

function, the university must address the issue of detachment vs. connectedness which is the subject of Walzer's book. For example, will the university recognize as legitimate (say, for tenure or promotion) only critical works of a detached nature which emulate the methodological style of the natural sciences? If so, then the university cannot hope to be a home for the vital, socially meaningful criticism of the type which Walzer celebrates. It must abdicate this role to other societal agents, and in a sense, itself become irrelevant to the amelioration of the adverse conditions to which social criticism seeks to draw attention. What in the university is sometimes called social criticism will "have no echo outside the academy since the critics have no material ties to people or parties or movements outside. Academic criticism under these circumstances tends steadily toward hermeticism and gnostic obscurity; even the critic's students barely understand him". In short, what is for the social critic the choice between social connectedness and detachment is for the university a choice between social relevance and methodological purity. Approached with the latter question in mind, the book can provide an excellent basis for discussion of the critical role of the university in society, and of what ultimately determines why some critical work is called scholarship and other critical work, even of rigour and depth, is not.

Roger L. Geiger. *Privatization of Higher Education: International Trends and Issues*. Princeton: International Council for Educational Development Conference Report, 1988. Reviewed by Robert M. Pike, Department of Sociology, Queen's University†

This slim monograph is a summary analysis of the papers and proceedings of a special seminar on the privatization of higher education organized by International Council for Educational Development in 1987. The seminar brought together a group of distinguished educators representing nine countries directly, and four countries indirectly, to outline and discuss national and international trends in the privatization of institutions of higher learning. Roger Geiger – the author of a major study on *Private Sectors in Higher Education* (1986) – attended the seminar and prepared the analysis at the request of ICED which is a U.S.-based international organization for the comparative study of priority educational problems.

In a preface, the chairman of ICED notes that the increased privatization of higher education is on the agenda of many countries. Originally meant to refer to a process of moving utilities from the public to the private sector (for example, the privatization of Air Canada) the general concept has taken three major forms when applied to the higher education sphere: a more positive attitude to the creation of private sector universities and colleges financed mainly by endowments and

†This review originally appeared in Vol. XIX, No. 1, 1989 with a portion inadvertently missing. It is presented here in its full text.

tuition fees; an increased public interest in maintaining and improving the quality of existing private education; and efforts to increase the private element in the funding of public colleges and universities, notably through closer ties with industry and sometimes through tuition fee increases.

Provided with information on one or more of these forms of privatization from thirteen disparate countries, Geiger had the difficult task of creating a conceptual framework for its analysis. His solution, inevitably slightly contrived, was to treat the large and complex higher education system of the United States as a special case, to offer just a brief note on the third world countries (Ghana being the only such country indirectly represented at the conference) and to divide the other countries into three categories: those with mass private sectors (Japan, Brazil, Columbia, Puerto Rico); those with a tradition of centralized and predominantly public higher education (France, Italy and Spain); and those with originally pluralistic and decentralized educational systems which have come, since 1945, to rely heavily on government funding of the higher education sector (Australia, Britain, Belgium and Sweden). Canada was not represented at the conference despite some major differences between the philosophy and structure of higher educational systems in this country and in the United States. Our systems would, however, fit most appropriately into the last of these three categories of countries which Geiger describes as "welfare states". Forty years ago, some eastern Canadian universities were relying as heavily for financial support on tuition fees as some U.S. private universities do now.

Members of the international higher education community are not particularly well disposed to the notion of privatization: as Geiger notes, "it conjures up images of mean-spirited free-market economists insisting that there are no free lunches". The conference participants were not, therefore, keen to accept that there was a macrotrend towards privatization equivalent to the trend towards greater government support of recent past decades, nor that such a trend would necessarily have positive outcomes. Their view on the absence of a macrotrend was partially correct. Countries with mass private post-secondary sectors do not seem to be significantly expanding these sectors (indeed, in Japan, substantial public funding of the private universities was required during the 1970's, though it has since been reduced). In the United States, where the majority of students attend public universities and colleges but where the private sector also thrives, the enrolment expansion which ended in the mid-1970's was mainly in the public sector; and since then, both sectors have held their own in quantitative terms. In none of the "welfare state" nations except Australia has there been any significant move to create private institutional alternatives to the public universities and colleges. Australian academic entrepreneurs, heavily funded by Japanese capital, have been engaging in some imaginative private projects which are aimed at attracting both an Australian clientele and wealthy foreign students from the Pacific Rim. The economic success of such projects remains in doubt, but Geiger does claim that Australian attempts to attract more foreign students paying full-cost fees both to

new private universities and to financially-strapped public ones "... raises the spectre of selling university places to foreigners, while denying them to qualified Australians".

On which note, we reach a central message of the ICED conference: that, in many countries, privatization has been powerfully stimulated by government economic constraints on post-secondary spending. Most commonly, public universities have been driven to seek non-government funding in the face of government cutbacks which are usually accompanied by official encouragement to broaden the funding base. In the United States, so Geiger suggests, the distinction between public and private universities has become increasingly blurred as intertwining between public institutions and private firms and foundations proliferate. The development office which, he surmises, has grown faster in American universities than any other administrative unit is now also being replicated in many other countries: for example, even Oxford University has hired a development officer from an American university for its worldwide funding campaign. However, Geiger describes Britain as demonstrating the worst case of government retrenchment in university education during the 1980's. The result has been a scramble for private funding – including, as in Australia, increased reliance on income from high foreign student fees – which, taken in combination with increased government controls in the name of efficiency, makes the plight of British higher education an outstanding example of the unattractive features of enforced privatization.

As elsewhere, universities in this country have followed the general trend of seeking more private sector funding from corporations and private foundations. There is also some indication that the provision of full degree programmes by Canadian private colleges is gaining some acceptance in principle: the establishment of the Private Colleges Accreditation Board in Alberta is a case in point. However, since the delegates to the ICED Conference were not convinced that large-scale privatization would be necessarily positive, Canadian educators would do well to consider Geiger's cautious conclusion that privatization should not be rejected or embraced on ideological grounds, but judged rather on its practical benefits: notable amongst them, a mobilization of additional resources for higher education, greater institutional freedom from government control, and potentially a greater measure of interaction between universities and the wider society. However, as this book makes clear, these benefits are all provisional (as the British case attests) and must be weighed against certain costs. For example, Geiger is concerned that in some countries with substantial private sectors, such as the United States and Japan, many students are mortgaging their futures with heavy loans in order to pay the mounting fees of elite private institutions. He suggests also that the current emphasis on private fund-raising puts universities in the entertainment business and gives wealthy donors an assured voice in their affairs which is not possessed by others. Finally, the dubious moral practice of increasing income by attracting well-off foreign students contrasts oddly with the unwilling-

ness of many governments to change the tradition of charging low fees or no fees to students attending public universities and colleges. In the context of government restraint, Geiger suggests that this unwillingness may deprive universities of much needed financial resources which could be used for discretionary purposes.

The possibility of increasing tuition fees in order to raise revenue is clearly relevant in the context of Canadian higher education. So are many of the other policy issues raised in the sixty information-packed pages of this conference book. However, like Geiger and the other conference delegates, Canadian educators should view moves towards privatization with caution. At their worst, government policies which foster privatization are simply a mechanism for replacing public funds by private funds. At their best, they may stimulate the augmentation or adaption of university activities through a more flexible financial environment.

REFERENCES

Roger L. Geiger, *Private Sectors in Higher Education: Structure, Function and Change in Eight Countries* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1986).

Watson, Cecily (ed.) *Readings in Canadian Higher Education*. Higher Education Group, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1988. Reviewed by Nancy M. Sheehan, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia.

Readings in Canadian Higher Education is a publication of the Higher Education Group at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. It is a selection of papers from the 1986 Conference sponsored by the Higher Education Group which focussed on the legitimacy of government intervention in the affairs of higher education. According to the Editor the volume's purpose is to put into the public arena more material on higher education – material which is "... buried in the archives of commissions of inquiry, in unpublished masters and doctoral theses and graduate student term papers..." (Preface). Although there is no introduction and no attempt by the Editor to tie the chapters together or to provide any direction for the reader, concentration on the legitimacy of government intervention into the affairs of higher education does provide a focus.

Let me indicate what this volume is not; first, it is not readings in Canadian higher education. A much more accurate title would be "Readings About Ontario Universities." Only one chapter – the first one, "Legitimation or Transformation: the Role of the State in University Education," by Howard Woodhouse, does not focus on Ontario and only one addresses other than university education. "The Multi-Year Plan in Ontario Colleges: From Planning to Review to Renewal," by Peter Stokes is devoted to the reasons for the demise of the Ministry's multi-year plan for the CAATs in Ontario.

Second, it is not a research volume. It does not consist of articles based on either ongoing or completed research of the kind found in most refereed journals. For the