Differing Worldviews in Higher Education

Two Scholars Argue Cooperatively about Justice Education

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Two noted professors on opposite sides of the cultural wars come together and engage in “cooperative argumentation.” One, a “Jewish, atheist libertarian” and the other a “mixed blood American Indian” bring to the table two radically different worldviews to bear on the role of colleges and universities in studying social and ecological justice. The result is an entertaining and enlightening journey that reveals surprising connections and previously misunderstood rationales that may be at the root of a world too polarized to function sanely.

“How refreshing to read a debate between a libertarian and a progressive where the participants are not trying to one-up each other or score debating points but simply trying to present an intellectually rigorous case for their philosophy, respectfully debate their differences, learn from each other, and hopefully find common ground.”

–Dr. Ron Paul, (R) Congressman, 14th District, TX
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DEDICATION

Four Arrows thanks Chief Seattle for warning us that we would eventually learn that we cannot eat money.

Walter Block thanks Adam Smith for his invisible hand, Friedrich Hayek for his spontaneous order and Murray Rothbard for blazing the path to Austro-libertarian anarcho capitalism.

Both authors of this book would like to thank Walter Block’s Loyola University research assistants Maria Missura, Andrew Naquin and especially Michael O’Brien for help with references, proper headers, footers and pagination and other such copy editing matters.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

An Intellectual Adventure

WHAT ARE THE GOALS FOR THIS BOOK?

We two authors, one an American Indian with an Indigenous worldview and a liberal inclination (Four Arrows), the other a Jewish atheist with a Western worldview and a libertarian orientation (Walter E. Block), employ “cooperative argumentation” to accomplish what an amazon.com reviewer said about a book on this topic (Makau and Marty, 2001): “Cooperative Argumentation gets us past the fighting in debate, and moves us toward the real power that can be found in understanding someone else’s argument.” In our book, this “power in understanding” refers specifically to one of the most controversial issues in higher education- the teaching of social justice.

The specific problem we address relates to teaching for the sake of justice in the world. It is the stalemate that has essentially stifled authentic social justice education. The stalemate is a result of polemics on one side or the other that do not contribute sufficiently to real understanding. Both authors agree, although we acknowledge exceptions that will be noted later, that Silver’s (2007, pp. 535–550) central argument is largely valid. He points to the lack of historical analysis of the declared and tacit roles of higher education institutions with regard to society and social change. Although we do not intend such an analysis per se, we hope that our pursuit of truth will provide schools and teachers with a better understanding of why this topic is so controversial and what exactly the issues are so they can be better addressed in the classroom. Research in social justice education reveals a need for doing this (Kymlicka, 1998; Parker, 2001). Bickmore (2008, p. 162) states the need clearly:

The need for teachers to develop the kinds of substantial knowledge bases that can invite and guides socially critical questioning and debate is probably more important and more difficult to remedy that is often acknowledges social education research. It requires sophisticated content knowledge for teachers to handle complex topics in a student centered and open (constructively conflictual) manner in light of global diversity and justice concerns.

Simon (2001, p. 219) states that “instead of shying away from such controversy, it can serve as the motivation frame and quality control mechanism of teacher development” and we can help educators plunge headfirst into such opportunities.

Before engaging in a dialogue about our disagreements on salient matters that pertain to this goal, we realize certain foundational agreements must be shared. For one, we agree that a “pursuit of truth” is more of a commitment to conversation
than to finding some absolute premise. We thus employ Palmer’s (1998, p. 104) notion of truth in our dialogue: “truth is an eternal conversation about things that matter, conducted with passion and discipline.” We will do our best not to impose any a priori assumption about truth or validity, and will thus develop, defend or modify any position according to the “natural logic” our words convey or do not convey (Borel, 1989).

Another agreed-upon assumption is that “argumentation should be valued as the elixir of life of participatory democracy” (Eemeren, 1995, p. 144). If argumentative discussion is to be such a vital tool for managing democratic processes, it must include critical, authentic, honest and open-minded dialogue and not merely a political monologue intended to demagogue the reader. In trying to respectfully and cooperatively argue “against” one another’s position, we of course will be conscious of the impact of our statements on the reader. Our goal, however, rather than a competitive “win,” as in a debate format, is that we truly want the reader to gain as much or more understanding about the topic as we hope to garner by writing about it. In this way all of us will be better able to make action-oriented decisions about higher education and Social, Economic and Ecological Justice (SEEJ) in the real world. We realize that in forensic, scholarly and political arguments, the all too usual practice is to vehemently represent a position and not to be conciliatory. We also know that both of our strong personalities and convictions as relate to the matters at hand require that any change in our current positions will have to be hard won. We do not see this as a deterrent to our cooperative goals. The dialectical norms of cooperation and rhetorical norms of zeal can be compatible (Leff, 1999).

A third initial agreement as relates to our goals for this text is related to Coleman’s (1989, p. 197) observation that “consenting to a process is not the same thing as consenting to the outcomes of the process.” We have entered into this partnership fully aware of the large differences in our reasoning, premises, conclusions and interpretations about social and ecological justice agendas in higher education. Although we can hope to move to a third position, we neither expect for this to happen nor do we necessarily believe it to be ideal.

Our fourth initial agreement is about an operational definition for SEEJ. This as it happens, is more difficult to do than would appear at first glance. One possible definition accepts that the ultimate vision for all three justice arenas (social, economic and ecological) relates to the pursuit of values resulting in a redistribution of economic, social and political resources. Thus, this first perspective agrees with the Environmental Protection Agency’s official definition for environmental justice as being sufficient for our definition for SEEJ in general. The EPA (n.d.) states:

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, culture, education, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair Treatment means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting
from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal environmental programs and policies.

We need only remove the word “environmental” to make this definition work sufficiently for its application to “social, economic and ecological” contexts for higher education. Thus, the first iteration of our working definition for SEEJ, adapted from the EPA, is as follows:

Social, economic and ecological justice refers to the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of laws, regulations and policies. “Fair Treatment” means that no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative consequences that result from industrial, municipal or commercial operations or the execution of local, state or federal laws or practices.

But there are difficulties here. Walter believes that this definition is compatible with the philosophical vision of people on the left side of the political spectrum, only. Four Arrows is unsure about that claim, suspecting that the concept of “fair treatment” is less political than it is a core aspect of any definition relating to the idea of “justice.” Owing to this early disagreement about a working definition for SEEJ, accompanied by an agreement between us that the reader deserves at least some agreed upon parameters for our subject matter, we commence our dialogue in this Introduction. We do so in an effort to reveal some understanding for ourselves and the reader that will allow us to move forward in addressing the chapter topics.

**Walter:** Social justice typically refers to affirmative action and non discrimination. But, in contrast, only free association is compatible with libertarianism. Here, people are free to discriminate against others on the basis of “race, color, national origin, culture, education, or income,” to say nothing of baldness, beauty (lookism), tastes in music or art or anything else under the sun. Economic justice supports egalitarianism and treating equals equally. But, in the laissez faire capitalist society, the only requirement is that no one may initiate violence against anyone else or his property. There is no necessity to treat anyone equally or fairly (assuming no fraud). Ecological justice is associated with forced recycling, prohibitions of private ownership of endangered species, and opposition to the privatization of forests, waterways, garbage dumps, etc. Whereas, again in sharp contrast, free market environmentalists analyze ecological difficulties as the result of government ownership or the tragedy of the (unowned) commons. And, it is a matter of sublime indifference whether or not “racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups, … bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal environmental programs and policies.” In the free market economy, there would not be any “negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations.” There would be, moreover, the complete absence of any “federal, state, local and tribal” governmental “programs and policies.”
How, then, to define SEEJ if the tradition approach outlined above will not suffice? One can resort to a second alternative. Here, we resort to a stipulative set of definitions: “Social justice” refers to plain old ordinary justice, only applied to social considerations; “economic justice” refers to plain old ordinary justice, only referring to economic issues; and “ecological justice” refers to plain old ordinary justice, only as it concerns environmental concerns. In this manner, we could have “baseball justice,” which, presumably, would refer to following the rules of this sport; or “music justice” which would apply to reading the score carefully, and playing the right notes. This is a bit silly, it must be conceded, because we have a perfectly good word for all of this, namely, plain old simple “justice,” and Occam’s Razor inclines us against all such multiplications of nomenclature. But, at least, this second perspective has the virtue of not offending any of the reaches of the political economic spectrum.

Four Arrows: I disagree with a number of Walter’s assertions, such as his claim that in a free market economy there are no negative environmental consequences. This reminds me of a passage in his enchanting book, Defending the Undefendable, where he says there is nothing intrinsically wrong with littering (1976, p. 110). In light of the plastic debris problem in our oceans, a “tragedy of the commons,” I hope he will come to acknowledge during the writing of this present book that unregulated production, transportation and littering is a “tragedy of the commons” related to unregulated littering (as well as to the unrestricted production of plastic in the first place) at some later point in our text! At this point I think it is more important to focus on my possible agreements with him so we can move toward a mutually agreed upon definition of our terms. I am willing to agree that social, economic and ecological justice (SEEJ) is more about the problem of initiating violence against anyone than it is about egalitarianism. Also, I am in accord with him that when we invoke SEEJ, we are merely referring to the universally accepted concept of “justice” (the “plain, old, ordinary” kind) as applied to social, economic or ecological issues. So perhaps we have already accomplished something.

Unfortunately, if our working definition of SEEJ were thus something like, “SEEJ refers to the avoidance or correction of acts of violence and the application of principles of justice to social, economic and ecological issues,” we would next have to agree on a definition for violence and a definition of “justice,” and this may also be difficult, especially if it brings us back to the concept of “fair treatment” on which Walter and I disagree.

Beginning with defining violence, figuratively speaking, it is often equated with injustice and there we go again, as in “doing violence to the truth.” Webster’s Online Dictionary is equally ambiguous and defines violence as “injury by or as if by distortion, infringement or profanation” in addition to the “exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse (n.d.).”

The Violence Prevention Alliance of the World Health Organization defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm,
maldevelopment, or deprivation.” It also refers to “collective violence” as “violence committed by larger groups of individuals and can be subdivided into social, political and economic violence (n.d.).”

Finally, I refer to Silverstein’s (1971, p. 67) idea that people can suffer the effects of violence without “any change in the present situation, without any overt, physical action taking place.” He was referring to “status-quo” policies such as Jim Crow laws, etc.

So I ask Walter, if we accept as a working definition what I suggested, i.e. that SEEJ refers to the avoidance or correction of acts of violence and the application of principles of justice as related to social, economic and ecological issues,” can he generally accept the possibilities above for defining the notions of violence and justice? I am willing to interpret the concepts implied by SEEJ as more about a process that can be best addressed on a case by case basis than in terms of a black and white definition. But in my judgment it must at least relate to a lack of violence and an application of justice that includes the ideas conveyed in the definitions generally associated with these two terms (violence and justice).

Walter: I greatly appreciate Four Arrow’s characterization of my book Defending as “enchanting.” That book has been reviewed many a time without that adjective ever being applied to it. I will reserve discussion of what I meant there about littering, plastics in the oceans, the tragedy of the commons, government regulations and other environmental issues, until we reach the chapter of the present book that deals with these issues.

I agree full well, and enthusiastically so, with Four Arrow’s contention that justice is intimately and negatively related to violence. At this point, I must throw a compliment his way. Initially I opposed placing a discussion of SEEJ definitions in this introduction. I thought we were so far apart that we should reserve our analysis of it to a later chapter, where we could adopt far more adversarial stances. But, he asked me to be patient, try it his way, and see if we couldn’t come to some sort of accord. He felt it important to at least define what we would be doing, at the outset. I complied with his request. I am surprised, I must admit, but glad I followed his lead in this regard, for now, with this equation of justice and lack of initiatory violence, I really think we have achieved his goal. I still maintain that this is a stipulative definition, not a reportive one, but we can more closely examine these issues later in the book.

Challenges to SEEJ definitions have been and continue to be the starting point for disagreements about whether or not higher education should be in the business of promoting it. Volumes have been written about justice and social justice and we have no intention here of revisiting this literature, at least not in this introduction. Suffice it to say that we are fully aware that some, such as Hayek (1978, p. 69–70), believe that:

In a system in which each is allowed to use his knowledge for his own purposes the concept of ‘social justice’ is necessarily empty and meaningless, because in it nobody’s will can determine the relative incomes of the different people, or prevent that they be partly dependent on accident.
We are equally aware that others, like those members of the Council of Europe believe SEEJ is sufficiently understood so as to make it a priority for higher education. According to Harkavy and Huber (2007, p. 167):

We subscribe to the responsibility of higher education to foster citizen commitment to sustainable public policies and actions that go beyond considerations of individual benefits. We accept our responsibility to safeguard democracy and promote a democratic culture by supporting and advancing within higher education as well as society at large, the principles of democratic and accountable structures, processes and practices; active democratic citizenship; human rights, mutual respect and social justice; environmental and social sustainability, dialogue and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

However, we believe our definition allows for both opposing positions to make their arguments. Novak (n.d.), whose conservative views tend to support Hayek’s concerns, would appear to accept our definition as “ideologically neutral”:

Social justice rightly understood is a specific habit of justice that is “social” in two senses. First, the skills it requires are those of inspiring, working with, and organizing others to accomplish together a work of justice. The second characteristic of “social justice rightly understood” is that it aims at the good of the city, not at the good of one agent only. One happy characteristic of this definition of the virtue of social justice is that it is ideologically neutral. It is as open to people on the left as on the right or in the center. Its field of activity may be literary, scientific, religious, political, economic, cultural, athletic, and so on, across the whole spectrum of human social activities. The virtue of social justice allows for people of good will to reach different—even opposing—practical judgments about the material content of the common good (ends) and how to get there (means). Such differences are the stuff of politics.

THE BOOK’S FORMAT

For each chapter we engage one particular topic that generally falls under the umbrella of SEEJ. We will attempt to understand the other’s position and make whatever concessions to each other of which we may be convinced. We will interpret each other’s writing in the most sympathetic manner possible. We will assume good intentions on the part of the other guy. One of us will begin by offering our opinion along with some initial reasons and arguments for it. We will then engage in our dialogue. For balance, we will take turns in starting out the chapters, and ending them.

This, at least, is the process we foresee in the writing of this book. But, as anyone who has ever written anything (and this includes shopping lists, too) knows full well, “there is always a slip between cup and lip”: the procedure of putting words on paper is a creative one. Issues arise while this occurs that may (or may not) alter initial intentions.
INTRODUCTION

In another book by Four Arrows, *Counter-Friction* (2011), issues pertaining to social and ecological justice in higher education are addressed in terms of power, politics and grassroots transformations of schools. In this book, we address the controversial subject matter that connects universities to the world at large in a way that allows the reader to understand the polarities that keep us from solving the crises we all face.

We hope and trust, gentle reader, that you will enjoy reading our feeble, but best efforts at moving us that proverbial millionth of an inch closer to the Truth, whatever that is. We two authors have taken a chance with each other; we come from widely disparate parts of the political economic spectrum and yet have cooperated in this venture. If we can indeed attain that goal, perhaps it will pave the way for more such cooperation in future.

*Four Arrows, aka Don Trent Jacobs*

*Walter E. Block*
CHAPTER 2

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Four Arrows’ Initial Position: I believe academic freedom is vital if state hegemony and its oppression are to ever be challenged so students can emerge from schooling prepared to think critically and participate reasonably in helping to achieve and maintain a relatively healthy world.

Walter’s Initial Position: Academic freedom is a useless concept, generally used to rationalize socialistic teaching (indoctrination) endeavors.

Walter: Academic freedom is a snare and a delusion. It is evidence of the insolence and gall of some academics. Those who favor it set themselves up for a fall. Why is there only such a thing as “academic freedom,” and no “plumber’s freedom,” or “taxi-cab driver’s freedom,” etc. Are only university professors deserving of “freedom”? Surely not. Forgetting for the moment whether we should favor this concept or not, what, literally, does it mean? Well, if it means anything, and it is unclear as to whether it does or not, it would appear to imply that the academic can do in class exactly what he wishes to do; otherwise, he is hardly “free.” (By analogy, plumber’s freedom would mean that the plumber, not the homeowner, would choose the type of facilities to be installed; tax driver’s freedom would enable the driver, not the customer, to determine the destination of the trip.)

Webster’s New World College Dictionary defines the term as the “freedom of a teacher or student to hold and express views without fear of arbitrary interference by officials (n.d.).” But the weasel word, here, is “arbitrary.” No one would think that academic freedom gives a physicist the right to teach Shakespeare, or, a literary scholar justification to hold forth on planetary movements.

May either of them, properly, address issues such as the justice of the U.S. role in Viet Nam, Afghanistan or Iraq? It is unclear as to whether this definition can shed any light on the matter. Perhaps, then, the phrase should not be taken so literally. Historically, “academic freedom” issues were highlighted during the McCarthy period, when professors were dismissed for discussing in a positive manner, or promoting, any idea opposed by those in power at the time. For example, consider this episode that occurred at Duke University. Hornell N. Hart, a Professor of Sociology there, published an essay entitled, “McCarthy versus the State Department,” against which Senator Joseph McCarthy took issue. He demanded that Duke squelch this publication. However, the president of that university, Arthur Hollis Edens (n.d.), wrote in response:

It is axiomatic in University circles that a Professor has the right to pursue research investigations of his choice. So far as Professor Hart’s work is
concerned, it will have to stand on its own merits and be measured by the rigid standards of truth, accuracy, sound scholarship and good taste, to which the works of all scholars are subjected.

But, this cannot literally be true. Surely Edens would not have supported sociologist Hart, if the latter insisted on holding forth about chemistry, or economics, or music theory, instead of sticking to his own field of sociology, for the teaching of which, presumably, he was hired.

Wherein does justice lie, in all of this? In my view, academic freedom should be seen as a matter of contract. Assume all universities, schools, are private, for simplicity’s sake if no other (For the libertarian, all public institutions of learning are per se unjust, in that they are financed through compulsory levies, e.g., taxes.). Suppose there was a Marxist or fundamentalist Christian college. Presumably, the overwhelming majority of its professoriate would be hired in order to promote that way of looking at the world and analyzing it. That is, the instructors would all be Marxists or fundamentalist Christians. (Possibly, each institution would want a bit of intellectual diversity represented on its faculty, just to keep students on their toes, but that would be strictly up to them, in the free or just society). Posit that the school hired a Marxist, and wanted him to teach Marxist economics. But, after he had been tenured, he converted to free enterprise, and desired to offer that perspective to his students, instead. The doctrine of “academic freedom” would give him the right to do precisely that. However, his contract with the Marxist administration would cut exactly in the opposite direction. Which is more just?

Obviously, the contract, here, would trump any so called “academic freedom.” If this academic wishes to profess Austro-libertarianism, and thus support laissez faire capitalism, that is, of course his right. But not on the property of the Marxist University, and not in direct contravention of his contract with their administration. And the same goes, without any doubt, were the professor in question to switch from Austro-libertarianism to Marxism, or from fundamentalist Christianity to atheism, or to anything else other than the religious doctrine for the purpose of which he was hired to introduce his students. To insist that the atheist has a right, the “academic freedom,” to propound this doctrine at Fundamentalist Christian University is as silly as to say that the cab driver has the right to take the customer where he wants to go, and not to the destination of the man who flags down the taxi.

The only exception to this general rule that I can see is the case where the university hires a professor to “engage in his academic freedom wherever it leads him.” This may or may not come with the side order condition that the academic, at least, has to stick to his own area of interest and, presumably, expertise.

Should institutions of higher learning be in the business of teaching, exploring, studying justice, whether “social” or not? Of course they may, if they so desire. Such a decision in no way contravenes the twin libertarian axioms of non aggression and property rights, based on homesteading and legitimate title transfer (Nozick, 1974; Rothbard, 1973, 1982). Would it best be done only within a few narrowly limited academic departments (e.g., religion, philosophy), or should the topic be researched all throughout the curriculum? This is roughly equivalent, for the libertarian, to asking whether restaurants should feature red, blue or no tablecloths. The answer to
the latter question is, Allow each eatery to decide this question for itself, and then the market will, presumably, pass judgment on their decisions through the profit and loss system. A similar analysis applies to the teaching industry. Each university should decide that issue for itself, and then sink or swim, at least to some extent, on the basis of it.

One argument for ranging widely on issues of (social) justice is that most academic subjects at least impinge upon it to some degree. For example, in music, there arises the question of the justice of copyright; in mathematics and the physical sciences, the propriety of working for imperialistic powers; in engineering and computer science, the legitimacy of patents; in history and English literature, the issue of plagiarism. Similarly, numerous ethical issues arise in economics (is the minimum wage law that disproportionately unemploys young black males to be considered immoral?; in law (should those responsible for the deaths emanating from the prohibition of drugs and markets in used body parts – Barnett, 1988– be dealt with as murderers?), in sociology (is the male – female wage gap due to capitalist exploitation, or to asymmetric gender roles in the home which are voluntarily chosen?).

On the other hand, it is the rare mathematician, chemist, musician, astronomer, etc., who has any but the most rudimentary and superficial training, or expertise in these matters. Allowing professors to deal with complex ethical issues runs the risk of allowing the blind to lead the blind.

My claim is that it is all but impossible to come to any definitive a priori conclusion on this matter. All the more reason, then, for the marketplace, and the institutions of economic freedom, to sort it out.

*Four Arrows*: Walter essentially puts forward one main argument against the concept of academic freedom and, implied by the context of our book’s subject matter, against the use of academic freedom to promote social and ecological justice in the classroom. He refers to the problem of arbitrariness in both defining and implementing academic freedom. For example, he believes it should be clear that a faculty hired by a religious university should not teach that which opposes the vision of that institution. He declares “no one would think that academic freedom gives a physicist the right to teach Shakespeare, or, a literary scholar justification to hold forth on planetary movements” and that neither should address issues such as the U.S. role in Iraq or Viet Nam. Ultimately, Walter contends that since no employee should have the freedom to do other than what his or her employer intended, it is best for “economic freedom” to ultimately sort out what is taught and how in higher education, implying that there is no rule or law called “academic freedom” that should circumvent the free market.

I’m sure Walter will correct me if I am misinterpreting his words, but I think I am close enough to continue with an argument that I think reveals my understanding of his while at the same time offers not so much a rebuttal but a solution that dovetails his view with mine, if this is possible.

First, allow me to point out that Webster’s use of “arbitrary” may not be such a “weasel word” as Walter contends. His black and white view that a physicist cannot teach Shakespeare, nor visa versa, etc., does not allow for the legitimate arbitrariness
inherent in good, creative research and teaching. For example, Eric Lewin Altschuler (1998) explains, in a piece entitled, “Searching for Shakespeare in the Stars,” how Shakespeare’s frequent references to and knowledge of the physical sciences could shed light on controversies over his authorship of certain plays. I could see both a good teacher of Shakespeare as well as a fine physics instructor employ a related interdisciplinary study to inform and motivate students about either topic. I think, Walter, excellent teacher that he is, will also see this possibility. This, in my view, is the kind of arbitrary dynamics in academic freedom the dictionary referenced. It is the same theory that allows Walter to teach contrary to his own university’s vision and mission statements in support of his own version of social justice.

Similarly, academic freedom allows both the physicist and the literature professor to teach their topics while at the same time stimulating critical inquiry regarding the U.S. role in Iraq or Viet Nam. There are many parallels to wars in Shakespeare’s time that could shed light on interpretations of this poet’s words and plots and morals, for example. And if the university vision statement endorsed social justice, I contend it would be a duty of the creative professor to find a way to marry an area of specialization to an exploration about whether or not the invasion of Iraq would have been a “just war” in the eyes of Shakespeare or not. Such possibilities challenge Walter’s declaration that Eden’s claim that a professor has a right to pursue research or teaching as he or she sees fit “cannot literally be true.”

On the other hand, I find myself both understanding and agreeing with the essence of Walter’s primary argument. He believes that the employment contract should “trump” the professor’s rights. Keeping focused on our task to illuminate reasonable considerations about the role of higher education in promoting social, economic and ecological justice in the world, I would modify my support of academic freedom with the contingency that it exists if it relates to the vision statement. I believe that a professor within a college or university should not only be allowed to pursue SEEJ as he or she sees fit, but that the instructor, administration, students and staff have a duty to do so, but if and only if two conditions exist:

1. The institution’s vision statement directly asserts or indirectly implies an honouring of the greater public good or the well-being of every person.
2. The ideas presented are or can be relevant to a particular course and allow for, even encourage, alternative and critical perspectives.

Both stipulations are supported by the “Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure” published by the American Association of University Professors in 1940; these remain a part of the AAUP precepts even today. The Statement aligns with the first stipulation as follows:

Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject.

My second stipulation for respecting academic freedom is addressed in the same section:

Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment.
Walter has told us that people should be free to discriminate against others. He objects, apparently, to the notion of academic freedom because it does not allow employers to dismiss faculty for not doing what the employer wants. He (1976, p. 51) has claimed that the colleges and universities allow its faculty:

The freedom to teach the subject matter in whatever form the academic wishes to teach it, despite any wishes to the contrary his employer may harbor. Therefore, “academic freedom” prohibits the employer from firing the teacher as long as he teaches the subject matter, no matter how objectionable the teaching is.

My two conditions would seem to solve this problem. Unless Walter (1976, 52) resorts to the kinds of examples he jokingly (?) used to represent degrees to which he contends academics violate principles of professionalism, such as a cartoon about a professor who uses academic freedom to defend teaching that John Wayne is the “father of NATO,” I cannot imagine a reasonable counter-argument if academic freedom is contingent on my two stipulations. Using the essence of a vision/mission statement might be a starting place if we can agree on a more reasonable conclusion about the majority of higher education faculty being capable of determining how to meet the vision statement via his or her field. Then it would follow that we could agree that the instructor would have the freedom teach about SEEJ and even advocate it, as long as scholarship includes alternative views and primary source research that engage students in critically understanding.

Since this interpretation of higher education vision statements might be considered a possible point of weakness in my argument, allow me to give an example to show how difficult it would be to honestly misinterpret a vision statement enough to claim it does not advocate a mission in behalf of the greater public good or in behalf of all citizens equally. My illustration below uses the vision statement of the University of Georgia. I believe it represents a more conservative wording than exists in many institutions of higher education, yet it is still obvious that social justice is relevant to it. In the following example, I have underlined the phrase that I claim relates to the promotion of SEEJ as we have defined it in our introduction.

Vision Statement: The University System of Georgia will create a more educated Georgian, well prepared for a global, technological society, by providing first-rate undergraduate and graduate education, leading-edge research, and committed public service.

Since public service is to promote the benefit of the public, not of one segment of it only, I contend that the concept of fair treatment is inherent in the idea. Thus a SEEJ agenda would be appropriate for this university. The Mission Statement further supports this contention.

Mission Statement: The mission of the University System of Georgia is to contribute to the educational, cultural, economic, and social advancement of
Georgia by providing excellent undergraduate general education and first-rate programs leading to associate, baccalaureate, masters, professional, and doctorate degrees; by pursuing leading-edge basic and applied research, scholarly inquiry, and creative endeavors; and by bringing these intellectual resources, and those of the public libraries, to bear on the economic development of the State and the continuing education of its citizens.

Each institution in the University System of Georgia will be characterized by “Cultural, ethnic, racial, and gender diversity in the faculty, staff, and student body, supported by practices and programs that embody the ideals of an open, democratic, and global society. (See http://www.usg.edu/regents/vision_mission_goals/)

These words refer to all of Georgia and all of its citizens, thus the “greater good” and “fair treatment” that are inferred. It even goes so far as to mention cultural, ethnic, racial and gender diversity in the university and it would be wrongheaded to believe such goals would not be applicable to the larger society. Finally, it supports the “ideals” of a democratic society. Admittedly, this concept is surrounded by controversy and interpretation, but we can get a good sense of U of G’s meaning for it via its vision and mission statements.

Few college or university vision statements are obviously neutral about making the world a better place for all. The University of California’s mission statement, which seems to do its best to remain neutral, still refers to the goal of working toward “improvements in the quality of life (n.d.)” and no serious investigator would be able to prove that the intention did not apply to all people equally.

I hope to learn through Walter’s response how his position and mine might have common ground. Academic freedom is an important concept according to most universities, most faculty and students, and most Supreme Court rulings. When it is ignored, at best, faculty risk losing tenure or failing to gain promotion. At worst are the many historical and contemporary international examples of imprisonment and death to those professors whose work challenges state or corporate hegemony. I hope we can all make room for subjectivity in higher education that is based on reason, reflection on experience, dialogue and primary source research. This means moving beyond the illusion of “the myth of objectivity” that is often used to curtail academic freedom and maintain the status quo. David Horowitz’s book, Indoctrination U.: The Left’s War Against Academic Freedom, is but one of many examples of using the cover of the myth of objectivity to prevent this kind of examination of the status quo:

For academic radicals who hope to “change the world,” teaching is not a disinterested intellectual inquiry but a form of political combat. The banner of this combat is “social justice,” the emblem that signifies to the post-Communist left the triumph of the oppressed over the oppressors (Horowitz, 2007, p. xxvi).

Bias exists and facts never speak for themselves. Our preconceptions, assumptions, values and politics are part of the lens through which we see the world (Clouser, 1991). The goals of academic freedom are to help assure that these things are exposed, realized, discussed, and, eventually, based on scholarship. If truth is, as Parker Palmer’s quote in the Introduction states - “an eternal conversation about
things that matter, conducted with passion and discipline,” then the lack of authenticity behind “disinterested intellectual inquiry” will not likely allow anyone to come close to it.

Walter ended his opening statement with his claim that “it is all but impossible to come to any definitive a priori conclusion on this matter.” I assert that this supports Webster’s reference to arbitrariness and the need to have institutions of learning where creative inquiry exists for the sake of new knowledge. I end with a quote from the original 1915 statement of the AAUP that has withstood the test of time. In a world where violence against nature and others is widespread and new creative solutions are largely absent, I think it is worth another read.

Higher education should be an intellectual experiment station, where new ideas may germinate and where their fruit, though still distasteful to the community as a whole, may be allowed to ripen until finally, perchance, it may become a part of the accepted intellectual food of the nation or of the world (AAUP, 1915, 1940).

**Walter:** A minor clarification: Four Arrows attributes to me the view that “no employee should have the freedom to do other than what his or her employer intended.” The way I see matters, it is not that the employer dictates to the employee, or, even the other way around; rather, a contract between them embodies the view of both of them. The bargaining process between the two of them should determine what the professor teaches.

As for Four Arrows’ point about “Searching for Shakespeare in the Stars,” yes, there is such a thing as interdisciplinarity. I have no doubt that, to take an example from my own discipline, an economist specializing in the sub field of law and economics could indeed teach a course in law; and, also, a law professor with some background in the dismal science could do a pretty good job at this course as well. But, it seems to stretch matters quite a bit to suppose that a man with a Ph.D. in literature, and perhaps no physics courses at all, could be a good instructor in that science, and the opposite holds as well. I go further: if there were a private university that mixed and matched in this manner, and did such things all throughout its curriculum, I predict it would soon go broke, and good riddance to it, too.

I cannot see my way clear to agreeing with Four Arrows’ claim that “both the physicist and the literature professor (could) teach their topics while at the same time stimulating critical inquiry into the U.S. role in Iraq or Viet Nam.” It seems to me that this claim fails to take into account the complexity of foreign policy, and the importance of specialization and the division of labor in all matters, certainly including the intellectual. In order to be a good physicist, one must carefully study this discipline. That leaves precious time to acquaint oneself with the niceties of war in the middle or Far East. It is not for nothing that LeBron James is a lousy cellist, and Michael Phelps cannot play the clarinet at all. The former spends most of his professional time pursuing basketball, and the latter is a denizen of the swimming pool. How could these athletes possibly be highly skilled in these musical pursuits, too? Why should academics be any different? Of course, this is not to say that some, few, academics, may be expert in fields for which they have no credentials.
They might well have carefully studied these other disciplines. I am, after all, merely making a generalization, which certainly admits of exceptions. However, I join with Four Arrows, and enthusiastically so, when he underscores the importance of contract. But, I fear, he takes most or all of this back when he says:

Simply put, I believe that a professor within a college or university should not only be allowed to pursue SEEJ as he or she sees fit, but that the instructor, administration, students and staff have a duty to do so, but if and only if two conditions exist: The institution’s vision statement directly asserts or indirectly implies an honouring of the greater public good or the well-being of every person. The ideas presented are or can be relevant to a particular venue and allow for, even encourage, alternative and critical perspectives.

First, this should be up to the contract, should it not? Yes, if this agreement requires all professors to promote social justice, then, indubitably, they should do so. But, surely, the market place would reject an institution that weighs down mathematics professors with the obligation to focus on SEEJ. Second, it seems likely that the math instructor can better promote human well-being by sticking to his expertise, than by waxing on about areas far removed from his specialty. Further, I do not agree that there is or can be anything such as the “public good.” In my view, there are only private goods.

Four Arrows goes on to support the “Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure” published by the American Association of University Professors in 1940:

Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject.

My question is, How can this be made to square with the idea of contract? University X may have signed a contract with Professor Y to the effect that he may, and indeed is encouraged to lecture about matters that have “no relation to his subject.” The marketplace may well reject an institution of higher learning with such a policy, but that is entirely a separate matter. Surely, X and Y have a right to sign such a contract.

As well, I see as problematic the other clause, regarding freedom of professors to discuss their subjects. In the regard, an interesting issue has arisen in Canadian higher education. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has criticized Trinity Western University in British Columbia, for requiring all faculty to sign a statement of Christian faith as a pre-condition of employment. Here, “Teachers are not entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject,” contrary to the “Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure” of the AAUP.

According to the executive director of CAUT, his organization’s condemnation of any school which enforces a religious loyalty oath “is not about faculty having to sign a statement of faith before being hired. A university is meant as a place to explore ideas, not to create disciples of Christ (Gilbert, 2010).” Sez him. Who is he
and his organization to impose his views on two contracting parties, Trinity Western University (TWU), and the scholars who sign on to its policies? That agreement is a capitalist act between consenting adults, and ought not to be abrogated by CAUT, an outside party (Of course, to the extent that CAUT sees itself as a private certification body, it should be free to condemn any policy not to its liking, and to inform others of its determinations). Nor is this type of threat without barbs. Until the Supreme Court of Canada intervened on TWU’s behalf, the B.C. College of Teachers – a sister organization to CAUT at least in terms of philosophy – removed TWU’s accreditation; its graduates were not allowed to teach in provincial high schools due to the supposed “anti-homosexual agenda” of its curriculum; that is, its Christian philosophy. While an avowedly Christian University such as TWU will of course “encourage alternative and critical perspectives” on some issues, it will most certainly not do so on others. Is that its right? Of course it is, the AAUP’s “Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure” to the contrary notwithstanding.

Thus, Four Arrows and I cannot at all “agree that the instructor would have the freedom teach about SEEJ and even advocate it, as long as scholarship includes alternative views and primary source research that engage students in critically understanding.” This would be in direct contravention of the contract TWU has made with its faculty, and it is entirely just that this Christian institution of higher learning have precisely that right.

I must also take issue with Four Arrows’ statement to the effect that teaching be in “behalf of all citizens equally,” and support “public service … to promote the benefit of the public, not of one segment of it only.” The mission of TWU, and other religiously oriented colleges, is to promote the welfare of a narrow segment of the overall population. Is it not just that it be allowed to do so? Why should this firm be forced to serve everyone, let alone “equally”? In the free society, no restaurant, steel mill or grocery is concerned with the entire population; only with their own customers.

Four Arrows weighs in on behalf of “cultural, ethnic, racial and gender diversity” and democracy. I have great difficulty with all of these concepts, at least when they are forced down the throats of those who are unwilling to embrace them. There are institutions of higher learning that reject all of them. On what ground are we to say them nay? Suppose I were to start up Blockhead University, and limit its faculty and student body to people of only one homogeneous “cultural, ethnic, racial and gender” category. I do so with my own honestly earned money. I reject the notion that to do so would be unjust. And, as for democracy, I accept this institution if there is unanimous agreement to vote in the first place, as in the case of a voluntary club, or condominium association. But this does not at all apply to any polity that people didn’t agree to join in the first place, and must thus be rejected as unjust. There is, after all, such a thing as the tyranny of the majority. Further, Hitler came to power through democratic means; so much for democracy. (For a thorough going critique of this institution, see Hoppe, 2001.)

As for “faculty being subtly threatened with not getting tenure or promotions,” the overwhelming majority of such cases concern conservative and libertarian
professors being booted out of the academy for not toeing the “social justice” line on such things as socialism, cultural, ethnic, racial and gender diversity, and democracy. The Horowitz book, I think, is highly accurate in its assessment of this situation.

Four Arrows ends his section of this chapter with the following quote:

It should be an intellectual experiment station, where new ideas may germinate and where their fruit, though still distasteful to the community as a whole, may be allowed to ripen until finally, perchance, it may become a part of the accepted intellectual food of the nation or of the world (AAUP, 1915, 1940).

My own reaction to this statement is that I would like to attend a university, whether as student or faculty member, that embodied this goal. But I know of no cases where this ideal is actually respected. However, I think it a matter of elemental justice that universities, such as the religiously oriented, that explicitly reject this viewpoint, also be allowed to operate.

Four Arrows: I concede that I may have overemphasized the interdisciplinary opportunity to teach SEEJ in courses not generally associated with it. I was only trying to demonstrate to Walter that it could be done and should be attempted if so doing does not detract from the main course objectives and if the school’s vision statement so warrants. Of course it would be inappropriate if a music teacher spent more time teaching about social justice than about notes, clefs and rhythm, given that the music oriented goals for the class would then be compromised. I also agree with Walter that the professor of music would likely have minimal expertise in social or ecological justice issues. However, not subscribing to the expert, top-down “sage on the stage” model of teaching, and preferring the “guide on the side” collaboration model, I do not worry too much about a lack of expertise in SEEJ. Research of primary source documents and good teaching can enhance a student’s learning about SEEJ if a master teacher, in any field, properly connects SEEJ to his or her course. There is a great difference between being a good physicist and a good teacher of physics. In any case, I did not mean to imply that any blending of one’s field of instruction with SEEJ awareness should be the mainstay of a course that is not normally an alignment with such issues and I concede this point to Walter.

Walter also takes issue with my statement to the effect that teaching be in “behalf of all citizens equally,” and support “public service … to promote the benefit of the public, not of one segment of it only.” He asks the question, “If the mission of TWU, and other religiously oriented colleges, is to promote the welfare of a narrow segment of the overall population, is it not just that it be allowed to do so? However, he seems to have missed my entire point, that if the institution’s vision statement supports a religious mission, then it is entirely acceptable for professors to act in accord with it. On the other hand, if the vision statement of the university upholds an SEEJ agenda, then this too would be justified. Walter’s position thus implies that he agrees with my claim that vision or mission statements ought to be the determining factor in whether or not a university target SEEJ goals. So my answer to his question is, Yes. It is just that a university be allowed, even encouraged to follow its vision or mission statement. It follows that if such a statement promotes the
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general welfare of the citizenry or specifically refers to social or ecological well-being or justice, then so be it. So it seems, at this point, that Walter and I are in agreement on this vital point!

Before I move to my most important concern with Walter’s position, I wish to challenge his claim that the “overwhelming majority of such cases concerns conservative and libertarian professors being booted out of the academy for not toeing the social justice lines.” I just spent about 20 minutes on both the Wilson database and Google searching cases in which teachers were fired for their political views. I grant that most of these incidents related to K-12 education but I also submit that the same forces exist in higher education. I found only two conservative teachers who were dismissed. Both of these cases related to Christian fundamentalist teachers. There were fourteen situations in which a teacher had been fired for promoting anti-establishment perspectives, such as teaching students to think critically about war, family planning, homophobia, Christian fundamentalism and even one for showing movies with a liberal slant. I would think this finding would be supported by any serious student of educational history. Censorship of and sanctions against those teachers who have challenged a state’s agenda or the dominant group’s ideology have always been at risk, not just in the U.S., but throughout the world. I must respectfully ask Walter to offer evidence for his claim or that of Horowitz, even if it is necessary for us both to create an annotated bibliography of citations to support our opposing notions. Most professors or teachers in public schools are threatened when they attempt education that challenges state hegemony worldwide. The loss of academic freedom continues to result in many people being imprisoned for teaching students to think critically in ways that can challenge those in power. I beseech Walter to acknowledge such “liberal” teaching is far more likely to lead to problems than teaching “conservative” or status quo perspectives alone! Or, at least, help me better understand his claims and thinking in this regard for clarification to me and our readers.

Although I feel more emotion about the aforementioned topic, the more important question has to do with my position that a vision statement is a contract of sorts that provides the basis for a faculty teaching goals. As I said, I agree with Walter that “Blockhead University,” has a right as a private institution to have its own agenda, but it is the vision statement that is more likely to advertise the owner’s purpose than individual employment contracts. I said a teacher would have a responsibility to address SEEJ if it was relevant to the course of study and if “the institution’s vision statement directly asserts or indirectly implies an honouring of the greater public good or the well-being of every person.” Moving on to Walter’s question, “this should be up to the contract, should it not?” I have to ask him why he seems to be ignoring my contingency relating to the vision and mission statements? I can only assume that, in spite of his own example relating to the religious school being able to adhere to its principles based on a mission statement, he feels the employment contract is a necessary requirement. Perhaps he sees no connection between the vision and mission and the school’s employment contract? I looked at a number of faculty employment contracts online. Most made no mention of the vision statement per se; however many required that the institution’s rules and
regulations be followed. I did find one that specifically required a commitment to the university’s “vision statement and core values.” Nonetheless, since most employment contracts are not that detailed about anything relating to curriculum, it would seem that following the university vision statement would, at least in spirit, come close enough to Walter’s regard for employment contract to warrant some concession to my stipulations.

If Walter’s only reluctance to take cognizance of the implied contractual relevance of the vision and mission statement to a faculty’s employment contract relates to his belief that there cannot be anything such as the public good and that “there are only private goods,” then in our next chapter about a university’s SEEJ obligations relating to the environment I will ask him if he believes the commons, e.g., fresh air, clean water, unpolluted rivers and oceans, public parks, etc., should be considered merely “private goods.” To dismiss my idea that academic freedom to teach should be dependent on the goals of a university or college vision statement’s reference to the “public good” because he believes there should only be private goods, is a topic of vital concern. However, since most public goods or commons relate to our natural resources, I can delay this conversation until our next chapter.

I close with a reiteration of my important questions for Walter’s clarification or perhaps a modification of a position or phrasing:

1. Does he truly believe that more conservative oriented educators are fired, censored, imprisoned, killed or otherwise intimidate than liberal ones, now and throughout history and if so, can he support his position? (Truly, I must say I dislike the labels, “right and left” and “conservative and liberal” and hope we can do our best to avoid using them in the future.)

2. How far away is Walter’s reliance on a faculty’s employment contract from my stipulation relating to the institution’s vision and mission statements, regardless of whether the actual signed contract refers to them?

3. And, for the next chapter, can he explain why the commons cannot exist or be for the benefit of the public good?

Walter: Four Arrows says it would be inappropriate for a music professor to spend more time teaching about social justice than music. In my view, this need not necessarily be “inappropriate.” It all depends upon the contract between university and professor. If the school really believes in academic freedom, and interprets this in the manner I have been doing, then the music teach may indeed properly address the issues of justice, or physics, or whatever. I only cast doubt on the economic viability of a college that allows this sort of thing.

I have never heard it expressed in quite this manner before, but, I certainly am an advocate of the “sage on the stage” model of teaching rather than the “guide on the side” collaboration scenario. If I want to learn how to speak Spanish, or to do a heart transplant, or engage in chemical experiments, I would vastly prefer to be taught by someone who knows full well what they are doing, who can get up on the “stage” and pontificate, who will not merely “collaborate” with me, a mere ignoramus on these (and many other) subjects. Thus, I do worry quite a bit about
a lack of expertise in justice issues on the part of the expert in physics, or music. But, I certainly agree with Four Arrows, and enthusiastically so, that there is a “great difference between being a ‘good physicist’ and a good teacher of physics.”

My co author takes me to task for saying that the “overwhelming majority of such cases concerns conservative and libertarian professors being booted out of the academy for not toeing the social justice lines.” Much to my dismay, I fear he is in the right, and I, in the wrong. I thus stand corrected by him on this matter. I have no evidence to buttress this claim of mine. What I should have said, instead, is that the reason it is so difficult to find evidence of conservative and libertarian professors being booted out of the academy is because there are so few of them there in the first place. In other words, it is not the case that those who do not toe the left-liberal line on social justice are first allowed into the professoriate, and then dismissed from it. Rather, they are not even offered entry, at the outset. The evidence for this is very clear, and, indeed, overwhelming, whether measured in terms of viewpoints of the faculty, or their financial contributions, or invitees to graduation ceremonies (Spartacus, 2004, 2005; Kennedy, 2005; Miron, 2006, Conservapedia, 2010, Karni, 2007; Horowitz, 2003). For example, according the left liberal-biased New York Times: “The ratio of Democratic to Republican professors ranged from 3 to 1 among economists to 30 to 1 among anthropologists.” Support for the Democratic Party is a reasonably good proxy for adherence to left liberal viewpoints, as is association with the Republican Party evidence of a right wing or conservative philosophy. This leaves out libertarians, who are usually (Ron Paul is an exception) linked with neither party. A similar disparity exists in departments of sociology, philosophy, history, religion, political science, and an even greater bias exists in feminist studies, black studies, queer studies, multicultural studies. And, according to Klein, “Screened out, expelled or self-sorted, they tend to land outside of academia because the crucial decisions — awarding tenure and promotions, choosing which papers get published — are made by colleagues hostile to their political views (Blog from the Core, 2004).” In the view of Rothman, Nevitte and Lichter (2005) this phenomenon is by no means limited to social scientist and liberal arts professors; it has infected the hard sciences as well: “three out of four biologists and computer scientists now place themselves to the left of center, as do about two thirds of mathematicians, chemists, and physicists.” According to the findings of these authors, the rot afflicts physicists by a ten to one ratio of Democrats to Republicans.

I really do not see how it can be denied that the university campus (my knowledge of the K-12 situation in this regard is inadequate; I bow to Four Arrows’ superior information in this realm) is almost an entirely owned branch plant of the left. What happened to Larry Summers, former president of Harvard, is very instructive, and is but the tip of the iceberg. For merely speculating about the possibility of male-female discrepancies in mathematics and physics accomplishments stemming even partially from the biological make up of human beings, he was drummed off campus. A lesser well known bit of evidence for this contention emanates from yet another highly prestigious university. According to Simon:

Early last year Yale University returned a $20 million gift from alumnus Lee Bass rather than honor his request that the money be used for a course of studies
in Western civilization. The incident spoke volumes about the intellectual and moral bankruptcy that has swept the U.S. academic community. Yale is so strapped for cash it has had to defer $1 billion in maintenance and has closed two departments. Yet, the school apparently would rather turn its back on $20 million than offend the forces of “political correctness” and offer a course in the civilization that gave it birth (1996, p. 21; see also Bass, 1995).

There are, of course, cases that appear to be on the other side of the ledger. For instance, feminist and lesbian theologian Mary Daly was seemingly fired from Boston College for her socialist views (Autostraddle, 2010). But, not so, not so. Professor Daly was, rather, dismissed because she would not allow any male students to enroll in her classes, contrary to explicit college rules. She could have continued to wax eloquent about her “Gyn/Ecology” perspective had she not insisted upon this exclusion.

I do have some anecdotal evidence to support the claim that upon occasion, critics of the left wing version of social justice are first given jobs, and then, unfairly, denied tenure: my own case. I taught at Holy Cross College from 1991–1997; my publications during that time were greater than any other member of my eleven person department, and, appeared in many of the same journals. Indeed, the number of my publications was almost equal to all of them put together. My teaching evaluations were severely criticized by members of the tenure and promotion committee that dismissed me; but they refused to compare them with those of other members of my department, nor with all others from the entire college who received tenure in that year. If that is not a case of a “libertarian professor being booted out of the academy for not toeing the social justice lines” then nothing is. A much more famous case concerned Michael Levin. He published a book on a subject other than what he taught at his university (philosophy), never mentioned this topic in class, and yet suffered a threat to his tenure, which he successfully fought in court at great personal cost (Hays, 1991).

As to “vision statements,” I do not take them seriously for any purpose; I certainly do not think they serve as, even, implicit contracts. Virtually all of them are blatant lies. Were they to accurately reflect what actually goes on in most prestigious universities, as opposed to expressing their pious and irrelevant hopes regarding knowledge, justice, understanding, etc., they would say something like this: “We are going to charge you some $50,000 per year for four years of tuition and room and board, and, in return, we are going to indoctrinate your children with feminism, Marxism, anti white racism, the homosexual agenda, multiculturalism, social justice, Keynesianism, obscurantism and other varieties of political correctness. Period.”

Four Arrows closes with three questions. My answer to the first is that I misspoke. I was in error when I claimed that “conservative oriented educators are fired and censored.” There are too few of them on campus for that. Rather, they are not for the most part hired in the first place. (I never claimed they were imprisoned, killed; certainly not in this country.) They are not so much censored as self-censored. My response to the second is that a vision statement is not a contract. No one was ever fired for its violation. However, I concede to Four Arrows, it has some quasi contract aspects: the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) has
successfully sued numerous institutions of higher learning for their trashing of the free speech rights of conservative and libertarian students and professors on campus. As to the third, regarding the public good, the commons, and fresh air, clean water, unpolluted rivers and oceans, public parks, etc., I entirely agree with Four Arrows that we should defer their discussion until we reach our chapters on environmentalism.

Four Arrows: I appreciate that Walter has retracted his claim that more right wing faculty are fired or otherwise terminated worldwide than those with a more liberal persuasion; however his fall back position cannot go unchallenged. If we cannot, in good faith, offer counter-evidence to one another, how else shall we use reason in our mutual search for truth and understanding in the other’s position? In this instance, Walter’s claim that there is a left wing bias in universities may or may not be true because the sources he used to establish it are not sufficiently scholarly. My co-author’s assertion is based on opinion pieces, blogs, publications of conservative think tanks, or are written by professors whose relevant studies were sponsored by a conservative organization. Referring to the latter, Stanley Rothman, S. Robert Lichter and Neil Nevitte’s original study, the one referenced by Walter about the “Politics and Professional Advancement Among College Faculty,” was sponsored by the Randolph Foundation, a private philanthropy that funds conservative organizations such as Americans for Tax Reform, the Independent Women’s Forum, and right-wing pundit David Horowitz’s Center for the Study of Popular Culture. If this is not bad enough, the conclusions to which Rothman et al. refers concerning a shift from right to left and a bias against the right among professors emanated from a study that asked questions in two entirely different ways in the two comparative studies, one requesting respondents to place themselves on a ten-point scale, and one asking them to select from a list of descriptions. This does not mean such a shift did not happen, only that there is no way to know if it did based on the data they offer. Furthermore, the original 1984 study involved three times the number of observations of the later study and involved two-year community colleges, whereas the latter included only research institutions. It is well known that people with more education are more likely to be left leaning, so showing that four year colleges have more left leaning folks that two year institutions should occasion no surprise; such a “study” demonstrates no bias at all. Nor do these authors provide any actual evidence to show that conservative Ph.D.s were denied positions or tenure more than liberal ones.

(For more details on this, see the full rejoinder, see: http://mediamatters.org/research/200504050002.)

This topic is only important insofar as many of the challenges to academic freedom from the right are based on the belief that professors are using it to indoctrinate students into left-wing ideologies. Walter feels the way he does because of his own personal experience. His story about the challenges to his tenure he experienced in spite of his publications, however, is paralleled by a similar story I could share about obstacles I faced at Northern Arizona University. I questioned the conclusions surrounding 9/11 and challenged the reasons for going into Iraq, and almost lost my tenure appointment over these episodes. I feel the logical conclusion cannot be
as much about our opposing political views as our willingness to express them or our tendencies to go outside the acceptable limits of the perceived status quo. This might be informative for our chapter on academic freedom, but hardly supports a dismissal of it.

I am much more interested in Walter’s blatant dismissal of vision statements. He says, “As to ‘vision statements,’ I do not take them seriously for any purpose; I certainly do not think they serve as, even, implicit contracts.” How does this square with his earlier statement that if a private school’s mission statement supported the right to talk about a topic, it should be able to do so? Such contradictions are typical in any fundamentalist ideology it seems to me, whether religion or libertarianism. Now, I could agree with my colleague that most universities and colleges tend to not follow them and that therefore, as Walter contends, they wind up being “lies.” But this alone does not warrant dismissing the stated goals of every university or college nor the hard work of many intelligent and well-intentioned people who created them. What I do not understand about Walter’s position here relates to our agreement that social and ecological justice is about preventing violence against others in the world. Since most of the vision statements relate to education as an opportunity to improve the well-being of citizens, developing dispositions and knowledge with which to gain it (which has to include stopping violence), I must know what Walter believes is the purpose of a university or, at least, why he feels one does not have the right to aspire toward its convictions?! An inability to accomplish a goal should not be an indictment against the goal itself or against those who are sincerely working toward it.

And what is the alternative? Is the only true purpose in the universities and colleges with social justice oriented visions to grant credentials for those who can, without a conscious awareness of the violence against homosexuals, women, social justice and the other things Walter dismissed, go forth and blindly serve those that are responsible for the violence?!

**Walter:** I regard Four Arrows as my mentor in this project. ‘Twas he who approached me about working with him on this, not the other way around. I am (happily) riding on his coat tails in this regard. I am not fully satisfied with this chapter as it now stands because, I believe we (me, mainly) have not fully adhered to one of the principles Four Arrows emphasized to me at the outset of our collaboration. He said there are plenty of debate format books out there, where scholars of differing opinions “have at it” with each other. We recognized, early on, that given the disparity of our views, we could not entirely ignore that element in this book. Nor was this all to the bad. An honest debate, where each person took seriously the views of the other, is rarely attained. All too often, debates consist of opponents shouting at each other, trying to score cheap points against one another, and as far as promoting understanding is concerned, they pass each other as “ships in the night.” However, in Four Arrows’ view, and I am sure he will correct me if I misunderstand him on this point, our book should attempt to be something more than that: we would also strive mightily to reconcile our positions with those of the other guy.
So, let me try to do just that, more explicitly. I now more clearly see his point about which type of professors suffer what types of outrage. He is taking more of a global view of this issue, whereas, in my own mind’s eye, I was thinking virtually only of the U.S. (and to a lesser extent, Canada). Walking in his moccasins, I agree with him: at times, in at least some nations, leftist professors have indeed suffered more indignities in many (non Communist-socialist) countries than those who advocate “free market corporatism.” (I regard this phrase as a veritable contradiction in terms, such as square circle, or tall short man. But, I will reserve my explanation for a future chapter when we deal with economic issues. Hey, we have got to keep the customers interested.) For example, during the time of Pinochet in Chile, a professor espousing views not all that distant from mine (e.g., those of the “Chicago boys”) would have been given at least a lukewarm welcome; regarding those promoting the vision of Allende, loss of tenure or promotion would have been the least of their worries.

Four Arrows: Perhaps it was Keynes who stated, “When the facts change, I change my mind. What do you do, sir?”. I now ask my esteemed co-author this question. In gracefully admitting that more liberal professors are taken to task in education worldwide, including imprisonment, etc., than those who support the status quo free market corporatism that pervades the world, what mind change occurs? Homophobia and violence against gays and lesbians continues unabated; women remain oppressed; gaps between executive pay and employee pay continue to rise; ecological violence in spite of scientific warnings seems unstoppable. After agreeing that folks in education who are trying to address these issues are more likely to be removed one way or the other than those in support of them, what mind change is happening?

I must respectfully ask this of my colleague who has caused me to change my mind about the right of a private college to allow its vision statement or employment contract to override academic freedom.

I appreciate Walter’s reminder to us both about our goals in this book regarding not merely hammering our views at each other and shouting each other down, so to speak. We are, I am sure, working hard at trying to understand the truth in one another’s views, and we need to do our best not adopt the tactics that both left and right wing “arguers” all too often employ. In any case, I think academic freedom should apply to everyone, whatever their political views and to whatever degree one university or another is stacked with either left or right wing folks. (I also detest these polarized positions and hope we eventually shake them off, except to the degree that an eagle needs both wings to fly.). Nonetheless, if we are going to support our ideas in ways that the other might be able to understand them, we must buttress them with data that holds up to scrutiny and we are obligated to challenge one another, albeit respectfully.

With this in mind, I want to bring a sharper focus to our various views, as I now understand them, relating to academic freedom and its role in helping us answer the question about whether or not higher education should address SEEJ issues. Walter will then comment on, clarify or add to my interpretations before we move on to our related discussion about the environment, commons, public good and private ownership in the next chapter.
First, because I appreciate Walter’s sense about the college or university, private or public, being somewhat like a business, I offered the vision/mission statements as a basis for whether or not the school should/could address SEEJ in its curriculum. Walter’s responses, which I am desperately trying to understand, remain paradoxical to me. First, he dismisses vision statements as entirely useless in the same way as he rejects the concept of academic freedom, saying that the employment contract alone should determine whether or not a faculty has the freedom to teach a particular topic. However, he also relied on the mission statement of a private, religious university to support his claim that it should not be forced to teach SEEJ ideas that are contrary to its religious mission. Which is it Walter?

Second, Walter, although he feels the concept of academic freedom is a “snare and a delusion,” seems concerned about the possibility (whether or not it is true) that left-wing ideologies are doing a disservice to higher education. At the same time he granted that worldwide, such ideologies are punished by those in control of universities, ending his last comment with a reference about how difficult it would have been to criticize Pinochet during his time in Chile. So I ask my esteemed colleague to help me understand what seems to be a second paradox: Does he believe that a professor during the time when Nixon and Kissinger were undermining a democratically elected government to support a brutal dictator could not/should not have explored the SEEJ consequences of this in a relevant course in higher education? In his response, perhaps he might share the fact that he was recently invited to a law school to discuss a topic related to differentials between male and female wages, an obvious social justice/equity issue, if ever there was one. If the school were somehow not allowed to engage this topic, or Walter not allowed to speak on it, would this not be a legitimate reason to invoke the concept of academic freedom? Are only law students to be afforded the right to consider important issues of social, economic, or ecological justice (SEEJ)?

Finally, Walter says the vision statement is not to be taken seriously for any purpose; that they are all lies. How then would he explain why he feels they are in alignment with the “indoctrination” agendas that he thinks defines most universities? Surely, if faculty are doing that which the vision statement envisions for the sake of non-violence against women, gays, minorities, etc., then the vision statement cannot be entirely a lie. Also, since my co-author would likely believe that a private company should not present false advertising about its product (I am hoping that free enterprise does not encourage or tolerate such a practice), then why should not a university have the same right and responsibility to advertise what it is selling to its customers? And, apparently, if Walter feels both the vision statement and the university practices are left leaning, then they are obviously not false advertising, and everyone should have the academic freedom to support the public good. So is Walter’s argument that vision statements are lies or is it that because they are not lies what bothers him?

So, if my illustrious collaborator could offer some comments that would help me understand his actual position (or at least tell me how he deals with the cognitive dissonance surrounding the apparent paradoxes), then we can move on to our next chapter where we examine whether or not there are things in the world that are best
for the good of all when not privately owned, especially those environmental assets 
such as air, fresh water and oceans.

Walter: I think that my distinguished colleague is beating a dead horse. After all, 
I did say, above, “…. I concede to Four Arrows, it (the vision statement) has some 
quasi contract aspects: the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) 
has successfully sued numerous institutions of higher learning for their trashing of 
the free speech rights of conservative students and professors on campus.” But, 
evidently, my co author is not satisfied with this concession of mine. So, let me 
further elaborate on it. FIRE has succeeded in forcing left wing administrations to 
back down in their trashing of the free speech rights of conservative and libertarian 
students and professors, in part, because of the failure of these universities to live 
up to claims appearing in their own vision statements guaranteeing precisely this 
sort of freedom of expression. For example, when students attempt to hold affirmative 
action bake sales, or show the bloody results of abortions, or try to engage in their 
second amendment rights to bear arms, or publicly post the Danish cartoons depicting 
Mohammed, or otherwise take advantage of free speech rights typically accorded 
to left wing students and faculty, the dean of the university typically forbids this, or 
confines it to small and specially designated “free speech zones” on the edge of 
campus (by the way, this furnishes further evidence that the university is a bastion 
of left wing sentiment). In cases of this sort, whether by letters to college presidents 
threatening lawsuits, or by initiating them, FIRE has been able to protect pro market 
students in the enjoyment of rights accorded to them by these mission statements. 
So, yes, I have been completely convinced by Four Arrows’ eloquent statements in 
behalf of vision statements. I retract my too critical remarks on them. I now see 
that they do indeed partake of contract like characteristics. Mea culpa. Uncle. I give 
up on this one.

I certainly support Four Arrows’ eloquent call for reason in our “our mutual 
search for truth and understanding.” And, to be sure, an offer of “counter-evidence” 
is part and parcel of this process. I regard his rejection of Rothman, Nevitte, and 
Lichter (2005) on the ground that these authors were supported by right wing groups, 
and that their publication did not appear in “sufficiently scholarly” venues, as 
verging on the ad hominem fallacy. Stipulate that it is the case that money from 
these sources sustained this publication, it does not demonstrate by one whit that 
their research was flawed. I would have thought that it was a “settled” issue that 
faculties of major universities in the humanities and social sciences were wildly 
biased against the market place, and that even the professoriate of subject matters 
removed from public policy analysis (music, art, the hard sciences) was significantly 
predisposed in this direction. As for Four Arrows’ specific criticisms of Rothman, 
Nevitte, and Lichter (2005), I am very much less interested in the marginal changes 
that have taken place in the statistical evidence undergirding this conclusion, than 
I am in the fact that there is tremendous bias against economic freedom in both 
time periods.

In the view of my esteemed co-author, “academic freedom should apply to 
everyone.” We are pretty far apart on this matter, in that it is my view that the
default position ought to be that academic freedom should apply to no one. (However, this may be overridden if both parties, academic employer and employee, agree to override it.)

Are all vision statements lies, every last word of them? Mary McCarthy famously said of Communist Lillian Hellman: “every word (she) writes is a lie, including ‘and’ and ‘the.’” No extremist I, I do not go that far in condemning most university mission statements. Sometimes, rarely, they show their true anti free enterprise venom, and on those occasions they are indeed, as Four Arrows insightfully insists, compatible with what actually goes on in the classroom, for the most part.

As for changing our minds, a la Keynes, it would not bother me in the least if Four Arrows, after we have finished writing this book, converted to the libertarian freedom philosophy. Indeed, that is one of my motivations for engaging in this cooperative endeavour. It would be magnificent to have such an accomplished and eloquent scholar consistently take the side of liberty. But, I hope this change of heart and mind does not occur before we are finished, lest, we never complete the writing of this book. I hate to start projects and not bring them to a conclusion.

I agree with Four Arrows that there is a problem with saying both that, one, politically correct vision statements are a complete lie, and, two, that universities push political correctness on campus in accord with them. This is indeed cognitive dissonance; my colleague is too polite to call it what it is: a downright logical contradiction. However, I maintain the truth of only the second of these claims, not the first. I doubt that there are any such mission announcements that are as brutally honest as the one I previously mentioned. Can he supply any such? As I stated above, the typical mission statement is not a lie in every word in every word of it (re McCarthy - Hellman). No, there are often mealy-mouthed sentiments expressed about equality, brotherhood, peace, good relations, social justice, etc., some of which are actually true; but they never quite get around to telling the whole truth, that the mainly left wing professoriate is intent upon inculcating our youth with the verities of “feminism, Marxism, anti white racism, the homosexual agenda, multiculturalism, social justice, Keynesianism, obscurantism and other varieties of political correctness.”

Four Arrows wishes to call into question the research conducted by Rothman, Nevitte and Lichter (2005), buttressing the finding that the university is mainly the domain of leftists. He does so by recourse to “N.C., S.S.M., & P.W.” (2005). But there are problems here. First, this rejoinder appeared in Media Matters for America, self described as “a Web-based, not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) progressive research and information center dedicated to comprehensively monitoring, analyzing, and correcting conservative misinformation in the U.S. media.” In other words, it is not a scholarly organization with a peer reviewed double blind refereed journal; rather it is biased toward the left, in much the same as the Randolph Foundation, Americans for Tax Reform, the Independent Women’s Forum, and Center for the Study of Popular Culture are biased toward the right, and deprecated by Four Arrows on that ground. One wonders at this double standard. Further, at least Rothman, Nevitte and Lichter give us their full names, we thus know who we are dealing with when we read their works; the same cannot be said for “N.C., S.S.M., & P.W.” who vouchsafe us no such information. However, I regard these points merely as an exercise in ad
hominem argumentation, unworthy of serious consideration. What matters is not
who finances whom, or whether an essay appears in a blog, in a magazine, in a
book, or in a scholarly journal. Nor does it matter one whit whether something is
published on an anonymous basis. The only thing that, properly, counts, is the truth
value of the claim. And here, it appears so far from the mark to deny that higher
education in the U.S. is a virtually entirely owned subsidiary of the left, that all I can
think of to do is to congratulate Four Arrows, and N.C., S.S.M., & P.W., for having
the courage to defend so quixotic a position.

neglects to mention that a rejoinder has been written to this critique (Rothman and
Lichter, 2009). It would take me too far afield to discourse on the debate between
these two sets of authors. Suffice it to say that in citing these two works (Rothman,
Nevitte and Lichter, 2005; Rothman and Lichter, 2009) I have responded to Four
Arrows’ request that we “offer counter-evidence to one another.”

My collaborator asks why I feel a university “does not have the right to aspire
toward its convictions.” I do not at all take this position. Very much to the contrary,
if a private university were to articulate a vision statement about brain-washing
students with politically correct goals, and stick to it, I maintain it would have
every right to do so. I would not want to send my children there, nor do I think it
would succeed in the marketplace of ideas, but that is entirely another matter. My
indictment of these institutions of higher learning, to the contrary, is not that they
honestly pursue this course of action (yes, libertarians do oppose fraud, among
which false advertising is counted; Four Arrows’ hope “that free enterprise does
not encourage or tolerate such a practice” is a well placed one), but rather engage
in this practice in a surreptitious manner. For instance, if a college wants to highlight
its opposition to “violence against homosexuals, women,” a goal I certainly support,
there is nothing in the libertarian philosophy that would oppose it. And the same
goes for discussing issues concerning Nixon and Kissinger and male and female
wage differentials. However, let us suppose that Bob Jones University (BJU), or
some other such institution of higher learning, prohibited discussion of these
topics. Would this “not be a legitimate reason to invoke the concept of academic
freedom,” asks Four Arrows. No it would not be, I reply. If BJU’s contract and/or
vision statement proscribes such deliberations, or if Yeshiva University wishes to
ban coverage of the Divinity of Christ, or if Brigham Young University desires that
polygamy not be examined (I am making up these instances only for illustration
purposes), then it would be improper for “academic freedom” to override these
stipulations. I thought this would have been clear from Four Arrows’ new appreciation
for the idea of universities “being somewhat like a business,” but one cannot have too
much clarity about such issues.

I did not at all “admit… that more liberal professors are taken to task in education
worldwide, including imprisonment.” What I meant to say, no, what I did say, is
that at times, in at least some nations, leftist professors have indeed suffered more
indignities in many (non Communist-socialist) countries than those who advocate
“free market corporatism.” It is not at all my view that leftist professors are brutalized to a greater degree than are rightist ones over the globe. Rather, fascist
dictators do this, to be sure, but communists return the favor in the opposite direction. Yes, it would have indeed been difficult “to criticize Pinochet during his time in Chile”; but the same applies to promoting Adam Smith in East Germany or in the U.S.S.R. However, my main focus in this regard is not the rest of the world. When I insist that the professoriate mistreats conservative and libertarian faculty and students to a far greater degree than liberal ones (mainly by not hiring them in the first place, a point for which I am grateful to Four Arrows for forcing me to see), I have in mind mainly the U.S. and Canada, areas with which I have had some experience.

I do not want to get into a debate about Pinochet vs. Allende while we are supposed to be discussing academic freedom. I would prefer to reserve such a dialogue for a chapter on foreign policy. But, since Four Arrows mentions the evils of the former and by implication the merits of the latter, it is only fair to note the case for the very opposite contention. See on this Stephens (2010) and McMaken (2005). Nor shall I respond, here, to Four Arrows’ points about violence against homosexuals and females, pay gaps between males and females, the warnings of ecological “science.” These are all fascinating topics, but deserve focused attention, which I intend to give them, along with I am sure my coauthor, in future chapters.

I fear we are going to have to “agree to disagree” as to whether or not the campus (in the U.S. and Canada) is a totally owned subsidiary of the left. To me, the evidence is overwhelming. Four Arrows sees matters quite differently. I see no way to resolve this, given the attempts we have both made in this chapter. Ah, well, no one book, let alone any one chapter, can accomplish everything.

Four Arrows: I hope the readers find this chapter as stimulating, challenging, interesting and ultimately enlightening as I. Although, it is obvious that we continue to articulate very differing views about academic freedom and its role in promoting in higher education, it seems that not only have we learned from one another, but we have become friends to some degree in the process, with the mutual respect that accompanies friendship.

There have been some agreements and concessions that deserve mention. These may be useful in later dialogue about universities and social/ecological justice and sustainability agendas. For one, we now concur that vision statements, mission statements and employment contracts have some bearing on rights and responsibilities in higher education as relates to SEEJ. As the reader may recall, this has come from both of us having modified our original ideas as a result of the other’s arguments. It goes too far for Walter to assume that my willingness to take my position means I believe that universities should be run like businesses in all ways, a la the “free market,” but if aligning one’s work with a vision statement is a business concept, then I favor it.

I also think we agree that professors of any political or ideological orientation who might stand against the hegemony of those in power are at risk if they teach their position to others. I hope that both of us will try harder to avoid the labels of left and right in future chapters, unless we can come to a mutually agreed-upon
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definition of these terms. When I claim that more teachers “on the left” are terminated, imprisoned or killed worldwide than those “on the right,” I am thinking of the main feature of the modern left that relates to social progressivism, whereas my co-author is likely thinking in economic or more classical terms. In any case, our over reliance on the assumptions concretized in ideological categories seems to be an obstacle in our dialogue that I hope we can surmount.

This concern deserves an explanation, not just because of its importance in this chapter, but as it relates to this entire publication. Academic freedom, SEEJ and all the related topics we discuss in this book can be too easily supported in the shadow of ideological positions, rather than in light of reason, facts, or true history. For example, Walter used the infamous story about Yale returning twenty million dollars to support his argument that a university is a “totally owned subsidiary of the left.” On first glance at the history of this event via the many editorials from the left and right about it, it would be hard not to conclude that ideology played a role as Walter indicated. However, if a more in-depth and scholarly study of the event were undertaken, a much more complex explanation would emerge than it merely being a left-wing stance by faculty and administration against the teaching of Western civilization versus a more multicultural curriculum. Even Yale’s most vocal multiculturalists say they know of no organized lobbying effort to persuade Levin to block the course for ideological reasons and there is much evidence as to other factors for the rejection of the money (Kaylin, 1995).

Another example of the problem of overly biased resources was my own reliance upon using Media Matters, a left-wing research organization, to challenge Walter’s use of right-wing authors. I did some further examination and found that this non-profit organization uses researchers with undergraduate degrees in history and receives operating donations from individuals who are likely liberal. So I was, I supposed, guilty of a double standard as Walter alleged in relying on them to make my case.

So what can the two of us do to avoid such traps? Walter alluded to one simple solution when he said that the Media Matters article was not peer reviewed. Certainly Walter and I, as university professors, can agree that any research we use to support our contentions should emanate from primary sources or from peer-reviewed publications. This will not make them fault proof, but it will help avoid the ideological emphasis found in less academic writings.

Consider an example of how this common approach to scholarly disagreements will make a positive difference in our future cooperative arguments. Walter mentioned, though stating he prefers to debate the issue in a later chapter, that there are opposing positions to my earlier statement about the horrors of Pinochet. He offered a Wall Street Journal editorial by Bret Stephens as a citation. Stephens is a writer/editor for the Journal’s regular column, “Global Views.” The cited article claims that after the U.S.-backed coup in 1973 that seized power from the democratically elected president, Salvador Allende, a group of Chilean economists often referred to as “the Chicago boys,” instituted a series of radical free market reforms that ultimately led to building codes that protected Chilean citizens from sustaining more damage than they did during a major earthquake.
Now, in this case, like my tendency to look at Media Matters to discern whether a claim is accurate or not, it is obvious that Walter’s libertarian worldview drew him to this particular article. However, we both would agree that academic freedom or not, a professor should not have the right to teach incorrect information. I think it is more likely this will happen to us, as with the Pinochet illustration, if we reference ideologically based, non-peer reviewed publications. I will do my best to minimize such sources in the future. Avoiding the ideology-based Wall Street Journal to rebut my mentioning the villainous exploits of Pinochet, by the way, seems a good example. Why? Because Chile’s modern seismic building code, drafted to resist earthquakes, was adopted in 1972, one year before Pinochet seized power in the bloody U.S-backed coup! This is one of those peer-reviewed facts where the ideology of the author was unlikely a factor. It is found in an article entitled, “Seismic Hazard and Countermeasures in Antofagasta-Chile,” published in Bulletin of the International Institute of Seismology and Earthquake Engineering. According to the article’s author, Tapia Cutierrez P., a professor in the Civil Engineering Department at Universidad Catolica del Norte in Antofagasta, Chile, “Construction is regulated however by several codes regarding both analysis and design. The Chilean Seismic Code is relatively old [3], its first version was approved in 1972 (1999, vol. 33, pp. 97–116).”

As for Walter’s expressed desire to convert me to libertarianism, I ask that he replace this idea and instead merely continue our mutual efforts to convert one another’s thinking to that which is as reasonable and as true as we are able to determine. I am not trying to make an “Indian” of Walter, merely an honest man.

Walter: I have but three minor points to make, and then, I think, we are finished with this chapter, the writing of which has been an exhilarating experience, after Four Arrows’ final whack at this piñata. My co author states: “we both would agree that academic freedom or not, a professor should not have the right to teach incorrect information.” I beg to differ. As far as I am concerned, a professor should indeed have such a right. For example, if I set up a mythical Blockhead University (my favorite university, I get to do exactly what I want, there) and announce we are going to teach things like $2+2=5$, that triangles do not have 180 degrees, that water is composed of $\text{H}_3\text{O}$, not $\text{H}_2\text{O}$, I think I would have every right to do so. I would not be violating any libertarian law in so doing. Or, to take a more realistic example, in my view, Marxism, Keynesianism, feminism, neoclassical economics, are all vastly mistaken (the first three far more than the latter one). Professors who espouse such perspectives are thus “teaching incorrect information.” Would they, in the free society, be prevented from doing so? Of course not.

Four Arrows mentions that he will do his “best to minimize” reliance on “ideologically based, non-peer reviewed publication … sources in the future.” Well, I shall not object to this course of action on his part. As for me, I shall take a different route. I fear I have a lot less faith in non ideologically based, peer reviewed publications than he.

My friend “dislike(s) the labels, ‘right and left’ and ‘conservative and liberal’ and hope(s) we can do our best to avoid using them in the future.” Again, we will
just have to agree to disagree on this matter. I respect his resolution on this ground, but, will not follow him down this path. These phrases are in my opinion good shorthand terms to account for much of what takes place in political economy, and I plan to avail myself of them.

I thank Four Arrows from his comments on Chilean building codes. I think it would be better if we gave this important issue a far more in depth treatment than is appropriate under the rubric of “academic freedom,” to focus of the present chapter. And I will do so later on in this book.

Four Arrows: Because Walter and I have agreed that if one author begins a chapter, the other gets to finish it, I have the luxury of the last word. First, I wish to briefly clarify my position on the “right” of a professor to teach “incorrect” information. I would (once again) agree with my colleague that a professor has a “right” to teach that 2+2 is 5. In terms of our chapter on academic freedom, and the legal and ethical parameters that surround it as I understand them, this “right” would be attached to the “right” of the professor’s employer to terminate him if such incorrect teaching was consistent and demonstrated through due process. I believe it was Samuel Johnson who wrote “every man has a right to utter what he thinks is truth, and every other man has a right to knock him down for it.” (I am here interpreting “knock him down” in the poetic sense: through evidence, reason and logic not fisticuffs). As for Walter’s lack of confidence in peer-reviewed papers, I can only agree that it is equally important to be critical of them as well as of an opinion piece. Nonetheless, I still have more confidence in primary source documentation to support a controversial position. I feel this kind of documentation is important when considering whether or not a professor should have the “academic freedom” to promote an idea.

Finally, I am willing to utilize the “short-cut” language of left and right wing terms since Walter feels they are helpful. However, I feel that the great battles relating to academic freedom are at least partially a result of a dependence on affiliations with these “camps.” Douglas Ehringer wrote: “A definition of a liberal as a muddleheaded idealist who rejects time-honored values for the sake of remedying temporary social ills’ tells more about the prejudices of the person offering the definition than it does about the meaning of the term, ‘liberal’ (1974, p. 45).” When it comes to social and ecological justice, I feel that the “us versus them” ideological positions are the key to most academic freedom issues. Thus, even if we continue to use them, I hope we can avoid being trapped by them in our continuing dialogue.

Because I believe so strongly that the ideological affiliations of people are basic to the problems inherent in academic freedom concerns (and likely in most of the rest of the book chapters), I end of this chapter with a relevant quote from my book, The Bum’s Rush: The Selling of Environmental Backlash (Phrases and Fallacies of Rush Limbaugh).

The brand of government that opposes all radical elements ultimately leads to autocratic authority. This is something neither liberals nor conservatives want. Yet, it is the clash between the factions identify with each that sets stage for tyranny. The following is a brief description of how so-called liberals
and conservatives mutually create the problem they both want to avoid. Assumptions assigned to each group swinging the pendulum of accusation from one extreme to the other until the momentum is too great to slow it down. It works something like this:

**Liberal:** Man imagines heaven on earth that attempts to create various utopias.

**Conservative:** This effort is radical. Perfection is not possible for man on earth. We are the is not so heavenly. The free enterprise offers the next best thing to happen-wealth.

**Liberal:** The attainment of wealth is associated with suppression of individual rights of workers. Counter efforts include laws to restrain free enterprise.

**Conservative:** The efforts to restrain free enterprise is associated with suppression of individual rights of entrepreneurs. Counter efforts include public criticism of lawmakers who are thought to be responsible.

**Liberal:** People retaliate against the criticism of lawmakers by appealing to ideal values relating to global responsibility and individual dignity. Retaliation becomes more radical individualism degenerates into a responsible subjectivism.

**Conservative:** Leaders convince masses of the futility of government efforts to achieve utopian ideals they focus on increasing social insecurity and frustration that result from social and political battles that exist. People become confused over issues of morality and choose sides. Militarism punishment and ethnocentrism than foster anarchy. Anarchy is the parent of Tierney. When people become confused and desperate they are more willing to follow authoritarian personality. A banner of traditional values hides the arbitrary and despotic exercise of power of the new leader. People no longer try to determine what is propaganda and what is truth.

The language of liberalism and conservatism thus causes people to forget we must work together to achieve goals that are not all that similar. This of course, is what we are trying to do in this book and hopefully it is the purpose of academic freedom in general (Jacobs, 1994, p. 64–65). It may also prevent us from truly understanding one another. In any case, I hope our opening chapter shows how both Walter and I are attempting to do what John Stewart Mill offers as important. He is talking about learning to know the perspective of someone with an opposing view:

He must be able to hear them from persons who actually believe them; who defend them in earnest, and do their very utmost for them. He must know them in their most plausible and persuasive form; he must feel the whole force of the difficulty which the true view of the subject has to encounter and dispose of; else he will never really possess himself of the portion of truth which meets and removes that difficulty (1947/1859).
**Four Arrows’ Final Position:** Although I initially believed that all education should employ academic freedom without restraint, I concede now that if a private school has a vision statement that specifically claims an agenda for the university that is contradicted by the teaching of a professor, that the professor’s academic freedom could be overridden by the university policy.

**Walter’s Final Position:** Initially I saw academic freedom as a total farce and a folly. Now I understand that, on the condition of a vision statement or employment contract so stipulating, a professor should be allowed to discuss any topic he feels is supported by such a statement.