matters

OCUFA'S JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION
LA REVUE D'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR D'UAPUO

Challenging the Academy

William Ayers
Class Warriors

Joel Westheimer
Higher Education or
Education for Hire

Simon Marginson
The University:
Punctuated by Paradox

David Rayside
The Queer Agenda on Campus:
Invisible? Stalled? Incomplete?

Brian Little
Acting Out of Character
in the Immortal Profession





Women's Health • life after breast cancer



Sometimes survival is just the beginning. Every year, thousands of Canadian women and their families are affected by arm disability following breast surgery.

Roanne Thomas-MacLean, associate professor in the Department of Sociology, is working with 745 breast cancer survivors to assess the impact of pain, lymphedema and loss of arm mobility on both their personal and professional lives. Her study, the largest of its kind in the world, will help establish a new standard for education, prevention and rehabilitation.

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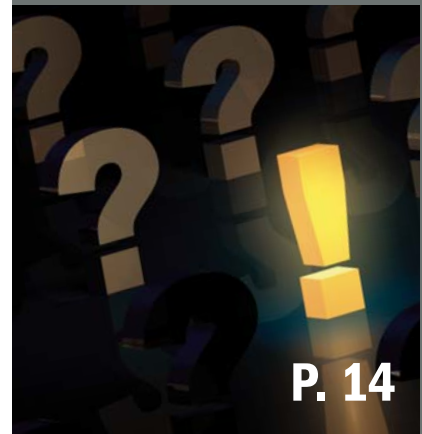
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Academic Matters

OCUFA'S JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION
LA REVUE D'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR D'UAPUQ

Academic Matters is published two times a year by OCUFA, and is received by 17,000 professors, academic librarians and others interested in higher education issues across Canada. The journal explores issues of relevance to higher education in Ontario, other provinces in Canada, and globally. It is intended to be a forum for thoughtful and thought-provoking, original and engaging discussion of current trends in post secondary education and consideration of academe's future direction.

Readers are encouraged to contribute their views, ideas and talents. Letters to the editor (maximum 250 words) are welcome and may be edited for length. To provide an article or artwork for Academic Matters, please send your query to Editor-in-Chief Mark Rosenfeld at mrosenfeld@ocufa.on.ca.

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Letters to the Editor

Thanks for the issue on tenure

I really enjoyed the Fall issue of *Academic Matters*, with its very interesting articles and arguments. I am personally interested in the politics of tenure because of where I am in my career, but the discussion explored a breadth of related issues of interest to faculty at all levels.

Thanks for a great issue.

KENDRA COULTER, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY, AND CRIMINOLOGY.
UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

Tenure and changing times

Mark Kingwell (*Academic Matters*, Fall 2009) argues that tenure is a conservative force, a far more plausible position than the "who ever needed it?" attitude of Michael Bliss, who seems to have forgotten a few things about the 1970s, when it was almost unheard of for someone hired at the University of Toronto not to be granted tenure and when some faculty actually did somewhat risky work, even before they were tenured. In the 1970s, moreover, *practically everyone* was more outspoken *about everything* than now. Students openly accused faculty of being conservative. They accused them of being male chauvinists, since, of course, faculty were nearly all male. Graduate students spoke up before landing tenure-track academic jobs and even before graduate assistants at the University of Toronto had a union.

Were students then especially brave and reckless? Not necessarily. The times were different but, most significant, Canadian society in general felt more economic optimism – and universities were relatively well funded. This combination of factors meant that many spoke and acted more freely than now, both with and without tenure, leading some to suggest, as Bliss does, that tenure is irrelevant.

A sense of desperation drives the academically inclined now, when much greater fiscal uncertainty has made it harder to land a tenure-track job and harder to be granted tenure in that position.

In short, it is very questionable that the experience of Michael Bliss offers any evidence at all that tenure is not an issue. He was mostly just lucky, along with other academics of his generation. The real issue is public and governmental support of higher education and research of all kinds.

LYNDA LANGE, DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES.
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO AT SCARBOROUGH




Class Warriors

by William Ayers

Professor William Ayers, banned last year from speaking at the University of Nebraska, argues that the current trend towards “academic capitalism” gives faculty the moment to speak up – and act up.

Le professeur William Ayers, à qui l'on a empêché de prononcer un discours à l'Université du Nebraska, soutient que la tendance actuelle vers le « capitalisme universitaire » signale aux professeurs le moment de faire entendre leur voix et de passer à l'action.



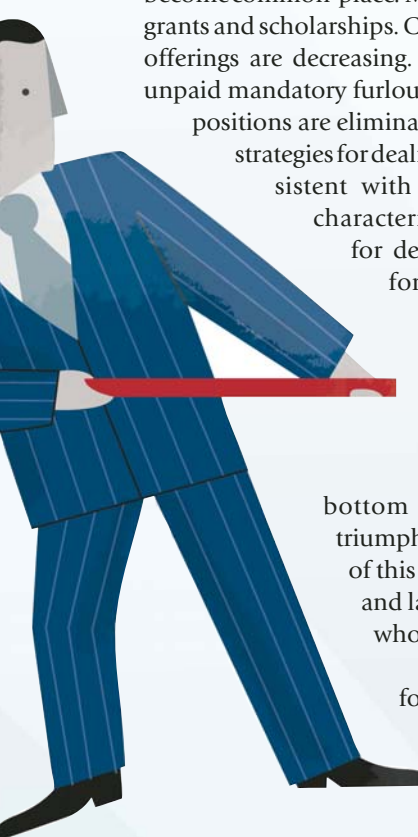
A delightful video emerged from the recent student-led struggles at the University of California organized to resist the grinding and relentless undoing of public higher education: a student attends to her daily routine, writing, reading, sitting in a lecture hall, while the camera focuses here and there, and a voice-over intones: “Pen: \$1.69; textbook: \$38; backpack: \$69; dinner (a tiny packet of dry noodles!): \$.50...” And at the end of the list: “Education [pause]...priceless.” The tag-line is perfect: “There are some things that money can’t buy. Don’t let education be one of them.”

The crisis in public higher education in the United States is not a joke at all. Tuition and fees are sky-rocketing across the country and are already out of reach for millions. Staff cut-backs, lay-offs, and reductions in student services have become common-place. Massive student loans have replaced grants and scholarships. Class-size is increasing while course offerings are decreasing. Hiring freezes and pay-cuts and unpaid mandatory furloughs are on the rise as tenure-track positions are eliminated. These and other "short-term"

strategies for dealing with the financial crisis are consistent with the overall direction that has characterized public higher education for decades: "restructuring" (biz-speak for a single-minded focus on the

below market wages keeps the whole enterprise afloat. Tenured and tenure-track faculty are disappearing, today holding barely 30 per cent of all faculty lines. Out-of-state students are increasing in most public schools because they pay significantly higher tuitions, and that pattern is turning public colleges and universities into "engines of inequality," places with less access and less equity, less social justice, and fewer highly qualified students, private schools in fact, while remaining public in name only.

But even this grim picture can be brought into sharper focus and, it turns out, more painful focus. California spends more on prisons than on higher education. Across the country, spending on corrections is six times higher than spending on higher education. From 1985 to 2000 Illinois



One might look at all this and conclude that the experiment with privatization is

bottom line), privatization, and the triumph of "academic capitalism." And all of this is part of a larger crisis of the state and larger choices about who pays, and who suffers.

A few snapshots: state support for the University of Illinois system stands at about 16 per cent today, down from 48 per cent two decades ago. In California, state colleges will

turn away 40,000 qualified students this year, while the community colleges, in a cascading effect, will turn away 100,000. And this year, a 32 per cent fee hike is proposed at the University of California at Berkeley (a proposal that triggered the current student movement), while the school pays its football coach \$2.8 million a year and is just completing a \$400-million renovation of the football stadium. The sports reporter Dave Zirin sums this mess up nicely: "This is what *students* see: boosters and alumni come first, while they've been instructed to cheer their teams, pay their loans, and mind their business."

These and similar trends are national in scope and impact. The average college graduate is between \$20,000 and \$30,000 in debt for student loans (not including credit card or other debt), compared to \$9,000 in 1994. Pell grants cover less than 32 per cent of annual college costs. Less than 20 per cent of graduate students are unionized, and student labor at

increased spending on higher education by 30 per cent, while corrections shot up 100 per cent. Here we get a clearer insight into the budget crises that are being rationalized and balanced on our heads: a permanent war economy is married to a prison society, with their abused and neglected offspring paying for their parental sins.

One might look at all this and conclude that the experiment with privatization is a failure—quality is down, inequity is up—and is, therefore, open to new directions. But, of course, as in other areas (the catastrophic financial crisis; the murderous invasion of Iraq; "No Child Left Behind" ...), the "geniuses" and "deciders" who created the problem will be the same self-described "experts" who are, perennially, tapped to craft a way out. So look for more of the same, while those challenging authority will be marginalized, ignored, and kicked to the curb by those who wield power from the top.

This is what will happen unless the marginalized decide to become subjects in (rather than objects of) everything that swirls around them, to take themselves (namely, ourselves) seriously as actors in this fraught and fleeting moment, and insist on elbowing our way in and taking a seat at the table. I, happily, took part in actions at the University of Illinois at Chicago in March this year in defense of public education. The March 4 event was one link in the National Day of Action that saw protests against the destruction of public education in more than 32 states across the country. The event was experienced in Chicago, in Berkeley and New

York, in Seattle and Washington D.C. as the stirrings of a movement-in-the-making.

A time of crisis is typically characterized by dislocation and fear and uncertainty. But because we are shaken from our certainties, our dogmas, and our orthodoxies, we are also potentially shocked into new awareness. A crisis can become then a time for new thinking, re-imagining, and transformation. I'm on the executive committee of the faculty senate and on the organizing committee of United Faculty, an incipient union effort. In each of these positions, I've seen faculty shake themselves awake—unsure at first just what it is that's about to run them over—and then pull themselves together to act up.

I've been reminded again of Don DeLillo's grimly funny and super-smart novel *White Noise*, whose narrator is Jack

as a right (something fought for by generations) or as an intellectual, ethical, and spiritual journey (education as enlightenment and liberation). The meteoric rise of for-profit universities (and the mindlessly trailing along by eager university administrators grasping their freshly-minted MBAs) is one part of that trend. Another piece is private universities' competing to secure their advantages at the expense of their "competitors" as well as the public, such as Harvard with its \$36-billion endowment or Northwestern, with its \$7 billion. Professor Erica Meiners, at a recent teach-in, pointed to Northwestern's new president's silly statement that he was hoping to make his university "elite without being elitist" and then raised the question: Exactly what "public"

a failure—quality is down, inequity is up—and is, therefore, open to new directions.

Gladney, a professor of Hitler Studies at a small mid-western college, who is sleep-walking through his life to the dull background sounds of TV and endless radio, the Muzak of consumerism and electronics, unrestrained advertising and constant technological innovation, appliances and microwaves. When an industrial accident creates what is at first described officially as a "feathery plume," but later becomes a "black billowing cloud," and finally an "airborne toxic event," everything becomes a bit unhinged. Jack's response to an order to evacuate is disbelief: "I'm not just a college professor," he complains, "I'm the head of a department. I don't see myself fleeing an airborne toxic event. That's for people who live in mobile homes out in the scrubby parts of the county, where the fish hatcheries are."

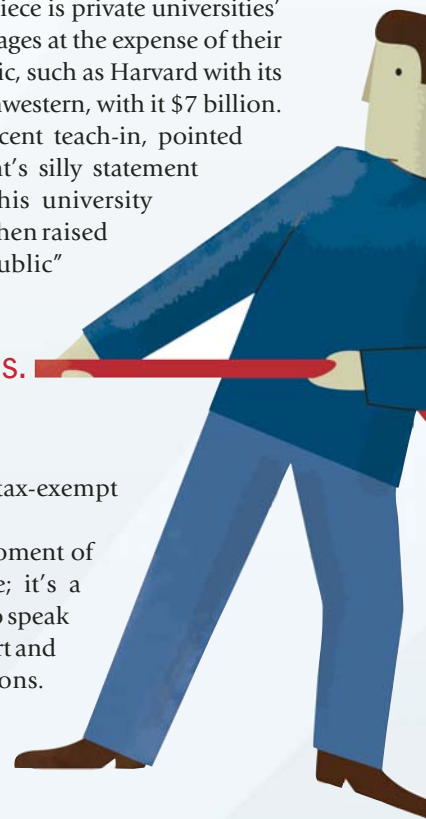
Well, not anymore. Our own feathery cloud has turned toxic at breath-taking speed, and those folks in the mobile homes might be our natural allies after all. When the administration at Cal closed the libraries and restricted hours of operation to save money, students implemented a 24-hour "study-in," where they were joined by faculty as well as by community members who had never before had access. Folks joined hands and chanted, "Whose university? Our university!" As one grad student said, "When we started, we wanted to save the university. Today, we want to transform it, to decolonize it, to open it up."

Higher education is being radically redefined as a product to be bought and sold in the marketplace as a commodity like a car, a box of bolts, or a toilet, rather than either

or "common" good do these tax-exempt institutions serve?

Meiners argued that this moment of rolling crises is a time to seize; it's a moment to study up and act up, to speak out and reach out. It's a time for art and humor and creative interventions. And it's a time to envision the world we want to inhabit, and then to begin to live it, here and now, on campus and off. She suggested a few possible campaigns as starting points to get our creative and activist juices flowing: cancel all outstanding student debt (good enough for the banks, why not us?); equal pay for equal work; truth in language (a furlough is not a camping trip, it's a pay-cut; "selective admissions" is more honestly *restrictive* admissions); and universal, free, open-access, high-quality, public, post-secondary schools (whew!).

The current frontal attack on public higher education is an attack on democracy itself. Education is a perennial battleground, for it is where we ask ourselves who we are as people, what it means to be human here and now, and what world we hope to inhabit. School is where we assess our chances and access our choices. Education rests on the twin pillars of enlightenment and liberation—knowledge and human freedom—so it always engages us with dynamic question about morality and ethics, identity and location, agency



and action. We come to want to know more, to see more, to experience more, in order to do more—to be more competent and powerful and capable in our projects and our pursuits, to be more astute and aware and wide-awake, more fully engaged in the world that we inherit, a world we are simultaneously destined to change.

So we wrangle over what to pass on to the future generation, and we struggle over what to value and how. In that wrangling, students must find vehicles and pathways to question the circumstances of their lives, and wonder about how their lives might be otherwise. Free inquiry, free questioning, dialogue and struggle must take their rightful place—at the heart of things.

Much of what we call schooling shuts down or walls off meaningful questioning and free inquiry. Much schooling is based on obedience and conformity, the hallmarks of every authoritarian regime throughout history. Much of it banishes the unpopular, squirms in the presence of the unorthodox, hides the unpleasant. There's no space for skepticism, irreverence, or even doubt. While many of us long for teaching as something transcendent and powerful, we find ourselves too often locked in situations that reduce teaching to a kind of glorified clerking, passing along a curriculum of received wisdom and pre-digested and often false bits of information. This is a recipe for disaster in the long run.

To take one example, emblematic in some ways. In October 2008, officials at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln canceled three talks I was scheduled to give at its College of Education. The College was celebrating its centennial that year, and a faculty committee invited me to give a keynote address, which I had tentatively called, "We Are Each Other's Keepers: Research and Teaching to Change the World."

The day before the cancellation, and at the height of the U.S. presidential campaign, an administrator called me to say that my pending visit was causing a "firestorm." She said that the governor, a U.S. senator, and the chair of the board of regents had all issued statements condemning the decision to invite me to campus.

The president of the university said, "While I believe that the open exchange of ideas and the principles of academic freedom are fundamental to a university, I also believe the decision to have Ayers on a program to celebrate the College's centennial represents remarkably poor judgment." The regents chair added that while he welcomed controversial viewpoints, "The authority we grant to the faculty to decide what to teach and who to invite comes with a responsibility to use that authority and that freedom with sound judgment. In this case, I think, that was violated." That last statement

struck me as worthy of the disciplinarian of a middle school commenting on a decision about homecoming made by the student council.

The administrator told me further that the university was receiving vicious e-mails and threatening letters, as well as promises of physical disruption and physical harm to me from anonymous sources were I to show up. She said that the university's "Threat Assessment Group" had identified "serious safety concerns."

I sympathized and told her how terribly sorry I was that all of this was happening to them. I also said that I thought it was a bit of a tempest in a tea pot, and that it would surely pass. Certainly no matter what some tiny group claimed they might do, I said, I thought that the Nebraska state police could get me to the podium, and I would handle myself from there.

She wasn't so sure, and, who knows? I'm not from Nebraska.

Still, I said, I thought we should stand together and refuse to accede to these kinds of pressures. Is a public university the personal fiefdom or the political clubhouse of the governor? Are there things we dare not say if they offend a donor? Do we institute a political litmus test or a background check on every guest? Do we collapse in fear if a small mob gathers with torches at the gates? I wouldn't force myself on the college, of course, but I felt that canceling would send a terrible message to students, bring shame to the university, and be another step down the slippery slope of giving up on the precious ideal of a free university in a free society.

It's hard to think what consistently rational argument could have been advanced in the halls of power for canceling my scheduled time in Lincoln. That I'm not a patriot? Loving the country mindlessly and thoughtlessly, closing our eyes to those dreadful things that the U.S. government has done and continues to do, cannot be a criterion for entering a conversation. In fact, speaking up, engaging in the public square, resisting injustice is every citizen's responsibility; it is the essence of democracy.

That I advocate violence? But I don't. Indeed, I believe that nonviolent direct action is a powerful tool for social change. But I do note that the U.S. government has been the greatest purveyor of violence on earth, as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. said in 1967, and that Americans live in fact in a sewer of violence, often exported, always rationalized and hidden through mystification and the frenzied use of bread and circuses.

I was made unwittingly and unwillingly an issue in the presidential campaign, and that unwanted celebrity is absolutely the only reason I was banned at the University of

Nebraska. But the fallout affects me only marginally. The university will surely suffer. After all, the primary job of intellectuals and scholars is to challenge orthodoxy. The growth of knowledge, insight, and understanding depends on that kind of effort, and the inevitable clash of ideas that follows must be nourished and not crushed. In this case, Nebraska shunned its responsibility.

We want our students to be able to participate and engage, to think for themselves, to make judgments based on evidence and argument, and to develop minds of their own. We want them to ask fundamental questions: Who in the world am I? How did I get here and where am I going? What in the world are my choices? How in the world shall I proceed? We want them to pursue answers wherever those answers might take them. We focus our efforts, not on the production of things so much as on the production of fully developed human beings who are capable of controlling and transforming their own lives, citizens who can participate fully in civic life.

We might declare that in this corner of this place—in this open space we are constructing together—people will begin to experience themselves as powerful authors of their own narratives, actors in their own dramas, the essential architects and creators of their own lives, participants in a dynamic and inter-connected community-in-the-making. Here they will discover a zillion ways to articulate their own desires and demands and questions. Here everyone will live *in search of* rather than *in accordance with* or *in accommodation to*. Here we will join one another, and our democratic futures can be born. In the always-contested space of education at all levels, we are, each and all of us, works-in-progress, participating, intentionally or unwittingly, in history-in-the-making. **AM**

William Ayers is Distinguished Professor of Education and Senior University Scholar at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC).



Lakehead University Welcomes New President

Lakehead University is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Brian J. R. Stevenson as president and vice-chancellor for a five-year term, commencing August 1, 2010. The announcement follows a year-long international search by the Lakehead Board of Governors to replace Dr. Frederick Gilbert, who will retire this summer after twelve years of service to the University.

Dr. Stevenson received his undergraduate degree and MA from the University of Victoria, and a PhD in Political Studies from Queen's University. A recognized specialist in international relations and Canadian foreign policy, Brian Stevenson first taught at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM), and later at the University of Alberta where he also served as vice-provost and associate vice-president. He has served as senior policy advisor to the Canadian Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and has worked in Washington D.C. for the Organization of American States and as a Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The current provost and vice-president academic at the University of Winnipeg, Brian Stevenson brings impeccable academic, administrative, and public service credentials to the position. Dr. Stevenson has made contributions as a board member of the Canadian Council for the Americas and the Canadian Foundation for the Americas. He currently sits on the Advisory Council of the Network on North American Studies in Canada.

Established in 1965, Lakehead University is a small comprehensive university located in Thunder Bay and Orillia, Ontario. It is home to the west campus of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine.

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Higher Education or Education for Hire? Corporatization and the Threat to Democratic Thinking

by Joel Westheimer

Teaching critical thinking is the university's democratic mission, argues the University of Ottawa's Joel Westheimer, and today's universities are failing to deliver. Universities need to reverse the trend that has them focusing on workforce preparation and the commercialization of knowledge and resurrect higher education's public purpose.

L'enseignement du raisonnement critique est la mission démocratique des universités, soutient Joel Westheimer de l'Université d'Ottawa, et les universités d'aujourd'hui ne sont pas à la hauteur. Les universités doivent renverser cette tendance qui les oblige à se concentrer sur la préparation des effectifs et sur la commercialisation du savoir et raviver l'objectif public de l'enseignement supérieur.



Ten years ago, I was fired, which is not in and of itself interesting. After all, many people lose their jobs every day, especially in times of economic turbulence. For better or worse, however, most endure such indignity in privacy. *The New York Times*, under the headline “New York University Denied Tenure to Union Backer,” reported that the U.S. government’s National Labor Relations Board “charge[d] New York University with illegally denying tenure to a professor who had testified in favor of allowing graduate students to unionize.” The *Chronicle of Higher Education* headline read “A Promising Professor Backs a Union Drive and Is Rejected for Tenure.” Smaller papers and magazines made similar observations. I was more concerned at the time with wanting my job back than with thinking about the broader implications (the cacophony of negative publicity heaped on NYU offered a sense of just deserts to be sure). But thrust into the public position as I was did raise one particular concern for my scholarly interests in democratic education. Nearly every news story cast my lot as an isolated incident of vengeful retribution by a few university administrators rather than as a case of something much larger than one professor (me) or one university (NYU).

For the past 10 years I have been happily employed by the University of Ottawa, and I am pleased to report that my children have not gone hungry. But whether others view my earlier dismissal as scandalous or justified, I find the following irrefutable: the forces that set the process in motion and enabled it to continue are an inevitable by-product of dramatic changes the academy has been facing in the past several decades. These changes have little to do with individual university employees and much to do with changes in the structures and workings of the academy itself—not only NYU, but also private and public universities across the United States and Canada. Universities now model themselves after corporations seeking to maximize profit, growth, and marketability. As a result, the democratic mission of the university as a public good has all but vanished. And many of the (never fully realized) ideals of academic life—academic freedom (in my case, freedom of political expression), intellectual independence, collective projects, and pursuit of the common good—have been circumscribed or taken off the table altogether on a growing number of college and university campuses across North America.

The effects of corporatization on the integrity of university research—especially in the sciences—has been well-documented elsewhere. Readers of *Academic Matters* are likely familiar with the many cases of scientific compromise



resulting from private commercial sponsorship of research by pharmaceutical and tobacco companies. Indeed, faculty

throughout North America are already deluged with requests or demands to produce research that is “patentable” or “commercially viable.” Sometimes these entreaties are couched in gentler (some might argue more insidious) terms such as “knowledge mobilization” or “knowledge use.” What I want to focus on here, however, are implications that are less well explored but equally dangerous: the ways the academy’s shift towards a business model of education delivery impedes our collective ability to preserve and promote a democratic way of life. As in so many other arenas in our society today where democratic interests are pitted against economic ones, democracy seems to be losing.

Three developments stemming from the pursuit of a corporate model of education pose threats not only to the historic ideal of a liberal democratic education but also to the future of democratic thinking itself. They are the elimination of critical thinking and a culture of criticism; the weakening of intellectual independence and democratic faculty governance; and the promotion of a meritocracy myth that drives the work of graduate students, junior and senior faculty alike. The first two erode democratic thinking by curbing the habits of mind and heart that enable democracy to flourish – what John Dewey called the “associated experience[s]” essential to democratic life. The last—the meritocracy myth—attacks the heart of these associated experiences by diminishing the power of the community to nurture collective meaning and worth.

THE IMPACT OF THE CORPORATE CAMPUS ON CRITICAL THINKING

WITHIN THE UNIQUE UNIVERSITY CONTEXT, THE MOST CRUCIAL OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS...ARE MEANINGLESS UNLESS THEY ENTAIL THE RIGHT TO RAISE DEEPLY DISTURBING QUESTIONS AND PROVOCATIVE CHALLENGES TO THE CHERISHED BELIEFS OF SOCIETY AT LARGE AND OF THE UNIVERSITY ITSELF...IT IS THIS HUMAN RIGHT TO RADICAL, CRITICAL TEACHING AND RESEARCH WITH WHICH THE UNIVERSITY HAS A DUTY

ABOVE ALL TO BE CONCERNED; FOR THERE IS NO ONE ELSE, NO OTHER INSTITUTION AND NO OTHER OFFICE, IN OUR MODERN LIBERAL DEMOCRACY, WHICH IS THE CUSTODIAN OF THIS MOST PRECIOUS AND VULNERABLE RIGHT OF THE LIBERATED HUMAN SPIRIT.

This excerpt from the mission statement of the University of Toronto might be hailed as a shining example of the centrality of university campuses in promoting and preserving critical thinking as the engine of progress in any democratic society. Except for one thing: institutional leaders at the university whose faculty drafted these words do not believe them and do not abide by them. The University of Toronto is the site of two of the most notoriously blatant violations of these principles in the past decade: the well-publicized cases of Nancy Olivieri and David Healy, involving the university's unwillingness to stand up to corporate funders and protect academic freedom and the integrity of critical inquiry.

Unfortunately, the Olivieri and Healy cases do not stand alone. Scores of examples of scientific and social scientific research essential to public welfare are undermined by private influence. In fact, more than 52 per cent of funding for clinical medical research is now from corporate sources. The trend is easiest to spot and most publicly alarming in the medical sciences, since lives are at stake. But there is cause for concern as well in the humanities and social sciences, where publication of inconvenient truths can be discouraged by university higher-ups.

The harm to the reputation of the university as a reliable source of (especially "scientific") information untainted by private conflicts of interest has been documented extensively. But the ways these changes affect the campus life of faculty and students has been considered far less. As universities turn to business models—becoming certification factories rather than institutions of higher learning—democratic educational ideals are fast becoming obsolete. Consequently, professors find it more difficult in their teaching to foster critical thinking as a necessary underpinning of democratic participation. The "shopping mall" university where students seek the cheapest and fastest means for obtaining the basic skills and certification they need is becoming a familiar metaphor and model for university administrators, students, and parents. Courses not directly related to job-training look more and more like useless dust to be eliminated. Meetings among faculty about which program of courses might yield the most robust understanding of a field of study and of the debates

and struggles that field entails are rapidly being replaced by brainstorming sessions about how to narrow the curriculum to fit into, for example, two weekends in order to *incentivize* matriculation and increase student enrollment.

THE WEAKENING OF INTELLECTUAL INDEPENDENCE AND DEMOCRATIC FACULTY GOVERNANCE

The state of affairs I describe above pertains mostly to the emaciated pedagogical potential of the newly corporatized university. But ultimately, what faculty—and especially junior faculty—are being asked to give up is their own intellectual independence. The creeping corporate climate of some university departments and schools can easily lead to the substitution of bureaucratic allegiance, in the form of "budget alignment" or "optimization" in the new parlance, for scholarly inquiry as the cornerstone of academic life. In some cases, the effect on the intellectual life of a department might be plain to see. In some schools and faculties, elected department chairs—who traditionally served terms of a few years and then eagerly returned to their intellectual pursuits within the department—have been replaced by chairs *appointed* by university higher-ups with no or at best perfunctory input from department faculty. Some stay in these positions for a decade or more with ever-diminishing interest in or focus on scholarly inquiry. In the *Social Text* article, "Tenure Denied," (where I described more fully my experiences at NYU), I told of a colleague at a mid-western university whose department chair suggested to the faculty that research questions that the department wanted investigated should be agreed on by a committee (of senior faculty and administrators) and posted on a Web site—and that faculty should align their research with one of those questions. Requiring research to be streamlined according to central criteria (doubtless related to funding





opportunities) makes perfect sense if one treats an academic department as a profit center. But it turns scholarly life into something less than we all hope it to be.

At times, the mere fact that departmental faculty are pursuing an active, diverse and uncontrolled set of research agendas may be perceived negatively by school administrators. While such departments continue to recruit promising scholars on the basis of their research production, the departmental leadership is caught in a bind. They need such scholars for the department's reputation and grant-getting ability, but once there, these scholars may pose some threat to the order of business within the department (and to the security of the chair who has likely already traded the kind of professional security earned from scholarly inquiry and production for the kind won by allegiance and loyalty to university higher-ups).

Appointed chairs can slowly and steadily shift faculty focus from scholarly pursuits that advance a field to those that advance the chair, a possibility especially troubling to junior faculty seeking tenure. Much as external pressures on the corporate university constrain and refocus academic research, so too do internal incentives on the departmental level. As in much of university politics, junior faculty are the most vulnerable. Faculty governance in departments that have remade themselves along corporate culture lines can become little more than a parody of pseudo-democratic (or simply non-democratic) governance, in which faculty simply (and always) endorse administrative positions. Faculty managers' and department chairs' only convictions are those that do not ruffle administrative feathers of those higher up. And the chill that blankets departments in which power has been centralized results in the further entrenchment of anti-democratic tendencies.

Under these conditions, the university starts to look less like a place of free exchange of ideas and more like a Hobbesian Leviathan, a place that boasts, as former SUNY New Paltz president Roger Bowen warns, "a settled, conforming, obedient citizenry—not dissenters who challenge convention." In these departments, junior faculty either conform or withdraw from departmental life after being tenured. The bottom line is raised to the top. Research that promotes the financial and hierarchical health of the administration is rewarded while

Universities now model
themselves after
corporations seeking
to maximize profit, growth,
and marketability.

independent scholarly thought is punished. Institutions of higher education become ones of education for hire. Undue administrative influence over research agendas, appointed department chairs and the further erosion of democratic governance, and the hiring of part-time and clinical faculty with no time for scholarly inquiry and little job security are all threats to both critical inquiry and university democracy.

Before moving on to my final point, I want to point out that these

conditions are created not only by university administration but also by a complicit faculty who would rather not sacrifice research time to engage in something as time-consuming as democratic governance. In other words, a repressive hierarchy is not required for non-democratic decision-making to flourish. Were university administrators to honour democratic faculty governance fully, would faculty step up to the plate? Under a corporate model of governance, appointed department chairs may stay in their positions for a decade or more. A democratic model, however, would require those deeply engaged in scholarship and research to be willing (or required) to take on leadership positions in administration, in addition to their roles as teacher and scholar. Countering an increasingly hierarchical and corporatized model of university governance requires commitments of time and energy that many faculty now shun but that a just workplace requires.



THE CORPORATE BENEFITS OF THE MERITOCRACY MYTH

One final characteristic of the newly corporatized campus I want to address is the complicity of the professorial (and graduate student) culture. The pervasive culture of increasing individualism results in a story we tell ourselves that goes something like this: "We work in a merit-based system. If I do my job correctly—if I'm a good graduate student or a good professor and I'm smart and I do my work well—I will be rewarded with a plum teaching assignment,

and I will be part of the academic elite and get a job.” This is an unfortunate state of affairs for two reasons. The first is economic and concerns the entrenched system of academic labour. The simple reality is that for the majority of disciplines, the claim that the system is merit-based is just not true. There are vastly more qualified, hardworking individuals than there are tenure-track and tenured academic positions for them to fill. At a certain level of proficiency, it becomes the luck of the draw.

But the second cost of an emphasis on individualism in the form of the meritocracy myth might be more insidious. Faculty focused only on individualized measures of professional success miss out on the collective action that has an extensive history in democratic societies and that has sustained and driven countless scholars, artists, scientists, and activists: working together towards a common end. Merit-based rewards encourages faculty to work behind office doors, estranged from colleagues. As Marc Bousquet points out in his book, *How the University Works*, believing in the fantasy of merit results in a great loss to everyone, including those dubbed meritorious.

The corporate university, on the other hand, advances and benefits from the illusion that each of us will attain rock-star status in the academy. Some readers might recall the episode of the television show *West Wing* when fictional President Jeb Bartlett explains why Americans seem to vote against their own interests by protecting a tax system that benefits only the super rich. “It doesn’t matter if most voters don’t benefit,” he explains, “They all believe that someday they will. That’s the problem with the American dream. It makes everyone concerned for the day they’re going to be rich.” And so it goes for the star system in the academy. The more graduate students and professors believe that their hopes for professional satisfaction lies in superstar recognition for their individual work rather than in collective meaning-making and action, the easier it is for democratic life in the university to be compromised.

CONCLUSION

The language of individual entrepreneurship has become all-pervasive across many sectors of society. It has, therefore, become increasingly difficult for faculty, administrators, students, and public officials even to talk about the public role of universities in a democratic society. This was not always the case. Universities in Canada, as elsewhere, were founded on ideals of knowledge and service *in the public*

interest. Universities had a noble mission—if not always fulfilled—to create knowledge and foster learning that would serve the public good and contribute to the social welfare.

Academic workers at all levels and of all kinds need to fight to regain this central mission. What is the role of the university in fostering civic leadership, civic engagement, and social cohesion? How can education re-invigorate democratic participation? How can colleges and universities strengthen our communities and our connections to one another?

I sometimes ask my education students to consider how schools in a democratic society should differ from those in a totalitarian nation. It seems plausible that a good lesson in chemistry or a foreign language might seem equally at home in many parts of the world. Every nation wants its educational institutions to prepare students for active participation in the workforce. So what would be different about teaching and learning in a Canadian classroom than in a classroom in a country governed by a one-ruling-party dictatorship? Most of us would like to believe that schools in a democratic nation would foster the skills and dispositions needed to participate fully in democratic life; namely, the ability to think critically and carefully about social policies, cultural assumptions and, especially, relations of power. Many school teachers and university professors, however, are concerned that students are learning more about how to please authority and secure a job than how to develop democratic convictions and stand up for them.

There are many powerful ways to teach young adults to think critically about social policy issues, participate in authentic debate over matters of importance, and understand that people of good will can have different opinions. Indeed, democratic progress depends on these differences. If universities hope to strengthen democratic society, they must resist focusing curriculum and research on skills-training, workforce preparation, and the commercialization of knowledge to the benefit of private industry. They must instead participate in the rebuilding of a public purpose for education. How to do so is a matter of professorial imagination. ■■

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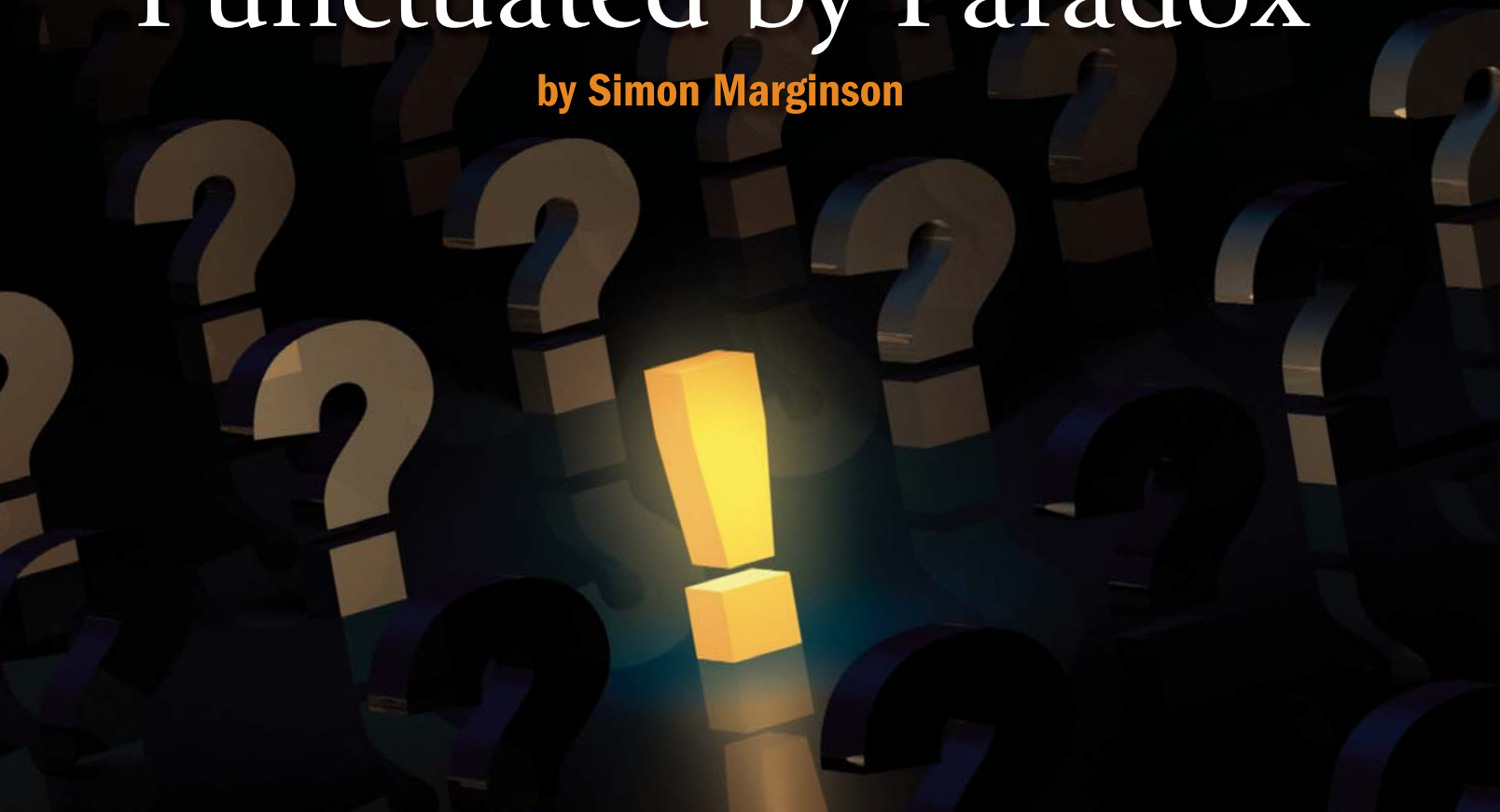
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THE UNIVERSITY: Punctuated by Paradox

by Simon Marginson



Old/new, engaged/separate,
public/private, elite/mass-oriented,
national/global. But for universities,
Simon Marginson argues,
paradox is vital.

*Les paradoxes sont indispensables
aux universités, qu'elles soient anciennes ou
nouvelles, engagées ou autonomes, publiques
ou privées, élitistes ou axées sur
les masses, nationales ou mondiales,
soutient Simon Marginson.*

As a social institution the university is punctuated by paradoxes. Is there any other institution (except possibly government) that combines so many different social functions? Is so clear about its primary values, so diffuse and unreadable in its core objectives? So self-serving and other-serving at the same time? So easily annexed to a range of contrary agendas: conservative and radical, capitalist and socialist, elite and democratic, technocratic and organic?

The university is like the “public good”, in that it becomes what we want it to be. But the university rarely holds to a single course. It continually disappoints. It always falls short of potential. But we defend it. We sense that if it were lost then something quite fundamental, and probably essential, would be lost.

What are the paradoxes that punctuate the university? Can we resolve those paradoxes? How do we live with them.?

PARADOX 1. THE UNIVERSITY EPITOMIZES BOTH MODERNISM AND TRADITION.

The university is high temple of modernity and thrives as the cauldron of innovation. It is constantly transforming its own ideas and products, less frenetically but more universally than the consumer economy. Its role as a modernizer plays out constantly in science and technology, ideas, and aesthetics; frequently in business; sometimes in generational cultures (the 1960s) or global cultures (now). It is way ahead of the pack in its cosmopolitanism and internationalism. Its instinct for devolution and flat networking across cyberspace is another anticipation of society-to-be.

And yet the university is also steeped in an older style of bureaucracy and a mediaeval-clerical culture. Along with a small number of religious organizations, the older universities are the great survivors. How many of the leading companies of 1850 are still standing? Most of the leading universities are. The classics, traditional scholarship, and the often subversive culture of the book are resilient, especially in ivy-clad institutions that wield the most power. Disciplinary communities and peer review flourish (though academic control of governance has gone).

And this clinging by the university to its own traditions is the necessary condition of its incessant interventions, its transformative forays into society, its modernizing capacity. On the other hand, if the university were not the successful modernizer, if it were not seen by society as haven of the Next Big Secret, its traditions would not last very long. In the university the future is the past. And the past is the future.

PARADOX 2. THE ENGAGEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY RESTS ON AUTONOMY.

That first paradox is not new. It began in the Anglo-American world when the German research university and its continuous encounter with science entered the American university and turned the latter into the modern research university, which spread through the world and became the global research university now standardized in the world rankings.

The second paradox is more recent in most countries, though it goes back further in the United States.

There are now tremendous pressures on the university to deliver to a wide range of “stakeholders” or “clients”: business and industry, professions and occupations, governments and their many agencies, NGOs, and global players. The great ivory towers, removed-from-the-world, have disappeared (though some little ivory towers are still in place). Nowadays the university is the builder of communities, salvager of regions, and the more active player in knowledge-city partnerships, with an ever-growing list of demands on its doorstep.

The paradox is that the university’s capacity to deliver and to solve problems others cannot solve without its help depends on its capacity to operate research, teaching, and service free of coercion or second guessing. It must have autonomy, if it is to fulfil the heteronymous role assigned to it by “engagement”, “third stream”, and “service learning”. Autonomy is essential to engagement. But unless the university is engaged in issues not of its choosing, it loses the social contract underpinning its autonomy. Freedom is slavery. Slavery is freedom. Orwellian stuff!

PARADOX 3. THE PUBLIC-GOOD ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY IS THE SOURCE OF PRIVATE BENEFITS.

Knowledge is a near-pure public good in the technical, economic sense. The knowledge creator may have a first-mover advantage and the best prospect of securing a private benefit from knowledge, but the benefits of knowledge cannot be confined for long to one person or agency. And once the knowledge is disseminated it becomes non-rivalrous and non-excludable.

Goods are non-rivalrous when they can be consumed by any number of people without being depleted, such as knowledge of a mathematical theorem. Goods are non-excludable when the benefits cannot be confined to individual buyers. The mathematical theorem again satisfies this condition.

Since the prospect for private benefit disappears once knowledge is disseminated, non-rivalrous and non-excludable public goods are under-provided in economic markets because private providers cannot readily profit from them. Thus research all over the world is subsidized by government or philanthropy. Likewise, the liberal, generalist functions of teaching, including the formation of the intellect through its reproduction of disciplinary knowledge are never rewarded satisfactorily in labour markets. Labour markets reward credentials (which are rivalrous and excludable) in association with observable vocational skills, not generalist intellectual formation.

Yet while knowledge is a public good, it is annexed to a great range of private purposes. There’s the paradox. It is turned into copyrighted, knowledge-intensive objects, installed in technologies that generate profits by consuming the eco-system (the condition of possibility for all), used to set up market monopolies that block rivals, and associated with claims to power and social privilege.

In producing knowledge as a global public good the university becomes complicit in all this. Indeed, the university is itself one of the corporations that secure private profit out of its production of public good knowledge. It suits those who profit from knowledge for it to be either accessed free of charge or below the cost of production. Unless the university provides knowledge-creation and mobilization for powerful

elites, it would lose an essential part of its social base. Private goods are a condition of the public good role and vice versa. But how “public good” is that? Knowledge is a public good. But for which “public,” and in whose interests? Public is private. Private is public.

PARADOX 4. THE UNIVERSITY IS FOR MARKETS BUT NOT OF MARKETS.

The university does much of its work for economic markets and does so in the manner of a business. It minimizes costs, bids competitively, and signs performance contracts. It prepares graduates for the selling of their labour to employers. It often works the global market in fee-paying

future, reward. Explicitly commercial operations such as for-profit vocational programs or the hiring of university facilities are marginal, not central. The bottom line of the university is not profitability or market share (except in the for-profit institutions, which exist only on the margin. The leading institutions are more concerned about prestige and social power than about revenues. They need money to operate but would rather be smaller and more exclusive than produce to the mass market).

If the university were to tip over into being fully capitalist, it will have less to offer capitalism. If the university stopped producing subsidized “public good” basic research, it could no longer be a source of applied and commercial research. If it taught only observable skills rewarded in

The university’s research effort is, in part, directed towards
the production of commercial science,
often for companies that universities themselves own or share.

international students for profit and charges astronomical prices to those who enrol in an MBA program. The university’s research effort is, in part, directed towards the production of commercial science, often for companies that universities themselves own or share.

Government policies would drive the university towards these objectives, even if it were not so inclined. Some national governments (e.g., Britain, Australia) set employment rates of graduates as an explicit performance indicator. Government research policy all over the world offers incentives to the university to collaborate with industry and shift more research activity into commercializable knowledge goods. Indeed, part of the “public interest” remit of the university is to build the global competitiveness of the national economy and to meet the needs of business and industry.

Thus the university is the handmaiden of capitalism. It often seems enslaved to capitalism. But it does so by producing public knowledge. The paradox is that it serves private capital by producing public goods, and in a manner which is not itself commercial-capitalist, or at least not predominantly so.

The university may be business-like, but it is not a business. It is of the gift economy not the market economy in that its “goods,” i.e., knowledge, is given to society, in the main, without an explicit promise in return of immediate, or even

labour markets and ceased to supply liberal education and disciplinary knowledge, it would weaken conditions of production in all sectors of the economy, reduce social literacy, and render elites less competent. The markets buttress the social contract that underpins the university. In return, the university underpins markets. Business is gift economy. Gift economy is business.

PARADOX 5. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FOR ALL IS CONDUCTED BY A TINY FEW.

Many benefits of research in the university, even those translated into commercial product such as influenza vaccines, are widespread if not universal. In the era of the global knowledge economy, in which the techniques and reflexivities associated with research are increasingly useful to societies in every sector, the public interest lies in the broadest spread of research capability and creativity. In other words, *in principle*, all faculty ought to be either actively researching or likely to be so in future; and all institutions, including those with a purely vocational mission, ought to conduct research programs.

The paradox is that in all fields of knowledge building, like most fields of the arts, the really important breakthrough

work is done by a tiny handful of people. Further, to maximize the cut-through of research, creative activity in each field should be concentrated in a small number of places in which the best people are gathered together. The paradox of research in a democracy is that everyone should be creative, or at least have the opportunity to practice creativity. Yet the really interesting research is always an elite activity. There is no ambiguity about this. Reality television does not make great art that will stand the test of time. Neither does a research policy focused on participation, not outcomes. Yet a widespread understanding of the nature and implications of research (the kind of understanding that only comes in sharing in the activity) is a vital safeguard, and lifts the level of social creativity. Excellence is democracy. Democracy is excellence.



PARADOX 6. THE UNIVERSITY PRODUCES GLOBAL PUBLIC GOODS SUBJECTED TO NATIONAL REGULATION.

In the end, the hardest paradox to deal with might be the last. The benefits of research in the university cannot be contained within national borders. The new mathematical formula, the breakthrough on solar heating, the palaeontologist who discovers that dinosaurs had feathers: all create global public goods, and their work finds its way everywhere. National governments would like to harness the university to their notion of the exclusively national public good—which more often than not means the rate of growth of national GDP—and to concentrate and restrict the university's benefits to the purposes to which they assign it. The university for its part, while paying lip service to the government as paymaster when it needs to, is wholly disdainful of the idea that its stage should be any narrower than that of the whole world.

But political economy matters and political economy is still national. The paradox is that the contribution of the university to the global public good is rendered through systems of funding and regulation that are wholly national in form, and controlled by governments largely or entirely indifferent to the good of the world as a whole (unless the matter con-

cerned is one that sizeably and directly impacts their patch, like, say, an influenza outbreak). There is no global government with global policies to fund and regulate the university's contribution to the global public good. While that contribution is real and instrumental to the fate of the world, it is also undefined and nebulous. And government funding and priority systems for organizing research always affect the university. Once again, as with public and private, this is a paradox of universal and particular. A global universal good is national-particular, it seems. And we have to hope that national-particular is a global universal good

Should we resolve the paradoxes of the university?

The temptation is to clarify the mission and roles of the university. To render it coherent in policy terms, if not moral terms. To decide once and for all to make the university modernist, engaged, public, non-market, non-elitist in research, and decidedly global. Wait, would that be all of the above, but with excellence instead of democracy in research? Or would it be traditional and autonomous instead of modernist and engaged, so protecting the high academic values we have inherited? Or do we go for the neo-liberal package of modernist, engaged, private, market, excellent, and national... or, wait, should that be global?

To attempt to "resolve" these paradoxes is to start to unravel the University. Any such "resolution" is bound to reduce what the university does and is for to the creation of value, thus narrowing its social and political base. The discerning reader will have noted that in each paradox, one side of the paradox provides the conditions of possibility for the other. To chop off one side is to leave the other swinging free, without any visible means of support.

This suggests that, while there are tensions inherent in these paradoxes, rather than thinking of the paradoxes as contradictions (even as the "non-antagonistic contradictions" famously discussed by Mao Tse-Tung) it might better to think of them as necessary antinomies, as two ends that are part of a common system and each necessary, if we want the university to continue to survive and evolve.

This does not mean that any and every mix of these paradoxes is as good as every other. Or that all mixes are benign. It is possible for the university to become too elitist in knowledge creation or too focused on the private ends of itself and selected others, or too exclusively national in its view of the world, or too diffusely global while losing touch with its funding base. It is possible for national governments or industry to strangle the autonomy of the university, and it is possible for the university to disengage from all its clients. On the other hand, a university that served no private purposes, or fragmented its concentrations of expertise, or cut its ties with society to preserve its identity, would not last.

For many of us the central political rubric is democracy. For this the social promise attributed to the French Revolution, "liberté, égalité, fraternité," is as good a starting point as any. To the extent that we bring norms to bear on the problem of "The University" (an institution much older than the great revolution of 1789-1793), we can judge the university by its potential contribution to realizing these three performance indicators in our time and in the foreseeable future. This does not mean we are obliged to re-engineer the university holus-bolus, and we would do so at our peril. It does suggest two tests we might usefully apply to its activities, to the playing out of its paradoxes, and in tweaking the configuration of those paradoxes.

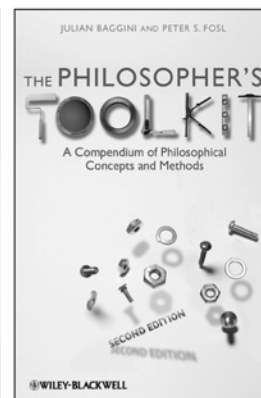
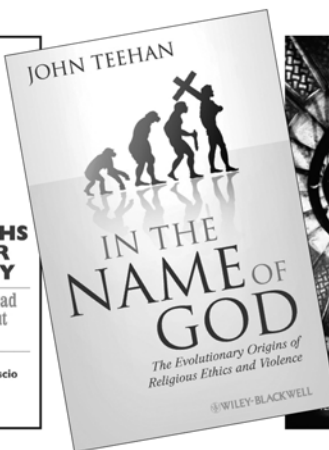
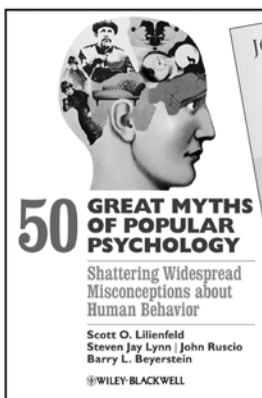
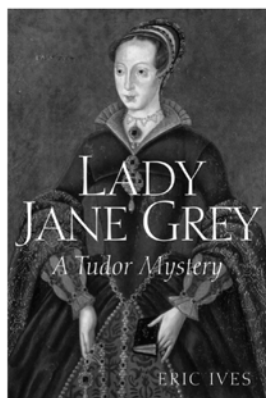
The first is the test of transparency. In the context of democracy as freedom, equality and solidarity, we can reasonably expect all of the activities of the university—old/new, engaged/separate, public/private, elite/mass-oriented, national/global—to be accessible to view and understanding. No secrets. This does not mean that all of the university can be or should be open to direct popular intervention or otherwise reduced to an instrument of one or another interpretation of the three mighty democratic goals. Still

less does it mean that the university ought to be more politicized, for in some respects it is too politicized now. But it means that in a democratic society all that the university does should be common in visibility.

The second test is the test of free creativity. The university is, above all, about the creation, inculcation, and dissemination of knowledge. This is what distinguishes it from all other organizations. Within that, knowledge creation has a pre-eminent role. Locked in our present trajectory as we are, we must solve the problems that our past actions have created since the Neolithic revolution began. Arguably, without the university we cannot solve these problems or disseminate plausible solutions to them that are both publicly and privately effective. We can judge the university—and the configuration of its paradoxes—and our own efforts to support it and draw value from it, by the extent to which open and autonomous creativity flourishes within. ■■

Simon Marginson is a professor in the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne in Melbourne, Australia. His most recent book is Global Creation: Space, Mobility and Synchrony in the Age of the Knowledge Economy (with Peter Murphy and Michael Peters), published in 2010 by Peter Lang in New York.

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The Queer Agenda on Campus: INVISIBLE? STALLED? INCOMPLETE?

by David Rayside



For universities to become truly inclusive, sexual orientation and gender identity have to be fully incorporated into the employment equity agenda, argues the University of Toronto's David Rayside.

Afin que les universités deviennent réellement inclusives, l'orientation sexuelle et l'identité de genre doivent être incorporées dans le programme d'équité en matière d'emploi, soutient David Rayside de l'Université de Toronto.

Is the queer agenda on campus invisible, stalled, or incomplete? Does this seem like yesterday's question? So much seems to have changed over the last decade, expanding the recognition of sexual diversity on Canadian campuses. Many students think that widespread anti-gay prejudice is part of the disreputable past they associate with their parents' generation, in much the same way that so many women today think of feminism as passé.

Some young people may even think that queer is "in"; others think that sexual minorities are so "normalized" that these issues are boring. There are established queer faculty who feel amply enough supported, so are complacent about the need for further action.

It's true that more changes have occurred in Canadian law, policy, institutional practice—and yes, public attitudes—than anyone I know would have predicted fifteen or twenty years ago.

In 1980, 69 per cent of Canadian respondents to a national survey said that homosexual relations were always "wrong." Cold comfort that this was a slightly lower number than the 76 per cent of Americans who said the same. In stark



In the absence of positive signals about inclusiveness
from the institution, the department or program, and instructors,
the uncertainty about being open will be amplified.

contrast, a 2007 Pew survey showed that 70 per cent of Canadians agreed that “homosexuality should be accepted by society.” Over the same period, we find similar shifts in responses to questions about specific gay/lesbian rights questions.

This change in public opinion is more significant than we find on virtually any other policy issue. We also find dramatic generational differences, with young people much more favourably disposed to sexual minorities than older cohorts.

So what’s left to do?

First, the amazing change in popular outlooks nonetheless leaves about 30 per cent of the population still disapproving of homosexuality and, probably even more so, of bisexuality and transgenderism. Many of them strongly disapprove. The Canadian National Election Studies include “thermometer” items that ask respondents to assess their warm or cold feelings towards particular groups by providing a temperature rating from zero to 100. Gays and lesbians get an average of 59, a good deal higher than in decades past, but low compared to almost all other groups. Ten per cent give scores of a very frigid zero.

Questions associated with raising children also create widespread anxiety. When asked if same-sex couples should have the right to adopt kids, about half say no to a right that has already been legally secured. (On this point, we’re not different from Americans.) There are a variety of reasons for the disquiet over or rejection of parenting rights, but the big picture suggests that many Canadians do not treat “family” as extending beyond the heterosexual norm. Many Canadians who are otherwise supportive of extending public recognition to sexual minorities retain serious anxieties about their children stepping too far outside restrictive gender expectations.

Sex itself is still scary for many, and silence often prevails where it shouldn’t. There are fears, anxieties, and prejudice

surrounding HIV-positive people, and this undoubtedly reproduces a reluctance to disclose publicly. The presumptions surrounding sex work, and the moralizing tone that often surfaces in discussions of it, leaves most of us unprepared to realize that some of our students pay their tuition through that work.

And what about Canadian schools—elementary and high schools—where our students come from? Have schools moved widely and systematically to recognize lesbian gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) students and staff and to confront the ubiquitous use of anti-gay language to denigrate or embarrass others? Have they integrated a routine recognition of sexual diversity in the curriculum, as we would expect them to along gender and race lines?

Well, no, they haven’t. There are some school boards that have developed terrific policies, the Toronto District School Board being an important leader. Is there evidence that this has produced sweeping change at the school or classroom level? No. How do I know? I ask teachers about this regularly, and I ask my own students year after year. Yes, some schools are good; a few are terrific. But most have changed little over the decades in their response to this set of issues. A recent survey conducted by Egale Canada (the country’s major national LGBT group) shows the same chilling results on LGBT issues that surveys in other provinces and in the U.S. have been showing for years.

So, many of our students who are not themselves queer or “questioning” will be arriving at our doorsteps without ever being challenged around this particular form of diversity and still ready to deploy the language that so strenuously polices heterosexual normalcy. And let’s face it, some of the higher education settings they find themselves in will not challenge those habits. The epithets may fade away on campus, where there are fewer faculties and departments in which explicitly prejudicial or insulting language is “cool.” But the patterns of antipathy or anxiety about sexual difference will often remain.

And remember, too, that even if more school students than ever are coming out as queer in high school, and at an earlier age, many do not, and they enter universities and colleges unsure as to what the climate will be. In the absence of positive signals about inclusiveness from the institution, the department or program, and instructors, the uncertainty about being open will be amplified.

As we all know, our universities and colleges vary a lot from one to another, and they contain huge internal variations in readiness to embrace issues related to gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. On some campuses, widespread deployment of “positive space” stickers suggests that there is at least some talk of sexual diversity. On others there is hardly a peep, even if in the past there may well have been activist attempts to press for change.

Within each of our institutions, we know there are drastically different organizational cultures across disciplines and constituencies. Within any one of them, there may be a willingness to recognize the importance of addressing racial, Aboriginal, gender, or disability issues but a complete indifference to, or avoidance of, sexuality issues. On some campuses, faculties of engineering will still be a challenge, though years of thought-provoking scrutiny have created openings for raising these issues. What about physical education, medicine, teacher education, commerce, nursing, physics—for that matter political science?

This isn’t just about students either. The challenges for administrative staff and other support workers can be formidable. In most places there are few enough LGBT faculty members who are as fully out as their heterosexual colleagues. But there are even fewer out staff. Most administrative offices are occupied by women, and it is still more difficult to be out as a woman than a man. Staff members are also more likely to feel vulnerable and, of course, they work more continuously than faculty do alongside colleagues whose views matter to them. Often enough, they will have experienced less-than-respectful treatment at the hands of faculty members, and they may well fear an increase in that kind of behaviour, if this particular “difference” were to be known. In other parts of the campus workforce—grounds-keeping, maintenance, security—the constraints on being out may be even greater.

And if it is fair to say that there is dramatic unevenness in our uptake of issues related to gays and lesbians, how much more true is that for gender identity? The word “transgender” takes in a wide range of identities and practices that cross sex/gender lines. It includes those who have (and wish to retain) mixed characteristics and those who want to shift from one gender identity to another (with or without surgery). For colleagues, friends, supervisors, and instructors, this can represent relatively uncharted territory and unsettle deeply-

embedded gender binaries. I would submit that there isn’t a single university or college in Ontario that has fully embraced the challenge of creating more transgendered inclusiveness, though a few (including my own) have taken some steps, with York University probably in the lead on this front.

Bisexuality regularly gets left out in all this. It’s odd that the form of sexual difference that has often been characterized as “chic”—for example, in school settings—is in real life the least understood and talked about. Bisexuality suggests ambiguity, and that spells danger. Many people, straight and queer, still reject the very idea of bisexuality or dismiss it as a phase or a cover for something more serious; namely homosexuality. If it means a bit of experimenting in one’s youth, well, that’s ok, maybe even a bit adventurous. But if it means something ongoing—a permanent willingness to imagine oneself with either opposite-sex or same-sex partners—then warning flags go up and anxiety levels escalate.

Then there’s the question of ethno-racial diversity. Queer is still largely read as white. Mainstream media representations still reflect that. Erotic material aimed at sexual minorities (overwhelmingly at gay men) is mostly white, and some portrayals of minorities feed into prejudicial stereotypes. Many activist groups have worked hard to address this issue, but my sense is that the movement(s) as a whole are still seen as more white-dominated than they should be.

There are lots of reasons for this, but one of them is that it is harder to be out and active in some settings than others. In communities where levels of morally traditional religious practice are more widespread (e.g., Afro-Caribbean communities, Korean, Muslim), and where immigration waves have been more recent and from relatively conservative regions in the world with little public recognition of sexual diversity, public manifestations of sexual difference are going to be more challenging. That is especially true where community or religious leaders will dismiss homosexuality as “Western” or as a form of corruption originating outside their communities.

Canadian institutions that are in the process of accommodating religious diversity—a complex and sometimes conflictual process—have to face up to the challenge of providing





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immorality and deviance away from public view.

supports for, and encouragement to, sexual minorities within religious communities. That, of course, includes Christian communities, of all colours and cultures. This will mean helping to kick start discussions of sexual diversity within social settings where such discussions have been entirely absent or conducted in only hushed voices.

This is more difficult than it sounds. Many—most?—queer activists or allies start off from a position of religious skepticism. People of faith who believe in welcoming or inclusive interpretations of scripture are often drowned out by more conservative or exclusionary voices. The trick is to generate a discussion that opens minds and doesn't close ears. There is no formula for this, but students, faculty, and administrators with an instinct for bridge building have some room to work in here. There is evidence of real change in the attitudes of even those groups historically most antagonistic to the public recognition of sexual diversity. Young evangelical Protestants are significantly more open to discuss these issues inclusively than their elders, and so are young people in most other faith traditions. Muslims born in Canada are much more accepting of homosexuality than first-generation immigrants.

One of the ways of working toward bridge building is to avoid censoriousness. I have said this before and I'll say it again: shutting down folks you find offensive is not an effective way of making political change. We have seen repeated examples of calls for a prohibition of (as opposed to protest against) anti-gay speech. Yes, there are extremes that may well warrant exclusion; Fred Phelps comes to mind. In most cases, though, homophobic or transphobic commentary has a right to space and air.

We have to remember that earlier waves of lesbian/gay activism faced state and media prohibitions, intended to keep immorality and deviance away from public view. It hardly makes sense to me that we countenance using the same

"policing" tools to shield us (and our students) from offensive prejudice. In purely strategic terms, the strong stuff that sometimes comes from the opponents of equity can shake the complacent among us and remind us that there are still millions of Canadians who really do not want to recognize us.

One last point concerns what we teach in colleges and universities. An important measure of how inclusive these institutions are is to assess how much questions of sexual diversity are being explored in our classrooms and in the books that our students read. In some disciplines we might well say, "quite a lot." There are lots of English and sociology departments, and programs in women's studies, that provide good illustrations. In some cases, history, social work, anthropology, French or modern languages would illustrate a similar inclusiveness. Political science? Really only in a few places. Medicine, nursing, phys ed., the sciences? Also only a few.

Associated with this is the question of whether interdisciplinary programs on sexuality have grown and prospered. I've had the privilege of directing the centre that houses what I think is the largest and most established of these programs (though not the first). Through this experience, and on the basis of our surveying other institutions across Canada and around the world, I know how modestly these new ventures are resourced and how fragile most of them are. Peek around the web sites of many of them, in this country and abroad, and you will discover small teaching programs based largely on stipends. Times are difficult for universities and colleges and, as a member of a huge teaching department, I know how difficult it is to keep up with increasing enrolments. But if we're to take this new field seriously, there simply has to be more sustained support for it. This does not mean ghettoizing queer or sexuality studies, for the experience at the U of T and other institutions demonstrates that such inter-disciplinary centres can act as a creative spur to the exploration of these questions within the more established disciplines.

What about published scholarship? Yes, there's been a major expansion of the literature on sexuality and, in some

disciplines, it is well integrated into the disciplinary core. But as with the study of gender and race and disability, it often gets relegated to its own little niche. The work on sexuality in the social sciences, for example, still too often gets treated as marginal within disciplines. A book on how the labour movement deals with sexual diversity issues does not get positioned within the broader analytical literature on how unions are adjusting to new challenges in the workplace. Typically, it gets left to the margins for those few students and faculty interested specifically in LGBT issues.

For our institutions to become more fully inclusive, sexual orientation and gender identity have to be fully incorporated into the employment equity agenda, and I mean fully. Too often, and I say this in 2010, institutions that have set out on an affirmative agenda around equity issues have limited themselves to the four so-called designated groups. However great the challenges of making substantial progress on those—people with disabilities and Aboriginals being obvious examples—sexual diversity needs full inclusion.

Serious attention to this particular equity issue needs fresh approaches. Basic visibility is still an issue; as is the long-embedded pattern of avoiding the subject. But there are new forms of openness to making change on this front, and new questions that need addressing.

In some places, even as small a gesture as displaying a positive space sticker or a poster advertising a queer event can be a major step toward generating discussion. In classrooms, using illustrations or case studies that avoid assuming heterosexuality may help students understand how ubiquitous that assumption is. Knowing more about where advice is available for those who are first coming to terms with their own distinctive identities is an important step.

Every setting is different; each one poses distinctive opportunities to make a difference. We expect creativity from students; we should require it of ourselves. ■■

David Rayside is a professor of political science and sexual diversity studies at the University of Toronto.



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ACTING OUT OF CHARACTER IN THE IMMORTAL PROFESSION: *Toward a Free Trait Agreement*

by **Brian R. Little**

Sometimes, the academic life demands that faculty deny their fundamental personality traits. But if collegial respect includes allowing colleagues the latitude to nurture their true characters, academics can survive and thrive amidst the challenges of academic life.

Parfois, la vie universitaire exige que les professeurs renient leurs traits de caractère fondamentaux. Mais si le respect collégial inclut assurer aux collègues la latitude de veiller au développement de leurs traits de caractère véritables, les universitaires pourront survivre et s'épanouir au milieu des défis associés à la vie universitaire.



It often comes down to personality. Despite the candidate's obvious brilliance, tenure is denied. The comment "insufferably arrogant," uttered almost *sotto voce* just before the vote, helps tip the scales. Across campus a dedicated but painfully shy associate professor is reading the term's teaching evaluations and, once again, is simply devastated. And over at the faculty club, a newly minted Professor Emeritus bounces into the retirement party to find only three attendees at the event, trying in vain to create the illusion of a throng. Later, at the bar, the reluctant pseudo-celebrants agree on one thing—this wouldn't have happened to any of their other colleagues. Personality matters.

Human personality plays a striking and subtle role in shaping the course of our lives in the immortal profession. Arrogance, shyness, bounciness, and hundreds of other traits of personality influence how others see us and how we see ourselves. They have important consequences for the shape of our lives. What do we know about these influences? How are they striking? What's so subtle?

Light can be shone on these questions by contemporary research in the field of personality science. Personality science studies a broad spectrum of influences upon human conduct, ranging from neurons to narratives. One of its most important sub-fields explores relatively fixed traits of human personality. William James, the philosopher/psychologist, proposed that such traits, by the age of thirty, are "set like plaster." Was James right? Are our professorial styles attributable to traits that are essentially immutable? Was that arrogance apparent early on? Can that shyness be a life sentence? Is that bounciness irrepressible? Trait psychologists would argue that the answer is "yes" to each of these questions, and I partially agree. However, I will argue that the notion of fixed traits being set like plaster goes too far. I propose that human beings are essentially half-plastered. Let's explore further.

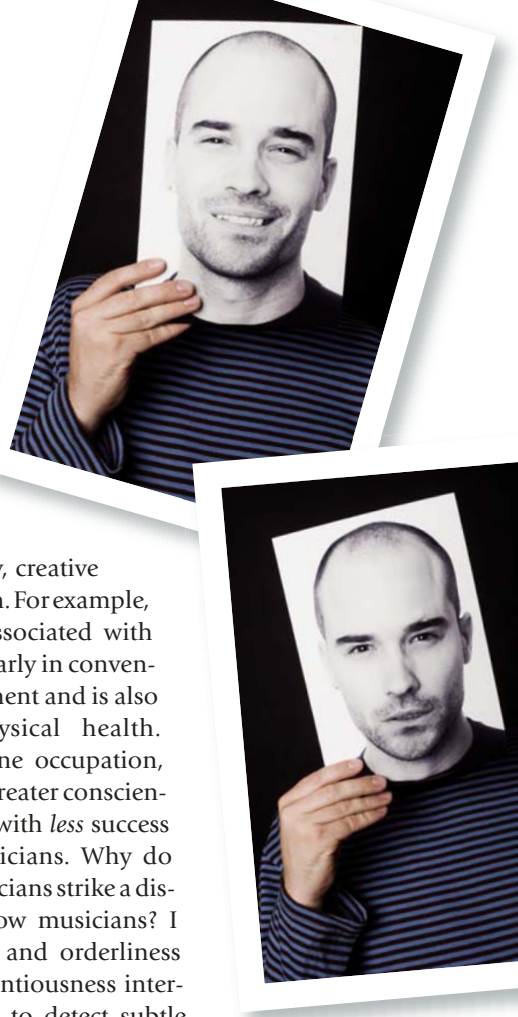
PERSONALITY TRAITS: THE BIG FIVE

Many personality researchers have concluded that the hundreds of different trait dimensions can be reduced to five major factors that consistently emerge in data collected across different cultures and language groups. The so-called big five dimensions are: open to experience (vs. closed-minded), conscientious (vs. careless), extraverted (vs. introverted), agreeable (vs. disagreeable) and neurotic (vs. stable). These dimensions are statistically independent of each other, so that one's status on any big five dimension is independent of that on any other. An extraverted professor, for example, may be open or closed, stable or neurotic, sweet or surly.

Each of the big five dimensions can be linked to important aspects of human flourishing, such as marital stability, creative achievement, and health. For example, conscientiousness is associated with greater success, particularly in conventional areas of achievement and is also linked to better physical health. However, in at least one occupation, that of jazz musicians, greater conscientiousness is associated with *less* success as rated by other musicians. Why do conscientious jazz musicians strike a discordant note with fellow musicians? I suspect that the focus and orderliness associated with conscientiousness interferes with the capacity to detect subtle intimations of key transformations or pitch changes. Open individuals excel in creative domains, while conscientious ones do better in more conventional areas. Agreeable people are particularly successful at group activities, and disagreeable ones are particularly at risk for cardiovascular disorders.

Most professionals are expected to be open, conscientious, moderately extraverted, initially agreeable, and stable rather than neurotic. I believe that this profile holds for academics as well, although we have greater latitude of acceptance of variations. Extreme deviations from these traits, however, are often seen as strange—including deviations on the more "positive" side. A colleague who is closed, careless, and cranky is unlikely to be seen as a valued colleague, except perhaps by those with similar personalities. But being overly open, too, can be seen as inappropriate and indiscreet. Undue conscientiousness might be construed as prissiness, while excessive agreeableness might convey weakness.

How about neuroticism or its contrasting trait, stability? Someone who is anxious, depressed, and vulnerable is unlikely to wear well with either students or colleagues. And although it seems difficult to fault an undue level of stability in one's colleagues, I suspect we have all served on committees where a professor's invulnerability, calm, and self-assurance may have raised some questions. Where's the fire? Does he actually care deeply about his field? Is her deep calm a sign of a lack of interest? Where's the edge?



EXTRAVERSION AND THE ACADEMIC LIFE

Let's explore in greater detail one of the most important of the big five traits, extraversion. Like other dimensions of the big five, extraversion is known to have a moderately high degree of heritability. One biological model of this dimension postulates that differences in extraversion reflect differences in the arousal level of certain neo-cortical areas in the brain; those high in extraversion have low levels of arousal, while introverts have high levels. Given that effective performance on daily tasks requires an optimal level of arousal, extraverts are typically seeking to increase their levels of arousal, while introverts are trying to lower theirs.

Optimal Level of Arousal

In everyday interactions at the university, introverts may avoid highly stimulating settings not because they are antisocial but because they realize that their performance is often compromised in such environments. Extraverts, on the other hand, may seek out such settings precisely because they have learned that they perform better when engaged in the cut and thrust of animated, even heated, exchanges.

Reaching an optimal level of arousal can also be achieved by the ingestion of beverages that have a direct impact on neo-cortical arousal. Alcohol, at least initially, has the effect of lowering arousal. At the faculty club bar after a couple of glasses of wine, the extraverts are more likely to dip below the optimal arousal level while their introverted friends, nudged closer to optimal arousal, may appear unexpectedly garrulous. Coffee, being a stimulant, has the opposite effect. After ingesting about two cups of coffee, extraverts carry out tasks more efficiently, while introverts perform less well. This deficit is magnified if the task they are engaged in is quantitative, and if it is done under time pressure. For an introverted professor, an innocent couple of cups of coffee before a meeting may prove challenging, particularly if the purpose of the meeting is a rapid-fire discussion of budget projections or similar quantitative concerns. In the same meeting, an extraverted colleague is likely to benefit from a caffeine kick that creates, in the eyes of the introverts, an illusion of competency.

Performance and Achievement: Twin Piques

Differences in extraversion also play a role in intellectual achievement. Generally speaking, and except for one grade, introverts achieve higher marks in school so that by the time they are in university they are more likely to obtain a first-class



graduating average. Why is this? Could it be that extraverts are simply less intelligent? The research suggests this is not so; there are no reliable differences

in I.Q. between those scoring high and low on extraversion. I believe that it is the learning environment that is critical.

Extraverts learn more in environments that are stimulating and engaging, and conventional schools may not be able to provide such an environment. Consistent with the notion that engagement is central for extraverts, the introvert advantage in marks disappears when we look only at laboratory classes. And the one grade exception, where extraverts come home with a better report card? Kindergarten. Though tempting, it is probably not wise to predict later academic achievement on the basis of how our children did in kindergarten. Our extraverted children may well have peaked then!

There are two other areas of intellectual achievement where there are notable differences between those who are high and low on extraversion. Extraverts have better memories than introverts but only in short term memory. Introverts do better on long-term memory tasks. Also, when we engage in tasks, we can adopt two different strategies involving a quality/quantity tradeoff. We can do things quickly and make a few mistakes, or do things slowly and get it perfect. Extraverts are more likely to opt for quantity, introverts for quality. These intellectual and cognitive differences can give rise to conflicts or at least mutual eyeball rolling between colleagues, especially when they are working on joint projects. Introverts, preferring a slow and careful approach to their tasks, see their extraverted colleagues as too "crash, bang, wallop" and want to rein them in. Extraverts can become exasperated at the style of their introverted colleague. They want them to speed up and get things done, even if there are a few little mistakes. As any department chair can attest, when such creatures are housed together, periods of protracted pique can ensue.

Generally speaking, and except for one grade, introverts achieve higher marks in school so that by the time they are in university they are more likely to obtain a first-class graduating average.

Social Interaction: Communication Styles

If we watch social interactions in our university departments, we can easily spot the difference between introverted and extraverted styles. Their non-verbal interaction styles differ sharply. Extraverts stand closer but speak more loudly; they tend to touch and poke. Introverts are less intense, more subdued, and definitely less pokey. As a result of these differences, when extraverts and introverts interact, it can look like a rather bizarre dance: a series of alternating lunges, retreats, pokes, and aversions. This is not suave.

They also have contrasting verbal styles. Extraverts use direct, simple, concrete language. Introverts have a tendency to craft more oblique, contingently complex, weasel-word communications (more or less, at times, or so it appears). Like that. Such differences can create all manner of friction within our departments with, once again, much rolling of eyes and gritting of teeth.

Although I hope to have shown that examining our relatively fixed traits of personality helps to explain some aspects of daily academic life, I suggested at the outset that I only partially agreed with the trait theorists. To explain my reservations I need to introduce a very different way of explaining human personality. If we want to understand human personalities, I think we need to know not only the traits that people have but also the deeds that they do. In those doings of daily life we begin to see some of the subtleties that are missed when we restrict ourselves to notions of fixed traits.

PERSONAL PROJECTS AND FREE TRAITS: ON ACTING OUT OF CHARACTER

One way of thinking about daily deeds is to explore the personal projects that guide them. Personal projects can range from the trivial pursuits of typical Tuesdays to the over-arching commitments of a lifetime, and they provide a vital link between people and their institutions. Our academic lives are constructed around personal projects such as "get tenure," "teach well," or "terminate with a least a shred of dignity." Whether our projects go well or not depends, in part, upon relatively fixed traits of personality. However, personal projects also give rise to what I call "free traits", and these play a subtle, yet powerful, role in influencing the shape of lives.

Free traits are strategic displays that run counter to a person's fixed traits but that advance that person's personal projects. In two different senses such free-trait behavior can be said to be acting out of character. It is out of character in the sense that it involves acting against one's first nature. It is also an expression of one's "character" and the values that enjoin us to rise to occasions. There are both costs and benefits to

acting out of character. To the extent that the free trait is enacted successfully, the person's project has been advanced. Short bursts of acting out of character need not be costly; these are the brief occasions we rise to, quickly, and then beat a hasty retreat to the faculty club to recover from, slowly. But protractedly acting out of character can extract a cost, including increased activity of the fight-flight reaction in the sympathetic nervous system and potential burnout.

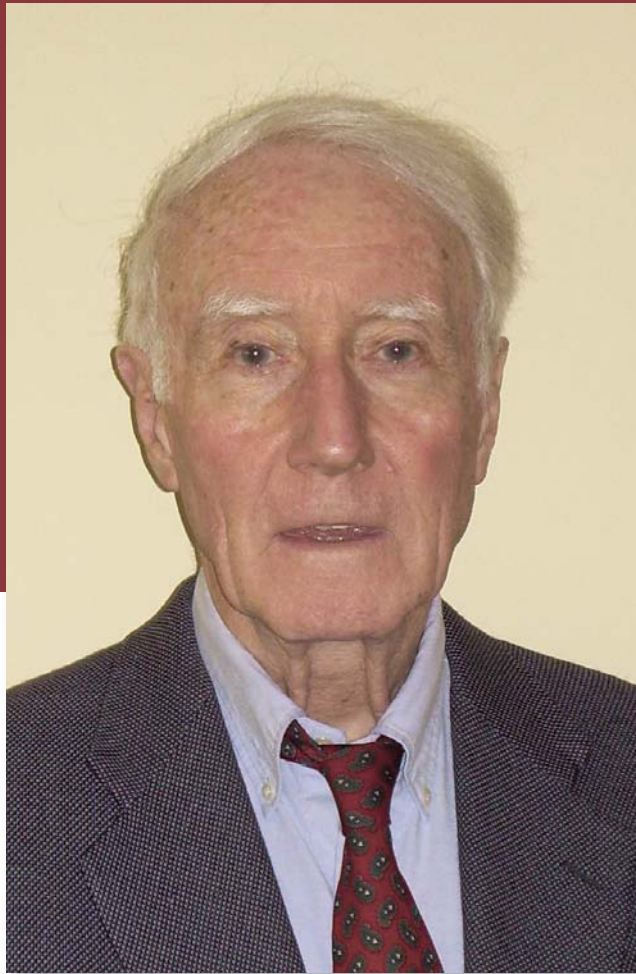
Consider, for example, a biological introvert who has a core personal project of exciting students about the course material. Such a professor may engage in "pseudo-extraverted" behaviour in order to help advance the teaching project. It is possible that the project might fail; there may be too much of a discrepancy between the professor's natural orientation and the free trait that is being expressed. But if the free-trait enactment is successful, the students are excited, and the project is accomplished. But even if successful in class, acting out of character can extract a toll. Fortunately, there are ways of mitigating these costs, but they require a change in the way that we relate to our colleagues.

RESTORATIVE NICHES: A FREE TRAIT AGREEMENT FOR ACADEMIA.

The costs of acting out of character can be mitigated by the availability of restorative niches in which one's first nature can be indulged on occasion. For example, I happen to be an introvert who frequently engages in extraverted free-trait behaviour in the classroom. If I can give some engaging anecdotes or involve the students in playful banter, then I do it happily but not really naturally. A far more congenial style for me is teaching one-on-one, which is a classic introvert preference. If you were to observe me in lecture, however, I suspect you would not detect any signs of introversion. However, there is one clear clue that emerges during the break we have half way through the lecture. A true extravert would find the break a great time to chat with the students and get energized for the second half of the lecture. But I need to get away from the stimulation that has been building during the extraverted performance. So at the break I seek out a restorative niche. If the lecture hall is near my office, I can find peace behind a closed door. But when the lecture is some distance from my office, I need to be more creative. Many years ago I discovered that the men's room afforded me just the respite I needed. I would find a quiet cubicle, lower my level of arousal, and nurture my first nature. However, extraverts have a way of tracking professors down, and after a few instances of intrusive, inter-cubicle chats, I had to refine my escape tactics.

An Academic Life PETER DALE SCOTT

by David MacGregor



Scion of one of Canada's most noted intellectual families —his father F.R. Scott: poet, founder of the CCF, McGill Dean of Law and mentor of Pierre Trudeau; his mother, Marian Dale Scott: Montreal painter of extraordinary depth and close friend of Norman Bethune—Peter Dale Scott, born in 1929, forsook in 1961 a junior Canadian embassy post in Poland that partly involved reading cables from the International Control Commission policing the 1954 Geneva Accords dividing North and South Vietnam.

The former diplomat landed at the sun-dappled campus of University of California at Berkeley where he taught English and was chief speaker at the first university teach-in there. By mid-decade Scott published fiery tracts against the war in Vietnam. In an influential essay prepared in 1972 for a collection of critical pieces on *The Pentagon Papers*, edited by his friend Noam Chomsky, Scott launched reasoned argumentation that President Kennedy's assassination was swiftly followed by a cancellation of the American leader's plans to withdraw from the conflict in Southeast Asia.

Kennedy's brother Bobby shared this clinical view of the President's fate, and paid a high price during the US presidential primaries in June 1968, while walking after midnight through a hotel kitchen in Los Angeles.

Scott's socio-anthropological masterpiece, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK*, published by University of California Press in 1993, will eventually revolutionize modern political thought. Creator in the 1970s of a term in political theory called, "parapolitics," (operationalized by the phrase, "plausible denial") Scott's notion of "deep politics" pointed to an almost Freudian repression operating retroactively to obscure political events.

C. Wright Mills illuminated the triple ruling elites (government, business, and the soldier caste) sitting atop the U.S. military-industrial complex, but Scott added a fourth and fifth elite actor: secret intelligence services and organized crime. Noam Chomsky published an entire book intended to refute Scott's analysis (*Rethinking Camelot: JFK, Vietnam and U.S. Political Culture*, 1993) while mentioning his friend only in an isolated footnote. Apart from Chomsky, writers on American politics ignored Scott's ground-breaking research into socio-political factors surrounding the murder in Dealey Plaza.

how do we live with evil
we can profit from it
we can preach against it

but if we write poetry
how not to represent
the great conspiracy

of organized denial
we call civilization?
from the protected mob

around JFK airport
with ties to the Russian
mafia at Brighton Beach

and the plane which every day
flies a million dollars in cash
to the drug banks of Russia

at a time when Russia
owes \$17 billion a year
in interest to its creditors

to the universities
continuously inventing new ways
not to contemplate such things

PETER DALE SCOTT

Scott's poetry penetrates conventional articulations of political reality. No one can read his long poem *Coming to Jakarta: A Poem About Terror* (1989) without experiencing mirrored years of living dangerously in the treacherous carrion claws of US imperialism. The subsequent two volumes of the Seculum trilogy: *Listening to the Candle: A Poem on Impulse* (1992), and *Minding the Darkness: A Poem for the Year 2000* (2000: pp. 137-8) explore labyrinthine worlds of drugs and power, assassination and betrayal, love and wonder.

In March, a week-long celebration of Peter Dale

Scott's work, commemorating his 80th birthday opened in New York (<http://www.opencenter.org/peterdale-scott>). Distinguished panel members like James K. Galbraith, Mary Baine Campbell, Daniel Ellsberg, Norman Rush, Roger Morris, Paul Almond, Ron Graham and Russ Baker discussed the astonishing impact of Scott's work on an understanding of the U.S. imperium, including his most recent volume, *The Road to 9-11* (University of California Press, 2007) which scrutinizes among other things, Dick Cheney's strange Presidential bunker activities on the day the Twin Towers collapsed, and the Vice President's eerie Continuity of Government scheme that reads more like discontinuity of government or palace coup. Why, panelists inquired, echoing Scott, does massively increased illegal drug production (as in Afghanistan today or Laos in the 1960s and 1970s) often accompany US invasions?

For almost a half century Scott has asked questions few scholars were prepared to tolerate. The world of deep politics may have finally entered the corridors of acceptable political discourse. It's been a long time coming. **AM**

David MacGregor teaches sociology at King's University College, London Ontario.

So now, at the break, you will find me in the men's room, in the last cubicle, restoring myself. But to avoid detection, my feet are up.

Free-trait enactment is not restricted to introverts who give extraverted performance. Extraverts in academe often need to switch into introvert mode, and their restorative niche would not be solitude but, rather, the most stimulating place on campus. Highly agreeable professors may, at times, need to be disagreeable; it comes with the turf in senior administrative positions, for example. But if being disagreeable moves from being an occasional tactic to a chronic commitment, then a naturally agreeable person will need frequent restoration to make it through without burning out. A restorative niche in this case would be a context in which cynicism is left at the door, and bitterness banned for the duration.

Each of these instances of professors acting out of character could be addressed if we were to agree to a Free Trait Agreement. Of course this wouldn't be a formal agreement; it would be a set of shared understanding about how to respect our colleagues' needs for restoration after they have been acting out of character in the services of the immortal profession. It would basically say that we will act out of character to advance the needs of our students and our universities, provided they, in turn, grant us, as needed, restorative niches in which we can nurture our natures. Such an agreement is already in place in departments and institutions that place a premium on collegial respect. With that respect and with those restorative resources, we can more than muddle through the challenges of academic life. Without them, the pressures of professing can be truly punitive and they can bring us to our knees. **AM**

Brian R. Little is Distinguished Research Professor in the Department of Psychology at Carleton University. This article began as a keynote presentation at the Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences at Carleton University in 2009.

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Sabbatical Time

IN AN ODD AND UNPREDICTABLE

way, the Olympics saved my first sabbatical. I mean, I had great plans for my first sabbatical. No lectures to churn out, no essays to mark, no exams to set, no emails to return—just time to think, read, and write. But it wasn't going to be all work. No sir. I figured it would be long lunches, real coffee breaks (you know, where you actually take a break!), walks in the afternoon, and even the occasional nap. Sabbatical would be like an adult version of daycare and, if anything went wrong, I could just go to the quiet area for a time out.

And, wow, the Winter Olympics were conveniently scheduled right in the middle of term and perfectly located in the Pacific time zone. I could drop off the kids and do a few hours of stress-free writing before taking a nap, grabbing some lunch, and spending the rest of the day revelling in midday curling, late afternoon bobsleigh, and early evening biathlon. The day would end with 10 pages written and a night full of short-track speed skating. The definition of sabbatical? I think it's a Latin word for "living at the intersection of slacking off and productivity."

Alas, it never quite worked out that way. In a normal term, you run back from lecture, talk to 12 students, send 47 emails, and then bash out an article or two in the 17 minutes you have left. This hardly approaches real-world definitions of competence, but at least you accomplish *something*. On sabbatical, however, you have so much time it's amazing you get anything done at all. I spent days and

days just contemplating, fiddling, re-working, re-contemplating, and re-fiddling.

My pace defied all normal measures of time. Seven-hundred-word book review? Five days minimum. Comments on a single thesis chapter? That's a one week task for sure. Heck, even this column—to which I usually devote about 12 minutes (*shhhh...the editor is listening...*)—took almost *two days*, which still doesn't explain why I sent it in about three weeks late. Sabbatical time moves at some alternative pace, like dog years, where you multiply everything by seven. Pretty soon, I was working through my coffee break and skipping those naps. Ten pages a day? No chance. I was happy with two.

If only this term-long time out had some effect on the quality of my work, which clearly (as you can read) it does not. Maybe sabbatical is a Greek word for, "simple tasks take WAY longer than normal." Regardless, by halfway through the term, the whole thing was promising to be more frustrating than relaxing.

At first, the Olympics only made things worse. After I spent the whole morning dawdling over two footnotes, it was a bit demoralizing to watch biathletes win a three-hour race by a second and a half. After two days spent struggling to churn out 100 words, watching performances measured in hundredths of a second was downright depressing. And don't even get me started on the whole idea of a photo finish, where margins are too



narrow for a clock to even measure. Suffice it to say, if there is a continuum of concepts of time, the Olympics are at one end and sabbatical at the other.

It didn't help that those gold medal winners reminded me of the cool kids in high school, all good-looking, high-fivey and chest-thumpingly successful. You'd think, considering the Olympics are essentially a giant athletic welfare state, that those TV commentators could tone down the rhetoric about hard work and personal initiative. I mean, I don't want to sound unpatriotic, but avoiding the cool kids was exactly the reason I became an academic.

But there's the rub, and the way I eventually made peace with the snail's pace of sabbatical. You can't fault the cool kids for being popular and successful anymore than you can fault a geek for spending five days on a footnote. That's just the natural order of things. So let them have their gold medals, photo finishes, and hundredths of a second. Sabbatical, after all, is a Latin word for "see you next September." **AM**

Steve Penfold is Academic Matters' humour columnist. He moonlights as an associate professor of history at the University of Toronto.



The road ahead

A UNIVERSITY CANCELS a public lecture by an outspoken academic due to political pressure. A job offer at a prestigious research institute is rescinded in response to the opposition of a large, corporate sponsor. Police arrest demonstrators at a debate on one the flashpoints of regional geopolitics. A decision with far-reaching academic implications is taken with only perfunctory reference to collegial governance. A university's strategic plan uses the corporate sector as a model, with the aim of maximizing growth, marketability and profit.

Isolated incidents at North American universities? Hardly.

They point to pervasive trends affecting intellectual independence and academic freedom, autonomy and governance, and ultimately the goal and purpose of higher education.

And these trends raise troubling question about the degree to which higher education been redefined as a commodity like any other, to be bought and sold in the marketplace. Has the mission of the university as a democratizing force and a public good all but disappeared? Are universities increasingly becoming charity-needing institutions dependent on corporate largesse and private funding? And if this is the case, are these trends simply "the way of the world" and irreversible, or are there viable alternatives that might be pursued?

These are the concerns that the "Challenging the Academy" issue of *Academic Matters* embraces. Two prominent writers—one from the U.S., the other from Canada—apply their

extensive experience, research and knowledge to an analysis of current directions in education today.

The articles by Bill Ayers and Joel Westheimer forcefully argue that public education at all levels is under attack, with far-reaching implications. An emphasis on skills training and workforce preparation, the perception of education as a private benefit, the commercialization of knowledge and a consumerist mentality indicate more than the loss of a public-focused and community-oriented conception of education.

Moreover, writes Westheimer, "the elimination of critical thinking and a culture of criticism; the weakening of intellectual independence and democratic faculty governance; and the promotion of a meritocracy myth that drives the work of graduate students, junior and senior faculty alike" is not just a threat to the ideal of a liberal democratic education.

These interwoven trends represents a crisis in democracy itself—a crisis that needs an urgent response. What would that response look like in the university setting? Above all, they argue, it would need to be collective and imaginative, embracing a democratic model of engagement and participation.

Collegial governance would not be *pro forma* but would see those immersed in scholarship and research take leadership roles in administration. A hierarchical and corporate model of governance would be abandoned.

The mission of the university—creating knowledge and promoting

learning which served the public interest—would become central.

Curriculum that focused on narrow workforce preparation, and research agendas which were limited to the commercialization of knowledge for private industry, would be replaced by a new emphasis on education for citizenship and community benefit.

A utopian aspiration, especially in the current environment? Perhaps.

In his penetrating analysis of the university, renowned Australian academic Simon Marginson observes that "unless the university provides knowledge-creation and mobilization for powerful elites, it would lose an essential part of its social base. Private goods are a condition of the public good role and vice versa." He also notes that "if the university were to tip over into being fully capitalist, it will have less to offer capitalism... If it taught only observable skills rewarded in labour markets and ceased to supply liberal education and disciplinary knowledge, it would weaken conditions of production in all sectors of the economy, reduce social literacy, and render elites less competent."

But, on the other hand, argues Marginson, "a university that served no private purposes, or fragmented its concentrations of expertise, or cut its ties with society to preserve its identity, would not last."

Essentially, Marginson's article points to the difficulties faced by the type of democratization envisioned by Ayers and Westheimer. All three authors, and the other contributors to this "Challenging the Academy" issue, however, would readily admit that the road ahead is circuitous. It will require ingenuity in negotiating preferred directions. ■■

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