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“Rewarding Excellence: Scholarships and the Primacy of Activity”

Abstract

This essay explores the way that scholarships and reward mechanisms, such as the Excellence Awards offered by the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, reflect, as well as help create, a societal value system that overemphasizes activity. In accordance with Hannah Arendt’s view, that in modernity activity has displaced contemplation and gained primacy, I demonstrate the sharp contrast between the view of community development advocated in contemporary leadership and management culture and the passive approaches supported by Lao Tsu and Martin Buber.