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SEARLE'S IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY

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Colwyn Williamson

The following remarks are about the nature of universities and their supposed political neutrality, about relations between students and teachers, and about the notion of the 'academic'. To gain a foothold in the problems arising from these topics, I will focus attention on a book written by an American philosopher, John Searle. Concentrating on this book, *The Campus War*, may require some justification. It will be said that it is a poor book, and this is true; but the views it tries to articulate are so typical that it will surely be useful to bring them into the open and subject them to some scrutiny.

Most of Searle's book is concerned with characterising student discontent and with his proposals about how to deal with this discontent. This part contains almost nothing in the way of explicit argument, but it is interesting from a methodological point of view, because it provides a striking example of a phenomenon that is always hard to define but which might be called *argument by innuendo*. Ostensibly concerned only with description and a kind of ordering of the data, it conjures up and flows from a whole prior commitment that is deeply and instinctively conservative. Searle's hostility to all forms of radical change emerges, not in the stating of a position with its supporting reasons, but in the characterisation of opponents and the method of presentation. This part of his book has little argumentative force. Regarded formally, the argument tends either to beg the question or to support one aspect of the status quo with some other aspect of exactly the same status quo. This does not mean that the book is ineffective: it is entertaining for those who share its assumptions and demoralising for those who do not.

Searle says that student discontent constitutes a 'religious movement', no doubt aware that this will cause offence. But it is a religious movement with certain special features; for Searle allow in the same breath that it has nothing to do either with any church or with any belief in the supernatural. What he means by describing it in this way is rather that it is concerned with the 'search for the sacred'. But the 'sacred', it turns out, has nothing to do with religion either. What the 'search for the sacred' means is that 'young people have a need to believe in something and to act on behalf of something that they regard as larger than themselves. They need goals that they can regard as somehow transcending their own immediate needs and desires; these goals make more tolerable the mediocrity and insignificance of their daily lives.' (p.14)

This 'need to believe' is described by Searle as a basic need possessed by all human beings; and it is a methodological assumption of his work that 'the religious impulse - the search for the sacred - is primary, and is not to be explained as a derivation from some other motive or set of motives.' (p.15)

This basic need partly explains why it is that students see themselves as having opponents. Together

with the need that students have, it is said, to feel part of a community, the religious impulse makes it necessary that there should be an enemy. 'Both the creation of intense feelings of community within the student movement and the pursuit of the sacred goals require an adversary. Someone must play the role of the enemy.' (p.15)

It is in this respect, according to Searle, that student reformers of today differ most sharply from those of yesteryear. 'When I was an activist student leader', Searle explains, 'We were constantly seeking the cooperation of other groups, even though they did not share our general outlook'. Today's unrest, he says, is very different from the days when student violence was confined to "rags", riots after football games, riots between competing groups of students, attacks by student groups on the outside community'. All of these, Searle laments, 'have been replaced by forms of unrest that constitute challenges to the authority of the campus administration'. (p.16)

It is because an adversary is necessary to meet the basic religious impulse and the need to feel part of a community that it is futile to offer any compromises. As Searle puts it, 'efforts at compromise are doomed to failure simply because any compromise with the evil enemy is regarded by the militants as morally unacceptable'. (p.16)

Searle's approach to student unrest has certain peculiarities, some of which I will touch upon.

Searle makes much of the 'methodological assumption' that human beings have a basic need, the 'religious impulse'. Whatever one may feel generally about the intelligibility of speaking this way, its explanatory force in the particular case is somewhat blunted by the assertion that previous generations of students, or at least Searle's own generation of students, who were presumably possessed of the same basic needs, did not act as today's students do. Driven by the same religious impulse, they managed either to satisfy it differently or to ignore it entirely in harmless pursuits such as rags, riots and attacks on the outside community. They were equally religious, but they did not question authority.

What is more curious than this talk of basic needs itself is the way in which these needs are portrayed as exerting themselves upon the course of events. It is because an adversary is required that one appears. How does this explanation work? One drinks a glass of water in order to quench one's thirst, at least this is sometimes why. This might be described, I suppose, as satisfying a need - though this way of putting it appears to take away at least as much as it adds to the understanding. In a similar way, Searle seems to suggest, the adversary appears on the scene only in order to satisfy the students' need to have one. And it is not that students find joy in the sense of solidarity that flows from common struggle, but rather that the

common struggle is created in order to satisfy the need for this sense of solidarity.

I would think that students are much like other people in that they join together to fight for certain ideas and objectives; and, in fighting for these ideas and objectives, they encounter adversaries who are opposed to their ideas and who do not want them to achieve their objectives. I would also think that, insofar as students' ideas include that certain powers are not justified and their objectives include that these powers be taken away, their principal adversaries will be those who presently possess these powers, who believe that these powers are in the hands of the best of all possible men, and who do not wish for them to be taken away. In Searle's account, however, the adversary is a kind of epiphenomenon, a figment constructed out of basic needs. One pities the unfortunate administrator or senior academic upon whom this phantom is visited.

The adversary, then, is an artifice constructed out of students' needs. In a similar way, confrontations with authority arise to meet the need that students have to feel that they are part of a community. An unsophisticated person might think that the 'flying pickets' of the recent miners' strikes were devised to help win the strike. John Searle is a trained philosopher: he would probably be able to persuade such a person that the strike was devised in order that miners might sample the pleasures of the flying picket.

It is characteristic of Searle's argument by innuendo that the ideas informing the struggle are not mentioned or are mentioned only in such a style as to make plain that any level-headed person would find them absurd. The trouble with students, as we have seen, is that they seek goals which transcend immediate needs and desires. They are also, it seems, reluctant to compromise with evil. These peculiar attitudes naturally give rise to odd political ideas: 'the widespread student revolts seem to lack any common platform, and indeed they often appear to concern matters only marginally related to the vital interests of students as students.' (p.18). Students often fail to do justice to the issues that Searle knows are the really important ones: 'in the United States the most common Sacred Topics are race and the war in Vietnam. It is perhaps depressing that civil liberties and academic freedom are not Sacred Topics.' (p.19)

This strange neglect of immediate desires and vital interests is no doubt a product of students' immaturity. A crisis of authority, Searle explains, is a situation in which people ask 'Why should I do what you tell me to do? Why should I take orders from you?' As a philosopher, Searle confesses, he is inclined to think that such questions are excellent. As an administrator, on the other hand, he finds himself increasingly irritated by 'the constant demand that one justify oneself before an adolescent mentality and mode of sensibility.' (p.155)

Militant students, we are told, subscribe to an 'holistic ideology' which regards the structure of power in society as 'a seamless fabric', so that universities are seen as 'part of the very fabric of the power structure'. (p.23) What is scandalous about this ideology, one assumes, is that it implies the alarming notion that universities are bourgeois institutions peddling bourgeois ideas in a bourgeois society. In reality, of course, very few student militants rise to this level of insight; and, as for the majority of students, they are usually almost as indifferent as their teachers to war, poverty, unemployment, oppression and the other sufferings of mankind.

The fact that students are by no means as enlightened as Searle accuses them of being should not surprise us. Even if we speak only of the educational system itself, which is to neglect most of the

means by which children are educated, we should remember that students are prepared for universities by secondary education, and they are prepared for secondary education by primary education. An education writer in *The Times* (27.2.73) described a class of thirty boys and girls in a comprehensive school half-listening to a history lesson on the medieval three-field system. 'Everything about feudal England', this writer notes, 'was presented from the point of view of ... William Rufus, the Bishop of Ely, the lord of the manor. It was innocently assumed that if all 32 of us had been transported back to 1073 then we should have been gay knights and paramours all.'

When it comes to his own ideology Searle would probably claim that he is a 'liberal', which means that he is a conservative of the petit-bourgeois variety. From this viewpoint on life, extremes of right and left seem somehow the same and politics is all a bit of a puzzle. The war in Vietnam is unintelligible, since everyone wants to end it, but it somehow keeps on going: 'the leaders of both major parties agree on the need to end it, but somehow the institutional apparatus does not seem to respond; somehow we have been unable to disengage'. (p.151) So far as he can tell, McCarthyism and radicalism are really much the same, by which it turns out that he means they are similar in 'form' and 'style'. He says that 'it is tempting, and I think rewarding, to compare this style of rhetoric (the ideas of student militants) with the McCarthyite witchhunts of the 1950s'. 'Even more striking than the similarities in the formal structure of the rhetoric are the similarities in the style in which the arguments are presented'. By 'similarity in style' is meant that 'both are presented with the passionate conviction that our side is right and the other side not only wrong but evil'. (p.25) I am reminded here of what Trotsky said about the comparison between the Jesuits and the Bolsheviks, namely that it reveals what it is to look at a 'fanatic warrior' through the eyes of a 'slothful shopkeeper'.

Searle is so much impressed by an alleged 'formal' similarity and an alleged similarity in 'style' that he does not appear to notice a fundamental difference of *substance*. So it is that 'liberals' like Searle will tell you in all apparent seriousness, and as though they expected you to believe they were pacifists, that picketer and policeman are essentially the same because both use 'violence'. It is of course relatively unimportant that the picketer is out to win the strike and the policeman to defeat it.

It is part of Searle's 'liberal' ideology that he is able to see himself as defending the rights of dissenting minorities. Because of the prevailing extremism, he complains, 'unpopular and dissenting views, such as support of the war or racism, have, in recent years, become impossible to express publicly on the major college campuses, and I fear this condition will continue.' (p.25) This is a theme to which Searle returns much later in the book when he is dealing with academic freedom. Here he gives J S Mill the credit for assigning a special place to 'the right to dissent'. As an example of how this 'right to dissent' is being undermined, he says 'I do not believe that at present George Wallace, or any other prominent racist, could give a public speech on a major campus and be guaranteed a safe and dignified hearing'. (p.192) It is inevitable that he should invoke in this context the cliché ascribed, falsely, to Voltaire: 'I disapprove of what you say but will defend to the death your right to say it'. (p.193)

Philosophers are of course justly renowned for using words in new ways, but Searle breaks new ground in the use he finds for the word 'dissent'. In a society which is deeply racist and which is currently conducting a war, how can it be sensible to describe as 'dissent' the advocacy of racism and the intensification of the war? And, with regard to Voltaire, it is very hard to suppress a smile at the suggestion

that university teachers, who are after all not famous for being prepared to defend anything even to the point of inconvenience, let alone death, might suddenly offer up their lives so that the racist may preach race-hatred and the warmonger war. It may be possible for someone who does not believe in the existence of evil, and who is against passionate conviction, to talk of giving a 'dignified hearing' to the Hitlers, Wallaces and Powells of this world. Others will find this language as grotesque as the morality it represents. Is it intended to be a nightmare, this picture of rows of liberal academics giving a calm and dignified hearing to someone who is, say, inciting others to dispose of the Jews?

I described Searle's method as argument by innuendo. What this means is that he systematically characterises people and their ideas in ways that insinuate the view, which is never explicitly argued for, that those who hold radical ideas are fraudulent, insincere or deranged.

In one place he denies that this is his intention, saying that his account 'is not inconsistent with the obvious explanation that the young people in question were motivated genuinely by hatred of the war, and horror at racial injustice. The characterisation of student radicalism as a quasi-religious movement is not intended to imply that the radical views are either false or insincerely held; on the contrary, it is intended to explain much of the peculiar intensity and fanaticism of radical attitudes.' (p.69) I have, I hope, already given enough examples of Searle's method at work to indicate that this disclaimer is quite unconvincing. It is all very well to say, on page 69, that this has never been his intention, but everything he has said on the previous 68 pages, and much of what he goes on to say in the remaining pages, amounts to a description which is only appropriate, which only makes sense, if we assume that those described are deeply deluded and irrational. Without this assumption, all the remarks about accepting radical ideas being like religious conversion (p.55), about passionate convictions, about not compromising with evil, and so on, are simply incongruous.

Perhaps Searle should have been willing openly to maintain that those who hold radical ideas are incorrigibly irrational. Certainly this would have placed him in familiar company; for one of the most common reactions of those in authority when they are first confronted with demands for change is to say that they would have been interested in 'rational discussion', but that they cannot countenance the unseemly manner in which the demands are currently being made. It is partly in order to make this point, by the way, that Peter Weiss in *Marat/Sade* depicts the masses as patients in a lunatic asylum, the idea being that respectable society cannot comprehend social discontent and sees it as a kind of 'possession' - either the workings of dark, conspiratorial forces or a variety of madness. (After the black riots in Watts, the US government set up a team of *psychologists* to produce an explanation.)

The ideology of 'rational discussion' is extremely interesting. On the surface, it appears to manifest a sudden enthusiasm for logic, a desire for cogent argument and, perhaps, a calm method of presentation. This, however, proves to be an illusion, as anyone who takes the trouble to lay out his radical ideas carefully on the page and drain them of emotion will soon discover. Someone prepared to pretend that passion is regrettable will not find that a cool presentation gets him very far. For 'rationality', he will find, really amounts to 'being realistic' and 'sensible'; and being realistic really amounts to continuing much as before; and an 'irrational discussion' is one in which the wrong ideas prevail. If you study the recent case of political victimisation, that of David Craig, you will find that, although other commentators found him rational and altogether pretty normal in manner, the Head of his department had discovered that

'argument is vain in dealing with him'. (Council for Academic Freedom and Democracy Report, p.3)

Those who chide radicals with not being rational usually have ideas of rationality closely bound up with the status quo, their premises are about the present, their arguments are from what happens now or has happened in the past. It is not surprising, therefore, that they tend to find the advocates of change irrational and to attribute radical ideas to some kind of malfunctioning of the brain or disorder of the mental atmosphere.

Throughout Searle's book, those responsible for subversion and disruption are rebuked, at least by implication, for not really understanding what a university is all about. This underlying conception of what a university is like or should be like is not made explicit until the sixth of the seven chapters making up the book. Here, in the chapter on Academic Freedom, Searle outlines what he calls 'the theory of the university'. According to this 'theory', universities are distinguished by a number of characteristics having to do with their purpose, the relationship with the general community, and the status of the persons in them. 'The university', Searle says, 'is an institution designed for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge'. He adds to this, perhaps thinking it is merely a different way of saying the same thing, that 'the purpose of the university is to benefit the community which created and maintains it, and mankind in general, through the advancement and dissemination of knowledge'. (p.170)

From this, taken together with the fact that professional academics have special competence in some area of study, it follows, Searle thinks, that 'the university is not a democracy where all have equal rights; it is an aristocracy of the trained intellect'. (p.171) What this means, he explains, is that 'because the professor is supposed to know more than the students about the methods and results of his subjects, he, not they, is put in charge of the labs, the courses, the grades etc.' (p.171) Certain 'rights' follow from this, in particular that 'professors should have the right to teach, conduct research, and publish their research without interference, and that students should have the corresponding right to study and learn'. (p.170) Teachers and students also have certain general rights in their roles as 'citizens in a free society', namely the 'rights of free expression, freedom of inquiry, freedom of association, and freedom of publication'. (p.175) But these freedoms may need 'to be restricted to preserve the academic and subsidiary functions of the university.' (p.175) Interferences of this kind 'have to be justified in terms of the theory of the university'. (p.176) Let me take an example which deserves to be quoted in full:

... the student has the same rights of free speech on the campus that he has off the campus, but the exercise of his free speech is legitimately regulated by the educational needs of the university. He does not have free speech while the professor is lecturing; he can only speak when called upon by the professor to do so; and when the professor tells him to shut up so that the lecture can continue he is under an obligation to comply. The classroom does not entitle the student to 'equal time' with the professor. Similarly, the professor does not have unlimited free speech in the classroom. He is only entitled to lecture on the subject of the course or lecture series, and he is not entitled to use the classroom for, say, political propaganda. If he reconstitutes his lecture series as a political indoctrination session, he both violates the academic freedom of the student and abuses his academic freedom as a professor. (p.177)

If I have understood Searle correctly, the rights described here again follow from the two principles previously asserted, the expertise of the teacher and the purpose of the university. That 'political indoctrination' may not be allowed into the classroom presumably follows from the fact that the university is designed for the pursuit of knowledge, and the right of the teacher to say when students may speak and when they may not speak presumably follows from this taken together with the fact that the teacher is the expert in the pursuit of knowledge. It follows further, perhaps as a generalisation of what has been said about indoctrination not being permitted in the classroom, that the university as an institution must be politically neutral.

The first question that needs to be asked about Searle's 'theory of the university' concerns its status, what kind of theory it is supposed to be. Is it intended to be a description of universities? When Searle says that the university is an institution designed for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge, does he mean this to be understood as a compressed account of the origins and history of universities? Is it the story of the motives of the founders or universities, or their administrators through the ages, of their administrators today, of the governments which nowadays create and finance them? Or is it rather that we are to take Searle as describing the function of universities, what they actually do; so that the purpose of a university is to disseminate knowledge as the purpose of a can-opener is to open cans? It is nowhere clear in Searle's account precisely which of these possibilities he has in mind. His method is idealist in the sense that he seems to be trying to deduce the actual university from the idea of a university. One might say that he begins with a *definition* of the university. But to say this is still not to see what kind of definition is involved, or how we are supposed to evaluate it. As any kind of description, whether of origins, motives, or function, it is, looked at in one way, simplified to the point of falsity, and, looked at in another way, rather vacuous. It would be naive to characterise the motives of those responsible for bringing about the dramatic increase in higher education during the last decade exclusively, or even primarily, in terms of the desire to disseminate knowledge. Those who brought it about did not even describe their own motives in this way, preferring to see the growth in higher education as an essential ingredient of the 'white-hot technological revolution' which was to transform the country's productive capacity.

And the systematic squeeze on financial resources for research has not been motivated by anything having to do with the advancement of knowledge: it is perfectly plain that it has much more to do with the need to increase the flow of technologically qualified students into industry. Obviously, similar difficulties arise if we attempt to describe, not the motives of those who create or finance universities, but the function of universities, what they actually do. Are universities more preoccupied with the dissemination of knowledge than with, say, the preparation and training of employees? I am not suggesting that this is a simple question, or that it has a simple answer. But Searle himself certainly presents no evidence on, let us say, the extent to which the education of metallurgy students is structured according to the need to be employed in certain capacities afterwards.

Now it may be that Searle does not mean to describe universities as they actually are, but only as he would have them to be. On this reckoning, what he is about is the outlining of an ideal university to which real universities may or may not approximate. This interpretation is encouraged by the rather sudden claim he makes on page 204 that he does not 'mean to suggest that existing universities attain the *ideal* of the aristocracy of the intellect; often they are an aristocracy of degrees, prizes and publications.' (my emphases) This claim is puzzling,

partly because it comes only after he has completed his 'theory of the university', partly because it is made so casually and without elaboration. Because it comes after the 'theory of the university', it would surely be all too easy for an innocent reader to imagine that Searle is describing existing universities in his 'theory'. And it is even more curious that Searle does not elaborate on the possibility that existing universities do not in this case fit his 'theory': one would expect him to be eager to discover the extent to which his 'theory' has any application to the real world.

But there is more to this than meets the eye. Prior to the sudden admission that existing universities might not be at all like his ideal, Searle had obtained a number of deductions from his theory. He had deduced, for instance, that students should shut up when the professor tells them to. But these students and this professor were, or so it seemed at the time, real people who walked about on the surface of the earth, ate up their crusts to make their hair curly, and had aunts living in Bishop Auckland. When Searle said that students must be quiet, he was surely talking to actual students who had, in his experience, shown some inclination not to be quiet. Surely he was trying to prove that these students are wrong? Perhaps he only meant that, if there were an ideal university, and if it contained ideal professors and students, then and only then would students have to be ideally quiet. If he meant this, he should have said so. Otherwise, there is a real danger that an ethereal university is being used to intimidate flesh-and-blood students.

It is regrettable that Searle does not embark upon a serious analysis of the extent to which the real world fits his ideals. He might have discovered that there is a gap between the two, and this would have committed him to advocating change; and, if the gap proved to be considerable, he would even be committed to that radicalism of which he so much disapproves. Of course, this is far-fetched in Searle's own case; his whole book is filled with the spirit of a man who is basically comfortable in the world as he finds it. But there must be some people who feel that a university should be a place that is in some sense dedicated above all to the pursuit of knowledge and who are on that account repelled by existing universities, seeing them as being preoccupied instead with careerism, status, the service of a corrupt society, and a million other concerns extrinsic to the pursuit of knowledge itself.

As we saw, Searle says that the purpose of a university also includes benefiting the community which created and maintains it, and mankind in general. All of this is very unclear. There are senses in which disseminating knowledge and serving the community could be conflicting requirements. There are senses in which serving the community and benefiting it might be different, and senses in which benefiting a community and benefiting mankind in general represent opposed aspirations. All of this would need to be sorted out before it would be possible to pass judgement on Searle's theory. Perhaps the sort of consideration he has in mind is indicated in what he clearly regards as a decisive criticism of those who favour what he calls, derisively, 'the youth city', one feature of which is to be that it is democratic. With an air of triumph, he asks, 'where is the money supposed to come from?' That he regards this question as decisive, which is bound up with what he calls the prudential argument for political neutrality, gives some indication of what he has in mind when he speaks of the community.

Even if Searle's definition of a university were acceptable and if we allowed for the existence of special competence among professional academics, it would still not be possible to deduce the rights that he thinks can be deduced. In the first place,

there is something odd about the 'rights' themselves. Professors have the right to teach, conduct research, and publish their research without interference. Students have what is called the 'corresponding right' to study and learn. This may sound a little like saying that officers have the right to command and soldiers have the corresponding right to obey. Be this as it may, it is still not satisfactory to say that the right of a teacher to teach is derived from the expertise he possesses in some subject. This is, perhaps, what *qualifies* him to teach, or part of what qualifies him to teach, but it does not give him the right to teach. As a matter of fact, 'the right to teach' doesn't seem to make any sense at all. When one talks of, say, the right of work, this means that there should be no unemployment and that every man should be able to earn the means to support himself and his family; but to say that everyone has the right to teach, or that he who teaches has the right to teach, all seem equally absurd. Of course, teaching is what a teacher does: to add that he thereby has the right to do what he does is simply not true.

The idea of academic expertise will not carry anything like the weight with which Searle seeks to burden it. He believes that, because the professor knows more about his subject than the student, it necessarily follows that the student can speak only when the professor gives him permission, that the classroom does not entitle the student to 'equal time', and that the student must shut up when he is told to. This, however, is plainly false. It is perfectly possible for there to be a system of education, with teachers possessed of expertise, where students *do* have the right to 'equal time', or whatever. It is possible for there to be a system, and perhaps there have been such systems, where the student is *obliged* to have 'equal time'. (It may be that the medieval teaching of philosophy through the game of Obligation was rather like this.) It is even possible that tutorials and seminars are, or should be, like this. It is stupid to suggest that any right I may have to tell a student to shut up is derived from, let us say, my greater knowledge of the geography of Arabia. There could be a system of education in which it is granted that I have greater knowledge, but I do not have the right to tell a student to shut up. It should, therefore, be quite obvious that the rights claimed by Searle do not in fact derive from academic expertise alone, if indeed they have anything to do with it.

The situation is not markedly improved by adding the further premise that the purpose of a university is to pursue and disseminate knowledge, and this is partly why I said earlier that this claim has a way of looking vacuous. For knowledge may be pursued and disseminated in different ways, and different educational institutions may embody different conceptions of how this should be done. Searle is apparently able to countenance only a system within which, essentially, the role of one man is to talk and that of another is to listen. Fortunately, the possibilities are not exhausted by the narrow horizons of people like Searle.

It may be thought that, despite these objections, the general intent of Searle's theory can be saved by saying that, although there might be universities in which, for example, students did have the right to 'equal time', this could only be if it somehow also flowed from the special expertise of the teacher - meaning, perhaps, if he thought it desirable. But this is not true either. Academics, all of them having received more or less the same training, may disagree about the matters mentioned by Searle; they may have very different ideas about what courses should be taught or studied, and about how these should be taught or studied. In disagreeing in this way, are they disagreeing about what has to do exclusively with academic expertise? One man finds it natural and proper that students should for the most part be seen and not heard, another finds this wrong. Is the disagreement purely *academic*? Obviously it is about

an academic matter, but is it one that can be resolved by academic expertise? It would be more correct to see it as having to do with much more general differences of attitude.

It may be said that, although this sometimes happens in practice, it ought not to. An academic may be influenced in what he says of academic matters by his moral and political attitudes, but this is wrong in the way in which it would be wrong for a judge to be influenced in his judgement of innocence or guilt by the wealth and social standing of a defendant. It is a small step from this to saying, as it is said of the 'agitators' responsible for industrial unrest, that people of this kind have an *ulterior motive*. Thus, it was said of David Craig that he was 'recommending changes in the examination system as part of a larger political design'. (Council for Academic Freedom and Democracy Report, p.2)

To speak of an ulterior motive here is to mean that the matter in hand is evaluated in terms of some remote end; it is regarded as a means rather than an end in itself. But this picture may be quite inappropriate, and it may be completely misleading to see an academic's judgement of academic matters as being *influenced* by his moral and political attitudes. His personal history might show that his attitudes on academic matters came first and led to his general attitudes, but this is not the point. What matters is that the particular attitudes are constitutive of the general ones.

The analogy with the judge is a serious one, but it must be taken seriously. Judges are quite explicitly influenced in their judgement by the 'character' and 'good standing' of those in their courts, but what they count as character and good standing is not explicable in exclusively legal terms. Reforms in the educational system are not brought about by teachers as a whole, nor by teachers alone. If there is an expertise in what makes for successful education, it is not an expertise synonymous with, say, expertise in the anatomy of the human body or the human mind. Kings are kings, not philosophers.

Searle, as we have seen, suggests that the need for neutrality is connected with the purpose of the university, to disseminate knowledge, and he says that the teacher must use the classroom for this purpose, and not for indoctrination. The difficulty with this is that, although everyone may agree that it is undesirable, there may be considerable disagreement as to what constitutes political indoctrination.

A university teacher who *defended* the existing system of examinations to students would not generally be regarded in present university circles as having introduced political considerations into the classroom. Is there anyone naive enough to think that those who criticise the existing system are treated in the same way?

Searle sees that 'intellectual activity consists of far more than discovering and broadcasting a set of true propositions. It involves also the development and deployment of insight and understanding, artistic creativity, aesthetic sensibility, and moral discrimination. The development of literary tastes in one's students, for example, consists of far more than inculcating in them a set of propositions or beliefs.' (p.203) It is here that we encounter a phenomenon of the greatest importance. *People who hold radical views have political opinions; people who hold conservative views do not have political opinions at all.* The newscaster who reports on the activities of Mau-Mau or IRA 'terrorists' is not putting forward any political opinions, but a newscaster rash enough to report on the activities of the Mau-Mau or IRA freedom fighters would certainly be guilty of departing from objectivity. It is therefore the radical who is responsible for 'introducing politics' where they have no place. So it is

that David Craig was accused by the Head of his department of introducing into his English literature course 'a doctrinaire approach'; Craig was said to be dealing with 'the study of literature in its relation to society' in a 'markedly ideological way'. (Council for Academic Freedom and Democracy Report, p.1) As evidence of this was cited that two poems of protest against war had been set for analysis, the contention being that 'it would put invidious pressure on students if they had to write about left-wing literature in an exam set under the convenorship of a left-wing teacher'. (p.2) The assumption here is of course consistent with the general principle that only radicals have political opinions; for it is obvious that it will not be invidious for students to write about right-wing literature under the convenorship of right-wing teachers. Searle would agree more or less with the Head of Dr Craig's department about this. To be fair, he does not say that members of the Communist Party cannot be teachers; he regards this as being based on the fallacy of supposing that a member of the party will be serious about it. 'One might join the Communist party', Searle says, 'as a way of annoying one's stockbroker, as a practical joke on one's wife, as a way of getting cheap lodging in New York, in the hope of meeting lady FBI agents, as a means of making business contacts, or for no good reason at all, just "for the hell of it"'. And even if one did join deliberately with the intent of following the party line, one might since the time one joined have changed one's mind or lost interest in the whole enterprise.' (p.189-90) If any of these conditions prevail, Searle allows, it would be perfectly alright for a member of the Communist Party to be a teacher, though it would still be correct for a university promotions committee to inquire into whether he is 'using the classroom for indoctrination and propaganda'. (p.190)

I will not comment on the rather entertaining supposition apparently shared by Searle and the Head of the English Department at Lancaster, that members of the Communist Party are engaged in the subversion of the established order. What is more important than this is the role of the principle I have been stressing, which here takes the form of assuming that political ideas would be introduced if these were *communist* ideas. Conservative ideas, it must be understood, are simply ideas. Thus, to refer again to the example of Dr Craig, the inclusion of some of Orwell's writings is evidence that political prejudices are being brought in, but to exclude Orwell's writings is not evidence of anything. It may be difficult to see this point because of the talk of 'indoctrination' and 'propaganda'. Despite the problems that undoubtedly arise about the distinction between education and indoctrination, this is not really what is at issue. It is perfectly possible to agree that the purpose of education should be education, not indoctrination, but this will not usually deter those who wish to weed out the communist indoctrinators in the education system. I would myself wish to suggest that to speak of indoctrination is to speak, not of the ideas brought into teaching, but of the *method* by which these ideas are brought in. This is why *argument* is an essential feature of an education that distinguishes itself from indoctrination. In fact, educational institutions can usefully be evaluated by the standard of the extent to which they facilitate and do everything to encourage argument and dialogue.

It is not clear how Searle's view that the university must be politically neutral meshes with his fundamental premise that the university must serve the community. I have already indicated that 'serving the community' is not an expression whose meaning is written on its face, but it does bring out the important point that the question of political neutrality arises in many more contexts than have to do with the content of courses. Universities are large public institutions, and they interact with the community in all sorts of ways that are politically relevant. They are financed by govern-

ments, their growth and the direction of this growth is determined by governments, they take trainees from industry and the military, they buy and sell shares, they accept grants from industry, and they carry out industrial and military research. In this sphere, of course, the same principle applies as that which applies to ideas. Those interactions with the community that have a conservative effect are not political at all; they are merely the obvious and natural thing to do. Perhaps I can illustrate this graphically with a small example. On the very day that an article by me appeared in *Socialist Worker* describing the way in which the British Steel Corporation is murdering the whole community of Ebbw Vale, there also appeared on my desk a *Newsletter* of the University College of Swansea advertising a British Steel Corporation Fellowship. An application who could 'satisfy the Corporation that his project is relevant to the Corporation's activities', it said, might be awarded up to £5,000 per annum. Searle in one place suggests that political neutrality might have to do with what is not controversial according to a 'social consensus' (p.186), but this idea seems to founder on the fact that the British Steel Corporation is run by a handful of men, whereas Ebbw Vale has a population of 28,000.

Searle gives the problem of reconciling political neutrality and serving the community a curious twist by arguing for political neutrality *from* the need to serve the community. This is what he calls the 'prudential argument' for neutrality: 'the community establishes, supports, and tolerates the university ... because the university serves certain educational needs of the community. But as a specialized institution it is not entitled to alter the terms of its contract with society and still retain its rights'. (p.184) What this 'prudential argument' amounts to concretely seems to me to have a lot to do with the remark I quoted earlier, namely: where is the money to come from? To this, Searle adds that, if the university is not politically neutral, it 'will be taken over by the strongest political forces of the day'. In reality universities have already been taken over by the strongest political forces of the day. This was, however, never rape; it was always sweet surrender.

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