

## BOOK REVIEWS

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*Beyond the Ivory Tower: Social Responsibilities of the Modern University*,  
by Derek Bok.  
Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982. 336 pages.

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The presidency of Harvard University is an important office in American higher education. Because of Harvard's distinguished history and current eminence, the leadership of this institution cannot be easily separated from the aspirations of American higher education as a whole. Although the responsibilities and accomplishments of American higher education cover a considerably broader spectrum than those addressed by Harvard, presidents of Harvard University have continued to command attention from a significant audience whenever they speak.

The current president of Harvard and the author of this volume of essays, Derek Bok, is no exception. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, for example, published a review of this volume in the same week the collection was published. President Bok has not only used his office well; he has also enhanced its stature. During his ten years as president he has spoken out on many significant issues and has done so with clarity and elegance. Further, Bok has demonstrated a moral awareness which is too often absent from discussions regarding issues in higher education. Some might find his even-handed and carefully analytic approach insufficiently passionate. I have a different reaction. To me it simply reflects a deep commitment to the values of academic life in an era marked by skepticism and a search for alternatives.

The current volume is a collection of twelve essays—two of which have appeared elsewhere—which examines the moral basis and the social responsibilities of the modern university. In particular, Bok is concerned with examining the relevance and continued legitimacy of the notion of academic freedom and the associated institutional characteristics of university autonomy and neutrality. The essays are concerned with the social and moral responsibilities of the university itself, not with the analogous responsibilities that may fall to individual members of the university community. The book is divided into three parts: basic academic values, academic responses to social problems, and non-academic means for addressing social problems.

The first chapters deal with academic freedom and the autonomy of the modern university. By tracing the changing roles and responsibilities of the university, Bok addresses these subjects in contemporary terms, indicating the processes that have led to new formulations and understandings of them. He correctly points out that the deep interaction between the modern university and the society around it has changed forever the relationship between the university and society and the principles that govern the behavior of both institutions.

The essay on academic freedom, for example, sets out the well-known rationale for this privilege but considerably enriches our understanding of how the issue is to be interpreted by placing it in the framework of the modern university. In this context, academic freedom is not understood as an isolated concept but rather as merging with other values in modern society to support both the creative capacities of the modern university and the society it serves. Bok explains how academic freedom becomes a concept that preserves the autonomy of the university in relation to teaching and research while allowing the university, its faculty, and its students to participate appropriately in modern life.

Bok clearly recognizes that the cloistered university belongs to our medieval past and that it is hardly a useful instrument to maximize our creative potential in the years ahead. At the same time, he understands that the university would be making a serious mistake if it were to become a handmaiden of the various interest groups that develop in our society. The real challenge is to select a role that protects the autonomy and independence of the university while allowing for teaching, scholarship, and the transfer of socially useful knowledge and expertise within society.

The essay on institutional autonomy and the demands of the state clarifies a number of troublesome issues and potential conflicts that exist between the modern university and the state as one of its chief benefactors. The essay provides thought-provoking guidance for both the regulated institution (higher education) and the regulator (the state).

There is an interesting essay on access to the university and racial inequality in which Bok attempts to address the murky issue of admissions policy for students and hiring policy for faculty and staff. He begins his consideration of admissions policy by assuming a situation in which all information is known. In this context, it is easy to predict which social class meets the goals of the university. Bok then proceeds to relax the assumption of perfect information and to ask in a more realistic context what is the appropriate university policy. The actual analysis is most helpful for those few institutions that have the same type of admissions problems as Harvard does. On the other hand, Bok's plea for honesty is to be highly recommended, for we are in grave danger of fooling not only ourselves, which is of some concern, but also our students, which is of much greater concern. With respect to affirmative action and employment, especially faculty hiring, Bok mounts a withering criticism of the governmental procedures established in the late 1970s for the enforcement of affirmative action policies. In general, Bok is less enthusiastic about the "preferential" hiring of minority faculty members than he is about the "preferential" admission of minority students.

Bok's essay on the moral development of students considers how universities might use their strategic position to encourage students to think more deeply about ethical issues and to strengthen their powers of moral reasoning. The ensuing discussion reveals a great deal about the transformation of the modern American university. Little remains of the earlier efforts of colleges and universities to instill a particular moral orthodoxy. There is, however, a growing interest in this problem, and many feel that universities have not served their students or society as well as might be expected in helping them

to develop independent moral and ethical judgments. Although Bok clearly recognizes the limits of the use of reason in the study of ethics as well as the risks of indoctrination and misunderstanding, he leaves us with a strong feeling that universities should continue to consider the moral development of their students as one of their major concerns.

In the essay on academic science and technological innovation, Bok discusses how universities today interact with society. The central issue of how to balance one's commitments to the university-based activities of teaching and research, on the one hand, and the needs of society for the transfer of socially useful knowledge, on the other, is a very troubling one. It has become especially acute in American universities in recent years as alternative—or non-corporate—funding has become somewhat scarce and as some of the best equipped laboratories have been moved from the universities to industry. Science, of course, is no longer simply a matter of intellectual interest but rather an important instrument of national policy, which further complicates these issues. In general, Bok advises caution, communication, and experimentation. He makes some natural arguments for plurality of funding sources and freedom of publication, but he is also appropriately cautious with respect to universities' equity interests in the work of their faculty.

The essay on social responsibilities of research is rather puzzling. For some reason, Bok seems to feel social scientists have more responsibility than natural scientists since they can more easily forecast the outcome of their work and its impact on others. This seems to be the strongest claim yet for social science. In my judgment, President Bok understates the near futility of trying to predict the outcome of the vast bulk of research in both the social sciences and natural sciences. The question for this volume is, however, which role, if any, should the university play in limiting research on particular topics? On the grounds that the pursuit of knowledge proceeds most fruitfully when scholars can follow their convictions without being limited by moral or ideological orthodoxies, Bok believes that the principle of academic freedom must be extended to university-based research. Although universities have a responsibility for such issues as honesty and safety regulations, Bok comes down firmly on the side of forbearance and restraint regarding "institutional guidance." The university's responsibility is to ensure that all research meets the special interests of its students and staff and preserves the honest standards of inquiry that are essential to the integrity of the university. He does allow that such a policy would be severely tested if there were an immediate and substantial threat to public welfare and safety or to the status of the university. Despite such general forbearance, Bok concludes that the university does have a responsibility to consider the social consequences of the projects that it financially supports. Since virtually all university-based research is subsidized, at least in part, by the university's budget, this conclusion seems at odds with the main thrust of Bok's argument.

The book also contains an interesting essay on university-based technical assistance abroad. Bok sees a number of potential benefits deriving from such an activity because it enriches the experience and talents of the university staff and brings new material for students in their training. In addition, university-based efforts are less likely to fall victim to cultural imperialism

than government-based efforts. There are problems, however, which include the protection of academic freedom and the ethical issues raised by the nature of some of the governments that are being aided. As is typical of all the essays in this volume, Bok's analysis is a very balanced one, and it should aid others in evaluating the overall benefits of such ties abroad.

In the essay on the universities and the local community, Bok tries to construct a kind of balance of trade regarding the costs/benefits to the local community of hosting a university that is exempt from property taxes. He also discusses alternative methods for compensating local governments in lieu of taxes. In general, this is an interesting and informative analysis.

One of the last essays of the book concerns the institutional adoption of particular political positions with respect to perceived injustices in the outside world. Bok advises that we stick to the principle of institutional neutrality and, therefore, leave members of the campus community to pursue such matters individually according to their own consciences. He feels that such a stance does the least harm to legitimate human interests and worthwhile social concerns, including the goals of the university.

The final essay concerns the acceptance of gifts. In this essay, Bok concerns himself with the strings that might come attached to a gift and that could work to undermine the basic academic values of the university. This essay is perhaps the most predictable and least rewarding of the entire volume.

In summary, these essays address the concept of institutional neutrality in an era in which universities have grown deeply involved in the life and affairs of society. Bok seems to feel the concept is still valid but should not be used to screen universities from other institutional values and moral commitments. Universities, of course, must operate within the basic framework of general obligations in a society, but they have additional obligations to the academic values that are considered essential to the progress of learning and discovery. The key question is, however, whether the university as an institution should respond to issues such as war, apartheid, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. The essays reflect the view that universities have an important responsibility to address social needs but they should do so through their normal academic functions such as teaching, research, and technical assistance. They should shy away from such non-academic options as divestment, boycotting suppliers, and issuing formal institutional statements on political issues. The universities should be very cautious about going beyond academic fields and expanding their fragile influence and limited leverage on broader political matters. The issue is not whether the university should trouble itself with the social concerns of its students and faculty but rather how it can respond in ways that both support these concerns and fully respect the academic values and legitimate interests of the institution itself. This is not a simple problem, and no one has yet offered a fully satisfactory set of solutions. Derek Bok's essays, however, take an important step in this direction. I recommend the volume.

*Harold T. Shapiro, President, University of Michigan*

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*Literacy and the Survival of Humanism,*

by Richard A. Lanham.

New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983. 188 pages.

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The chapters of this book were written and published independently, but they are linked by a common theme and a set of theories. The theme is rhetoric in relation to human motives, and the theories are drawn from recent speculations in biology and the human sciences. Although there is much repetition, what is confidently asserted in one chapter is not always consistent with what is no less confidently proclaimed in its neighbor. But the book is little the worse for that, since it calls for a reorientation of ideas rather than assent.

Lanham thinks that rhetoric and the teaching of composition have been perverted by association with a philosophical tradition that starts with Plato and Aristotle and is continued by More's *Utopia*. The outcome of this tradition is a pedagogy that makes clarity, brevity, and sincerity the sole excellences of prose. Such prose effectively denies legitimacy to the order of words; it is accordingly best taught, as in fact it is, by specialists who have no contact with literature departments. Lanham identifies and prefers an alternative tradition, initiated by the Sophists and continued by Castiglione's *Courtier*, which emphasizes grace, style, and eloquence in prose and in life. The teaching of such a rhetoric would not be divorced from the teaching of literature or from the general theory of stylish life and thought: the *paideia* of the Greek rhetoricians, the *sprezzatura* of Castiglione.

Lanham attributes the rise of Renaissance humanism to a literacy crisis brought on by the practice of printing from moveable type, which called for a re-thinking of the basis of human communication. He thinks we are living in a similar crisis brought on by the spread of electronic means of handling information. But he also thinks that the life sciences and human sciences of the last hundred years have converged on a "post-Darwinian synthesis" in which the philosophers' emphasis on serious purpose, with the concomitant suppression of playful and competitive motivation, has been shown up as a dangerous delusion. Human beings have a biogrammar, an inbuilt equipment of motivational tendencies, inherited from prehuman and presumably apelike ancestors. We must come to terms with the fact that we (especially the males among us) are natural status-seekers and naturally playful.

It is rather obvious that Lanham's theses about human motivation are not derived from a study of the sciences he invokes, but are personal convictions buttressed by the more lurid speculations of analogy-mongers. His frequent references to sociobiology show no understanding of the theoretical bases of that intriguing branch of study. But to complain of this misuse of science is to miss the point, because Lanham is insisting that there is no antecedent psychic or physical reality to which one's views should conform: reality is created in social interaction. Criminal cases in the courts are a game to decide who shall win; in politics, it is only the intellectual who "maunders on about 'the issues'" (p. 22). So presumably, the supposed post-Darwinian synthesis is just a hoped-for consensus, and his indictments of humanists for not knowing their

biology are meant to create the reality they invoke. At least, that is one way of taking them; his assessments of the seriousness of purpose, and of the ineluctability of the biogrammar, fluctuate from chapter to chapter.

Lanham argues that the neo-Darwinian synthesis can provide the basis for a reconstruction of a core curriculum for the first two postsecondary years, currently relegated to student whim. Some people think the present chaos beneficial, arguing that in times of rapid change no system is any more reliable than the student's preference, but Lanham does not. Apparently, the core curriculum is to consist of indoctrination in Lanham's convictions about motivation, together with exposure to the pop science that supports them, and training in the habits of reading and writing to which such motivation is given rein. Lanham seems to be quite serious in proposing that American postsecondary education should be built around his pet notions. Academic chutzpah has seldom been taken so far. But here again it may be that he is not being serious but rather playful or contentious.

Since 1979, Lanham has been in charge of the massive Writing Program at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), an institution faced by a crisis of literacy. His proposals and practices are described in the last chapter of the book. They bear no relation whatever to the heady stuff that has gone before. Instruction in writing is to be provided at all levels, including graduate school, in close collaboration with course instructors at upper levels. The service is offered to administrative staff, whose need is as great as that of the students. Instruction is based on the recognition that at least five different stylistic norms prevail in academic prose: humanist, scientific, sociological, legal, and administrative. The present program is regarded as an interim measure, pending the restoration of a proper sequence of instruction from kindergarten on, so that the UCLA team is in constant communication with school boards in its neighborhood. In this context, as in others, Lanham's text responds to a perceived crisis in literacy and in the humanities that is widely shared in the States but does not prevail in Canada. The Ontario school system, at least, seems to be in better shape and to have far greater powers of self-correction than that of California. But, in fact, it is not easy to see how Lanham's program responds either to the specifics of the crisis as he describes it or to the values extolled in the earlier part of the book. More disconcertingly, Lanham fails to explain how his procedures relate to current theories of composition teaching. Recent years have seen intense controversy between proponents of process-centred and product-centred methods. The earlier chapters of the book constituted in effect an oblique and polemical contribution to this debate. It is surprising and disappointing that this concluding chapter does not relate the proposals and practices it describes to the current state of professional opinion, or even mention that this is a field in which the relevant issues are under professional debate. One is left to wonder whether Lanham is himself uninformed, or wishes his readers to remain so. This is not to say that Lanham's program may not be a very good one in the conditions that actually prevail.

Instruction in the UCLA program uses a basic text, a videotape incorporating the essentials of the text, and an elaborate computer program. This program is very important. Lanham points out that a serious difficulty in

teaching composition is that so much mind-numbing labor has to be spent in correcting repeated errors. Lanham's program requires that no script be submitted to an instructor until it has been purged of elementary errors through repeated revision by computer. The instructor is thus set free to discuss matters of substance and taste. Unfortunately, the chapter in which these matters are set out is short on hard data and full of anecdote and self-congratulation. We learn nothing of substance, for instance, about just what the scope, present limits, and pitfalls of computer revision are.

In this concluding chapter, professorial readers may be startled by Lanham's love for the UCLA administration and his contempt for his humanist colleagues. Some of the latter is doubtless justified, but perhaps not all. For instance, he rebukes them for not being willing to write the video scripts he wants. But surely video is a medium that, like other media, has to be learned and respected. Why should a professor of English be blamed for not being at home in it?

Lanham writes like an angel, witty and eloquent. He has read widely and thought acutely. But something is amiss. It is nearly a decade since he enchanted us with *Style: An Anti-Textbook*, which promoted the same values without the pseudo-science and without the shrillness. But then he was fresh from the sober air of Dartmouth. Since 1971, he has been in Los Angeles, and the land of Ronald Reagan and Aimée Semple McPherson seems to have infected him with its passion for instant salvation and plausible schlock. His excessive reliance on the most picturesque and least reliable fringes of science and scholarship may divert attention from the inherent worth of the positions he espouses. In Lanham's mind, one may feel, the surf is up, and serious work must wait until the weather changes.

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*Gender, Class and Education*,  
edited by Stephen Walker and Len Barton.  
London: Falmer Press, 1983. 235 pages.

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The male editors of this volume begin by acknowledging their trepidation in entering the field of women's studies and by questioning the ability of men to fully understand women's experience. Yet a third of the contributors are men, a fact which lends a dual perspective.

The papers in this collection are from a 1982 conference held in England on race, class, and gender. Apart from a few Americans and one Australian, the majority of the contributors are British, with the result that some of the issues discussed are of only local applicability. For example, there are several discussions on school uniforms and Thatcherism; and the use of specifically British acronyms without explanation often leads to such puzzling statements as "one study of a local Nut Association found most men reluctant to participate further."

The volume is a companion to another work, evolved from the same conference, on race, class, and education. The goals of the conference participants included an exploration of education as an agent of social reproduction with particular emphasis on the inequities of gender relations. The papers are grouped around three themes in education and gender relations.

The first is an analysis of how individuals respond to messages about social conditions both inside and outside school. Here it is argued that although the dominant educational ideology is patriarchal, individual norms vary with class and culture. There is also a persuasive argument that women both accommodate and resist the feminine role; they adopt gender-specific behavior to achieve their own ends, but they then resist the same behaviors by using them to ward off the consequences of the feminine role.

The second theme deals with the historical, situational, and institutional processes through which schools reproduce gender and class relations. A discussion of the "hidden history" of co-education delineates how class and gender ideologies have shaped and have been shaped by educational practices. Single-sex education is both damned and praised. The contributors compare institutional arrangements and formal and non-traditional practices at different educational levels and in different social classes. There is an exploration of teaching as gendered labor followed by a discussion of its effect on management control and state intervention.

The third theme concerns the implications for policy formulation of removing inequities in the education system; particular stress is laid on value change and the impact of moral education. Throughout, links are made between feminism and socialism, resulting in repeated references to such terms as capitalist hegemony, oppression, and inherent contradiction. Refreshingly, these terms are not used in a cavalier fashion but in specific and well-defined ways.

The collection contains theoretical and empirical data, state of the art bibliographic material, and a provocative literature review. The feminist ethnography has a healthy blend of description and reaction, and while retaining scholarly neutrality, enough indignation to have an impact. In all, this collection presents recent writing by distinguished contributors on important issues.

*Linda Perry, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education*

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*Culture and Adult Education: A Study of Alberta and Quebec,*  
by Hayden Roberts.  
Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1982. 274 pages.

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The concept of culture in this book is narrowly defined and therefore the title is somewhat misleading. In essence, *Culture and Adult Education* examines the way in which adult education programs are influenced by a region's social philosophy.



It has long been recognized that adult education is affected by political, economic, and demographic forces as well as by philosophical and ideological perspectives. The author critically examines adult education in terms of its history and trends in the provinces of Alberta and Quebec, analyzing government and non-government institutions, native organizations, labor unions, agricultural societies, and co-operatives. The guiding hypothesis at the base of the work centres on the concept of purpose in both individual and social development.

This is an excellent comparative study, and it reinforces the need for further cross-regional and intra-regional studies in adult education. Not only does Roberts give us a valid general model for comparative studies in adult education, he also leads us to a much clearer understanding of how adult education programs have been conceptualized and implemented in two specific regions of Canada. An additional and important contribution of his book is the typology it provides for comparative studies in education.

This book is to be valued for both its historical and contemporary presentations of adult education in Canada, its conceptual framework, and its comparative design.

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