

expansion of HE's remit into the wider 'Lifepace' (373) of the learner. Such sentiments chime in with attempts to include life-wide learning amongst economically focused lifelong learning agendas (Williams 2007), yet there is little reflection on the effects, negative as well as positive, that might accrue from this 'formalisation' (382) by higher education. Other chapters focus on higher education in the US exploring the development of corporate universities and partnerships between public universities and the private and public sectors, viewed somewhat uncritically as a 'win-win' option by O'Connor and Lynch (421). Two contributions take us out of higher education and into a virtual space where new technologies, particularly social software, reshape job structures, locations and approaches to managing knowledge. Innovative approaches to apprenticeship, located wholly in the workplace, are explored by Guile who combines activity theory with social capital theory in an interesting study of the creative industries. The section, and therefore the handbook, ends with a welcome contribution from Johnson who explores 'the shadow side' (456) of workplace learning. He identifies a range of ethical issues which arise for educators including the power of the economic paradigm, excessive corporate control, corporatism in the traditional university and exploitation of the knowledge worker. He also suggests some potential responses that could guide educators at a general, and occasionally specific level. A useful addition to the text would have been to include contributions from researchers and practitioners who have encountered these ethical issues in specific workplace learning contexts to explicate in more concrete terms the dilemmas and power plays of this practice.

The handbook will be particularly useful as a recommended text for postgraduate students who are beginning to explore this burgeoning research area. It is well designed for readers who wish to dip in and out of selected chapters; perhaps more so than for those tackling a whole section, who have to bear a certain amount of repetition. Overall I would recommend it to both serious academics and those who frivolously wish to sample the topic. However until a cheaper soft cover version becomes available it is likely to be only the former who contemplate making a purchase.

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**Oxford, the collegiate university: conflict, consensus and continuity**, by Ted Tapper and David Palfreyman, Heidelberg, London and New York, Springer, 2011, 209 + xxl pp., ISBN 978-94-007-0047-5

*Oxford, the collegiate university*, is unashamedly a work of advocacy, for the revival and maintenance of a world the authors think is almost lost. Fortunately, the work is also well-grounded in historical, sociological and political scientific analysis.

Tapper and Palfreyman's concept of the collegiate university is rooted in the experience of the richer 'mixed' (i.e., predominantly undergraduate) colleges identified by the Franks Committee of the 1960s and North Committee of 1997. These 12 richer colleges (there are 30 'mixed' colleges overall) are seen as carrying the 'college' torch in determining the character of the university. Its essential elements include the provision of undergraduate teaching (notably the tutorial), the maintenance of what A.H. Halsey has described as 'commensality' (expanding the term to include the broader aspects of the environment, including buildings and services as well food and drink), and strict self-governance. To survive, 'collegiate universities' are seen as having to meet five 'pre-conditions': independent self-governance; control of membership; provision of 'a social and cultural setting' for members; 'ideally' financial independence (although dependence should never lead to "compromising policy decisions"); and fulfilment of key functions (in order, for example, that they remain 'actively engaged in teaching, learning and research') (167).

The authors have the good sense to recognise this model for what it is: an invention of the Victorian era. Newman is its principal theorist:

A university embodies the principle of progress, and a College that of stability; the one is the sail, and the other the ballast; each is insufficient for the pursuit, extension and inculcation of knowledge; each is useful to the other...It would seem as if a University, seated and living in Colleges, would be a perfect institution, as possessing excellences of different kinds. (Quoted on p. 27)

However, it is important not to romanticise what the model consisted of. The modern tutorial, for example, began as a form of remedial education for not very bright middle class young men (Harvie 1976, 54–9).

This essentially late nineteenth-century model of the university is what is now under strain, from several directions: from the development of the university (especially through scientific research as a countervailing power); from the vicissitudes of public policy (especially related to funding); from public expectations more generally in an era of mass higher education (especially in relation to access and social justice); and from what is seen as intrusion into the private business of both college and university governance.

On all of these variables Tapper and Palfreyman reverse Caesar's admonition 'the fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars/But in ourselves' (Julius Caesar, I, ii, 134). For them, everybody else is wrong. Science teaching has drawn students away from the college and into departmental laboratories, undermining the 'jewel in the crown' of the individual tutorial. 'Premium' funding (whether laundered through the college fee or for uptake of buildings) has fallen foul of the 'dull mediocrity' of the post-Dearing financial settlement (181). Meanwhile, in relation to access 'meritocracy' (measured through success in public examinations, in whatever context) is undermined by flabby and populist discussion of social justice. Finally the attempt by regulators to hold charitable foundations to public account for meeting the objects for which they were originally endowed (and continue to seek donations, public and private) has simply gone too far.

On each of these four counts, there are alternative ways of looking at the world, some of which would be much more in tune with the same authors' exposition, in another recent volume, of the responsibilities of Oxford as an 'apex' institution within the system (Palfreyman and Tapper 2008). Subject developments are driven, in a mass system, by student markets, involving 'consumers' who are much more sophisticated than

they are often given credit for. At the same time public funding of research, especially science, has provided a huge dividend to universities in the UK, and especially Oxford and Cambridge. Funding 'diversity' is also a more complex proposition than the 'Matthew principle' of simply giving to those who already have would prescribe, and the authors' view of what Dearing had to say about it is partial and self-serving (for an alternative interpretation see Watson 1998). Meanwhile, in searching for the 'best and the brightest', Oxford and Cambridge have eschewed one element of the North American elite system they purport to admire: the phenomenon of 'creating a class' that looks like the community the university would wish to serve (Stevens 2007). Finally, a degree of modesty is appropriate about charitable objects. 'Strict construction' of college foundational purposes would be uncomfortably close to some of the elements of today's 'widening participation' agenda (see Thomas 2009, 30–1).

The authors conclude with a sequence of future scenarios, and a plan. The former are crudely (these are not their terms): first, 'muddling through': secondly, being like Cambridge (with much more centralised leadership from the university – as reflected in unified academic contracts); thirdly, a 'two-brand' solution (binding together the research university and the commensal college, as articulated by Newman); and finally irrevocable decline. They advocate working for the third of these: essentially a 'lifeboat' strategy for the richer colleges (pooling of resources is seen as a mug's game):

In the past the collegial tradition survived by attempting to embrace broader developments within higher education. For example, colleges built and ran science laboratories, postgraduates were required to have a college base and it was argued that the core faculty should wear two hats. But we have reached the point where so many compromises have been made that the collegial tradition is stretched to breaking point, in danger of losing all semblance of a core meaning. The core values need to be defined and the means of sustaining them provided. If there should be colleges that lack the ability to do this effectively then perhaps they should merge with others, or indeed become halls of residence. There is no reason why there should be a non-collegial as well as a collegial tradition of undergraduate education at Oxbridge. Perhaps the collegial tradition needs to retreat to its well-funded heartland in order to survive and remain the most important – but by no means the only – defining feature of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. (182)

My personal instinct is that this won't work. The college as expensive theme park could quickly degrade. Something much more like the Cambridge solution (scenario two) is more likely to emerge. But even that will continue to be judged by its contribution to the sector as a whole. The retiring Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, Alison Richards, put the point well: 'Cambridge occupies a distinctive and distinguished place among universities, but our future health and that of UK higher education as a whole are interdependent' (Richards 2009). Occupants of the well-endowed collegiate lifeboat (or is it a Bond villain's escape pod?) would do well to remember this.

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