



# Confronting Managerialism: How the Business Elite and Their Schools Threw Our Lives Out of Balance (Economic Controversies)

By Robert R. Locke, J.-C. Spender

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*Confronting Managerialism* offers a scathing critique of the crippling influence of neoclassical economics and modern finance on business school teaching and management practice. Locke and Spender show how business managers who were once well-regarded as custodians of the economic engines vital to our growth and social progress now seem closer to the rapacious "robber barons" of the 1880s. In effect, responsible management has given way to "managerialism," whereby an elite caste of businessmen disconnected from any ethical considerations now call the shots, sending the lives of rest of us "out of balance."

The book traces the loss of managers' earlier social concerns, amply encouraged by management education's transformation since the 1960s, especially in the US. It also questions not only the social ethics of the US management caste, but its management efficacy compared to systems of management that are highly employee participative and dependent, such as in Germany and Japan. Today's attempts to "bolt on" ethics and social responsibility courses, the authors argue, are mere window-dressing, a public relations move that cannot get to the heart of the matter. Only fundamental reforms in civil society and business schools can really make a difference.

A unique, topical, and controversial look at a subject that impacts us all.

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### Review

"In a brilliant and compelling narrative, Locke and Spender trace the decline of American business after World War Two to the extinction of socially responsible management. This is a truly important book ... definitely a must-read." -- H. Thomas Johnson, Professor of Sustainability Management, Portland State University

### About the Author

Robert R. Locke is Emeritus Professor at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He is one of the leading international authorities on the contentious subject of management, and the author of numerous books and articles on comparative management and management education.

J. C. Spender is a visiting professor in the Center for Business Performance at Cranfield School of Management. Now retired after seven years as a Business School Dean, he works as a consultant, researcher, writer, lecturer, and generally itinerant academic.

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