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This book provides a good starting point for taking on that challenge and deserves to be read by practitioners, researchers and policy makers.

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Academic freedom at the dawn of a new century: how terrorism, Governments and culture wars impact free speech

Evan Gerstmann and Matthew J. Streb (Eds), 2006

Palo Alto, Stanford University Press

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ISBN 0-8047-5444-6

Non-American historians of the culture and society of the US know that the country can from time to time exhibit its best and its worst self. The 14th amendment to the Constitution, which was designed to ensure equality for former slaves and their descendants, degenerated into a licence for abuse by private corporations ('persons' in law) at the turn of the twentieth century. Conversely, almost all sophisticated observers knew that as a result of the peculiar institution of the detention centre at Guantanamo Bay, the current President would end up in the Supreme Court, and that he would lose.

External observers also look to the US as a test bed for the construction and defence of academic freedom. Some of the most eloquent formal definitions were established here, notably by the Association of University Professors (AAUP), in 1915 as follows: ‘freedom of inquiry and research; freedom of teaching within the university or college; and freedom of extra-mural utterance and action’ (p. ix). Moreover, America has seen these principles severely tested, notably in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century flexing of industrial muscle (alluded to above) and in the anti-communist witch-hunts of the McCarthy era. Another contentious area has been Government’s direct and indirect governance of science (and of scientists). Today there is a sense that such trials are upon the academic community again; in the context of national (or homeland) security hysteria, neo-conservative foreign policy, corporate muscle (again), and Internet-enabled monitoring and exposure of professorial opinion (to say nothing of general funding pressures and the atrophy of tenure). It is to the credit of the editors and authors of this intriguing collection of essays that they acknowledge the limited sense in which this is so: the barbarians are still basically on the other side of the gates, and things are much worse elsewhere.

The essays in this volume mostly originated in a conference at Loyola Marymount University, supported by the Institute for Leadership Studies in February 2004. Broadly they are of three types: historical and theoretical reflections on the record of academic freedom; musings on the current state of the American academy and the pressures it is under; and some, often sobering, comparative accounts of how things are on other continents.

An example of the first is Timothy Shiell’s account of ‘three conceptions of academic freedom’. These are the ‘civil libertarian’, the ‘legal moralist’ and the ‘egalitarian’ conceptions, of which only the first really stands up to scrutiny (to summarize: the latter two can all too easily fall prey to contextual—including partisan—distortion). But to maintain such a ‘universalist’ standard requires eternal vigilance and ‘an aggressive, organized movement to educate the public and academics’ (p. 40) about its virtues. Another useful contribution is M. Susan Lindee’s exploration of pressures on science, in which she suggests that ‘our current war hauntingly mirrors the cold war’:

... it involves ground wars by proxy in geographic locations that may be of limited relevance to the central issues, and it seems to require the vigilance of individual citizens, who need to be watching their fellow passengers and reporting overheard conversations in restaurants. (p. 80)

An example of the second is John Akker’s account of the work of NEAR (the UNESCO-sponsored Network for Education and Academic Rights), which he directs. The cases he presents from the Middle East, Africa and Asia, serve to remind American academics of the protections they enjoy; not least as a consequence of their Supreme Court’s recognition of the applicability of the First Amendment to the Constitution to academic discourse (as Justice Brennan stated in 1967: ‘Academic freedom is of transcendent value to us all and not merely to the teachers concerned’, p. 55). Other such perspectives come from Antonio Brown on Europe and Enrique Desmond Arias on Latin America. Colombia is identified as at the top of a disturbing league table of abuse.

The star turn is in the middle category. Robert O’Neil, a former University President himself (of the University of Virginia) writes about ‘Academic freedom in the

post-September 11 era' as 'an old game with new rules' (pp. 42–60). His test is that set by Senator Russ Feingold: the only Senator to vote against the US *Patriot Act*, and, with deep irony, one of the successors of Joseph McCarthy as the junior Senator from Wisconsin. Feingold sees 'a climate of fear towards the Government that is unprecedented' (p. 43). Following a careful study of McCarthy-inspired cases juxtaposed with some of the post 9/11 *causes célèbres*, O'Neil cannot agree: 'the prospect of a recurrence seems remote' (p. 60).

Why should this be so? It is not just a reflection of Supreme Court protection (Brennan in 1967 was reinforcing the conclusion of a landmark case in the immediate post-McCarthy period: *Sweezy vs. New Hampshire* [1957]). Fundamentally what was an asymmetrical balance of power—in politics and public opinion—is now more finely poised. Inquisitorial groups like Students for Academic Freedom, Campus Watch and the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA, which in the immediate aftermath of the twin towers attack issued a now infamous report, *Defending civilization: how our universities are failing America and what can be done about it* [Martin & Neal, 2002]) are themselves more effectively monitored and refuted by other organizations like the Foundation for Individual Rights in America (FIRE), the Center for Individual Rights (CIR) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). As editor, Gertsmann concludes the volume with 'wary optimism' (p. 175).

Much of the discussion is predictably about the pressures from outside the academy on behaviour inside. As David Rabban, general counsel to the AAUP as well as a leading historian of the issue, says in his foreword, 'although these pressures have overwhelmingly been resisted within the academy, their existence itself is troubling' (p. xiii). But then there is the question of what the academic community does to itself, notably through speech codes, concerns about 'offence' to particular parties, and self-censorship. Paul Sniderman contributes a fascinating concluding essay on the political and social-psychological drivers of internal institutional conformity.

Elsewhere in the volume, an intriguing minor plot unfolds. One of the contributors to the conference was Alan Kors of the University of Pennsylvania, author with Harvey Silverglate of the anti-political correctness lobby's bible, *The shadow university: the betrayal of liberty on America's campuses* (Free Press, 1998). Their book essentially extrapolates a single case (of a student disciplined for calling fellow-students 'water buffaloes') into a charge of ubiquitous repression across US higher education. Kors contributed an essay for the volume, but 'at the strong recommendation of two outside reviewers' (p. xiii) it was turned down. Donald Downs, the author here on 'Political mobilization and resistance to censorship' is so outraged that he dedicates his chapter to Kors. In 1968 Eric Ashby gently suggested that 'society has to be indulgent to its universities; it must permit some professors to say silly and unimportant things so that a few professors can say wise and important things' ('A Hippocratic oath for the academic profession', *Minerva*, 8(1), 64–66). *Academic freedom at the dawn of a new century* covers many cases where professors have said silly things but are nonetheless defended (notably the 9/11 conspiracy theorists and apologists like Ward Churchill of the University of Colorado). But what did this particular professor (Kors) say about academic freedom that so offended at least some of his peers? I think we should be told.

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culture of independent schools. Most importantly, I hope it encourages researchers to engage more with independent schools in looking for alternative perspectives on managerialism and anti-managerialism.

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Adult literacy as social practice: more than skills

Uta Papen, 2005

London, Routledge

£70 (hbk), 176 pp.

ISBN 0-4153-5376-2

Considerable attention is being paid to the professional development of practitioners involved in adult literacy, language and numeracy (ALLN). This book is a very welcome addition to an increasing literature on ALLN, how it is defined, how it is used and what the implications are for practitioners and learners. In particular, this volume has a key aim to introduce readers to the social practice view of literacy and its implications for teaching and learning ALLN.

The initial chapters cover the theory of literacy as social practice and then move on to discuss the implications for policy and practice. A primary aim is to show how theory and research can inform policy and practice and how this can be achieved through collaboration between research and practice.

A central tenet of the social practice view of literacy is that by understanding the role of literacy in learners' lives, it is possible to apply this understanding in relation to the literacy demands in work, home and in social and familial relationships. This approach can also address how ALLN is taught and learnt and it can help contribute to policy in the UK and further afield.

Each chapter contains short readings to further illuminate and expand issues raised, followed by research activities, suggested issues for reflection and additional reading. For example, in chapter one, which sets out theoretical perspectives on reading and writing, readers are encouraged to critically examine their own assumptions about literacy and numeracy and there are two readings, one by Mary Hamilton discussing four 'strands' or ideologies of literacy: emancipatory, social control, cultural missionary work and remedial. A second article by Jean Searle discusses how literacy is not a neutral concept. Readers are then asked to collect definitions about literacy and apply the ideologies outlined by Hamilton and to reflect on whether their own programmes fit these too.

In part I of the book, Uta examines the 'new' way of looking at reading and writing. She identifies the literacy debates about functional skills versus social practice, using the example of making a journey by train to illustrate how literacy and numeracy are important

components of the social practice of traveling by train. People need to be able to read and use timetables and to purchase tickets (in England, with so many options, this is no mean feat!). Importantly, the integration of literacy and numeracy is recognized in this activity.

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