Philo A. Hutcheson. *A People's History of American Higher Education.* New York: Routledge, 2020. 226 pp.

This book is a love letter from Philo Hutcheson, recently retired from academia, to the study of higher education history. In it, he critiques those who tell the story of higher education in the United States, both in courses and through the kinds of research projects the discipline undertakes. Consequently, at times he presumes his reader already knows the "standard" history of higher education. In his book, Hutcheson seeks to focus on the people (students, faculty, staff) inhabiting postsecondary institutions, humanizing (and complicating) the traditional narratives that, not coincidentally, focused for most of the last century of study on straight, white, Protestant men who were the nominal "leaders" of those institutions. Contrasted against biographical works or individual institutional histories, "this book endeavors to examine who participated in what ways at which U.S. institutions of higher education over time" (p. 13).

In the introductory chapter, Hutcheson outlines his concept of "historiography," which he defines as "understand[ing] how we think historically" (p. 1). In the second chapter, he provides a description of the earliest colonial colleges within their contexts as institutions of the early republic, a more humanistic narrative than a recitation of the progression of the founding of colleges. Chapter 3 examines the changing concept of *college* in the expansion of colonizing citizens into the continent's Midwest and West. Hutcheson connects those concepts to "the purpose of college in the 1800s" (p. 54); in chapter 2, he provides an overarching narrative history, more akin to historiographical antecedents in higher education than to the tone he adopts in later chapters. Chapter 4 covers the Progressive Era and its effects upon advanced education, again in a broad narrative that provides readers both definition and context for understanding (attempted) progressive reforms.

The second through fourth chapters present, in tone and scope, a rather traditional narrative approach to conveying the history of higher education in the United States. Starting with chapter 5, however, Hutcheson switches to a thematic approach to conveying history; also, perhaps unintentionally, he moves from primarily narration to a historiographical review. Chapter 5, entitled "War," focuses on concepts of US patriotism, as exemplified on college and university campuses, from the American Revolution through the "war on terror." For its subject, the chapter is short, and perhaps the best focused of the thematic chapters. Nonetheless, the chapter concludes, surprisingly, with a short section on Tribal Colleges, which Hutcheson shows as both a

result of and an example of colonizing efforts that often attended US military actions.

Chapter 6 begins Hutcheson's shift from historical narrative toward historiographical review. Here, he attempts to capture college student life in three areas: "Sex and Love! Beer! Football!" (p. 130). Starting in this chapter, Hutcheson seems keener to annotate the work of other (in some ways, more contemporary) historians of higher education than he is to provide a narrative history. He relates most of the recent work of historians of student culture, focusing upon perennial student concerns—alcohol, athletics, and, well, action. Half of that chapter, however, lumps everything else into a section entitled "Other Important Student Activities," the effect of which is to diminish the importance of both halves. Given his stated desire to explore the less-traditional work in the history of higher education, I anticipated a greater analysis and synthesis (as well, perhaps, as greater coverage) of these varied aspects of campus life. Still, as Hutcheson points out, there are far fewer (and far less expansive) completed projects of these histories from which to draw.

Hutcheson describes chapter 7, on research universities, as an "add-on" to the history he intended to write. In this chapter, he does an admirable job of succinctly tying the growth of a particular institution—focused on research—to the extension of a distinctly European intellectual construct. He shows the influence—through the development of "product" that could be commodified or utilized by the state—of those institutions over the past 150 years. Given that the research university became, in the twentieth century, the pinnacle for state higher education planning and governmental largesse, the chapter seems necessary, if for no other reason than to point out that such an institutional structure and mission were (like the earlier colonial colleges) so centrally tied to national aspirations. Schools with an institutional mission of teaching the best and brightest to conduct research became the standard from which all other institutions (and students and faculty) were compared.

It is in chapter 7 that Hutcheson gives his first substantial analysis of the history of faculty life, but that is only roughly six pages; the section on students in research universities is only half of that. While the brevity of this chapter is commendable, and while the historiography of the modern research university is perhaps scant, I wished Hutcheson could have expanded his analysis of how the notion of a research university affected students and faculty.

In chapter 8, Hutcheson returns to his grand(er) narrative, attempting to link the colonial colleges to today's postsecondary institutions. The chapter is centered on how higher education became stratified, through codifying concepts of merit, exclusion, and

institutional mission. "One characteristic of stratification in U.S. higher education is the more limited opportunities for access and for engagement, and the diminished access for white women and African Americans in terms of the G.I. Bill is a salient example" (p. 191).

Chapter 9 serves as Hutcheson's epilogue. In it, he troubles the concept of meritocracy in the education of a democratic society, and it seems Hutcheson believes that conveying fuller, more complicated histories will help unsettle the dominance of the meritocratic paradigm of education.

> Adding on different groups experiencing exclusion or some form of stratification still centers the narrative on white men; in this book I have attempted to offer all institutions and participants as evidence of the development of U.S. higher education and, at times, to recenter the historical narrative in terms of the experiences of white women and people of color (p. 211).

Perhaps because of the brevity of the book, the promise held in this attempt seems not quite fulfilled.

Also in this final chapter, Hutcheson delivers his main critique of US higher education: the "two [Morrill] Acts established a legal system of public segregation . . . that remains in force today not in legal terms but by maintenance of separate institutions with distinct effects on students" (p. 202). The second half of this chapter returns to advocating that historians change how—and why—we teach history. He argues not just for a change in how histories of higher education are taught, but also for changes in how to understand (and study) the very notion of higher education.

The final chapter jumps between these two points, creating some confusion about the connections Hutcheson sees between conceptualizing higher education (both in histories and as a national endeavor) and teaching the history of higher education. Nonetheless, Hutcheson provides thoughtful reminder and rejoinder about the inherent promises—and all-too-frequent lapses—of history and higher education within a democratic society.

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