

du livre: 1948 pour 1848 à la page 27, tocologie pour toxicologie à la page 45 et la mention à quelques reprises de la 'race' française (momenclature imprécise et inappropriée).

Il y a d'ailleurs quelques lacunes. Comment laisser sombrer dans l'oubli, par exemple, d'éminents professeurs/administrateurs tels que Lorne Laforge, doyen pendant quinze ans de la Faculté des lettres au cours des années 1970-80, ou des finissants de renom tels que Brian Mulroney et Lucien Bouchard (entre autres, j'en suis sûr)? Ce n'est qu'un petit reproche car Hamelin a évidemment su démêler très bien l'impondérable. Il admet volontiers d'ailleurs qu'il ne rend pas compte de la totalité de l'évolution et de la situation de l'Université Laval (p. 325). Je proposerais toutefois l'inclusion dans une telle oeuvre future d'annexes pertinentes qui permettrait de combler des lacunes telles qu'celles citées ci-dessus.

A l'instar de Hamelin, on peut bien souhaiter à l'Université Laval bonne chance et longue vie! Toute personne intéressée à l'histoire de cette institution, du Québec, ou des universités en général ne peut mieux passer quelques heures fort agréables et édifiantes qu'en lisant cette excellente histoire.

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Peter C. Emberley and Waller R. Newell. *Bankrupt Education: The Decline of Liberal Education in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994. Pp. 189. Can\$17.95 paper, Can\$40.00 cloth.

The unrelenting assault upon the contents, processes and outcomes of schooling in Canada and the United States continues. It is a broadly based attack, coming from media, governments, *ad hoc* commissions, interest groups, educational critics writing for middle-class public consumption, and academics writing for fellow scholars and the university student market. *Bankrupt Education* is a work falling into the latter category, although it will surely also find a small readership in the general educated public.

Perhaps the best place to start an appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of *Bankrupt Education* is with the recognition that it is not really one book at all; it is two. That, however, is not what the authors intended. "Liberal education is, in short, a journey from the particular to the universal and back again. In this book we have imitated this classical form" (p. 137). The authors begin with "the controversies over education in Canada today" (p. 137) in chapters 2 and 3, then go beyond the particular contemporary context of Canada to the historical and geographical sweep of chapters 4 and 5, and

then in chapter 6 “return from the distant shores of classical antiquity, and from the darker corridors of European nihilism, to our own Canadian shores” (p. 137). These five chapters constitute the book—a brief Introduction merely sets the tone and an even more cursory closing chapter consists of concluding comments rather than the comprehensive Conclusion its label suggests.

Unfortunately, the authors do not offer convincing arguments about this “classical form.” They do not persuasively move from micro to macro. In trying to account for this difficulty, I had a nagging suspicion. Perhaps chapters 4 and 5—“Liberal Education and the Modern World” and “Liberal Education and the Fragmentation of Modernity”—are really the treatise Professors Emberley and Newell wish to put before us. Perhaps the rest—chapter 2, “The Crisis in Canadian Education”; chapter 3, “The Assault on Education”; chapter 6, “Liberal Education and the Canadian Polity”—are quite incidental. In other words, the “real” book is in chapters 4 and 5, containing a meta-discussion in the tradition of what Quentin Skinner a decade ago brilliantly coined a “return of grand theory.” Certainly the coherence of these middle chapters, their carefully crafted logic, and their passionate and persuasive rhetoric give the reader the feeling that this is where the authors are most engaged and wish most to convince their audience.

This hypothesis also helps explain why, when the authors concretely discuss education systems, they are most eloquent, convincing, and insightful about universities. The section on how “the crisis in public education is linked to the universities” (p. 50) is lengthy and articulate. It is not, however, nearly as clearly “linked” to the discussion on the crisis in public education as it is to the broad essay on the history of ideas that is chapters 4 and 5. The argument in these middle chapters is internally cohesive and smoothly integrated into an unflattering analysis of universities and the arguments for amelioration.

The writing on higher education contrasts sharply with the analyses and discussions of public schooling in Canada. The devastating critique of contemporary public schooling constituting the first fifty pages of the book contains serious enough limitations that I wonder if it, as well as the catchy title, were included simply to draw in a broader audience. Such limitations are also evident in chapter 6, although in different forms and for different reasons, as there the authors attempt to make an historical argument for reorienting contemporary schooling. The critique of contemporary schooling in Canada is for the most part predictable and flawed. Much of it echoes media criticisms—indeed, the authors rely on media accounts for much of their argument.

The starting point for their critique of contemporary schooling is uncritical, *a priori* acceptance of the platitude that public schooling is in such desperate straits that the need for fundamental changes is self-evident. *Bankrupt Education* “is meant to address the concerns felt by so many students, parents, and

teachers about the decline of Canadian education" (p. 9). The authors seem unaware that, newspaper headlines notwithstanding, the reality is that public opinion polls document a great deal of satisfaction with our schools. Although I do not argue that this is justification for complacency, it is clear that the authors should justify their first premises.

As to why Canada's school systems are supposedly in such terrible shape, the causes are found in the recent changes inflicted upon a once sound system by a nefarious and unlikely band of "revolutionaries" who "demand radical reform" (p. 4). Precisely who these revolutionaries are is a bit of a slippery question, as they operate under an umbrella broad enough to encompass neo-Deweyan social reconstructionists and vocationally oriented instrumentalists. After the dust settles, it seems the arch villains in this fifth column are the advocates of progressive education, although we are later told that "The clamour for curricular reform can be said to arise from five evident sources" (p. 23): "business"; "ethnic advocacy groups"; "educational theorists and administrators"; "radical intellectuals"; "activists" (pp. 23–28 *passim*).

Whereas the varieties of insurgents bent upon destroying Canadian schools and the particular natures of their individual sins are discussed in ecumenically encompassing terms, the crisis in Canadian education is rather parochially illustrated. Almost all references to and illustrations of this national crisis—aside from passing, historical, references to Quebec—are from the province of Ontario. This is perhaps understandable, in view of the authors' extraordinary dependence upon the *Ottawa Citizen* and the *Globe and Mail* as sources of data about schooling. But it is not really defensible, in light of the book's title; nor is "The Crisis in Canadian Education" an appropriate chapter title when the virtually exclusive focus of discussion is the Ontario situation. If this book really is about a national crisis in schooling, then at least token acknowledgement that there are educational jurisdictions lying in the hinterland beyond the metropolis of Ontario is a reasonable expectation.

But the most serious limitation of *Bankrupt Education* is its historiographic orientation. In the final analysis, this book is not about a contemporary crisis in Canadian education; nor, fundamentally, is the book even about Canada. As has already been noted, the essence of this book is to be found in chapters 4 and 5—"Liberal Education and the Modern World" and "Liberal Education and the Fragmentation of Modernity." In the authors' own words: "At bottom, the debate over education is inseparable from the vast political, cultural, and economic changes taking place in Canada and the world, changes as yet dimly perceived, disturbing, and perhaps best summed up by the recent fascination with 'the end of history.' We will try to connect the education debate to these larger global processes" (p. 9). Thus the alleged current "bankruptcy" of Canadian education is in fact one symptom of a pervasive bankruptcy of

Canadian society, which is itself a manifestation of a ubiquitous global crisis and malaise. Therefore any consideration of Canadian society in general, or of Canadian education as a subset of that larger entity, merely serves as a convenient vehicle for illustrating more fundamental, global processes and realities. Furthermore, this essence is only superficially a contemporary reality. From the authors' viewpoint, a trans-historical and trans-cultural dynamic is playing itself out and carrying along with it contemporary Canadian social realities.

This historical idealism is precisely what the authors wish to argue. That is why we are told we must go back to the beginning, as "The philosophy of liberal education begins with Socrates" (p. 76). The enlightenment and liberation of the human intellect and spirit through history under the banner of Liberal Education is indeed a stirring epic, as relayed by professors Emberley and Newell. The result is blatant and unashamed Whig history. Not even a façade of critical evaluation is attempted.

The works of Plato and the predictable parade of intellectual giants who follow are treated as sacred texts constituting the cornerstones of civilization itself. As the Gospels preserved the words of Christ, Plato preserved the Socratic dialogues. "Thus the particulars of Socrates' life became paradigmatic events in the human search for wisdom" (p. 77). Readers who are students of the history of ideas will see that Cornford's Socrates, as illuminated in his classic *Before and After Socrates* is alive and well in Dr. Emberley's and Dr. Newell's eulogy.

Professors Emberley's and Newell's historical interpretations of, and pleas for, liberal education are meant to be history writ large; a tour-de-force of passionate rhetoric to help us understand the signature of a new epoch. Perhaps it will help the reader of this review to know in advance such conclusions as: "In sum, the irony of the present in the West is that technological capitalism itself may be creating the de-subjectivized life-world longed for by post-Hegelian hermeneutics" (p. 127). How? "Whether it be through post-modernist architecture, chemical-based microprocessing, or the fantasies of cyber-punk, the straight line of Newtonian physics and its political correlation in the universal rights of liberalism is everywhere giving way to the free happening of decentered Heideggerian Being" (pp. 127-28). The result? "[C]apitalism's most radical unfolding, a realm where Michael Foucault joins hands with Steven Jobs" (p. 128). Now if that doesn't whet your appetite for reading this book, nothing will. At least it beats the hypothesis that the world is going to hell because today's teenagers are bone-lazy and rotting their brains with drugs and punk rock! But, again, it also takes us a long way from what a general readership might assume is in the book as implied by its title.

Bankrupt Education, flawed as it may be, deserves a place on library shelves. Its authors remind us of a disturbing fact: "Behind the mountain of studies, statistics, and task forces, we have in Canada today a fundamental debate over the intellectual and moral purposes of education, and the sooner we face it the likelier we are to achieve some real results" (p. 9). All engagements of Canada's community of scholars in this crucial debate are to be welcomed. Perhaps the interest, concerns, efforts, and insights of scholars outside of faculties of education—such as professors Emberley and Newell, who are political scientists—should be particularly appreciated.

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Robert Choquette. *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995. Pp. 258. Illus. Can\$27.00 paper.

On Sunday, 3 December 1995, at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Pope John Paul II canonized Eugène de Mazenod, the founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. There could be no more fitting tribute to this former French bishop and superior general of the Oblates than the publication, in the same year, of this book by Robert Choquette, which analyses the exploits of the Oblates in Canada's Northwest. One of the leading historians of Christianity in Canada, Choquette carried out his research under the auspices of the Oblate-owned Western Canadian Publishers, an organization in the forefront of improving the quality of religious historical studies. Besides approaching Christianity's spread in Canada's north and west with understanding and balance, this book makes an important contribution to Canadian historiography by opening the English-speaking reader to a world of thought and action that has hitherto been closed because the archival sources are largely written in French.

In compelling fashion, Choquette claims that the Oblates succeeded in conquering Canada's Northwest for the Gospel in its ultramontane Roman Catholic form. Opposition to this religious conquest came largely from the Church of England and its evangelical Church Missionary Society. The Oblates triumphed in the Northwest, while Protestants emerged victorious in the Yukon, northern Manitoba, and the easterly portion of northern Saskatchewan. The Oblates aimed to evangelize the Native peoples and destroy their culture. Their conquest was successful and they were responsible, in large part, for 85 percent of today's Canadian Native people considering themselves Christian.