by government and First Nations alike, will do more to undermine political and economic development than anything else.

The author also fails to examine some of the "sacred cows" of Aboriginal education policy, such as "cultural appropriateness," and to ask whether a continued adherence to such notions will leads to further marginalization of Aboriginals from mainstream Canada. It is unfortunate that he and other eminent Aboriginal scholars and activists have ignored the reasons for particular patterns of Aboriginal under-achievement. They have uncritically assumed that "cultural discontinuity," "colonization," and "racism" are the root causes of Aboriginal educational failure when little empirical research indicates as much. Stonechild is on solid ground when he blames government for its intransigence and stonewalling in the early days of Aboriginal-state relations, but he is on less solid ground when he blames government for present day educational failure. Constantly blaming government may have its political rewards, but it also prevents Aboriginal scholars from critically examining how their own world views, epistemologies, and policies may hinder educational progress. Nonetheless, this book is an important milestone in Canadian education policy discourse and should be read by scholars and the public alike.

McVeigh, Brian J. (2006). *The state bearing gifts: Deception and disaffection in Japanese higher education*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Pages: 297. Price: $63.00 USD (hardcover).

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The State Bearing Gifts begins with a brief re-telling of Virgil's ancient story of the Trojan horse. The Greeks, weary of their long siege of Troy, burn their camp and feign retreat, leaving behind a huge wooden horse. The Trojans, assuming the Greeks have left in defeat, take the horse into their walled city. But as the Trojans sleep, Greek soldiers hidden inside the horse come out, kill the sentries and open the city gates, allowing the rest of their army into to the city. The Greeks overpower the Trojans and take the city. The story is the source of the old adage, "Beware of [people] bearing gifts," and hence, the ultimate source of this book's title.

This book is an ethnographic, participant-observer study based on the author's extensive experience (beginning in 1987) with ten post-secondary institutions in Japan, in a variety of roles including graduate student, researcher, professor and department chair. The analysis also makes extensive use of print media, much of it translated from the Japanese. It is the fifth in a series of books about of Japanese higher education by the same author, and presents a fascinating, but disturbing, case study of undergraduate education in Japan. As the title suggests, the author has declined traditional analytical frameworks based

on social contract theory or market theory. Instead, he uses gifting theory from sociology/anthropology. It is an intriguing approach that helps us see the data in a different light, to see connections that we might otherwise not see.

The result is a "multi-valent" book that can be read on several levels, or understood from several points of view. My background is in educational leadership and policy studies, and I came away from the book convinced that it has provided me with additional arguments to support my unorthodox thesis that centralized bureaucracy is an inappropriate organizational format for schooling in the twenty-first century, whether primary, secondary or post-secondary. I understood both the Trojan horse story and the book in general to be illustrating at least three general principles.

First, all is not necessarily (or even usually) as it appears. The author argues that a certain degree of deception and/or self-deception is necessary for individuals, relationships, organizations, and even nation-states to survive and function. But problems or pathologies arise when this deception becomes excessive, when the emotional toll of maintaining deceptions becomes too great for individuals to bear, or when entire organizations or societies engage in mass self-deception.

Second, so-called gifts may (and usually do) involve some kind of overt or implied entanglement or duty on the part of the receiver, or an expectation of reciprocity from the receiver. The author calls this "the burden of the beneficiary." Sometimes, as in this case study, the burden is to act out roles and attitudes that are not authentic to the receiver. Over time, this burden of imposed role-playing (a form of deception) leads to a particular type of alienation, an affective state rooted in the condition of being untrue to oneself. This leads to a kind of withdrawal which the author calls "presentism": being physically present but mentally absent, going through the motions, pretending.

Third, it doesn't necessarily require overt force to control individuals or populations. Sometimes, it only takes some gifts, like 'free' education (or 'free' medical care would be another example) to make people dependant on the 'giver,' to legitimate and strengthen the giver's power. Save your naked force for those who would prefer to refuse your gift. As my mother and grandmother used to say, "You can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar". But of course, there is a downside: the exchange cycle not only makes the receiver dependant, it also raises the receiver's expectations for more. The continuing exchange cycle perpetuates the self-deception and the resulting alienation mentioned above.

The specifics of this case study are not pretty. The number of young persons of undergraduate age is declining in Japan while the number of post-secondary institutions continues to increase. This places the institutions in competition with each other to put bums in seats in order to maintain the flow of government grant money needed to survive. In turn, this makes the entrance examination system a joke, because virtually all reasonable applicants, no matter how marginal, are going to be admitted. It also means that there is increas-

ing pressure on institutions, departments and instructors to pass, and graduate, marginal students, because a reputation for failing students would curtail the number of applicants to the institution in future years.

Meanwhile, according to the author, most Japanese post-secondary institutions misrepresent their true mission, promising one thing but delivering something quite different. The examples provided are startling. The institutions survive because they are successful at employing professors and storing students waiting for work. They sabotage learning, provide "simulated schooling," and camouflage the fact that real education is not occurring. An important purpose of the university (critical analysis of a society's political and economic arrangements) is rendered impotent, so the political-economic elite are not threatened and the status-quo can continue. "Late capitalist forces" have colonized higher education, and the state-sponsored education-employment system gives priority to job selection over learning. Education and the credentials it provides have become commodified in a credential-focused society.

With all this deception going on, the role-playing necessary for the maintenance of institutional and national facades has taken its toll. Both students and professors have become so alienated that many students only pretend to learn (though they may enjoy the extra-curricular activities), and many professors only pretend to teach.

The most unsettling part of this book is that it is entirely credible. The details may vary, but the same forces are in play at home: in Canada, in Ontario, in my university, and in my Faculty of Education. In the last fourteen years that I have been associate dean and responsible for the management and quality of our undergraduate program, especially the last seven to ten, I have noted increasing numbers of students only pretending to learn, and an increasing number of faculty members only pretending to teach. And only last month (as I write this) our Faculty received a very definite bums-in-seats-order from our central administration, causing us to accept an additional number of marginal applicants we would not otherwise have accepted. The book presents a chilling prospect.

The State Bearing Gifts will be of interest to persons interested in sociology or anthropology of education, comparative education, post-secondary education, education policy studies and Japan studies.