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**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND ASIAN LANGUAGES**

**THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA  
IN THE 1990s**

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## ABSTRACT

Over the past ten years Australian higher education has undergone a transformation from a binary structure, marked by a division of 'traditional universities' and colleges of advanced education, to a uniform university structure. This transformation was first proposed in 1987 by the Hon. John Dawkins, Minister for Employment, Education and Training in the Hawke Labor Government. The proposals appeared in the form of a 'Green' policy discussion paper which drew substantial amounts of criticism from the academy, but nonetheless were swiftly transformed into policy as a 'White' paper or policy statement. Since that time, Australian higher education institutions have been subject to a series of changes that have fundamentally changed the patterns of tertiary education provision established over the previous forty years. They have experienced a re-allocation of research funds which has eroded the established advantage of the traditional universities; they have been obliged to accept amalgamations; and, student numbers have expanded at a rate and to a proportion never previously imagined. All of this has been achieved under the banner of improving Australia's place in the highly competitive international economy. The champions of a restructured higher education sector have argued that this competitiveness is greatly dependent upon Australia's ability to improve the scientific and technical base of its human capital: higher education must move towards a more efficient and effective provision of education which will meet the needs of the market.

The transformation of higher education has been achieved without the unanimous blessing of the academy. Many of the most strident critics of what have come to be known as the Dawkins Reforms are academics who have expressed dismay at these changes. In particular there has been as strongly argued case that the reforms, with their emphasis on science and technology, mark the end of liberal education in Australia. Australian higher education is now, they declare, the site of mass education based upon a new instrumentalism in which the liberal arts have no significant place.

This dissertation takes such criticisms as its focus. In particular it attempts to show that the critique founded upon a defence of the inherent role of liberal education in the Australian university sector has been misguided. Furthermore, the dissertation argues that because so much of the attack on the restructuring policy took this form there was little place for a substantial critical appraisal of the validity of restructuring based upon an imperative of the market.

The idea of the university in Australia as one fundamentally defined by liberal education is examined at two levels. First, it is argued that the notion of liberal education used to defend the university against new instrumentalism is an idealised notion which both ignores the historical construction of such an idea at a time when liberalism itself was undergoing transformation, and, wrongly assumes the absence of instrumentalism within it. Second, the history of the establishment of the university in Australia is reviewed to show that whilst the founders of the universities often had sympathies for the liberal arts, from the outset Australian universities were consistently conditioned by the drive for instrumental education.

Higher education policies in the post-WWII era are given particular attention in order to show that mass higher education is no new phenomenon, but the continuation of the drive towards expanded education provision. Just as with the expansion of schooling to mass schooling, a greatly expanded higher education sector has been necessary to fulfil the continued demands of the social democratic consensus. The thesis concludes with the argument that the critique of higher education reforms has been hobbled by the absence of a critical sociology of education which could place the restructuring of Australian higher education in the context of the transformation of social to market democracy.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- ABS** — Australian Bureau of Statistics
- ACAE** — Australian Commission on Advanced Education
- ACER** — Australian Council for Educational Research
- ACTU** — Australian Council of Trades Unions
- AHEIA** — Australian Higher Education Institutions Association
- ANU** — Australian National University
- ARC** — Australian Research Council
- AUC** — Australian Universities Commission
- BHP** — Broken Hill Proprietary
- CACAE** — Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Advanced Education
- CAE** — College of Advanced Education
- CRTS** — Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme
- CSIRO** — Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
- CTEC** — Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission
- DEET** — Department of Employment Education and Training
- DEIR** — Department of Employment and Industrial Relations
- DITAC** — Department of Industry Technology and Communications
- EFTSU** — Equivalent Full Time Student Unit
- FAUSA** — Federation of Australian University Staff Associations
- FTE** — Full Time Equivalent
- GDP** — Gross Domestic Product
- HEC** — Higher Education Council
- HERDSA** — Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia
- NBEET** — National Board for Employment Education and Training
- NSWUT** — New South Wales University of Technology
- NTU** — National Teachers Union

**OECD** — Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**PSA** — Public Service Association

**RCUM** — Royal Commission on the University of Melbourne

**SES** — Senior Executive Service

**TAFE** — Technical and Further Education

**TAFEC** -Technical and Further Education Division

**TDC** — Trade Development Corporation

**TEAS** — Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme

**TEC** — Tertiary Education Commission

**UGC** — University Grants Commission (England)

**UQS** — University of Queensland Senate

## INTRODUCTION

It is the better part of a decade since the Green Paper on Higher Education in Australia was released by John Dawkins, the then Minister for Employment, Education and Training. Long enough for the impact of the reforms proposed by that document and the subsequent White Paper to have an impact. What have come to be popularly known as the Dawkins reforms engineered a radical restructuring of higher education funding, provision and organisation. The previous dominance of the 'old' universities access to research funds has been dismantled and they now compete with all players across the higher education sector for public research funds. The binary system of higher education established in the nineteen-sixties has been dissolved by the inclusion of the old institutes of technology and colleges of advanced education into the same funding formula as the universities. Whilst the number of institutions has been reduced through a painful process of forced amalgamations, the number of universities has grown with the renaming of the CAES (Colleges of Advanced Education) and institutes, and, the total number of students enrolled in higher education has risen steadily. Implicit within all this has been a renewed emphasis upon the importance of scientific and technological directions within the higher education sector as the basis of an essential forging of links between education and industry. Australia, it has been argued, needs to take its place by competing within an international economy and stronger initiatives in vocational and technical education are an essential element of the national economic agenda.

This dissertation has as its main focus, not so much the actual outcomes of the reform of Australian higher education as the response to them from within the academy. In even further qualifying this focus it is useful to explain the impetus to it. As everyone who has had contact with Australian higher education since 1987 is well aware the proposed reforms were met with dismay by many people working in, or with an interest in, the higher education sector. Whilst the more cynical observer might contend that the expressed opposition to reform was merely a response by a conservative academic

community seeking to protect its anachronistic stronghold of privilege, the form of response was in reality much more that of a heartfelt cry of anguish in the face of perceived attack on the very essence of the academy. This response from the academy came as much in the form of the articulation of what many felt to be the fundamental role of higher education, or at least the role of the university, as it did as a defence of particular facets of advantage. This is not to say that there were not elements of open institutional self-interest expressed, but the overarching tenor of the response was more an expression of initial bewilderment and then frustration, than of high dudgeon. Again, the more sceptical witness may point out that there is no one better trained than an academic to fudge the real issues and present their own interests as an argument for the general social well being. Whilst this factor is of course not entirely absent, it just as readily suits the advocates of reform to highlight these responses in such a way as a means to discredit and thus dismiss their opposition. It was almost with pathos that many academics responded to the Dawkins proposals by reference to the absolute integrity of liberal education and the ethos implicit within the idea of a university. Paradoxically, this position has come to be expressed more stridently in recent years than it has ever been in the history of Australian education. It was the ardency of this response and the absolute conviction of it which initially fired my interest. Whilst familiar with the idea of a liberal education I was somewhat bemused to not just read the responses to Dawkins in higher education newspaper supplements, but to hear in conversation, academics from across the board defending so passionately the maintenance of what I, an academic apprentice in an Institute of Technology, took to be a remnant. Liberal education in its most basic sense of learning for its own sake seemed to be an ideal which we all valued and tried to ignite in our students, but surely we did not take ourselves seriously enough to believe that it was what any of us, other than those in the most secluded corners of the elite universities, were actually *funded* to do. It seemed to me – having spent a little time previously researching federal government education policies in the 1970s – that our employers had not been funding higher education at any level in the recent past without the expectation that it met at least utilitarian, if not directly instrumental ends. Why then, did the academy respond to restructuring by resorting to the defence of an already displaced ideal? Furthermore, there were aspects of the response which, as a sociologist, provoked my interest: the frequent argument that the pursuit of knowledge should not

be corrupted by instrumental ends is a case in point. This comes most vehemently from philosophers, and whilst there might be no dispute with the essential argument, the suggestion that such knowledge was actively pursued anywhere in the academy seemed to be a defence built on very tenuous ground. These were, after all, institutions of higher education within one of the dominant social institutions of capitalist society – how sincerely then, could we declare our independence from the dominant social relation of capitalism? None of this is to argue that the reforms did not foreshadow real changes which have had profound effects upon the concrete reality of academic teaching and research; indeed many of the fears of the critics of the reforms have been vindicated.

It was the defence which the academic community predominantly resorted to which struck me as being unrealistic, rather than the fears they expressed. It seems much more the case, that rather than being an anti-academic, anti-intellectual government policy shift towards a new vocationalism, as many of the critics sought to understand it, the restructuring of higher education in Australia has been part of an attempt to resolve more fundamental problems. These are the problems associated with the limits of the capitalist nation state and capitalist social institutions at a time of the growing internationalisation of the economy and the subsequent dissolution of the last half century of social democratic alliance.

Although not always articulated in tandem, the critiques of the Dawkins higher education reforms represented predominantly two sides of the same coin. Firstly, the ideal of 'liberal education' as the driving force of higher education was declared and expanded upon. These critics did not necessarily identify current practice as the epitome of liberal education, nevertheless their arguments were for the most part expressed as a defence of a status quo which was seen to embody at least its essential principles. The other plank of criticism focused less upon defending the liberal ideal and focussed more upon discrediting vocationalism as a driving force. Each of these arguments combine to form the idea that the motor of educational means should not be instrumental ends. Neither of these kinds of argument have been productive in confronting the changes in Australian higher education. Indeed, they tend to have derived from a misconception of the real nature of the formation of the contemporary notion of liberal education and of



the real nature of the development of Australian higher education. It is as if these critics of the Dawkins reforms have for the most part been seduced by an 'idea' of something rather than confronting the reality of their own concrete existence.

In this dissertation I contend that the focus of the initial criticism of the Dawkins reforms of Australian higher education was founded on three levels of misconception. First, the notion of 'liberal education' to which these critics refer is an idealised notion of liberal education; it took shape at a particular phase of educational development which is particularly connected to its own historical moment. The critics treat this idealised notion as an absolute rather than locating it as one form of liberal education which has not and could not remain static. Just as liberalism itself has taken different forms over the past two hundred and more years, so too has education within the liberal state, and this is why it is absurd to refer to liberal education as a static form. Second, the ideal of liberal education as the epitome of non-instrumentalism is flawed; from the colonial outset the possibility and the reality of the establishment of universities and higher education in Australia, despite the rhetoric of 'liberal education', was unequivocally ends driven. Last, the critique of the Dawkins reforms on the basis of it being a shift towards a policy of new vocationalism is far too superficial an account of the driving force of change in a capitalist social institution. The task of drawing all these threads together has been difficult. What is more, each of the arguments I put forward is to some extent dependent upon the others, and so it has been difficult to know which order to place these sections. On the one hand they can to some extent stand as discrete arguments, whilst on the other hand, for the purposes of this dissertation as an entity, they cannot stand alone. Some of the chapters then, can be read in different order to that in which they are placed here.

Chapter One, actually reviews the responses to the Dawkins Green and White papers. This is by no means an exhaustive review – the profusion of contributions prohibits such an account – however, the chapter endeavours to consider those responses made by the most prolific and representative of the contributors. Whilst the contributions can not be unequivocally delineated into a series of positions there are general points of commonality between some of the arguments. This chapter is divided into sections

which reflect the general flavour of these commonalities with the intention of highlighting and defining the essential ideas expressed within what, to some extent, became a debate. The actual sequencing of the contributions is aimed to show how the predominant contributions responded to each other or stood in relation to each other as well as in relation to the proposed reforms themselves. The contributors considered first are not necessarily more significant than those which follow. The main strands considered in this way are: those representing the arguments for a traditional defence of the delineated structure of higher education in which universities are defended as the site of liberal educational pursuit and excellence; the response from representatives of the humanities and social sciences that the emphasis upon scientific and technical vocationalism spells the demise of the liberal arts and thus the possibility of social self-critique; the contributors who debate the notion of the non-instrumentality of the humanities on the grounds of instrumental rationality; and those contributors who seek to point out that rather than debating whether or not the humanities are, or ought to be, instrumental, the real issue is that of the significance of the reforms in terms of the distribution of power and the state of class struggle over education in an increasingly international context.

Chapter Two, sets out what is absent in the majority of the critiques of the Dawkins reforms. In this chapter I argue that the actual restructuring of Australian higher education must be understood within a context. As social scientists we do not approach any subject with the same body of questions or methods of explanation. However, social scientific approaches which do not attempt to consider their subject within at least a general context are profoundly limited in their explanatory value. This chapter, then, seeks to explain why an historical context of the development of liberalism can offer enormous insights into the social institution of higher education. It sets about developing such an account which then allows for a focus, less concerned with resisting immediate events on pedagogical and philosophical grounds, and, more directed towards understanding these events in terms of the social relation of capitalism in the late twentieth century.

Moving on from the obvious concerns, of chapter One, with protection of the liberal educational ideal and the opposition to vocationalism and instrumentalism as the *raison d'être* of higher education, and the argument for the importance of context, the third chapter sets out to actually examine the concept of liberal education as it has been constructed in this debate. It is a nineteenth century ideal of liberal education to which most of its contemporary advocates refer and so this chapter reviews the development throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth century of the idea of a liberal education. It becomes apparent that despite the current popular attachment to a Newmanian ideal of the university and liberal education, as a means separated from instrumental ends, this was far from being the dominant view in the nineteenth century. Indeed it seems that by the time that Newman's *Idea* was published it was more a defence of a defeated ideal rather than the articulation of a widely held position. In other words, this suggests that the current popular conception of the ideal of a liberal education and its place within the university is a notion which never really held sway at the time of its own construction. It is almost as if, with the passing of time, the ideal has become romanticised and venerated to a position of influence which it has never truly held. The oversight in this idealisation of non-instrumental liberal education is that throughout the nineteenth century, the notion of liberal education was struggled over and reformed as a result of that struggle. Rather than being a struggle of instrumentalism over non-instrumentalism the real issues were over what kind of instrumentalism should be promoted within a liberal university education; particularly, the struggle was how to force the ancient universities to accommodate the new means essential to the ends of a new age. In other words how to shift the ancient universities out of the middle ages and into the age of capital.

A further concern of this chapter is the question: how valid is it to assume that liberal education is non-instrumental and thus divorced from sectional interests? Just as instrumentalism is necessarily representative of a more precise notion than mere usefulness so too is non-instrumentalism more specific than non-utility. Implicit within the notion of instrumentalism is the concept that there are clear and concrete ends, and these ends must actually exist in the interests of some concrete social group. Even where it is argued that instrumental ends can simply represent the general social interest (that

is utilitarian ends), those of us who reject the idea of the possibility of general social interest within exploitative social relations such as capitalism are driven to point out that the notion of general social interest is a distortion of the reality of class specific interest. In the same vein, non-instrumentalism must stand as absolute independence from material ends or interests. The very notion of non-instrumentalism is antithetical to capitalist social relations: once capitalism completes the process of subversion of production for the purpose of rational ends to production for the purpose of profit, all relations within the capitalist social relation fall within the realm of production in the interests of the capitalist class. The development of modern education as a social institution has not occurred outside of the social relation of capitalism, and the construction of the modern idea of liberal education has been firmly located within it. Rather than to debate the possibility of instrumental and non-instrumental education it is much more useful to ask: does the notion of non-instrumentalism actually reflect or promote the interests of particular social classes? Another way of looking at this problem is to recognise that, despite the contemporary assumption that liberal education is not ends driven, the contemporary notion of what actually constitutes it is historically constructed, and that, in at least the initial stages, this construction of liberal education was very much in the interests of a particular class or class fraction.

The fourth chapter is also concerned with a consideration of the validity of the notion of liberal education. Here, however we move to the establishment of the universities in Australia. Just as the idea of the essential non-instrumentalism of liberal education is articulated within the response to the Dawkins initiatives, so to is the idea that the history of the Australian university is one of institutions which have epitomised this ideal. The chapter reviews the histories of three of the first universities established in Australia. In doing this it presents a case that, although there was a certain assumption of the need to establish liberal arts institutions in order to underwrite the supply of a suitable future leadership for a nascent democracy, the reality of the first half century of establishment was somewhat at odds with the rhetoric. The establishment of the universities in Australia was overwhelmingly instrumental in both political and economic terms. For the most part the most successful faculties in achieving funding at both public and private levels were the most apparently economically instrumental,

rather than those providing liberal education for presumed young leaders. From the outset the universities' dependence upon state rather than private funding meant that their real autonomy was constrained by the necessity to exhibit utility more than commitment to an ideal of higher education. Even the sources of private funds and benefactions were often tied specifically to the development of faculties rather than general educational imperatives.

The two chapters which follow develop this study of Australian higher education further. Chapter Five summarises the developments in higher education expansion in Australia of the long boom. This was the period in which higher education provision was increasingly identified with national economic well being and in which financial responsibility was increasingly assumed by the Federal Government. The post war commitment to a social democratic agenda required undertakings by government to underwrite the most important of capitalist social institutions, and, in an era of anticipated growth, ensured production of the kinds of skilled labour power to facilitate growth was essential. Education was clearly a priority, and whilst the states appealed for financial assistance across all educational sectors, the fostering of national standards of a higher education system at a time of obvious need for expansion was regarded as a legitimate site for federal support. This chapter identifies the period in which there is a real watershed in Australian higher education provision. Whilst still regarded as an era of elitist higher education in which the universities dominate we see in the various government reports a definite statement about the need to extend participation in higher education in the interests, not so much of access as much as, of national economic well being. This is the period in which higher education in Australia becomes no longer the site of reproduction of sections of a ruling class in the form of professional elites who go on to dominate economic and political institutions such as business, Parliament, the judiciary, and the like, but it is directed increasingly into a role of producing and reproducing the forms of skilled labour necessary to both economic expansion and expansion of the social democratic state.

Chapter Six discusses the experience of Australian higher education provision since the end of the period of long boom. This period commences with a moment of anticipation

of great opportunities in higher education access and provision with the coming to power of the Whitlam Labor Government in 1972, but, quite rapidly, moves into the period in which social democratic social institutions come under increasing scrutiny and their role and outcomes are reappraised, restructured and even eroded. Thus, whilst the final chapter gives an account of the period which many observers identify as the moment of the attainment of truly mass higher education, it is also an account of the time in which many of those participating in the process of higher education declare its transformation from an institution predicated upon the importance of the creation of independent ideas and acting as the site of informed social self-critique, to one entirely oriented towards satisfaction of the instrumental needs of the market. Chapter Six then, gives an account of the various government reports and policy developments which have charted this shift and, as with chapter Five, attempts to set this out within the context of the changing nature of liberalism – in particular the era marking the dismantling of those social democratic institutions so important to the forging of the social democratic consensus (for example, the trade union movement, full employment policy and education).

Chapter Seven needs to be read as standing beside the account of the development of Australian higher education. This chapter attempts to throw some light on the parallel development of Australian sociology of education. The absence of a rigorous sociological analysis or critique of higher education policies over the past two decades cannot be overlooked, particularly in a dissertation which argues that the most recent responses to policy are flawed. The particular development of Australian sociology, and especially the development of Australian sociology of education offers some insights into its failure to mount a concerted critical defence of its very own genre within the academy. In the first place, the failure of a strong sociological representation in the debate was one of its weaknesses. Furthermore, it would seem that the failure of educational sociology to critically confront the social democratic rhetoric of the 1960s and 1970s – indeed its willingness to embrace such rhetoric as a path to positive change – provided it with an achilles heel which economic rationalist arguments have been able to exploit.

The conclusion to this dissertation draws the various layers of discussion together in order to support the contention that the developments in Australian higher education are the mark of more significant and fundamental changes than those of government education policy. Implicit within such an argument is the rejection of the idea that the events since 1987 have been the result of a misguided policy at the core of which has been a re-orientation in which vocational education and science and technology have taken priority at the expense of the humanities and social sciences. Whilst the material discussed is intended to give the developments a greater context of national economies and national governments' attempts to direct the former within a seemingly ineluctable globalisation of production and exchange, it is not intended to belittle or undermine the real concerns expressed about the very real outcomes of the shift towards market driven education provision. The intention of this dissertation is not to deride the idea that education should be driven by such ideals as independent knowledge and improvement of the human condition. However, what it has intended to query is the assumption that in Australia this has been the essential condition of university education, and higher education in general, prior to 1987.

No account of the post 1987 reforms which ignores the ongoing but transient nature of liberalism can confront the realities of higher education in a post democratic society. Rigid but romantic attachments to a static ideal of liberal education, formed in an era of liberal democratic reform, encumbered by all of the instrumental baggage associated with the particular tensions of the political struggles of the time, are greatly limited in any defence of an educational ideal in the 1990s. This does not mean that traces of the past are absent or irrelevant, it only means that we must recognise them as traces not essence, and that we should not assume that transformation represents a break.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE RESTRUCTURING OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE 1980s AND RESPONSES

The academic community responded with considerable misgiving to the Dawkins initiatives both floated in the 1987 Green Paper and established in the 1988 White Paper. Not surprisingly some of the most vehement responses came from representatives of the traditional university sector which, on the surface at least, stood to suffer the greatest damage from the policy. These were people who had benefited from both the differential funding of tertiary education institutions and the channelling of the majority of government research monies into the universities. To some extent, academics in the university sector regarded this imbalance as the traditional universities' birthright. The competition for funds would now be played out under new rules (directly ends driven criteria) which these academics had possibly even less experience in attracting than their counterparts in other parts of the tertiary education sector, who, because of the dearth of private research monies in Australia, were better practiced in hustling for the few resources available.

This unilateral approach to research funding was just one of a number of initiatives which would serve to dissolve the binary divide and mark the end of what was for academics in the established university sector a period of privilege and prestige. Universities have traditionally been accepted in the twentieth century western culture as the acme of education and knowledge production, and university teachers have acquired not insignificant prestige from their role within these institutions. The rubbing out of the line, which, since their inception in the 1960s, had separated the Colleges of Advanced Education (CAES) and Institutes of Technology from the universities, could not help but erode this edge. It is far from remarkable then, that the concerns expressed by this sector of academia were often thinly disguised elitist expositions of the superiority of the



universities over the other higher education institutions. The comments mostly took the form of statements of conviction about the inherent qualities of excellence and scholarship which they had, by nature as well as design (that is collective management) fostered, and which were now under threat.<sup>1</sup>

This is not to say that academics in the newer universities and less prestigious tertiary education sector altogether welcomed, or were even unperturbed by, the proposals. Indeed there was a general and strong sense of misgiving. Academics in institutions faced with the likelihood of forced mergers naturally feared the possibility of loss of control over content and structure of courses taught. Added to this, the shift toward increasingly corporate management structures served to make them ever more aware of the implications for employment conditions in terms of, for example, tenure ratios and the real possibility of redundancy forced by criteria of surplus to demand.<sup>2</sup> Apart from the possibility of increased access to research funds, which some disciplines within the aspiring university/tertiary sector anticipated, there was considerable unease expressed by their colleagues within the schools and departments of humanities and social sciences. Along with their peers in the more elite part of the tertiary sector many people viewed the emphasis upon science and technology education and their assumed connection to national economic recovery with both disdain and an awful sense of foreboding for the future of their disciplines.<sup>3</sup>

In reality the reaction to the Dawkins initiatives was far from a partisan knee jerk driven by one's need to protect either one's place within the hierarchy of institutions or one's choice of academic discipline. Thus, whilst there were a number of issues around which the responses coalesced (the concerns of forced mergers, reduced autonomy and increasing accountability directed by new corporate rather than collegial management structures), all of which clearly aimed at directing the tertiary sector to produce more

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<sup>1</sup> See Hugh Stretton (1989) who defends Adelaide University's position of excellence; also Leonie Kramer (1990), Bruce Williams (1988) and David Pennington's exchange with John Dawkins in *The Age* (1989), are representative of the establishment response from the traditional university sector.

<sup>2</sup> See Kerry Barlow (1989), Roland Sussex (1989), Gill Boehringer (1989), Bob Bessant (1988) and Roger Scott (1988).

<sup>3</sup> See Stephen Knight (1989), Denis J. Davis (1988) and Bernd Hüppauf (1990).

with certainly no real growth and the likelihood of reductions in resources, these concerns were underpinned by broader but intrinsically connected issues about the role of the university and the place of the humanities and social sciences within it.

The outcome was an initial barrage of newspaper comments, journal articles and conference papers which, as the policy has been implemented throughout the past nine years, have been followed by a steady flow of articles, edited collections and, most recently, monographs which have with varying degrees of scholarship sought to analyse and explain the current issues in tertiary education in the context, if not always as a direct consequence, of the Dawkins Revolution in tertiary education.<sup>4</sup> It is the concern about the emphasis underlying all this, the tertiary sector's need to become more market driven and the notion that it bears a seemingly unequivocal responsibility to national economic recovery – that has really struck at the heart of so many people with an interest in tertiary education. On the surface it seems that for a great number of the participants in the debate the issue is that this agenda seems to fly in the face of the very core of tertiary education – ‘liberal education’ – and cannot be condoned. Much of the discussion has been concerned with a critique of both the growing priority of vocationally directed education as well as the perception that the competition for research funds is based upon identifiable and market valid outcomes. These criteria have been seen as a critical redirection, the operation of which, it is argued, have done irrevocable damage to the pursuit of the liberal arts in Australia and have transformed the very essence of the university. No longer can academics take comfort from the knowledge that their work is validated by an endorsement that means should be the driving force of academic pursuit and legitimately take priority over the ends. The suggestion has not been that valid ends are not important but that they should not be the only, or even the predominant, way in which means are determined.

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<sup>4</sup> For example see R. DeAngelis (1992). For monographs see Ian Lowe (1994) for a statement of general concerns expressed widely within the academic body in the early 1990s. Geoffrey Maslen and Luke Slattery (1994) present a rather less accomplished and less well substantiated account of current crisis in academia. Ian Hunter *et al* (1991) critique those arguments which defend the humanities on the grounds of non-instrumentalism. Simon Marginson (1993) is the best review of recent developments in educational public policy which places the reforms of the tertiary sector within the context of economic policy.

This chapter reviews this theme within the debate from 1987 to the early-mid 1990s. Because of the range of contributions and the different threads running within this debate it is not possible to discuss contributions in either a discrete or an entirely chronological fashion. Rather, I explore general themes, areas of difference and similarities and tensions in the arguments in a way which shows that the debate is more than merely an assessment of policy conducted between those whose professional and sometimes individual interests are at stake, but that the contributions mark fundamental schisms between those who hold an idealised view of the role of the university, those who see a purely instrumental role and those who seek to explain and challenge it in terms of social and political structures.

### The Role of the University

This notion of the role of the university is the central concern of this dissertation which owes its origins to this particular debate. Whilst not all contributors to the debate refer directly to such a concept as a 'role' or an 'idea' of a university the very nature of their participation in the discussion implies that they hold some sense of what a university's place in contemporary Australian life should be. Some of the arguments are founded upon an essential ideal of the role of the university whilst others seek to show that no such position can be held. A further complicating factor is that apart from those specific defences of the elite or traditional universities against the policy's construction of a unified tertiary sector – which couch the arguments very much in terms of how these institutions are the only ones who can rightly claim such a name<sup>5</sup> – much of the discussion does not distinguish between sections within the entire tertiary sector. Instead they argue along general lines about the place of the humanities and social sciences in higher education overall.

There are some writers who have actually noted that a contributing factor to the public acceptability of the Dawkins initiatives has been the absence within Australia of any acknowledged or consistent view of a university's place in society. Indeed it has been pointed out that since the establishment of the first universities in Australia in the 1850s,

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<sup>5</sup> For example see Kramer (1990).

which were modelled upon universities in Scotland and Ireland, there has never been any real contestation, either within the academy, or publicly, over the role of the university in Australia (Hüppauf, 1988). The absence in Australia of the kinds of struggles and consequent reforms which mark the history of the university systems of Britain, France, Germany and the United States is explained in some part by Bernd Hüppauf who argues that we have experienced neither the “social crises, revolutions or defeat in war” that marked the last two hundred years of European society and which contributed to “serious crises of their collective self-image and visions of the future”, nor did we experience anything “to match the wave of migration resulting from the Third Reich and the Second World War, which took many European intellectuals to US universities and injected new ideas into the American cultural milieu” (Hüppauf 1988,87). He goes on to argue that being spared the kinds of challenges that such disruptions bring, as well as being

... financially privileged, socially protected and enjoying relative intellectual freedom, Australian academics have hardly ever felt a need to justify their concept of teaching and research and develop a theory of the university. The concept of the university has always been taken for granted ... Global definitions of the aims of higher education would be difficult to find, ...and the expectations of politicians and public at large are all too often determined by momentary and sectional interests. The day-to-day reality of the university is characterised by a hazy co-existence of general education and vocational training, teaching and research, autonomy and social-political dependence, interdisciplinary dialogue and rigid divisions between traditional departments (Hüppauf 1988,87-8).

Whilst this may only be a partial explanation for the absence of contestation of the role of higher education in Australia, it gives some sense of the shape of the status quo in 1987 in terms of the tertiary sector, as well as a sense of the vulnerability of an academic body which had not previously needed to defend itself publicly.

Tony Coady and Seamus Miller (1993) also point out the general absence of a consistent concept of the role of the university. They suggest that the issues associated with the development of a unified national system are not just conflicts resulting from the practical dilemmas of how to teach more students with less money, or the effects of restructuring upon university autonomy, but:

...there is an unresolved theoretical or intellectual problem concerning the very nature and role of the University as an institution. It is ... quite unclear what the goals of the University in Australia are supposed to be (Coady and Miller 1993,40).<sup>6</sup>

Unlike Hüppauf however they attribute this absence to a wider arena than Australia, noting the work of British theorist Ronald Barnett (1990) who argues that the UK is particularly devoid of “serious debate about the aims and values of higher education”. Indeed Barnett suggests that the debate is more vigorous in a range of countries including Australia (Barnett 1990, 3-6). Whilst Coady, Miller and Hüppauf query the existence of an agreed position on the role and aims of higher education in Australia this is really their only point of difference with other writers who work from the assumption that there is an essential role of the university and who seek to defend the place of the humanities within this essentialism. Despite this difference in perception of the strength, in Australia, of the foundations of such a position, both groups advocate it.

In an early paper commenting on the response to the Green paper Coady sets out the beginnings of his defence of the humanities against the “crudely instrumental terms of the kind so prominent in the Federal Government’s “reformist” plans for universities” (Coady 1988, 16). Here, he establishes an argument for attachment to the values of a “traditional ideal of a liberal education” which, he argues, embodies:

...the spirit of inquiry, the sense of involvement in a problem because of its inherent complexity whatever the payoff, the desire for comprehensive understanding, the critical attitude, which always approaches a problem with a sense of scepticism or caution about the received opinions in the field, the disinterested or objective spirit which respects data and follows the logic of the issues where they lead (Coady 1988, 16).

All of these are part of the “reflective attitudes” which Coady sees as central to the university and which are ignored in the Green Paper.

The Green Paper’s conception of universities is basically one of degree factories in which raw material is rapidly processed into certified technocrats (Coady 1988, 17).

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<sup>6</sup> In an earlier paper, Coady (1988) cites Don Aitken’s comments in *The Age*, (1987) in which Aitken refers to the lack of consensus on the concept of the university. Coady refers to Aitken saying that *he* cannot understand what is meant by the concept which seems to be rather more than Aitken intends.

In 1993 Coady and Miller set out an extension of this argument by reasserting the relevance of Cardinal John Henry Newman's mid-nineteenth century work *The Idea of the University*, which they suggest is capable of providing a theory of the modern university. They argue that Newman's work provides a framework which not only sees the university as the site for the disinterested pursuit of knowledge, but that this pursuit occurs in the general interests of society as a whole. Attached to this is also the development of an intellectual practice of "logical thinking, and the habit of careful and balanced judgement" (Coady and Miller 1993, 40).

Coady and Miller reject the contention that Newmanian approaches to the university are no longer relevant, arguing that theories of a previous era are not necessarily of no value today. They do, however, disagree with Newman's ideas that as a teaching institution the university has no place for research; the obstacles presented by trying to combine the two are not insurmountable: "... a research function for universities, far from being inconsistent with Newman's vision of higher education actually complements it" (Coady and Miller 1993,42).

Coady and Miller argue that although it is not generally recognised there is implicit support of utilitarian values within Newman's work. Thus, although Newman's work is a statement of the worth of liberal knowledge informed by reason as an end in itself, they cite his argument – that the university is primarily a teaching institution which must teach all knowledge including that necessary to the professions such as law and medicine – in support of the idea that a Newmanian concept of liberal education embodies an acceptance of economic utility. Furthermore, they maintain that the notion of social utility is present because:

... intellectual empowerment of the sort Newman advocates is not only of enormous benefit to the individuals who gain it, but also to the major institutions of society. Schools, the media, the legal system, the bureaucracy, government would all benefit from an injection of graduates with Newman's intellectual virtues (Coady and Miller 1993,42).

Thus, they oppose the arguments put forward by advocates of reform like Don Aitken (1987), that attachments to the concept of liberal education, and preservation of the kinds of institution which foster it, do not fit with the public good.

Whilst this Newmanian approach is often cited as elitist, Coady and Miller argue that with adequate funding university education need not be restricted to a minority. Nevertheless, they do qualify this with a clear statement that what they are speaking of as a truly liberal university education is not appropriate for mass consumption:

Yet the question has not been seriously faced by contemporary university “reformers” of just how far access can be taken without so devaluing what is on offer in universities as to make access unimportant and university education a misnomer (Coady and Miller 1993,43).

The question of ‘importance to whom’ is not, and cannot be, addressed on Coady and Miller’s terms, for they never question the validity of the values they invoke. Indeed, in an early paper Coady states: “my inquiry is unashamedly into values and ... it is committed to the possibility of reasoning about values and ideals” (Coady 1988,16). This is a position which seems to suggest that the important issues for the academic are the philosophical question about establishing universally correct values and ideals, that is, that these can be established and represent the interests of all humanity.

In a similar vein, Brian Crittenden asserts that there are some “distinctive characteristics of a university” which distinguish it from “other kinds of institutions... within the general domain of post secondary education”, but, he identifies these in more detail than Coady and Miller (Crittenden 1990,268-9). Nevertheless, what he describes does not really diverge from the latter’s implied roles. He argues that the marks of a university are: advancement of knowledge in a wide range of matters which fosters interrelated teaching and research practices; teaching of “general or liberal education as well as specialised theoretical and practical studies” with all students having some exposure to “advanced general education”; advancement of vocational knowledge and the critical appraisal of its “practice in its social and cultural context”; offering as well as a range of undergraduate programs, graduate programs which foster “advanced knowledge and of skills in scholarship and research”; a primary concern with developing those skills

necessary for reflective activity professionally, socially and individually, rather than those suited to effective operation within the international economy; and academic freedom to go about this business (Crittenden 1990,277). What is more, like Coady and Miller, Crittenden defends the separation of the universities from other higher education institutions on the basis of their engagement “in a practice that has tried to embody certain ideals believed to be of human significance”. Again, Crittenden provides more explanation of what these ideals relate to than Coady and Miller do.

The concept of a university and its association with important values is analogous to such other concepts as that of rationality, science, democracy, justice, art. Despite significant [historical] variations in... practices with which such concepts are associated, it matters profoundly what may justifiably count as a rational choice, a scientific explanation, a democratic society, a just act, a work of art. ... the term ‘university’ is not simply a label for any institution of formal education or training beyond secondary schooling; it carries with it certain normative criteria that any institution claiming the name should satisfy (Crittenden 1990, 278).

He does not, however, claim a tradition of liberal education for Australian Universities:

Over the past twenty-five years, probably not more than four or five universities have attempted anything like a common core of general education for undergraduates. Although all offer a wide variety of subjects that contribute something towards a liberal education, I doubt whether any has a systematic, coherently designed program of liberal education (Crittenden 1990, 281).

Crittenden puts the case for inclusion of general and liberal studies within professional programs and notes current preference of employers for the “broadly educated, intellectually flexible employee”. He does, however, warn that liberal education is not impervious to the possibility of redefinition to include general skills “(e.g. of analysis and synthesis)” as part of a process of “having greater occupational relevance”. Clearly he fears the transformation, through contamination, of liberal education into what he regards as its antithesis (Crittenden 1990,284).

Crittenden argues for a connection between research and teaching but emphasises that research in the university should be driven by criteria of “excellence and significance within the intellectual disciplines”, rather than applied research, which might well be better carried out by other institutions: “its first responsibility is to advance



understanding, not make things work better” (Crittenden 1990,287). The rest of his argument proceeds to endorse this view of the university as an institution where knowledge is pursued in a contemplative rather than practical fashion – an activity which depends upon academic freedom. All of this can only function in Crittenden’s view in a system of tertiary education which recognises and caters for diversity in its institutional structures.

Hugh Stretton (1989) puts his case, for the protection of research as a process of disinterested inquiry, by arguing that what may seem to be of no *immediate* instrumental value in the short term, often has hugely beneficial outcomes in the long term: he cites the example of Derek Rowley whose work at Adelaide University over more than two decades ultimately led to development of an oral vaccine for typhoid and cholera which was not an initially intended outcome. The final support for development of this program, however, has had to be taken up abroad due to lack of Australian government support and Stretton sees this as indicative of what would occur under the kinds of priorities emphasised by the restructuring of higher education. This argument is however, developed less as a general defence of the values of research which is not determined by instrumental ends, and more as a defence of the special conditions which existed within the university sector and which facilitated such research interests. Thus Stretton refers to the very real increasing burden of teaching growing student numbers with less funds as being a threat to the University academic’s capacity to research.

Yet another contributor to the debate who falls into this category of defence of the “special role” of the traditional universities is Leonie Kramer. Her support of a highly stratified higher education sector is abundantly clear.

The binary system provided realistically for students of different levels of ability and different academic goals to find a place in the college or university which best matched those abilities and aspirations (Kramer 1990,217).

She uses the example of teacher training to illustrate her argument against the proposed amalgamations by suggesting that, on the one hand students previously accepted into teacher training institutes would have to be excluded from the amalgamated institutions under university admissions criteria because of inadequate tertiary admission scores, or,

on the other hand, that the previously high standards of the universities would have to be lowered to cater for less able students (Kramer 1990,223). Yet further cause for concern in Kramer's view is the issue of appropriate curriculum offerings in amalgamated institutions forced to attempt to train both generalists and vocational specialists. Kramer stresses that this is why institutions must be allowed to maintain some degree of autonomy in curriculum development.

It is these forms of defence of a privileged academic sector which Simon Marginson dubs "The Unpopular Defence of a Selfish Utopia" (1989, 2).

The concept of 'knowledge for its own sake' is used to claim special status or protection for its proponents: ... It gives a saintly air to what are really more limited disputes about professional autonomy, research policy priorities, etc. (Marginson 1989,3).<sup>7</sup>

### The Humanities Under Attack

As noted above, the consternation expressed by the academic body in response to the higher education reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s was not limited to those seeking to protect their position of relative advantage in the traditional universities. There were many academics working in the CAEs and Institutes of Technology, as well as some colleagues from the universities, who welcomed the end of the binary divide but who expressed reservations about the motives behind the reforms and who saw within them an implicit threat to the humanities and social sciences in tertiary education.

The expansion of universities in the post-war era facilitated the production of a supply of academic labour in the 1960s and early 1970s which was taken up by the further expansion of higher education and the establishment of new universities and institutes of technology in the 1970s. This was a body of relatively young academic workers who had trained, through post-graduate work, to be not just teachers, but also, active and engaged researchers. There were severe frustrations for these workers in the second tier of higher education where funding did not allow for research. Added to this individual teaching loads were, for the most part, at levels which prohibited research for all but the

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<sup>7</sup> This observation is developed later in this chapter.

superhuman: the Dawkins policy initiatives gave some promise of greater access to government research funds. At the same time the dismantling of binarism represented the removal of what many with career aspirations saw as an artificial barrier to advancement into the more highly prestigious sectors of higher education.

Nevertheless, it seemed to many academics in schools of humanities and social sciences that whilst this all sounded promising on the surface, in reality their disciplines stood to gain little. Whilst the contributors who have focussed particularly on this view (that is 'the humanities under threat') have not advocated preservation of a traditional liberal education in quite the strongly traditionalist terms as those discussed above, they still express – not always explicitly – a sense that the underlying principles of the humanities are, and should be maintained as, non-instrumentally driven ideals rather than projects directed by government to produce graduates best suited to the requirements of an unpredictable market place. This connection to ideals of liberal education is not surprising given that what we are referring to here is a group of academics who, although not working in institutions regarded as the embodiment of the idea of liberal education, are certainly, in the most part, graduates of the universities in which (despite Crittenden's denial of such) liberal education was, by tradition, presumed to be inherent within an arts program. Indeed, many of these academics had proceeded to post-graduate study in British universities where such ideals were presumably just as firmly entrenched.

The following contributors to the review of the higher education reforms are not necessarily identified as being from this group; but certainly the arguments they advance reflect the general concern, for the humanities in the face of the reforms, which was shared by academics from humanities and social science disciplines across the tertiary sector. Sol Encel (1988) expresses views which illustrate these kinds of concerns. Encel accepts the value of ending the binary system and acknowledges the need for both expansion of student intake at the same time as eliminating duplication and fostering streamlining. His reservations, however, are that, much of the discussion within the Green and White papers does not really develop the philosophy of growth and equity beyond the rhetoric of "a fair share for all" (Encel 1988,24). Instead, there is a focus

upon the essential idea within the policy, that education can fuel economic recovery. Encel argues that there is no evidence in Australia, or abroad, to support the idea that more higher education graduates contribute to economic growth. He criticises Dawkins for developing policy imperatives which take the role of universities as service providers for granted, remodels them into new directions of academic/industrial interconnection and “almost totally ignores the ivory tower or cultural function of university education (apart from a few genuflections)” (Encel 1988,25). Encel reiterates a point he made in a paper presented in the mid 1960s in response to the Martin Inquiry which laid the ground for the binary system which Dawkins dismantled.

*Any substantial improvement in the situation of the universities should be based on an attempt to assert that their functions are 'autonomous' and 'cultural' as well as purely instrumental. The distinction is, of course, largely artificial. In practice, every institution of higher education exists because of social demands. Its quality depends not only on how well it fulfils these demands, but on the extent to which it can at the same time, and within the framework of its social purpose, develop the pursuit of learning for its own sake[his emphasis] (Encel 1988, 25).*

Thus we see an acknowledgment by Encel of the role of higher education as being socially determined at the same time as a strong assertion of a core tenet of liberal education (that is autonomous knowledge). There is no grappling here with the ambiguity of a position which asserts that the social determination of the acquisition and transmission of knowledge does not run contrary to the pursuit of knowledge as an end in itself .

Judith Brett’s attack on the Dawkins reforms outlined in the Green Paper is far more forthright in the defence of the humanities. She rejects the language of the discussion paper as being devoid of the essential values of the humanities. Brett gives an emphatic statement of the role of the humanities as the means by which we can explore that which is essentially human. “The attempt is ...made to understand what it means to be human in our time and place and how this can be better achieved” (Brett 1988,32).

Brett specifically rejects the notion in the proposed reforms that teaching and research can be separated and conducted by separate individuals. This, she argues, is evidence that the humanities are not part of the agenda of the proposals, and she goes on to point out that research is only discussed in terms of scientific and technological work in which the outcomes are easily identified and are valued in cash terms. The process of teaching in the humanities is one which constantly involves day to day interaction at a level of “interpretation and argument” in a similar environment to that of presenting a paper to one’s academic peers. This activity is dependent upon research and cannot be isolated from it, even if the practice takes the form more of writing than what is generally regarded as active research.

Disquiet about the market driven orientation in the higher education reforms has not been entirely the preserve of academics working within the humanities. Ian Lowe (1990, 1994) a Head of a School of Science has expressed objection to the priorities of efficiency and effectiveness within the higher education reforms. These, he argues, only address one of the functions of the university, that is the teaching of undergraduates, which is open to quantification. Clearly measures of efficiency are necessarily quantitative and they ignore what Lowe identifies as the other functions of the university which are qualitative, that is conservation, application, extension and assessment of knowledge.

Hüppauf (1988) (whose reference to the absence of debate over the idea of a university is noted above) does not object to specific aspects of the policy changes (for example increased flexibility, increased accountability of staff, and a greater interaction between academics and wider society) but opposes “the underlying philosophy of the approach as a whole – or, rather, its lack of philosophy” (Hüppauf 1988,90). He continues:

The application of rudimentary notions about the workings of the market to the complex structure of present universities can hardly be expected to justify drastic changes (Hüppauf 1988, 90).

A major concern for Hüppauf is with the reformers acting as representatives of industry rather than as politicians and public administrators whose abiding concern is that of education. He argues that this orientation has led to a view of the universities as being

limited in their role to the production of qualified labour power and only that knowledge directly applicable to production – a “twofold role: to produce technological innovations, and to create a workforce equipped with technological knowledge and skills” (Hüppauf 1988,90). Such a role is clearly at odds with Hüppauf’s notion that universities occupy, at many levels and over time, a mediating role both for the individual as well as between wider social arenas.

It is this mediating role that establishes the university, to an extent unparalleled by any other social institution, as the place where society can reflect on itself and develop its identity...[but] This position is increasingly under threat ... The demand is unambiguous; vocational training is to push aside the education of the personality, and all other types of research are to be subordinated to the production of scientific knowledge capable of direct technical application (Hüppauf 1988, 91).

Part of Hüppauf’s argument is based on the idea that it is the technological advances of the computer era which have enabled a fundamental change in the demands placed upon academics. He suggests that academics have been insulated from the pressures of intensification of labour experienced by workers in other sectors throughout this century, but sees the increasing demands for academic productivity to be measured by marketability of output as driven by the need to “industrialise” an area of production in which productivity has been difficult to measure. The actual amount of time which academic work requires has, until now, been regarded as immutable. Hüppauf seems to be arguing that the universities are being forced to adopt new structures which will allow for them to be shifted from a practice

...in which innovation and productivity are linked to curiosity, to phases of unproductive day-dreaming, to unconventional approaches that may easily go astray, to time sequences that resist quantification but appear vital for the emergence of the new (Hüppauf 1988,92).

The new direction is one in which academics are brought under the encroaching regime of the market, where their practice will not be funded without good reason to expect that it will produce outcomes which are quantifiable and profitable. Hüppauf points out that the humanities are, of course, the area at greatest risk given the difficulty of assuring such readily identifiable ends.

If the humanities and social sciences do not develop fields of research that conform to the supreme values of marketability, efficiency and effectiveness, they will be marginalising themselves in a university built around a core of commercial success and industrial usefulness (Hüppauf 1988,93).

Their refusal to comply will force them to seek funding from outside the academy. A further threat is the issue of how decisions about what research is ultimately useful are made. In this kind of scenario the sponsor of the research quite clearly intends to be a consumer of its outcomes and research support comes from their intention to further their own interests.

It is the demise of what Hüppauf refers to in terms of the academic tradition which really cuts him to the quick.

One of the most disturbing aspects of the current reforms is the light-hearted thoughtlessness with which intellectual traditions are sacrificed for short-term utilitarian interests. The remaining small enclaves of general and basic reflection with no immediate application to profit are being subjected to increasing political pressure and may soon be crushed by market forces (Hüppauf 1988,93).

Hüppauf defends the idea of a role of the university “*as a whole*” and sees the importance of maintaining autonomy from the political institutions of democracy which, because of their need to be seen to deal with issues in the short-term, are unable to provide solutions to the dilemmas raised by the “rapid developments in science, technology and commerce”: issues such as euthanasia, genetic mapping, sophisticated military technology and environmental degradation (Hüppauf 1988,94). All of these are problems which, Hüppauf suggests, require careful consideration of long term consequences; a role for which the academy is best suited, but which will be neglected in a system directed towards readily identifiable utilitarian ends. He expresses concern about the reforms being legitimised in terms of the symbol of the national interest and suggests that what is regarded as “profitable to the *nation*” would need “careful and critical assessment” of the long term ramifications (Hüppauf 1988,96).

There are a few points to be made here which, although they do not dispute Hüppauf’s thesis about the threat to the humanities’ capacity to survive the reforms, nevertheless challenge his assumptions about both the form of academic labour and the traditional

independence of the humanities. First, it is necessary to take issue with his notion that it was not until the widespread adoption of computerised production and its associated rises in industrial productivity that questions of academic productivity incorporated the academy into the demands of industrial society. Much of what is argued in this thesis rests on an understanding that the universities as well as all the other institutions of higher education in Australia have always been primarily connected to the demands of capitalist production and therefore industrial society. Hüppauf seems to entirely overlook the teaching role within the university by focussing his argument upon the notion of academic work as research and reflection. The role of reproduction of particular forms of skilled labour have been uppermost in Australian higher education. Indeed Hüppauf himself points out that “the universities primarily served as institutions of teaching and training” with postgraduate studies not being established until the mid-1940s (Hüppauf 1988,86). Chapter Five shows that much of the discussion of how to facilitate expansion of higher education in the post-WWII era was concerned with the production of an appropriate labour supply necessary to facilitate national economic development: part of this discussion was directly concerned with the problems of productivity (for example, how to address problems of high failure rates). The current reforms of higher education are not a special case in which the development of computerisation, as Hüppauf suggests, has made it at last possible to force a reluctant body of intellectuals to meet the demands of the economy. Rather, they are the encompassing of an essential part of the state within the broad sphere of policy objectives which mark the culmination of the shift from a social democratic agenda in Australian capitalism to one in which the market is seen as the only logical driving force.

Second, but similarly, Hüppauf’s attention to the rhetoric of national interest implies that this is some new determining criterion being placed upon academic work. Again, the post-WWII expansion of higher education in Australia was very solidly predicated upon this factor and is explored at length in chapters Five and Six. More particularly, the suggestion that academic labour is being forced for the first time to become subject to the forces of intensification misses the point. First, the introduction of a binary higher education system in the 1960s in which the colleges of advanced education were regarded as primarily teaching institutions and funded accordingly is the period in which



academic labour power was truly intensified. With the beginnings then, of mass higher education so too came the intensification of academic work. The fact that some sections of tertiary education (the elite universities) were not subject to that intensification at the same rate is by the by. It is the overall process of education which must be taken into account. Just as with shoes – the small number of hand crafted pairs of shoes is not the paradigm to be taken in isolation. Even without the benefit of the hindsight of the 1990s it was apparent that the Dawkins reforms smacked firmly of an attempt to force all sections of higher education into a greater intensity of work; both in teaching and research. This is the reason why, although his fears for the future for the humanities are not disputed, Hüppauf's argument suffers from its failure to acknowledge the real relations of education in Australia.

In a later paper Hüppauf does refer to the attention paid to human capital theory and national interests in the development of higher education policies in the 1960s and even before, but, maintains that the current reforms are the mark of a new moment in academic labour in which research and scholarship are separated with the former gaining priority as being only concerned with instrumental reason and the latter identified as cultural activity (Hüppauf 1989,440-1). He regards the contemporary attention to national interest as more a form of revived nationalism than a general concern with community objectives, and it is this nationalism, tied to an economic agenda of overriding market orientation, which Hüppauf identifies as the way in which the relationship between university and national interest is being forced into new arenas. His insistence upon analysing the reform agenda as a radical break with past agenda severely limits Hüppauf's ability to mount a plausible defence of the humanities. As with other similar accounts it adopts an absolute idea of academic work which holds that the process of redefinition brings about irrevocable damage. Such accounts engage in the debate in a way which never brings it to the edge of really raising the problems of what are currently the determining forces of academic work. They ignore the history of ideas as well as the history of higher education by choosing to discuss it in terms of not just an idealised form but almost as if it has, until now, existed in its pure form.

## The Humanities as Instrumental

The attachment to the idea of the humanities as embodying disciplines which have been untainted by, and must continue to be shielded from, the vagaries of instrumental reason is not unanimously held by those from within its ranks. Ian Hunter has had a significant voice in the debate. He rejects the standard defences of the role of the humanities and, in a paper published in 1989, he develops a distinct critique of the attempts made in the White Paper to acknowledge and assuage such criticisms of the Green Paper. The White Paper response he suggests is a merely tokenistic recognition of the arts and humanities in Australian national life and is necessarily vague in identifying the skills fostered by the humanities.

Hunter identifies two strands within the arguments that the humanities must be maintained as part of a liberal education which is essentially non-instrumental. First, is the idea that he refers to as the cultural critique, which he associates, for example, with Brett (1988), that the humanities are necessary because they foster the development of the complete human being or sense of self. Second, is the argument he notes in Coady (1988), that they provide the critical capacity for society to self-examine, and that within this critical appraisal there is a development of rationality. Hunter argues that neither of these ideas of the role of the humanities coincide with the way things actually are.

In terms of the notion of fostering essential human attributes, he asks which cultural attributes are essential. He rejects the notion that individuals require a “rich sensibility” and a capacity for written expression to participate in contemporary life and contends that what is needed is a “specific set of ethical, legal and political competences”. To suggest that these competences are increased by “the study of literature and history is a narcissistic expression of the aesthetic persona” (Hunter 1989,441). Hunter asserts that these competences accrue through both normative and administrative direction. He identifies the rationale for this as being derived from “decisions taken on the need to provide individuals with the very specialised array of abilities they need to live as citizens” (Hunter 1989,442). It needs to be noted here that Hunter does not identify by whom or how these ‘normative and administrative’ decisions are made, and although he

is clearly seeking to discount universalism, he resorts here to an argument which almost approaches an idea of Hegel's 'logic of reason'.

Hunter's argument with the second strand of the defence of the humanities seems to be that the development of educational policy (and therefore presumably the existence, form and content of the disciplines within educational institutions) is not the outcome of "general 'social understanding' fostered by the humanities" but is rooted in the plethora of "nineteenth-century social surveys and campaigns for social improvement that prefigured the emergence of modern education systems" (Hunter 1989,442). Again, Hunter goes awry here. He overlooks, or chooses to ignore, the political direction of the formation of education policy (see chapters Two and Three). He seems to be accepting the idea that modern education systems derive *solely* from a nineteenth century logic of liberal democratic *social improvement* agenda.

Voluntary internalisation of new cultural and social norms in a morally managed environment was the central strategy of popular education in England and provided the model for state and elementary education in Australia. When the modern subjects of English literature and history emerged in this space, the knowledges they imparted were inseparable from the ethical techniques and pedagogical relationships of a special pedagogical environment. The modern humanities are inseparable from a technology of ethical formation aimed at producing the self-regulating and self-developing citizen (Hunter 1989,444).

This ignores the case put by the large body of work, discussed in chapter Two, which strongly contends that in Britain the promotion of such agenda through education was by no means uncontested; the arguments for state provision or compulsion to education bristled with contradictions and as such were actively opposed by the failing feudal classes as well as large sections of the rising bourgeoisie. Thus whilst the new professional and intellectual sections of the middle class expressed the case for universal education provision in terms of notions of democratic citizenry in the nineteenth century, their part in the history of establishment of mass education (and therefore, education policy) was arguably no less that of self-interest than the other ruling class factions of the day. The existence and form of education policy cannot be separated from this struggle nor from subsequent struggles. Whilst in the twentieth century it has been framed in the language of liberal democracy, this does not mean that it is simply an

instrument of liberal democratic governments as Hunter's thesis suggests. Furthermore, such an argument fails to make the distinction between liberal democratic imperatives and social democratic policy which is essential to understanding the nature of social institutions and their development.

Hunter's neglect of politics hobbles his argument that the humanities, as they exist in contemporary Australia, have a clear instrumental role. He cannot move beyond this contention to one which explores the ways in which the ends of the humanities in Australia have been contested and conditioned by phenomena far more complex than that which he appears to be attributing to an unproblematic condition of liberal democratic society when he states that: "The history of the university humanities in this century is, in large part, the history of their incorporation and transformation within the new socially oriented education systems" (Hunter 1989,442).

Hunter asserts that a humanities education cannot be defended as a general education counterposed to the vocational. He suggests that it is because of the very nature of it as general education – in that it develops a range of "ethical and cultural abilities" from which further "skills, competences and social behaviours can be developed" – that the humanities cannot be regarded as being the preserve of the development of the complete person or the "disinterested "enrichment of society's cultural life"" (Hunter 1989,446).

Thus, Hunter's disagreement with the proposals of the White Paper are not over an apparently new orientation toward utilitarianism, but because it focuses only upon the "(economic and industrial priorities)" and disregards the social. The White Paper needs to have an extension to include these social priorities:

...not because the existing priorities are utilitarian or 'instrumental', or fail to grasp the incalculable and disinterested contributions of the humanities to culture and reason. Rather, it is because they fail to take into account the quite calculable and interested role of the humanities in forming the personnel necessary for maintaining certain cultural and ethical levels in the population at large (Hunter 1989,446).

In concluding this argument Hunter suggests that the humanities embody norms and values which are not bearers of ideological or philosophical baggage, but are sustained

by the nature of the pedagogical practice within the humanities, whereby students acquire knowledge “through relations of emulation and correction that shape their personalities.” It is because of this that the humanities are historically the carriers of “a variety of ethical norms and imperatives associated with personal conduct...” (Hunter 1898,447). It is this point that Hunter accuses the humanities academy of failing to take up in its own defence. Whilst he does not claim that the place of the humanities in fulfilling this role of reproducing ethical and moral values is immutable, he argues that its future will not be ensured,

...by invoking the many-sided aesthetic personality. It would be an irony...if the opportunity to provide a more worldly and pragmatic account of the humanities were lost amid all the avowals of culture and reason (Hunter 1989,447).

Again we have here a rejection of the idea of universalism within the humanities. It is clearly for Hunter, not content but process which matters, and thus the subject matter of the humanities is less important than its pedagogical practice. This is a rejection of the idea of the humanities having, on the one hand, a body of relevant knowledge which, on the other hand, by process of transmission, contestation and construction, is dialectically formed. Hunter, of course, has to argue this way in his particular assertion of the instrumentalism of the humanities because he does not acknowledge the ideological weight of the knowledge itself. If the content of knowledge has nothing to do with ideology or sectional interests then it cannot be instrumental. Therefore, in wanting to assert the instrumentalism of the humanities he necessarily resorts to arguing that instrumentalism lies in the process, but, his emphasis upon the pedagogical part of the process means that he implicitly discounts the place of research, which the mainstream defence of the humanities is at pains to argue is essential to the role of social critique. Hunter does not satisfactorily indicate how knowledge production through humanities research fits into his explanation of the instrumentality of the humanities. This emphasis on the role of the humanities in producing a large number of general graduates that are employed within predominantly government, but also business, allows Hunter to view instrumentality only in economic terms and in individual terms (that is production of skills and the individual embodiment of a social ethos) and thus ignore the place of the humanities in maintenance of a political and ideological status quo. The significant place that the humanities and social sciences have had (through reproduction of

liberal/bourgeois ideology as well as social policy research and the like), in underwriting the ideological and political stability of social democratic nations like Australia, is testament to its usefulness and interestedness.<sup>8</sup> Hunter fails to acknowledge that to credit the humanities with the role of social self-appraisal does not mean that one must view it as disinterested observer or as immune from utility. The struggles over schooling in Australia in the late 1960s and early 1970s illustrate well how the critique (from within the humanities and the social sciences) of the failed social policy of equality of opportunity was instrumental in facilitating the Whitlam Labor Government's relocation of education funding from state to federal control under the auspices of the Schools Commission.<sup>9</sup> The constant reworking and maintenance of concepts of liberalism such as equality and liberal democratic process has been enormously reliant upon the humanities and social sciences.

Hunter (1990) extends his earlier argument by first debunking the claims that the humanities are "the embodiment of the humanising mission of liberal education" and attempting to establish the historical interconnection between liberal education and "the forms of expertise characteristic of modern government" (Hunter 1990,396, 399). He sets about this on historical, ethical and political grounds.<sup>10</sup> Hunter takes up a crucial point made by Sheldon Rothblatt (1976) when he discusses Rothblatt's analysis of the utility of eighteenth century liberal education which was conducted in schools and private school rooms and did not extend to the universities. At this time liberal education

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<sup>8</sup> For example, Stuart MacIntyre (1986a, 317) refers to the extensive social surveys conducted in Victoria and other states in the early 1940s. Furthermore the establishment of the Australian National University (ANU) in 1946 was founded upon the need for a humanities based research academy to underwrite the social democratic agenda – see chapter Five).

<sup>9</sup> The real case was much more that social sciences research was the academic expression of the realisation fostered through human rights struggles in the US in the 1960s that 'equality of opportunity' as the ideological face of extended mass education in the post war-era was unable to deliver the social mobility it promised. See chapter Six and Sinclair-Jones (1983).

<sup>10</sup> Hunter uses the work of Sheldon Rothblatt (1976) quite extensively here, but seems to miss the points being made about the nature of the connections between liberal education, civility and gentility in the eighteenth century. He quotes from Rothblatt to support his argument "that between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries liberal education was typically pursued outside the university and university education was not typically liberal" (Hunter 1990,399). But, this is a distortion of Rothblatt's point which is referring specifically to liberal education in the Georgian era. Indeed the great part of Rothblatt's work discusses the struggles over the establishment of liberal education in the Universities in the nineteenth century (see chapter Three).

was for the most part pre-occupied with fostering the practice of civility and gentility as personal attributes. Such education served its subjects well in an era of uncertainty in which opportunities could frequently depend upon ability to display appropriate social graces (see chapter Three). Hunter notes Rothblatt's point about the utility of polite education to show that, rather than being entirely a process of personal development, this form of liberal education had clear vocational ends, but he rejects the explanation in terms of liberal education being conditioned by external social and political factors.

The central point whose consequences must be grasped is the dependence of the goals of cultivation on the practical deployment of specific and variable ethical techniques. ... these ends are not reducible to a functional social purpose or a general political rationality working through them (Hunter 1990,408).

There are, he contends, much better reasons to defend the humanities in terms of their political rationality. Hunter claims a Foucaultian approach to understanding power, rejecting notions of power as being used by those individuals who have it against those who have none. "Rather, the goals and exercise of power are effects of the deployment of those intellectual and political technologies that render reality calculable as an objective of administration" (Hunter 1990,420). And from here, Hunter again develops his argument that the humanities disciplines that we know are directly related to the establishment of mass schooling in the nineteenth century which:

...was due neither to the idealism of radical reformers nor the logic of state power. It was the result of the massing of a whole series of social surveys, reform campaigns, architectural innovations, evangelical movements, pedagogical theories and ethical imperatives. Above all, it was the result of the deployment of an array of powerful 'disciplinary' techniques – of observation, normalisation, optimisation. These transformed the physical health, intellectual abilities and ethical bearing of whole populations into objects of political measurement and intervention (Hunter 1990,422).

These techniques were the preserve of a range of professionals and other groupings such as teachers, doctors, statisticians, bureaucrats and the like whose interests were, argues Hunter, "'translatable' into the new political rationality of government education" (Hunter 1990,422). And, it was the connection "between the ethics and expertise of the scientific vocations and the programs of government" which brought about the leakage of the liberal arts (that is English literature and history) into the teachers' colleges and, ultimately the universities (Hunter, 1990,424-3) In other words, the humanities' place

in institutions of higher education are directly linked to political rationality; not, as many argue, because of their “‘humanising’ mission”, but because of the ways in which they have been established as the connections between the ethics of civility and the “technologies of government” (Hunter 1990,427). *These* are, he argues, the reasons for defending the place of the humanities in higher education. Thus, as with his earlier paper, Hunter absolutely denies, by choosing to ignore, any place for politics in the development of the humanities disciplines and their place in higher education. The absolutely critical point that Hunter seems to be overlooking here is that, whilst he is correct in his identification of the nineteenth century acceptance of the role of the liberal arts/humanities in promoting self-discipline or the self-regulating individual necessary to liberal democracy, this was not separate to that process of self-fulfilment or self-realisation which the contemporary defendants of liberal education invoke. Indeed he commits the same error as they do in that he fails to recognise that self-regulation and self-discipline, precisely because of all their instrumental reasons, do not represent a different aspect of nineteenth century educational ideals to the idea of self-fulfilment or complete living at the height of the liberal democratic moment, but are at the very centre of it. Both Hunter and those he attacks err in their separation of these. He reasserts an instrumentalism but separates it from the idea of complete living by arguing that nineteenth century education was directed towards the former, and those he critiques separate the latter from instrumentalism – neither party recognises these as two sides of the same coin.

The contribution of Dieter Freundlieb (1990) is an example of what marks this discussion as a true debate. His too is a defence of the humanities’ place in Australian higher education, but, he takes issue with Hunter on the basis of its place in the “formation of individuals with predictable competences necessary for the smooth functioning of modern economy and a modern state” (Freundlieb 1990,369). He notes a strong Foucaultian rejection of “general moral or ethical principles” in Hunter’s work, in terms of both, his straddling of a normative account of a place for the humanities in Australian higher education, and, the descriptive account of their coming to occupy the place they do have. Freundlieb argues that Hunter has chosen to misread much of the criticism of the Green and White Paper by the humanities defendants; in his view none



of the participants actually do believe that the humanities should be disinterested, rather, they hold that they should not be the servants of *narrow sectional* interests. He acknowledges that in fact there have been occasions when the humanities may have served narrow or sectional interests and these certainly merit investigation and criticism.

Freundlieb suggests that Hunter makes too much of what really happens in the determination of the content of the humanities. He argues that the content and curriculum of these disciplines is less clearly directed by governments and seems to suggest that they have more of an organic nature. Further to this Freundlieb points out that a real failing in both the work of Foucault and consequently Hunter,<sup>11</sup> is the absence of recognition that “their own critical activity would be impossible if their theory of the subject and the way subjects are formed, that is, through externally or self-applied ‘technologies’, was generally applicable” (Freundlieb, 1990,372).

A major point of disagreement with Hunter is with the basis of denial of the normative possibilities of the humanities; that it is not their function. Freundlieb maintains that an absence of normative activity does not mean that there is no place for a normative role for the humanities. “It seems that for Hunter the limits of governmental reasoning are the limits of the world” (Freundlieb, 1990,371). An argument in defence of the humanities, justified by a faith in governmental reasoning denies the possibility of a normative vision in which “social usefulness ...goes beyond what existing government bodies are able to envisage” (Freundlieb 1990,373). There is no place in Hunter’s account for a critical review of government reason if reason is taken, as his work implies, as immutable. Freundlieb rejects this sense of the absolute and argues that the humanities are essential to the constant reworking of notions of what is reasonable. Hunter’s attachment to

... the idea of the calculable and to instrumental reason ... fails to allow for what is arguably the humanities’ most valuable aspect: their potential for self-reflective critique and for developing conceptions of personal and social life that have hitherto been incalculable (Freundlieb 1990,374).

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<sup>11</sup> Freundlieb qualifies this by noting that towards his death Foucault began to indicate an acceptance of a form of self-reflexivity and Hunter’s real error lies in his failure to address this body of work.

Like Hunter, Denise Meredyth is not convinced by the arguments of people such as Coady – whom she terms “the current apologists for the humanities” (Meredyth 1991,29) – who reject vocation as a determining factor in humanistic education. She also refutes the attempt, by Marginson and others, to demonstrate the social utility of the humanities in Australian higher education based on arguments that they have had a strong traditional place in providing public administrators. Meredyth’s point of contestation is that, unlike Britain where the Northcote-Trevelyan reforms (civil service entrance exams for university graduates) established strong links between the humanities and the civil service, Australia has had no conduits between university and public administration. She cites Ashby who in 1944 rued the lack of direct pathways from the arts faculties to a career in the public service, and she presents other evidence, from that era and earlier, to show that there was no tradition of public service recruitment from the arts faculties (Meredyth 1991,30-1).<sup>12</sup>

Meredyth goes on, however, to acknowledge that although there were no formal links, and a seeming reluctance on the part of both the academy<sup>13</sup> and the public service to promote such links, the recruitment of graduates (and arts graduates in particular) into the public service grew steadily from the 1920s until by the late 1960s well over a third of graduates being taken on were from the humanities related disciplines (Meredyth 1991,30). Meredyth’s argument rests upon her dismissal of claims of traditional links, in spite of her recognition that from the 1920s arts graduates were the majority in public sector graduate employment. Clearly it would seem that she has a definition of tradition which does not allow almost three quarters of a century as a qualifying period.

A point that Meredyth makes less of, but could have used more strongly to put her case, is that most recent trends in public administration recruitment are towards both reduced expenditure and a shifting emphasis in which “graduates in Business Studies and

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<sup>12</sup> See chapter Four for further discussion of this.

<sup>13</sup> Although Meredyth refers to the academy’s “lack of enthusiasm” to draw links between arts faculties and public administration, it is important to note that Encel (1953, 224), Scarrow (1954,173) and Caiden (1965, 244) refer to the role of Universities in exerting pressure on the Commonwealth public service to provide for specific employment of non-specialist graduates, which came about under Section 36A of the Public Service Act in 1933.

Economics are threatening to colonise the public sector” (Meredyth 1991,29).<sup>14</sup> If one’s point is to make a case against arguments which support the humanities on the basis of enduring connections between recruitment of arts graduates and public administration, it would seem useful to go beyond just disputing the validity of the tradition itself and to emphasise the frailty of relying upon an attachment to tradition as validation for their continued existence.<sup>15</sup>

## Instrumentalism is Not the Issue

Few of the contributions to the debate over the role of the humanities have sought to move beyond the dispute over the extent to which the humanities are or ought to be instrumental or utilitarian. Simon Marginson and Rachel Sharp, however, have both transcended the dichotomy of disinterestedness and instrumentality to offer comments on the higher education reforms which place them in a context of political and economic struggle.

Sharp notes that even the most caustic criticisms of the higher education reforms have not spent their invective upon critiques of the pressure for increased accountability, even though it has been a linchpin of the process. She attributes this absence to a shared set of values within both the academy and the government which “... reinforce[s] and legitimate[s] a higher educational system inherently unaccountable from any democratic perspective” (Sharp 1991,10). The discussion has occurred within the parameters of liberal discourse because the academy itself is inextricably entwined in the agenda, it is dependent upon the educational structures and related institutions of liberal society for its reproduction. There has been

... a failure to distinguish between ... education as a means of knowledge and of intellectual, literary and artistic pleasure on the one hand, and education as a set of relations to gender, age, status and class on the other (Sharp 1991, 10).

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<sup>14</sup> Interestingly Scarrow (1957) notes their high representation as a proportion of graduates in the public service in the immediate post-WWII era. See chapter Four for further discussion of this.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Pusey’s study of the senior executive service (SES) in Canberra in the late 1980s produced interesting data on this subject. He found that 54 per cent of SES officers in key Canberra Departments had degrees in either economics, commerce or business administration. See *Economic Rationalism in Canberra: A Nation Building State Changes its Mind* (1991).

Academia is characteristically divided along the lines of disciplinary divisions which in Sharp's view negate "the possibility of developing any generalised holistic understandings" necessary to form an understanding of the social relations implicit within Dawkins' agenda. Furthermore, the academy is intensely hierarchical in its attachment to merit in assessment of individual capacity, but the idea is so firmly entrenched that it is hardly commented upon from within its ranks. Sharp seems to be arguing that academics do not see themselves as workers, or as working within a privileged position, and therefore are not able to propose solutions to equity issues other than to support wider access which, she argues, has an insignificant effect upon changing the opportunities of school leavers (Sharp 1991, 10-11) .

The unpleasant reality is that most academics accept the basic framework of liberal ideology which legitimates the form and content of higher education and its one-sided and anti-democratic character. The ideology of academic professionalism and professional autonomy, ... provides no means of developing a democratic notion of accountability because professionalism and the illusory notion of education's autonomy are integral aspects of an unjust system (Sharp 1991,11).

Where defence of the humanities denies this difference it becomes a defence of liberal values which run counter to a radical critique. Accountability is not disputed because it underwrites, through a process of legitimacy, the place of education in reproducing elites as well as offering the possibility of social mobility. It is not possible to defend liberal humanism (social democracy) at the same time as presenting a plausible rejection of accountability. Similarly, she notes, the place of education in securing national economic well being is not contested, even though there has been no real scrutiny of the validity of the prevailing economic model of competition and market forces. Any such assessment has been conceded to that sphere of the academic profession supposedly only equipped to address it – the economists.

There is little evidence of academia playing host to the kind of in-depth critical discourse about such basic questions and providing the intellectual leadership and perspective which might delegitimize the more facile popular consciousness within which economic issues are usually debated and pseudo solutions posed. In short, any notion of the academy as a locale for the pursuit of truth and critical thinking bears little relationship to what actually transpires in academia (Sharp 1991, 11).

In Sharp's view it has been possible for the Dawkins reforms to enlist the radical critiques of education of the 1970s in support of the agenda because of the shared rhetoric of dismantling elitism and the extension of utilitarianism. She identifies the recent trend in the humanities towards a fascination with post-modernism as further distancing it from the possibility of critique of existing social structures. (Hunter and Meredyth are clear examples of such a case in their uncritical acceptance of the institution of government and the complete absence of the state in their analyses.) "The only viable position, for the postmodernist, is the reject [sic] of all positions – save for his or her own" (Sharp 1991, 12).

The issues which the debate over 'Dawkinism' focuses upon hold little relevance for Sharp. She identifies these concerns as the outcome of the general retreat from reformism and the reorientation to primacy of the market which is evident within liberal democracies. She reminds us of a far more pressing alternative educational tradition founded in grass roots working class movements throughout the history of capitalism in which "accountable education is linked to issues of class emancipation, to the search for a different kind of social, economic and political order." In this tradition social mobility is a non-issue given its individualist agenda of exiting the constraints of class structure.

The bourgeois academy, structurally isolated from the collective struggles in work places and local communities... isolates the quest for knowledge from considerations of economic and political justice... The contemplative life which academia fosters reinforces an idealist view of knowledge production as primarily a matter of the intellect alone rather than the product of collective social practices and reflections on the experience of struggle. It fosters too, the illusion that successful reforms depend ultimately on the struggle for better ideas, as the latter can achieve their own implementation (Sharp 1991, 13).

Sharp concludes with a metaphorical call to arms of those few isolated anti-capitalist academics who are able to resist both the seduction of "transient fashions in pursuit of their careers" and the despair of achieving "a socialist future in a context where the objective conditions for its fulfilment are perhaps less propitious than at any other time in the twentieth century". Within the structure of the bourgeois academy there is still a flicker of critical analysis (evidenced, for example, by the response to the Gulf war) and for Sharp this activity is far from futile.

Simon Marginson has been a consistent contributor to the discussions of the Dawkins reforms commenting on a range of issues in this arena.<sup>16</sup> A paper presented to a conference on 'The Humanities and the Universities of Technology' in 1989 most directly addresses the concerns of this chapter. Like Sharp and Hunter, Marginson cannot accept the critiques of the Dawkins agenda which spring from the attachment to an idealised notion of the humanities as the bastion of disinterested inquiry under attack from imposition of centralisation and instrumentalism. Not only are such responses misguided but, Marginson argues, they are to some degree "reactionary". It has already been noted that Marginson identifies those arguments defending the academy as a community of scholars who should be allowed to continue their scholarly activities unrestrained by utilitarian expectations and demands of accountability, as "The unpopular defence of a selfish utopia" (Marginson 1989,2). In the first place he points out the absurdity of the notion of disinterestedness in contemporary higher education.

There is no segment of higher education that is not funded by someone other than its producers, and therefore inevitably accountable...

There is no teaching and learning in higher education that is shorn of instrumental purposes. The vast majority of graduates in the humanities and social sciences enter administrative or middle management positions...

Further, there is no knowledge produced in isolation from power and interest; no production of knowledge that is disinterested and autonomous (Marginson 1989,3).

Because of the way in which claims of disinterestedness and the defence of autonomy are invoked by the academy to shore up their position as an intellectual elite, which in turn bestows upon them a place as a social elite, it has been easy for the Dawkins attacks to attain popular support outside the academy – this support translates into a "populist anti-intellectualism" (Marginson 1989,4).

As for the defences couched in terms of the role of the humanities in social criticism, Marginson argues that the academy is far from being the major site of such practice. In particular those academics most committed to the idea of a community of scholars are

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<sup>16</sup> Initially his contributions were made whilst he occupied a position as research officer with the Federation of Australian University Staff Associations (FAUSA) and more recently Marginson has written from his place as a senior research fellow at the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at Melbourne University.

those most committed to individualistic and politically conservative pursuits with very little active life outside the academy.<sup>17</sup> Even for those academics who do engage in political action within the academy and in the broader social sphere the constraints upon time available to the vast majority of academics in the post-WWII era deny the possibility of rigorous social criticism.<sup>18</sup>

Marginson sees nothing new in the policy which directs the social sciences to ensure instrumentalism, but queries the appropriateness of the instrumentalism being embraced by the policy. The real concerns are cuts in government expenditures on public administration and social wage items which will reduce demand for social sciences humanities graduates. The proposed growth areas in higher education are those directed toward commerce, and the realm of the private sector identified as essential to restructuring the economy and Marginson expresses concern with this agenda. "It is a shaky basis for a higher education policy. The decision to increase enrolments in technology based subjects is simply a leap of faith..." (Marginson 1989, 8).

Where the White Paper does express support for the cultural role of the social sciences it emphasises the role as being contingent upon a healthy economic base and Marginson issues warnings over this "*prioritisation*" of the economic over the cultural:

Australia will only be able to "appreciate and support artistic and intellectual endeavour" once sufficient wealth is created – which could be a long time coming... Dawkins' conception of "artistic and intellectual endeavour" effectively marginalises those activities least directly identified with market demand,...The Minister agrees with the proponents of the community of scholars that these activities should be seen as non-instrumental: a conjunction of views that is dangerous (Marginson 1989,9).

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<sup>17</sup> Geoffrey Serle (1973,151) makes a similar point when he notes that it was not until the late 1930s that the "strong apolitical academic tradition was ... modified by a minority engaging in public debate on 'controversial' questions." See also, Marian Sawer (1987) for a discussion of the failure of notions of 'academic freedom' in Australia to be taken as opportunities "to exercise a critical social function", Bob Bessant (1978,29-32) who explains this absence in terms of specialisation and structural constraints of academic employment, and Judith Brett (1991) who seeks to explain the influences upon the process of academic writing and the consequent failure of academics to become public intellectuals.

<sup>18</sup> See also Theodore Roszak's essay "On Academic Delinquency", written at the height of the Vietnam war, which takes the academy in the United States to task for its historical failure in its role of social critic, but which explains this failure in terms of structure of the academic profession (Roszak 1968).

If for no other reason than for good politics Marginson notes the importance of rejecting the notion of disinterested inquiry in favour of both fostering social scientists as “socially responsible and socially engaged”, and asserting the instrumental role of the social sciences in the public sphere. It is necessary to be aware of the threat to fulfilment of social needs which such government policies pose (Marginson 1989,13-14).

Although Sharp and Marginson share a frustration with the blind alley down which the defence of the humanities has stumbled their critiques are not merely statements of the same position. They do share an awareness of the place of education within the state as well as within a context of increasing internationalisation of capitalist production. They are therefore both able to offer analyses and critiques which are conscious of the place of education within a much larger context than merely the role of education. They consider the Dawkins initiatives within the context of capitalist production as well as the specific conditions of Australia in the late twentieth century. Their real point of difference is a political one. Marginson is quite clearly putting forward a recipe for a short term reformist agenda, in which social democratic conditions are defended and at best maintained whilst Sharp’s case is more clearly a statement about the need to overcome existing social structures and social relations.

## Conclusion

The academic body’s reaction to the Dawkins’ higher education reforms was by no means united in terms of its rationale for maintenance of the status quo, or in its response to the forces of change. There was nevertheless a strong sense of disquiet which tended to resort to defending its position in terms of its special place as being traditionally removed from the directly instrumental needs of society. As Simon Marginson notes:

...with the exception of the institutional mergers and the centralisation of research funding, the reaction of the universities, was less about the detail of the policies (all of which were to be successfully implemented) than the language of economic rationalism in which they were embedded. This was not the way that higher education talks about itself. The government had invested economic objectives with the authority of national needs. (Marginson 1993, 123).



Whilst some academics did identify the need for assessment of the reforms from a different and broader terrain than the immediate policy, they had grave doubts about the willingness, political awareness and insights of their colleagues to provide such a critique. Such a critique needed to be formed in terms of wider social and political issues than the preservation of an academic world which had been in the process of erosion since its very inception in Australia.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LIBERAL DEMOCRACY TO MARKET DEMOCRACY

As Guy Neave points out in relation to the perception of a European crisis in higher education in the early 1980s:

...short-term preoccupations with the here-and-now which is, after all, the essence of a 'crisis' may often obscure the more subtle but not less significant evolution that underlies the issue of the moment (Neave 1984,112).

The context of the higher education reforms which are the focus of this dissertation is not simply the past decade, nor is it altogether that of post WWII Australia. The context is more far reaching – it is the context of capitalist social relations and the place of higher education within them, and it is for this reason that higher education provision is explored in this dissertation as a process of historical development within the dynamic of liberalism and capitalist development and expansion over the past two centuries. The political, economic and cultural context of contemporary Australian higher education originates not in Australia but in eighteenth century Britain.

Mass education is a modern phenomenon: whilst the history of education stretches back into previous millennia and this history has carried elements of earlier ideas and ideals into the theory and practice of modern education, *mass* education is a product of the nineteenth century. As such mass education reflects the structure and development of the society in which it has been formed. Because so much of the current concern over Australian higher education reform refers to a shift towards 'mass' higher education it is useful to understand the background to pre-tertiary mass education. Tertiary education is the highest formal phase of modern education systems, it is underpinned by a system of schooling and the initial context of the development of mass elementary education is an important part of the process towards mass tertiary education. In the first part of this

chapter I will give a brief account of the arguments which seek to explain the impetus to state funded mass education in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, because current higher education reforms are part of a significant and general shift in the form of state intervention, the greater part of this chapter outlines the form of these shifts from the liberal democratic through the social democratic and now apparently market democratic state in Australia. From this the final part of this chapter attempts to offer some insights into higher education reforms.

### The Development of Mass Education in the Liberal Democratic Era

The philosophy of education dates as far back as knowledge itself. It has, of course, some great names associated with its practice, and teachers and thinkers from Socrates through to James Mill and John Dewy were all dedicated to ways of transmitting knowledge and explaining the necessities of the gaining of wisdom. It is only in the last century, however, that the majority of the population, in the west at least, have become, for some part of their lives, compelled by the state to submit to formal education. Legislation to establish regional boards to provide and levy fees for elementary schooling for all children was not introduced in England until 1870; in Australia the individual colonies introduced Education Acts from the early 1870s which set the ground for compulsory education. Until that time basic education for the masses, in the form of literacy skills, and perhaps some numeracy, had been primarily the preserve of the family, philanthropists, or the church. In a paper on the development of education of the working class in England, Richard Johnson points out that as late as 1846 education provision was comprised of a:

decentralised pattern ... which the state helped to finance and control but in which education, even in its 'public' forms was seen to be indigenous to *civil society*. The direct organisers of education remained the representatives of dominant class-fractions in their own communities: clergy, gentry, manufacturers, merchants and, more marginally, tradesmen and farmers (Johnson 1976, 46).

Only the aristocracy and sections of the gentry, manufacturing and merchant classes had the means to pursue education wholeheartedly. But in these social classes education was not ubiquitous, many women of quite aristocratic origins were frequently forced to live lives of ignorance and illiteracy.

Since the late nineteenth century compulsory education and the expansion of retention rates has extended in all industrialised countries to the extent that in Australia, for example, more than seventy-seven per cent of fifteen to twenty-four year olds are undertaking full-time education (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1994, 86). Education has become one of the most important social institutions within industrialised societies. The explanations of the causes of educational expansion and the growth of its significance as a social institution vary from nation state to nation state. These explanations cannot, however, be divorced from the establishment of the capitalist mode of production as the dominant mode of production by the early nineteenth century and the concomitant extension of liberal democracy and later transformations in liberalism. Within this context different sociologists and historians have placed varying emphases upon the initial extension of elementary education to the masses, on the one hand, as an essential plank of universal suffrage and democratic participation, and, on the other hand, as a necessary means of producing a literate and disciplined work force to fuel the requirements of industrial expansion. Within these main parameters of the arguments are a variety of connected explanations of causation which include demographic pressure, philanthropic movements and many others.

Whilst there is more than a kernel of validity in all of these arguments there is a tendency to seek too directly a functional causation within the demands of societies experiencing rapid and turbulent economic and political change. This tendency has frequently come to be accepted as common knowledge and the great casualty in all this has been the dearth of explanation which attempts to address educational expansion in broad historical terms. Thus, whilst it is the case that some of the debate about, and demands for, educational expansion in the nineteenth century were couched in terms of the need to educate those citizens about to be granted democratic rights and participation in the democratic political process, the advocates of such expansion were not arguing from a neutral class position. Not surprisingly in England there was intense Tory opposition to education of the masses at the time. The conservative forces argued that education of the subordinate classes would foster discontent with their place and would lead to expectations of rights which should not be extended. Brian Simon cites a Tory opponent to legislation for establishment of Parish Schools:

... it would teach them to despise their lot in life, instead of making them good servants in agriculture, and other laborious employments to which their rank in society had destined them; instead of teaching them subordination it would render them factious and refractory, as was evident in the manufacturing counties; it would enable them to read seditious pamphlets, vicious books, and publications against Christianity; it would render them insolent to their superiors; and, in a few years, the result would be that the legislature would find it necessary to direct the strong arm of power towards them (Simon 1974, 132).

There was, however, an active lobby for universal education from the philosophic radicals such as James Mill, Jeremy Bentham and others.<sup>1</sup> Simon argues that despite their passionate declarations, the support for universal education, advocated so strongly by the utilitarians who represented the new middle classes, was inspired less by altruistic belief in the dignity of men than by the belief that, once educated, the working classes would recognise the inherent capacity of such leaders and shed their feudal allegiances. It seems that utilitarian advocates of education of the working class then, were not arguing for educational expansion in order to facilitate the masses' *direct* participation in government. Thus, articulation of the democratic imperative of educational expansion was important in the ideological representation of class alliances (Simon 1974, 126-176). The strong middle class emphasis upon the importance of self discipline and the need to teach this to the lower classes would not have been separate to this political incentive. Indeed the interests of the middle class push for mass education lay not only in the direct outcome of gaining political representation, but there was a keen concern for issues of general law and order which were seen as essential to the harmony of the new society. The apparent absence of individualism in the forms of self-reliance and self-discipline (enlightened self-interest), in working class men, women and children, clearly needed to be addressed; middle class intellectuals held that such values could be taught and public provision of education seemed the most appropriate means.<sup>2</sup>

As for popular functionalist arguments – which suggest that educational expansion occurred as a result of the needs of industry for literate workers – there is substantial evidence to counter such claims, at least for nineteenth century England. Most obviously

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<sup>1</sup> See Halévy (1972, 282-296) for an account of the philosophic radicals and establishment of the Lancasterian Society.

<sup>2</sup> See P.S. Atiyah (1979, 266-72) for a discussion of middle class perceptions of the role of education in enlightened self-interest.

it is difficult to sustain such an argument when we are forced to acknowledge that although England was the most advanced and prosperous industrial nation it was the last of the industrialising nations to introduce mass education. Rather than being wholeheartedly supportive of compulsory elementary education, the captains of industry opposed it vehemently. Any such compulsion interfered with their access to cheap and adequate supplies of labour and particularly impinged upon the length of the working day. Prior to the introduction of mass elementary schooling attempts were made through the Factory Acts to require factory owners to ensure that their young employees undertook education for a certain period each day, however this was difficult to police and it seems that there were very low levels of compliance with these laws (Simon 1974, 170-176 and Marx 1976, 613-619).

The working classes were, of course, neither illiterate by tradition nor stupid. For them the need for literacy was driven less by the necessity of increasing their skills (there was high demand for unskilled labour which did not need literacy)<sup>3</sup> than it was driven by the awareness that literacy meant access to information, and information was their path to understanding and even influencing the extraordinary changes in the world that they were experiencing. "Artisans, small traders and labourers" in the 1790s were well aware of the need to educate themselves in an era of political unrest. At this time many workers were organised in Corresponding Societies which became the focus for worker self-education.<sup>4</sup> The trades unions supported demands for universal education from as early as the 1830s but met with no success. There was a vibrant and plentiful radical press throughout this period and it was access to this which fostered many loosely formed groups of working men and women in their efforts to educate themselves. These organisations expanded to include education of their children. The abundance of pamphlets and radical newspapers provided ample resources from which to learn (Johnson 1981 & 1976, 50-51 and Simon 1974, 177-211).

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<sup>3</sup> There is a body of evidence which suggests that industrialisation actually severely eroded literacy rates amongst the factory operatives. See Johnson (1976, 47), also Marx (1976, 615) for an account of the deskilling in the form of declining literacy and increasing brutalisation in the letter-press industry.

<sup>4</sup> See E.P. Thompson's classic work *The Making of the English Working Class* (1968), for a thorough account of the role of the Corresponding Societies.

This action by the working classes on their own behalf was, it seems, an important catalyst to the extension of compulsory mass education: not, as it may seem, out of recognition by the contending ruling classes that the masses sought self-improvement, but out of the realisation that it was necessary to move to wrest control of education from the spontaneous working class movements which had been formed. In the early decades of the century Whig aristocratic leaders came to support the utilitarian push for publicly supported education, recognising that it was necessary to remove the control of working class education from its traditional domain, the family and working class culture, which was regarded as irreligious and decadent (Simon 1974, 134-135 & Johnson 1970). In his discussion of self-motivated education and its defeat in Northumberland and Durham in the 1850s, Robert Colls states:

The new schooling practice had two primary objectives. First, to break down the traditional patterns of working-class self-education by a process of substitution. Secondly, to build up the new by an almost Jesuitical concern for the rising generation of pitmen's children.

...

Their parents were irredeemable, besotted as they were by a popular culture and a radical tradition which did not promise industrial civil harmony (Colls 1976, 96-98).

The English bourgeoisie eventually conceded to the need for mass education which would be conducted in terms of their own class interests rather than to leave it in the hands of a working class with potentially disastrous political outcomes. Thus, it is probable, that compulsory mass elementary education was less the outcome of the productive (economic) needs of the bourgeoisie, than of their needs to subvert the consciousness raising of working class initiated and controlled education, as well as to inculcate the acceptance of 'morality', discipline and other attributes so necessary to the continued reproduction of a docile proletariat. Simon cites the Manchester Education Aid Society in 1866:

The first need of society is order. If order is to be produced in men and women, what kind of preparation for it is that which leaves the children as wild as young ostriches in the desert? When for the first ten or twelve years of life there has been no discipline either in life or body – when cleanliness has been unknown – when no law of God or man has been considered sacred, and no power recognised but direct physical force – is it to be expected that they will quietly and industriously settle down in mills, workshops, warehouses or at any trade in

the orderly routine of any family to work continuously by day, morning and evening, from Monday till Saturday? The expectation is absurd. Continuous labour and sober thought are alike impossible to them (Simon 1974, 359).

Whilst there had been pressure upon the state, from the radicals and liberals as representatives of bourgeois interests, to intervene in the introduction of mass elementary education, it was not until the threat to working class compliance became a real concern and the persistent procrastination began to give rise to working class organisation of its own educational resources that we see its successful accomplishment in England.

In Australia education departments were established by each of the colonial governments between 1872 and 1893 to provide compulsory elementary education . There was strong working class support for state provided schooling in the late nineteenth century. As in Britain the imperatives were not entirely unanimous; working class socialists saw education as essential to the development of class consciousness whilst others were driven by the need for vocational skills associated with “skilled trades and agriculture” for boys, whilst girls should be given training in “housekeeping, health and child-rearing” (Miller and Davey 1988, 23). Colonial economies at this time were predominantly agricultural and pastoral and whilst small domestic industries were beginning to be established in the cities they required skilled rather than unskilled labour, hence the calls for training in the trades and domestic work. Unlike Britain there was no real resistance from the Australian ruling classes to the idea of education for all. Certainly it seems that from the outset the Governors recognised a need for some form of influence to counteract the influence of the convicts upon the large numbers of their legitimate and illegitimate children. A.G. Austin tells us:

...something, as Governor King had already pointed out, had to be done to rescue these children “from the future misery to be expected from the horrible examples that they hourly witness from their parents and those they live with” (Austin 1972, 4).

The issues of self-reliance and self-discipline were felt as keenly as they were in England. The real debates in nineteenth century Australian elementary education took the form of how to provide education and the associated battle over control of education



between the church and the state. By the end of the century state funding to private and denominational schools had been withdrawn.

## The Transition from Liberal to Social Democracy

The establishment of mass elementary education in the liberal democratic era marked the beginning of a process of mass education extension which proceeded into and throughout the twentieth century. In this century we have also witnessed the transformation of liberal democracy into social democracy and its transformation into what I have chosen to identify as 'market democracy'. It is useful for the purposes of this dissertation to gain some insights into the nature of this process in order to provide the context which I have argued is essential. The transformation from liberal to social democracy necessitated real growth in the administrative structures of the state and with the culmination of the transformation came a growing level of state intervention which was accompanied by the fruition of the idea of policy. In their work on *Political order and the Law of Labour* Geoffrey Kay and James Mott (1982) note that the foundation of policy in Britain was the commitment to full employment from which the plethora of state interventions flowed. The work of J.M. Keynes provided the framework for the policy. His *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936) set out the arguments that capitalism and class struggle could be managed. The guarantee of full employment which was fundamental to Keynesianism underwrote a political consensus within which trade unions could be accommodated without their challenging either capitalism or the state as the legitimate centre of power.

Policy became the strategy for reproducing labour-power when citizenship and the rights of organisation had been conceded to the working class; and it was no longer possible to cut the opposition off at source (Kay and Mott 1982, 147).

The maturation of national insurance, in Britain, as part of Keynesian policy in the immediate post-war years, marks the watershed for Kay and Mott of the real transition from liberal democracy to social democracy. This tying of subsistence to the wage was in their view critical to the complete transformation of the "objective necessity to labour into a right to subsistence".

The political consensus of policy had a daring simplicity: the working class accepted wage labour unquestioningly, and in return the state undertook to

provide universal wages by keeping the labour market buoyant and supporting the small minority out of work with benefits paid on conditions that did not impugn their integrity as subjects. ... Liberal democracy, enhanced by the willingness of the working class to accept the conditions of wage labour, flowered into social democracy (Kay and Mott 1982, 152).

This apparent largesse of the bourgeois state, which the economic growth of the long boom era was able to support, contributed to the appearance that the Keynesian policy approach – of full employment and high levels of state intervention in improving the standard of living – was the permanent solution to maintenance of order in capitalist production (Kay and Mott 1982, 144).<sup>5</sup> With the onset of crisis in the early 1970s, however, the flaws within this theory of capitalist management began to emerge. The crisis of overproduction and its companion, the inability to maintain full employment, raised the dilemma of how to cater to a growing reserve army of labour within the guarantees of subsistence and social wage struck in the social democratic bargain. It is this dilemma which theorists in the 1970s and 1980s frequently termed the crisis of the state.<sup>6</sup> Conservative theorists have tended to analyse this contradiction as the problem of an overly interventionist and administratively elephantine state. In such arguments the solution is to remove regulation on capital accumulation as well as to vastly reduce the burden of state revenues placed upon capital.<sup>7</sup> Kay and Mott point out that such solutions are absurd; “[t]here is no possibility of reforming the state by means of the state”. The real problem which the conservatives confronted was “the social democratic illusion that the forms of abstraction were empty and could be filled with a rational content” (Kay and Mott 1982, 156).

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<sup>5</sup> However this has not proceeded without modification, see Jessop (1980, 67-9), who points out that, since 1948, provision has changed such that:

... instead of the Beveridge system of universal rights to agreed standards of income and services, there has been a steady shift towards a highly differentiated, fragmented system of welfare rights and privileges with a tendential polarisation between a growing number of means-tested and state-supervised claimants and a growing number of those reliant on tax-aided and state-encouraged private provision.

<sup>6</sup> The crisis has been variously identified as ‘legitimation crisis’, ‘fiscal crisis’ and ‘crisis of the state’. Some of the main contributors in the 1970s were, Gough (1974), Habermas (1975) and O’Connor (1973).

<sup>7</sup> See the work of Milton Friedman (1980) as the most popular advocate of small government.

## Social Democracy in Australia

In the case of Australia, the detail of the transition from liberal to social democracy is slightly different to that identified by Kay and Mott in Britain; but, there is an underlying similarity in the experience of transformation from the construction, in the nineteenth century, of a proletariat which accepts poverty in terms of the right to work, to a post-war Keynesian welfare state in which the right to subsistence is tied to full-employment policy. Peter Beilharz *et al* (1992) make a number of points which would support this argument.

The strong working class resistance, in nineteenth and early twentieth century Australia, to the debasing forms of income support (that is the poorhouse) which were embodied in the British Poor Law Reforms is, according to Beilharz *et al* (1992,35-36 & 75-76) frequently cited as underpinning the ready attachment of Australian labour to the assertion of independence as necessarily linked to the exchange of their labour-power in the marketplace. Beilharz *et al* (1992, 36) are concerned to point out here that this preferred option meant that there was no acknowledgment of the need to provide for those who might have been termed the 'deserving poor' at the time.

In linking independence to the capitalist market, labour and liberal alike sidestepped the question of citizenship and provision for those whose primary identities were neither capitalist nor labour (Beilharz *et al* 1992, 36).

Unlike Britain, where the 1834 Poor Law Reforms provided for those too feeble or unable to work, no such provision was established in Australia. Furthermore, the opposition to relief was part of a working-class culture which embodied "the mobilisation of diverse moral, theological and patriarchal themes that identified (wage) work as noble, morally decent and socially respectable" (Beilharz *et al*,1992 76). Rather than agitate for state intervention the working class accepted voluntary charitable organisations as the proper domain for provision of relief. What is not developed in the work of Beilharz *et al*, however, is the point that the Poor Law Reforms in Britain were instituted out of the need to overcome the pre-capitalist provisions of the eighteenth century Poor Laws. Prior to the reforms, the Parish in which one was registered bore the responsibility for providing relief to the pauper, which not only reduced the mobility of labour, but most importantly did not make relief contingent upon one's status as part of

the reserve army of labour. The reforms removed these barriers to the construction of a proletariat. No such legislation was necessary in the Australian colonies. The nature of exportation of convicts and free settlement meant that the proletariat was formed before it arrived. Labour arrived in Australia as free labour or conscripted labour and thus the extant possibility of poverty was its precondition.<sup>8</sup> In other words the Australian proletariat was created before it set foot on *terra Australis*: the right to work did not need to be constructed through extension of poor law provision to the Australian colonies. Beilharz *et al* (1992,36) are quite correct in noting the plight which the rejection of the principle of relief presented to those who did not constitute a reserve army of labour, and even more germane, is the point they make later:

It was all very well to mobilise individual anxiety and shame around the work ethic, but the actual experience of the Australian economy in the nineteenth century – a highly vulnerable dependent economy in which drought, flood, overseas investment flows, and cyclical excess of over- or underproduction – meant that work itself was a highly variable phenomenon and that regular work was not always available (Beilharz *et al* 1992, 76).

Here we see a state of liberal democracy in which the right to work was upheld by the working classes as their right to independence, despite the concrete reality that they occupied an economically and politically subordinate position at a time when a ready market for their labour power was far from guaranteed.

This working class resistance to the definition of poverty as pauperism and the preference for the right to work over the right to subsistence was significant in the development of 'new protectionism' after federation. Stuart Macintyre (1985, 54) explains that, "New protectionism meant that it 'was the duty of government to protect the economic welfare of its citizens". However, this economic welfare was tied to the wage, not to relief: the state pursued the strategies of a White Australia policy to prevent cheap imported labour undercutting wages; and, the idea of a minimum wage was initiated as the means of ensuring that Australian manufacturers kept their side of the protection bargain by paying "a fair and reasonable" wage in exchange for the shield

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<sup>8</sup> The indigenous population of Australia was not recognised – Australia was classified *terra nullius*.

of tariffs on imported goods (Beilharz *et al* 1992, 77).<sup>9</sup> The Harvester Judgement of 1907, made by Justice Higgins, set the benchmark for a minimum wage supposedly adequate to supply the needs of a male worker, his wife and three children (Beilharz *et al* 1992, 77). Despite the fact that the stonemasons building Melbourne University had won the battle for the forty hour week in 1856 the Harvester judgement marked the end of an epoch. In the latter decades of the nineteenth century the vagaries of the new economy had meant that profits could be maintained by suppression or reduction of wages, even when the length of the working day could not be increased. The introduction of a minimum wage called a halt to this possibility.

On the one hand, the establishment of a minimum wage drew the ire of capital, which argued that it could not afford to pay, whilst on the other hand, labour pointed out that many workers had more than three children, thus rendering the minimum wage inadequate. The Harvester judgement was actually overturned by the High Court after appeal from the Chamber of Manufacturers, but Macintyre points out that within five years a basic wage had been legislated by three state Labor Governments and “by the 1920s ... a minimum wage based on the cost of living ... [had] become the bedrock of wage determination in Australian industry” (Macintyre 1985, 55). Neither capital nor labour were happy with the decision: the employers felt it was not necessary to pay to all workers a family wage which greatly exceeded the modest needs of the large numbers of single men, and labour continued to point to the significant proportions of large families for whom the minimum wage fell short. The struggle over wages was unequivocally tied to needs, not, at this stage, the productive capacity of labour.

In the early years of federation the state assumed responsibility for the well being of individuals not able to be defined as part of the workforce: the old age pension was introduced in 1909 with the rationale that it was “justice not charity” and “invalid pensions, maternity benefits, allowances to widowed or deserted mothers” were all similarly justified with their introduction in 1912 (Macintyre, 1985, 53 & 1986b, 5). Proposals to introduce child endowment (resourced from a tax on employers) along with

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<sup>9</sup> See Stuart MacIntyre (1986b, 3-5) for discussion of the ‘fair wages’, ‘fair prices’ alternative to income supplementation in Labor Party policy in the opening decades of this century.

a reduced wage benchmark (the needs of a man and wife only) floundered, and it was not until the 1940s and the advent of Keynesian economic policy in Australia that a federal scheme of child endowment was introduced by the conservative government in the form of “trade-offs between the industrial relations system and a welfare benefit” (Beilharz *et al* 1972, 78-79).<sup>10</sup> The dark days of the depression followed by the need for a rapid extension of centralised planning necessary for the war economy after 1941 are the factors which Beilharz *et al* (1992, 82-83) attribute to the possibility of the establishment of the Keynesian welfare state in Australia.

The construction of a vast war economy, in which almost no aspect of the economy or civilian life remained untouched was both the liberal planners greatest achievement and the necessary context in which a new link was forged between economic interventions around the full employment of manpower and resources and welfare (Beilharz *et al* 1992, 83).

Although the establishment of state welfare intervention in Australia was not based upon a direct contributory scheme<sup>11</sup> such as that in Britain’s national insurance scheme, the outcome of the 1940s was the establishment of a Keynesian welfare state that adopted policy as the means by which to maintain the working class endorsement of capitalist dominance. In 1945 the Chifley Labor Government introduced sickness and unemployment benefits, a move which, like that in Britain, could not be taken without the assumption that virtual full employment could be maintained indefinitely. Beilharz *et al* point out that:

the making of the national welfare state presumed that welfare measures as such were of secondary residual importance compared with the overriding drive to make full employment a reality for all male Australians (1992,82).

The commitment to full employment was established in the 1945 White Paper on full employment.<sup>12</sup> Beilharz *et al* (1992 79) identify this new highly interventionist welfare state as the outcome of new (or social) liberalism in which inequalities were no longer attributed to individuals but were identified as being rooted in the social structure. Whilst it is certainly valid to identify a shift from individual to structural explanations

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<sup>10</sup> New South Wales introduced a scheme in 1927.

<sup>11</sup> Contributory schemes in various forms had been mooted over the preceding decades – see Beilharz *et al* 1992, 79-81.

<sup>12</sup> See Watts (1983) for an account of the development of the post-war reconstruction policy and the ALP.

within democratic theory, it sheds no light upon what actually constitutes the difference in how the theory constructs the social relation of capitalism. A much more useful approach is that of Kay and Mott's, with which we can identify parallels, in the shift from liberal to social democracy, between Britain and Australia. As in Britain, the development of the welfare state in Australia marked a shift from the liberal democratic construction of 'freedom' as 'the right to work' to the social democratic construction of the 'objective necessity to labour' into 'the right to subsistence'. Just as in Britain, the Australian experience was one in which the working class acceptance of "the conditions of wage labour" endorsed the transformation of liberal democracy into social democracy. As in Britain the affluence afforded by the period of long boom underwrote the continued working class acceptance of capitalist domination and welfare state provision. This was despite the absence of a nationalised health scheme in Australia, and the linking of other benefits to means testing, which Beilharz *et al* (1992, 89-90) refer to as evidence of Australia as a 'welfare laggard' in which the system of benefits did not incorporate the notion of citizen rights. The success of the Australian state in denying sections of the working class full access did not however negate their ultimate right to subsistence. Thus whilst means testing fudged the edges of welfare provision, its absolute scenario was at most a period of delay between unemployment and receipt of benefit; which of course, in an era in which unemployment was only conceived as a short term phenomenon, was anticipated as only a rare event. This was an issue of the amount of time separating the wage worker from absolute poverty rather than the negation of it.<sup>13</sup>

These differences between forms of the welfare state are evidence of the different intensities and balance of power within individual nation states. The existence of means testing in the post war Australian welfare state is testament to the extent to which capital in Australia was successful, against the interests of the working class, in avoiding revenue demands as well as to its ability to pay the level of wages which allowed for a

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<sup>13</sup> See Geoffrey Kay's work, *The Economic Theory of the Working Class* (1979, 1-6) for a discussion of the this point.

small level of savings adequate to catering for small irregular necessities such as hospitalisation.<sup>14</sup>

The Keynesian economic management and full employment policy was sustained for almost three decades in Australia. Although the cracks in the edifice were apparent by the late 1960s the real trauma emerged in the mid-1970s. It is no overstatement to dub the crisis, which was without doubt international, as a particular trauma in Australia. The first Labor Government for twenty-six years came to power in late 1972 and with it came an ostrich like faith in the continued growth necessary to maintain full employment and the extension of welfare provisions. Increased intervention was vital in order to ameliorate the myriad social injustices which had been exposed throughout the 1960s. Barriers to equal educational access were to be removed throughout all educational sectors; women were to be accorded equal rights, opportunities and pay; free medical cover would be made available to all; poverty would be relieved; and many more initiatives hovered in the wings. The weight of all this at a time of increasing economic constraints proved too great to sustain the program of reform.

### **Economic Rationalism and Market Democracy**

The downfall of the Whitlam Labor Government in 1975 has become established Australian political lore. The drama associated with the 'sacking' however tends to confuse the actual sequel and the Fraser Government – whilst obviously marking a new era of liberalism in which the legitimacy and viability of the illusion of welfare state as cornucopia was undermined – was less successful in dismantling the welfare state than its supposed 'left' government successors have been. The Fraser Government most certainly came to power with a mandate to curb what was increasingly regarded as excess, but it met with substantial popular resistance to the threat of real welfare cuts. This is not to say that the Fraser Government was ineffectual; its real strengths, however, lay less in its winding back state intervention than in its ideological attacks upon the principles which had evolved out of the social democratic consensus of the preceding

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<sup>14</sup> Pusey (1991, 3) points out that compared to other OECD countries, "Australia has had, at least for a couple of decades, a small public sector, low levels of taxation and public expenditure, and very low levels of social welfare provision."



three decades. Thus, for example, attempts to redress in the schools the imbalance in educational opportunity (which were accompanied by the 'new philosophy of education')<sup>15</sup>, were reworked into a major contributing factor in youth unemployment.<sup>16</sup> In the area of higher education increased access was discredited by claims that removal of fees, for example, merely served to further advantage the already privileged sections of the community. Rather than engaging in labour market policy schemes which focused upon restructuring, the Fraser Government implemented a series of programs which served to conceal the new phenomenon of growing youth unemployment. Transition from school to work programs, which encouraged young people to stay at school for a further year before joining the labour force, served to reduce the unemployment statistics and were legitimated by claims from employer groups and media attention that young people had inadequate literacy levels and poor attitudes towards job seeking and work.<sup>17</sup>

By the early 1980s the Fraser Government began to foreshadow a new era in economic management. The infamous Razor Gang (Review of Commonwealth Functions) of 1981 headed by Sir Phillip Lynch (Deputy Leader of the parliamentary Liberal Party) proposed a number of radical initiatives intended to curb the budgetary dilemmas and commentators at the time were struck by the apparent severity of the recommendations. Grant Harman was moved to declare:

In the history of this country, there are no comparable examples of such extensive, dramatic and sudden cut-backs in government functions, or of such thorough pruning of government agencies. This applies to both federal and state levels of government (Harman 1981, 28).

This new austerity was really the mark of the conservative response to the changes in the world economy. It marked a shift away from the social democratic interventionist agenda, to what has been termed economic liberalism: demands upon the state to manage crisis are still in place, but, they are made at the same moment as the state and,

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<sup>15</sup> See chapter Five.

<sup>16</sup> Interestingly in the United States progressive educational philosophy has recently been blamed for growing illiteracy rates and thus has become the reason cited for high rates of youth crime and drug abuse. Rather than the structural inequalities inherent in capitalism the mystification is such that social democratic ideology can be constructed as the cause of all social ills. See *Australian* (October 17, 1995, 11).

<sup>17</sup> See Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training (Vol.1, 1979, 81-133).

in particular, its size and degree of intervention are cited as the root of the problem. Not surprisingly the tensions were acute and were manifested in the contestation over which sections of the state were to be dissolved at a time where, more than ever before, intervention was necessary to ameliorate the pain of recession. The post war social contract had only been made possible by the glue of full employment and rising living standards. Whilst the length of the long boom meant that a new generation had grown up without questioning the viability of capitalism as a system of production which could be perfected in distributional terms, the policies and rhetoric of the conservatives presented the possibility of a different scenario. Here, economic constraint could be pursued by a government which was prepared to reinstitute notions of deserving and undeserving poor and moral responsibility, which undermined all they had come to take as given. The right to subsistence was being eroded by the very institution which had underwritten it. The actual achievements of the Fraser Government were in reality far less epic than the passion of the time would suggest. Much of what really transpired was the creation of a national mind-set rather than any major diminution of welfare provision. The conservatives can be held responsible for nibbling around the edges at the most vulnerable points of the system, (for example, the increased Medicare levy) and the demise of social justice initiatives in favour of public subsidy to the private sector (Macintyre 1986b, 9); but, their more important achievement was to lay the ideological bedrock for the onset of 'reform' in the name of economic rationalism by the Labor Governments which followed.

In his discussion of the decline of small 'l' liberalism as a priority within the ALP after 1975, Boris Frankel notes:

Under the leadership of first Hayden, and then Hawke and Keating, the ALP reiterated time and again during the 1980s that it was embarrassed by Whitlam's policies and would now become a 'responsible economic manager'. Keynesian indicative planning and social justice programmes were eventually promoted more by the Australian Democrats and the Communist Party than by the ALP. ... The fact that Malcolm Fraser ... advocated a number of policies less market-oriented and yet more bitterly opposed than the Hawke government, is a measure of the fragmentation and dislocation of small 'l' liberalism in the past decade (Frankel 1992, 94-95).

Immediately after taking office in 1983 the Labor Government called the National Economic Summit which brought together government, unions and business with the aim of engineering Australia's economic recovery under the banner of tripartism, or 'new corporatism'. This cooperative 'fest' was essential to the development of the Labor strategy of wage containment as a foil to continued disinvestment, and the union movement, under the banner of the Australian Council of Trades Unions (ACTU), compromised before the promise of price controls in exchange for industrial harmony and productivity related inflation indexed wage rises. The price constraint element of what was termed the Accord was, in an internationally integrated economy, no more than a mirage which enabled the manufacturing industries dominated ACTU to draw the rest of the Australian workforce to its own flogging.

With the making of his infamous 'banana republic' speech in 1986 Paul Keating (then treasurer) foreshadowed the new economic agenda: the Australian national economy was in crisis with a record deficit. If the opportunity for all parties to exercise restraint and adopt the new productive consciousness necessary for export led recovery was lost, Australia would slide into economic decline and take the standard of living with it. Frankel notes the real shift in the ALP over the decade following 1983 in which the 'nation building' rhetoric of the early Accord became increasingly incompatible with the Hawke/Keating "globalizing market ideology".

Of course the ALP government's rhetoric was still largely couched in nationalist symbolic form as it curbed or dismantled state-run 'nation-building' processes. But a significant cultural shift had occurred. All the familiar and controversial policy initiatives covered by terms such as deregulation, micro-economic reform, corporatization and privatization were largely conceived as measures necessary for the transformation of Australian-based businesses – rather than the nation – into globally-competitive market forces. Modernization had been refined to mean less national independence and more market fusion into a new global order.

...Under Chifley, the ALP's concept of a strong nation required the nationalization of some parts of the *private* sector. Forty years later, Chifley's concept of modernization was turned upside down. A strong Australia was now synonymous with a strong business sector (Frankel 1992, 106-107).

Australia was not alone in this new direction. George Ross and Jane Jenson (1985/86, 33) identify the common hurt amongst most economies as “simultaneous high inflation, low growth and rising joblessness” which most nation states sought to resolve by the pursuit of “neo-liberal deflationary and monetarist policies”. The message was clear:

...capitalist accumulation had become a global process. National-centred accumulation perspectives for ‘deepening the domestic market’ gave way to capitalist visions of the entire planet as labour market, production locale and marketplace (Ross and Jenson, 1985/86 33).

What is often understated in analyses of the shifts towards globalisation is the accompanying leap in the rate of technological innovation in production (Ross and Jenson 1985/86, 34). Technological unemployment for large numbers of workers in advanced industrial economies went hand in hand with the job loss resulting from economic crisis. The recession imposed its own logic of concentration and rationalisation as businesses restructured, closed, or were absorbed. Where and when expansion took place it often occurred with little re-employment of previously displaced labour. Even where labour has not been directly displaced within individual firms, increased output has often been achieved without resorting to increased employment. Those workers laid off as a result of the immediate effects of the crisis have not been absorbed into restructured expanded production.<sup>18</sup>

John Smyth (1994) has attempted to explain the restructuring of Australian higher education within the context of the globalisation of the Australian economy. In doing so he has unfortunately resorted to the old saw of economic nationalism, in the form of dependency theory, in which Australia is constructed as a client state of transnational corporations which siphon off the wealth of the country.<sup>19</sup> Critiques of this approach have pointed out its oversights, most glaring, of course, is the misconception that Australian national capital is both non-exploitative and, that in the process of globalisation it is immune or disinterested and remains loyal to the working classes at

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<sup>18</sup> See Christie *et al* (1990), Etwell (1996) and Selby-Smith (1987) for discussion of these factors.  
<sup>19</sup> Crough and Wheelwright (1982) is the most frequently cited early example of this position. See David and Wheelwright (1989) for its more recent articulation. See Dick Bryan (1990) for a critical review of this position.

home by remaining on-shore.<sup>20</sup> The very point of increasing globalisation is that the boundaries around the definition of national capitals becomes more and more blurred until it is utterly meaningless as an analytical concept in the discussion of global production. The deregulation of the banking sector in the early years of the Hawke Labor Government meant that even capital involved in domestic production for domestic consumption was not separated from the globalisation process. Smyth recognises the significance of transnational corporations in the globalisation process, but his analysis resorts to a cause and effect between the two instead of identifying the contemporary transnational corporation as a phenomenon of world economic development. In other words, the transnational corporation becomes the *bête noir* of the scenario: transnationals are regarded as the problem, rather than as a symptom of the problem.

The real significance of globalisation for higher education in Australia has been the shift in policy towards the imperative of the global market. The argument has been that like all other sectors of the economy education must be subjected to micro-economic reforms to ensure that it facilitates structural adjustment and skills formation.<sup>21</sup> Part of the legitimating rhetoric of micro-economic reforms are demands for efficiency and accountability, the only valid measure of which, it is argued, is the market place. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has been a key architect in the international arena of restructuring and it has been particularly influential in its definition of the role of higher education in the way forward towards international competitiveness. In its (1989) report entitled *Education and the Economy in a Changing Society* it argued:

The competitiveness of OECD countries will increasingly depend on their scientific and technological capacity as the main source of diversification and development of their economies. In this, the role of higher education is of special importance. It is the main source for the supply of highly-qualified scientific and technical personnel; for the advancement of knowledge, through research and development; for facilitating technological change; and for helping business managers and entrepreneurs to develop a capacity for technological innovation (OECD 1989, 55).

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<sup>20</sup> As early as 1987 there were signs that Australian companies were investing more in the USA than US capital invested in Australia. Who's the client? (Dowling 1987).

<sup>21</sup> See John Dawkins "Opening Statement" to the OECD Intergovernmental Conference on Education and the Economy in a Changing Society (OECD 1989, 9-14).

This is the kind of justification that John Dawkins used to promote his higher education reforms in the late 1980s: the notion of a 'clever country' embodied precisely this vision of scientific and technical expertise interwoven with the demands of the restructured economy. In part, the logic behind this drive for more scientific and technical training was that other, more successful exporting nations, had higher proportions of scientific and technically trained workers – *ergo*, scientific and technical training improves export performance. The naivety of such a position is obvious; whether Dawkins truly believed his own rhetoric is surely doubtful, but most certainly it suited the general tenor of the restructuring agenda and reinforced the arguments for more vocationally directed higher education. What is more, the problem of high unemployment rates needed to be addressed at all levels; the need for higher rates of participation in higher education was not unconnected to the need to reduce youth unemployment rates. The Fraser Government had used extended participation in schooling, but this had not gone far enough as unemployment rates approached double figures with youth unemployment around twenty-five per cent. Higher education was the necessary extension of the youth unemployment mop.

The shift towards a more scientifically and technically oriented vocational emphasis in higher education is more far reaching than Australia and Britain. A decade ago Neave noted a common trend away from "demand-led", to "expenditure-driven" higher education policies in Western Europe. Whilst the move was not ubiquitous – the extent to which access was socially and politically immutable and whether systems were low cost were important variables – it was increasingly common as governments sought to resolve the problems associated with the demise of the "neo-Keynesian consensus" (Neave 1984). As in Australia, the effect of the withdrawal from 'neo-Keynesian' policy has been, paradoxically, an extension rather than a reduction of intervention. The earlier commitment to education in response to demand allowed for the student's selection of course according to:

the individual's own perceived abilities, ambitions and maturing career plans. The State underwrote the traditional freedom of choice and freedom to study....

The basic premise[sic] of expenditure-driven policy [however] is that the resources of the community are limited, must be used in optimal manner and,

increasingly, in the light of what is deemed by governments as national priorities – economic competitiveness, the broadening of the country's technological and scientific base, and the development of new skills amongst the future commercial, economic and administrative élites. ...Regardless of the justification, be it to restore a flagging relationship between higher education and industry, or to bolster industry's research base by tighter links with universities, such policies are interventionist to the extent that they aim to 'profile' student perceptions of the labour market. Though often presented as the invigorating gale of market forces ... in their extreme form, such policies are *dirigiste* in their working, interventionist in their execution and, finally collectivist in their intent, as much as their main driving impetus are national priorities and requirements as perceived by governments (Neave 1984, 116).

The accuracy of Neave's identification of the intent of such policies as collectivist is questionable. As noted above, by the end of the 1980s it was obvious that in Australia the employment of the rhetoric of national priorities had become the new-speak for the promotion of globally competitive Australian-based business. The sectional interests are as readily disguised within the invocation of national interest, as they are within the similar frequent references to the needs of the community, as if the community is a homogenous collective within which harmony will prevail, once the right micro-economic policies are in place.

In Australia, the social democratic alliance was replaced by a well crafted corporatist alliance of the 1980s in the form of the Accord.<sup>22</sup> Organised labour, endorsed the interventions, described as macro-economic policy, which effectively changed the structure of industrial relations. The numerous versions of the Accord which took shape throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s gradually eroded the principles of wage determination (both direct and social) in which workers had been able to gain increases on the basis of increased production of relative surplus value. The Accord's emphasis upon productivity related wage rises at levels below the rate of inflation enabled the reduction of real wages, thus allowing for an increase in the production of profits.<sup>23</sup> At the same time as wages declined in real terms the government boasted rises in job

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<sup>22</sup> See Jessop for an explanation of the significance of corporatist intervention in the "reorganization of the labour process, industrial regeneration, welfare programming, infrastructural provision, incomes policies, and economic planning" (1979, 200).

<sup>23</sup> Soucek (1995, 130) notes that "...between 1983 and 1989 the wage and salaries share of gross nonfarm product fell by 10%, whereas the companies profits' share rose by 43%".

creation; evidence, they declared, of the effectiveness of the new industrial policies. What was not acknowledged, however, was that the new jobs created were almost all part-time or casual, even full-time positions were increasingly offered as contract rather than long-term appointments and very few required high degrees of skill. This trend proceeded as job losses continued to rise from the aggregate of full time skilled work.<sup>24</sup> Elements of the social wage have also been steadily eroded: the hospital system in all states is critically understaffed and previously high standards of care are slipping as public hospitals impose an array of strategies such as ward closures in attempts to operate within their budgets; and public education at the level of schooling is faces real reductions in funding under the guise of devolution. Most states in Australia are moving towards devolution of schooling provision in attempts to deal with the problems presented by continued high public expectation of provision at a time of reduced budgets. Devolution has been presented as an extension of participatory democracy to the community, but its reality, as commentators in Britain and New Zealand testify, has been to relocate the responsibility and ultimately the culpability for failure to meet expectations away from the state directly and to the institutions and users themselves.<sup>25</sup> At the same time this pattern has opened another window for capital as schools and their decision making bodies are forced more and more to resort to corporate sponsorship and other marketing strategies to supplement funds. Just as with the higher education sector, principals are increasingly perceived as needing to embody management rather than pedagogical expertise.

## Conclusion

It is in this context of attempts to construct a restructured economy, and a reformed public sector that higher education reform in Australia must be understood. In other words when we speak of reforms which seem to represent the abandonment of traditional values of liberal education for new vocationalism, what we are really describing is not a brief moment in which there has been a radical shift over a single decade. Rather we are identifying the responses to changing economic conditions.

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<sup>24</sup> See Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (1994, 103-108).

<sup>25</sup> Both England and New Zealand are further along the devolution track. See Lingard *et al* (1993), *Schooling Reform in Hard Times*, also Donald (1992), for discussion of these events.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE IDEA OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

If we were to distil higher education practice in Australia in the last decade of the twentieth century would we find any vestige of liberal education? As we have seen from chapter One, some people – both providers of, and participants in, the process – value liberal education as an ideal. In order to understand why the idea of liberal education has such resonance for so many we really do need to explore what it represents. In the opening pages of his work on the tradition of liberal education in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Sheldon Rothblatt observes that “Liberal education is of particular concern to technological societies because as specialism proceeds, liberal education seems to dispute the advance and even fall victim to it” (Rothblatt 1976,9) .

Despite current concerns for its demise the notion of a liberal education is so firmly ingrained as a part of our educational culture that we use the term with an assumption of shared meaning. If pressed to give a definition, however, we could provide a great many variations on the theme. Perhaps the most consistent theme today would be the idea that liberal education involves some element of education for the development of the individual as a whole person. But, this leads us to a further problem of definition. What do we mean by this idea of education for the whole person? The men who are considered to be responsible for influencing the formation of the modern concept of liberal education offer some insights. For James Mill “The end of Education is to render the individual, as much as possible, an instrument of happiness, first to himself, and next to other beings” (Mill 1931,1). Herbert Spencer, in his treatise on the need for a rational rather than a liberal arts curriculum, held that education must achieve the function of preparing “us for complete living” (Spencer 1949,7). But, as Emile Durkheim (1956, 61-67) pointed out, such definitions assume a shared understanding of what constitutes happiness and complete living which can not be taken for granted. Furthermore, such

assumptions of the inherent logic of these as the universal ends of education are not able to be sustained once we acknowledge that throughout history, the process of education has exhibited enormously varied forms in the pursuit of quite diverse ends. Determinations that the ideal role of education is, for example, 'the development of the whole person' in terms of the achievement of happiness or complete living, are historically specific and ignore the reality that such concepts did not necessarily arise in previous forms of social organisation. For example, the citizens of ancient Sparta would have not identified ideals of education as the path to individual happiness or complete living; rather, the military emphasis of their daily experience reinforced notions of duty, self denial, expendability and the like. More immediately, the educational justifications of the middle ages placed no value upon education for life on earth; the hereafter was the site of fulfilment to which the educated person aspired.

The real problem we face is not so much one of correct definition, but of the definition of a term that has not been constant since at least the beginning of its modern usage. Like all cultural concepts it is in a process of continual change and perpetual contestation, and like all culture it is conditioned by, reflects, and carries with it marks of the intricacies of social change within which it has been and is still being transformed. By their very nature cultural terms embody contradictions and 'liberal education' is sodden with them. Thus if we stop at any moment in the past three centuries we could not establish a single undisputed understanding of the term. As Sheldon Rothblatt maintains, "it is possible for a liberal education to be all things to all men [sic]" (Rothblatt 1976,195). Ideas of liberal education have varied depending upon whether one is referring to a university or other source of education as well as varying over time within these distinctions. J.P. Powell (1974,197-8) notes that its modern use as a "central idea in an educational tradition" dates from the latter part of the sixteenth century when the university arts course "began to acquire an intrinsic value and to become increasingly disconnected from vocational considerations" of training clergy and civil administrators. In its familiar contemporary use liberal education is a term which carries baggage from ancient times to the seventeenth century, changes somewhat in the eighteenth century and again in the nineteenth century.

It does seem however, that in contemporary literature and discussions of the potential for liberal education in Australian universities today there is a fairly consistent, fundamental understanding of it in Newmanian terms; albeit that this discussion frequently occurs as a kind of whimsy about the loss of a golden academic past. “Knowledge is capable of being its own end” (Newman 1959,130). According to this view liberal education should not be, and only truly occurs when it is not, ends driven.

... that alone is liberal knowledge which stands on its own pretensions, which is independent of sequel, expects no complement, refuses to be *informed* (as it is called) by an end, or absorbed into any art, in order duly to present itself to our contemplation (Newman 1959, 134).

Indeed the overriding theme has been that a liberal education is one in which there is no place for identification of difference in ends and means; that because a truly liberal education is an end in itself it has no relationship to instrumental ends and therefore the means of liberal education should not, and by definition cannot, be driven by ends outside themselves – its means are its own ends.

In trying to resolve this problem it is necessary to turn back to the nineteenth century as the period in which it seems that the modern idea of liberal education was fully established. In doing this it becomes apparent that this twentieth century notion of separation of liberal means and instrumental ends is a misrepresentation of the reality of both, the nineteenth century construction of what came to constitute and be accepted as liberal education, and, the relationship between liberal education and the university. Indeed Cardinal John Henry Newman’s *Idea of a University*, which he gave as a series of founding lectures at University College Dublin in 1852, was not representative of the mainstream of nineteenth century opinion about its role. Even at Dublin he could not summon support for his position and after he resigned in 1859 the University went through a series of refoundations in which it “took on a resolutely practical orientation” (Kearney 1970, 185). Newman’s *Idea of a University* was more a rail against what was increasingly becoming the case (that is, the university as a site of instrumental education) than an affirmation of an existing state of affairs.

A major problem in assuming that liberal education is at a distance from instrumental ends is the notion of instrumentality. It is important to ask the question “Instrumental to whom?” It seems that there is an implicit acceptance that instrumental refers only to specific ends which have a direct benefit to the individual. This is in its broadest sense a functionalist concept in that it does not explore the possibility of instrumental having different parameters – that is, a more immediate connection to the interests of particular classes. Furthermore, contemporary commentators who seek to defend liberal education from the incursion of instrumentalism, seem to overlook the case that whilst the nineteenth century notion of liberal education was certainly one which very much came to be understood as an education of the individual *primarily* in the interests of the individual, implicit within it was the logical extension that this served to promote the collective interest of society.

Let us, in the first place, explore the notion of liberal education as being the education for the ‘whole person’. Twentieth century defendants of liberal education seem to regard the notion of the education of the ‘whole person’ as an essential element, and, they identify with the articulation of this idea in the nineteenth century. What tends to be overlooked in current accounts however, is the context of this idea. The nineteenth century was the period in which the notion of individualism was fully formed within liberalism. As C.B. MacPherson explains in his account of the seventeenth century foundations of ‘possessive individualism’, the development of liberalism rests on the formation of the idea of the individual, as free from dependence upon, or by, others, and as the “proprietor of his own person and capacities” (MacPherson: 1962, 263). Here is a notion of the individual as a separate entity in possession of all that he/she embodies, both physically and in terms of capacity, and who bears no responsibility for or from others except for that necessary to the pursuit of individual interests (MacPherson: 1962, 263). If we turn to the frequently cited quotation from John Locke’s *Two Treatises of Government* (1690) we find a straightforward identification of the *subject* of modern history as the individual in full possession of him/herself.

Though the Earth, and all inferior Creatures, be common to all Men, yet every man has a *Property* in his own *Person*. This no Body has any Right to but himself. The *labour* of his Body, and the *Work* of his Hands, we may say, are

properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided and left it in, he hath mixed his *Labour* with, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his *Property* (Locke in Laslett 1960, 328-9).

Here then is the 'whole person', with complete mastery of oneself and one's abilities. Indeed we can see that the notion of the importance of the education of the 'whole person' is synonymous with the idea of education of the liberal individual. Rather than liberal education being essential to the process of *creating* a 'whole person' as it is popularly understood today, nineteenth century advocates of liberal education were pressing for a form of education suitable to the needs of the *already existing* liberal individual. Unlike their late twentieth century counterparts who regard the construction of the 'whole person' as being *dependent* upon the practice of a liberal education, the notion of the individual/whole person was the *prerequisite* to nineteenth century theorists' determination of the idea of liberal education, – indeed it was the imperative for it. It was not until the idea of the liberal individual in full possession of him/herself was established that it became possible to debate what form the shaping of that individual should take. It is not so much that contemporary theorists are wrong, they are both concerned with shaping the 'competent' individual, but they have misplaced the emphasis by starting with liberal education as determinant of the individual, rather than the individual as the reason for a specific form of liberal education.

In terms of the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake it is important to note that prior to the nineteenth century, discussion of the role of liberal education was taken up with that education suitable for the sons of the aristocracy, landed gentry, clergy and other sections of the propertied classes. For the early liberal theorists such as John Locke the central importance of education was not a matter of extending knowledge or facts but one of process. Robert Sumser (1994) points out that for Locke the individual sets out in childhood with a flexible and easily directed identity. The effect of education in his view was to mould, direct, and guide this individuality in ways which developed the "child's potentiality" (Axtell: 1968,58). For Locke the truly worthwhile outcome of education was not the acquisition of large bodies of knowledge with no direct relevance to their daily lives, but the creation of an individual who embodied:

...that decency and gracefulness of Looks, Voice, Words, Motions, Gestures and of all the whole outward Demeanour, which takes in Company, and makes those with whom we may converse, easie and well pleased (Locke in Axtell: 1968, 246).<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, Locke was contemptuous of pedantry, considering it to be the antithesis of the formation of gentlemanly geniality and sociability. In his view the formation of the individual was best achieved by the process of “habituation” whereby domination by others in positions of authority would be rendered redundant by the development of self-regulation. This “internalisation of control”, or self-regulation, was of course essential to developing liberalism where the increasing individual freedoms and the waning of open coercion marked the need for alternative means to the containment of individual excesses. Rather than teaching the pupil rules, Locke believed in fostering the process of habit. He recognised that “virtues” were not innate human characteristics but were personal traits which needed to be imposed upon the individual and it was for this reason that he argued against the instruction of “moral rules” and the notion that pupils could be influenced by development of faculties of reflection – both of which were open to rejection by the individual – and asserted the importance of “constant Custom” which allowed for the development of action which was neither questioned nor reflected upon, but was guided solely by habit (Sumser: 1994, 5-7). There was no suggestion at this stage that education should foster a love of the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Rather than “brain stuffing”, education was the preparation for life at a time when it was not clear what a child’s ultimate position would be.

This means that the educator must prepare the child’s mental, moral and physical capabilities to meet any situation....Needless to say this is the hallmark of liberal education, and we are indebted to Locke for helping to carry that ancient, yet self-renewing tradition across the centuries from its home in classical Greece (Axtell: 1968 58).

The most important concerns, at the time where classic liberalism had come to replace the direct dominion of the feudal order with the formal equivalence of all persons, was the necessity for development of self regulation and the ability to adapt to all that life could confront one with.

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Sumser (1994,5) for directing me to this point.

Pray let this be your chief care, to fill your son's head with clear and distinct ideas, and teach him on all occasions, both by practice and rule, how to get them, and the necessity of it (Locke cited in Axtell: 1968, 59).

## The Formation of a Modern Notion of Liberal University Education

The early separation in content of university education between liberal arts (emphasising instrumental ends) and liberal sciences (emphasising knowledge), both distinct from “accomplishments which were servile or mechanical” (Powell 1965,17), faded by the mid-eighteenth century. By then it had become an idea of liberal education in which distinctions between arts and sciences were not of real consequence but in which, as we have seen above, “living rather than knowing” became the prime motive (Rothblatt 1976,14). Rothblatt explains this shift by drawing upon the way in which the connotation of the term ‘liberal’ shifted at this time; initially ‘liberal’ denoted freedom (freedom as the antithesis of slavery), thus it was still connected to its classical Greek origins. Rothblatt argues that whilst such a distinction was an anachronism in the eighteenth century, there remained some element of social distinction in its use. “The notion of some sort of social superiority inherent in the recipient of a liberal education was never wholly absent in common thought” (Rothblatt 1976,24). Study of the arts at early seventeenth century Cambridge included both liberal and servile arts, where the former was concerned with intellectual pursuits such as logic and rhetoric, and, the latter with practical matters which could range from agriculture to painting. During the eighteenth century a clear distinction between these evolved; a distinction in which the servile arts implied lower social standing, and their expulsion from liberal education commenced. As a mark of social acceptability in a time of expanding social mobility the “exterior polish implicit in ... a liberal education” could provide entrée to circles and associated opportunities which were otherwise unattainable (Rothblatt 1975,26). Rothblatt notes that it was in the second half of the eighteenth century that the connotations of the term ‘liberal’ move from ‘freedom’ towards ‘independence’. This century, he points out, was one in which frequent social change presented as a problem of independence to many social groups (for example, yeomen, gentry and the clergy) whose individual futures had been previously protected by their dependence upon feudal relations of patronage. The threats and challenges to political independence of those

“enfranchised groups” brought about a need for the extension of the concept to include social independence, an expansion which necessitated acquisition,

...of civilized behaviour and all the attributes of a liberally-educated man. A liberal education might not be able to guarantee social independence, but at least it gave a plausible veneer of success to its recipient, allowed him to speak with some authority, and gave him a welcome push in the right direction (Rothblatt 1975,28-9).

Uncertainty about one’s political independence was not the only dilemma for those sections of Georgian society with the luxury of pondering the role of education. The growth in service occupations opened up avenues for those of less noble birth but who had had access to education; this was an era in which social skills were more useful than practical skills. This was no new phenomenon, the growth of the Elizabethan court in which patronage was essential, had elevated social above technical skills. In his discussion of Oxbridge in the Elizabethan era, Hugh Kearney notes that with the growth in the numbers at court and the involved system of appointment by patronage “the division between gentlemen and non-gentlemen became the most important social distinction in English life” (Kearney 1970,26). Although many of the established gentry shunned the universities in favour of training their sons in those graces required at court (for example, riding, playing the lute, dancing, tennis and the like) the most popular route to gentility for the yeomanry, traders and other aspiring groups was one or two years at Oxbridge and the Inns of Court (Kearney 1970, 25-27). In Kearney’s view the social role of the universities was transformed through the sixteenth century. No longer were they merely sites for the reproduction of the clergy, but now: “[a]bove a certain level in society – say that of prosperous yeomen – the universities were instruments of social mobility.” By 1600, the complex social hierarchy of medieval society had given way to “two nations, the ‘gentlemen’ and the rest, the great majority” (Kearney 1970,33).

The aspiring classes were not alone in identifying education as an important plank to secure their position. Hans Eberhard Mueller sees the educational expansion of the seventeenth century, and increasing participation by the aristocracy, as a response by the nobility to the threat of losing political control:



The changing conditions of warfare, the growing influence of the court, and the rise and expansion of central administrative and judicial institutions rendered the traditional noble education partially dysfunctional. The replacement of the celibate clergy with educated laymen from the lesser gentry and even the lower orders threatened to monopolize the nonmilitary service by an upstart intelligentsia that would upset the traditional hierarchy among the ranks (Mueller: 1984, 109).

The landed ruling class saw education as increasingly necessary for the maintenance of its “predominant position in state and society” (Mueller 1984, 109).

It is here, in the early seventeenth century, that we can see the aristocratic impetus to the nexus between education and polite knowledge which, despite the “educational depression of the second half of the seventeenth and first part of the eighteenth centuries” (Mueller; 1984, 110), became in the later eighteenth century, as Rothblatt also notes, so important to the aspirations of those dependent upon patronage for a position of note.

Book learning, whether pursued at school or with a private tutor at home, became compatible with gentility,... It was not yet an essential attribute of a gentleman, nor was education alone sufficient to make a gentleman; but wealth ripened by ancestry could now be enhanced further by the finishing touches of a school, a private tutor, or a university (Mueller 1984, 110).

In the eighteenth century appointment by patronage was still the only form of access to the civil service. Rothblatt cites a writer of the time who noted that “the difficulty of finding friends in the right places was the real reason for general education”, one’s future was not certain and this uncertainty was at the heart of the matter: “Flexibility and breadth in education, ... have nothing to do with ideals or morality, but are functions of the market. Liberal education is only possible when a man does not know what position he will occupy in life” (Rothblatt 1975,153). The late eighteenth century was a period of growing occupational differentiation and rising status for many activities previously thought of as trades or closely aligned to them; for example, physicians must separate “...from surgeons, surgeons from barbers. Painters began to separate themselves from artisans or craftsmen, claiming that theirs was a liberal and not a servile profession”(Rothblatt 1975,29). Although we associate the growth of specialisation and

consequent educational 'reforms' with the Victorian era,<sup>2</sup> the changes associated with the expanding division of labour were nevertheless significant in terms of their impact upon the change in emphasis of educational imperatives at least a century before.

A central theme in Rothblatt's discussion of liberal education is the changing relationship between means and ends. His examination of the history and culture of liberal education is a consistent attempt to bring this relationship into focus, starting with a discussion of the strong correlation between means and ends in the Georgian era. Although not overtly argued in Rothblatt's book it is possible to extend his argument to put a case for the idea that there is a consistent attempt amongst those interested in the development of liberal education to force the means to fit the ends.<sup>3</sup> As Rothblatt's work suggests, disjunctures between university means and liberal educational ends in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were extraordinarily influential in forcing changes which can be flagged as attempts to diminish the schism (Rothblatt 1976,100-1,132).

### The New Middle Classes

Much of what we think of when we refer to nineteenth century discussion of the appropriate form of liberal education are the arguments put forward by representatives of the new middle classes. And, it seems that because of their significantly abundant and articulate contribution we have come to accept that they were indeed the only force behind the shift in the idea of liberal education, from a predominantly classical education to that of the later nineteenth century in which the ancient universities had been forced to take on a range of new disciplines. Thus it is easy to develop a discussion such as that which follows and to rely upon this as the explanation of the formation of the modern idea of liberal education.

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<sup>2</sup> J.P. Powell (1974, 206) points out the connection between the importance of the division of labour in Victorian economic theory and the growth in educational specialisation in the eighteenth seventies and eighties.

<sup>3</sup> Powell (1974,205) cites Lyon Playfair, "one of the leading spokesmen for reform, [who] argued that if society cannot adapt itself to the traditional liberal curriculum then the university must change itself to meet the needs of society."

The Georgian era was a period dominated by a ruling class of landed aristocrats but one which also witnessed the growing influence of a middle class expressing utilitarian ideals and beginning to press for political reform.<sup>4</sup> The predominant idea of the outcome of a liberal education, which expressed the interests of the ruling class “was to produce civilised persons, instructed in the workings of the laws of human nature, able to make their way through the intricacies of Georgian behaviour and establish the right tone in all social encounters...” (Rothblatt 1976,78). Because there was no match between these ends and those of an Oxbridge education provision of liberal education was not pursued within the universities and they were indeed frequently pilloried for their failings. It was not only that “...the Oxbridge curriculum was not sufficiently ‘useful’ to meet the practical requirements of polite education” but, its practice fostered all that was anathema to Georgian educational imperatives (Rothblatt 1976,78). The classics, logic and rhetoric, were central to an Oxbridge education, as they were to Georgian liberal education, but, the former’s ways of dealing with the subject matter denied them acceptance. The Oxbridge adherence to medieval foci resisted the Georgian interest in “...new forms of fiction and historical writing”.(Rothblatt:1976,p.80) Furthermore, the emphasis upon logic and rhetoric as the means to effective disputation – often as ‘argument for its own sake’ – conflicted with Georgian views on their place as tools in the promotion of harmonious social interchange ; “...the purpose was to communicate, to bring persons together not to divide them, to teach them to be open minded, not intolerant” (Rothblatt: 1976,80).<sup>5</sup> As already noted in the ideas of Locke, the ideal of the time was education to foster ‘constant custom’, not critical disputation. Self-regulation meant fruitful social interaction for the individual.

A plethora of educational alternatives such as secondary schools, private establishments and dissenting academies were, as a consequence of the absence of determination from higher educational authority, able to offer their own versions of a liberal education. Their ability to do this was, Rothblatt tells us, facilitated by the general form of liberal

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<sup>4</sup> See Halévy (1972) *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism*.

<sup>5</sup> Cambridge, unlike Oxford, developed a strong focus upon the study of mathematics from the late seventeenth century, it was the only honours course available through the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth centuries. See Powell (1965,2) and (1974) for account of the differences between the curriculum at the ancient universities.

education at the time: “[e]ntirely literary in character, focused particularly upon the study of classical languages, and requiring therefore only a few cardinal texts, ...” (Rothblatt 1976,75). Acquisition of a liberal education did not necessitate access to large institutional libraries or established curricula but could be offered within the smallest of institutions, and indeed, as it frequently was, within the private schoolroom itself.

In a tribute to Joseph Priestley, Thomas Huxley refers to Priestley’s education at the Dissenting Academy at Daventry in the 1750s, where he was encouraged to ““try all things: hold fast that which is good””; testing of opposing points of view was apparently an important part of the teaching process (Huxley 1925a,3). In his own teaching practice at the Dissenting Academy at Warrington from 1761 to 1767 as ““tutor in the languages””, which involved teaching Latin, Greek, French and Italian as well as ““lectures on the theory of language and universal grammar, on oratory, philosophical criticism, and civil law””, Priestley promoted similar ‘freedom’ in the exchange of ideas. Huxley cites one of Priestley’s students:

At the conclusion of his lecture, he always encouraged his students to express their sentiments relative to the subject of it, and to urge any objections to what he had delivered, without reserve. ...I do not recollect that he ever showed the least displeasure at the strongest objections that were made to what he delivered, but I distinctly remember the smile of approbation with which he usually received them: His object ...was to engage the students to examine and decide for themselves, uninfluenced by the sentiments of any other persons (Huxley: 1925a,.4-5).

Such an approach is an example of neither the attachment to polite knowledge and sociability nor the notion that freedom of thought was potentially divisive that Rothblatt stresses as the central ideal of liberal education of the ruling landed aristocracy in that period (Rothblatt:1976,159-60). It does, however, seem to have been the main ethos of Warrington which, unlike Oxbridge, was not only intended for the training of clergy but also of “those intended for commercial life and the professions” (Simon 1974,29).

What is noteworthy here is Huxley’s endorsement one hundred years later; when referring to the above quotation from Priestley’s student he says “[i]t would be difficult to give a better description of a model teacher than that conveyed in these

words”(Huxley 1925a,5), thus indicating a continuity in acceptance of the pedagogical fundamentals within the dissenting tradition.

Rothblatt’s work describes a quite marked shift in the nineteenth century, from a conjunction of liberal educational means and ends of sociability in the Georgian era, to new ends of social responsibility and individualism which were often at odds with the traditional means of education, (that is, the attachment to study of the classics) and inspired continued resistance, throughout much of the century, by the men of the universities to the introduction of new subjects, such as science and the new discipline of literary studies.<sup>6</sup> The dissenting academies such as Warrington, and their educational approach were the eighteenth century precursors of the idea of liberal education endorsed by men like Huxley in the nineteenth century; Huxley noted and applauded Priestley’s “craving after a credible and consistent theory of things” (Huxley 1925a,4). The development of alternatives to the established educational institutions did not occur in only one form, there were differences in the approach to pedagogical issues; the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century witnessed a number of new models of education, the best known of which are probably those explored by the group of men known as Utilitarians, or philosophic radicals, and their associates such as the philanthropist Robert Owen and the Quaker William Allen. John Mill and Jeremy Bentham set about developing a system of elementary and secondary education intended to promote Utilitarian ends. The system was based on the Helvetian notion that “the vast majority of men may be taken to be equally susceptible of mental excellence, and remediable causes of their inequalities are discoverable” (Halévy 1972,282). Halévy argues that Mill seized the opportunity:

James Mill was a born propagandist and, if education, as Helvetius maintained, was all-powerful in the formation of character, then education was the instrument to use in order to convert the nation to the Utilitarian morality (Halévy: 1972,282).

He was clearly enough taken with the idea to use his eldest son John Stuart as his guinea pig and between the ages of three and thirteen Mill, in collaboration with Jeremy Bentham, took personal responsibility for John’s education. The educational experiment

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<sup>6</sup> See Chris Baldick (1987) for discussion of development of literary studies in the 19th Century.

was systematic in its approach – the following gives a taste of the programme of instruction: it commenced with introduction to the Greek language and progressed through arithmetic, works about individual men’s achievements in the face of adversity, Aristotle, synoptic tables, geometry, algebra, experimental chemistry, writing in English verse, and culminated in political economy, amongst other subjects which could be identified as the thoughts themselves rather than the “auxiliary instruments of thought” (Halévy 1972,283-4).<sup>7</sup>

At the same time as Mill was ‘conducting’ his experiment he was involved in the promotion of the idea of *Schools for All*;<sup>8</sup> Francis Place was a fellow supporter of this aim of establishing sectarian education which would fulfil the needs of those like himself who had risen from skilled artisan to master but who had been unable to find educational institutions able to provide an education beyond a classical education for his own large family. Halévy cites Place:

It is the middle class which ‘contains, beyond all comparison, the greatest proportion of the intelligence, industry, and wealth of the state. In it are the heads that invent, and the hands that execute; the enterprise that projects, and the capital by which these projects are carried into operation... it is this class which gives to the nation its character. The proper education of this portion of the people is therefore of the greatest possible importance to the well being of the State’ (Halévy 1972,286).

In 1818 Mill’s article “Education” appeared as a *supplement to the Encyclopaedia Britannica* and here he extended his criticisms, of the educational establishment, to the universities for failing in the “education of that class, of society who have wealth and time for the acquisition of the highest measure of intelligence” (reprinted in Cavenagh 1931, 66). An educational establishment intended for such a class, Mill implied, should make “provision for perpetual improvement; a provision to make the institution keep pace with the human mind” rather than what he saw in the “old and opulent establishments for education” as “not only ... no provision for, but a strong spirit of

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<sup>7</sup> See “Extracts from John Stuart Mill’s Autobiography” reprinted in Cavenagh (1931, 74-131) for his account of his father’s approach.

<sup>8</sup> This was the motto of the Royal Lancasterian Institution for the Education of the poor of which Mill was a member. The motto was taken from Mill’s anonymously published 1812 paper *Schools for all not Schools for Churchmen only* (Halévy 1972,286,289).

resistance to, all improvement, [and] a passion for adherence to whatever was established in a dark age,...". He goes on:

That he is a *progressive* being, is the grand distinction of Man. He is the only progressive being upon this globe. When he is the most rapidly progressive, then he most completely fulfils his destiny. An institution for *education*, which is hostile to progression, is, therefore, the most preposterous, and vicious thing, which the mind of man can conceive (Mill 1818, reprinted in Cavenagh 1931,66-7).

This attack on the universities was not only the sentiment of Mill and his friends but was preceded a decade before by a series of forceful articles published in the radical Whig journal the *Edinburgh Review* between 1808 and 1810.<sup>9</sup> In one article Sidney Smith lambasted the obsession of schools and universities with classical studies:

... the only proper criterion of education – its utility in future life....  
...how far is that particular classical education, adopted in this country useful?...  
...there never was a more complete instance in any country of such extravagant and overacted attachment to any branch of knowledge, as that which obtains in this country with regard to classical knowledge. A young Englishman goes to school at six or seven years old; and he remains in a course of education till twenty-three or twenty-four years of age. In all that time, his sole and exclusive occupation is learning Latin and Greek. He has scarcely a notion that there is any other kind of excellence; and the great system of facts with which he is the most perfectly acquainted, are the intrigues of the Heathen Gods:with whom Pan slept? – with whom Jupiter? – whom Apollo Ravished?...  
...Attend, too, to the public feelings – look to all the terms of applause. A learned man! – a scholar! – a man of erudition ! ... Are they given to the men acquainted with the science of government? thoroughly masters of the geographical and commercial relations of Europe? to men who know the properties of bodies, and their action upon each other? No: this is not learning; it is chemistry or political economy – not learning. ... The picture which a young Englishman, addicted to the pursuit of knowledge, draws ... is a knowledge of the Greek language. His object is not to reason, to imagine, or to invent; but to conjugate, decline and derive (Smith 1809, 44-6)

Smith goes on to identify and mock the reasons behind the fear of change:

The English clergy, in whose hands education entirely rests, bring up the first young men of the country, as if they were all to keep grammar schools in little country towns; and a nobleman, upon whose knowledge and liberality the honour and welfare of his country may depend, is diligently worried, for half his

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<sup>9</sup> Simon (1974,87) notes that the *Edinburgh Review* had a wide readership which extended beyond political circles to the manufacturing class.

life, with the small pedantry of longs and shorts. ... ecclesiastical tutors ... fancy that mental exertion must end in religious scepticism; ... A genuine Oxford tutor would shudder to hear his young men disputing upon moral and political truth...He would augur nothing from it, but impiety to God, and treason to kings.... An infinite quantity of talent is annually destroyed in the Universities of England, by the miserable jealousy and littleness of ecclesiastical instructors (Smith 1809, 50).

The tensions, noted by Rothblatt, between means and ends in liberal education in the first half of the nineteenth century are indicative of tensions in the broader political structure which the focus of his work leads him to neglect. Not only were the means of education within the ancient universities out of step with the vestiges of Georgian expectations, but the very ends were themselves undergoing a period of contestation. The half hearted attempts at internal reform at Oxbridge were carried out under duress by men who most certainly had no sympathy for the idea that universities should be preparing graduates for the professions or industrial leadership.

In his essay “What Knowledge is of Most Worth”, published in 1861, Herbert Spencer set out his case for an educational means, a “rational *curriculum*”, which would fulfil the function of education – preparation for complete living (Spencer 1949: 6-7). Spencer argued that science was the central concern of such preparation and sought to discredit remaining attachments to what he viewed as the purely decorative classics. He opens the essay with his now famous observation about the fondness of primitive *and* civilised peoples alike, for clothing which has more to do with adornment than protection from the elements, and proceeds to extend the argument to educational means.

Among mental as among bodily acquisitions, the ornamental comes before the useful. ...If we inquire what is the real motive for giving boys a classical education, we find it to be simply conformity to public opinion. Men dress their children’s minds as they do their bodies, in the prevailing fashion (Spencer 1949,2).

Spencer’s essay proceeds to argue why science is essential to each element of education for complete life and in his concluding passages declares:

Thus to the question we set out with – What knowledge is of most worth? – the uniform reply is – Science. This is the verdict on all counts. For direct self-preservation, or the maintenance of life and health, the all-important knowledge is – Science. For that direct self preservation which we call gaining a livelihood,



the knowledge of greatest value is – Science. For the due discharge of parental functions, the proper guidance is to be found only in – Science. For that interpretation of national life, past and present, without which the citizen cannot rightly regulate his conduct, the indispensable key is – Science . Alike for the most perfect production and present enjoyment of art in all its forms, the needful preparation is still – Science; and for purposes of discipline – intellectual, moral, religious – the most efficient study is once more – Science (Spencer 1949,50).

For Spencer the neglect of science was particularly galling, given that he attributed to it the very achievement of civilisation; but, he forecast that it would have its day and would usurp the classical pretenders. He likened science to Cinderella:

For we are fast coming to the *denouement*, when the positions will be changed; and while these haughty sisters sink into merited neglect, Science, proclaimed as highest alike in worth and beauty, will reign supreme” (Spencer 1949,51).

Similarly, in his 1868 address to the South London Working Men’s College, published under the title “A Liberal Education; and Where to find it” Thomas Huxley set out his idea of liberal education as an education:

... which has not only prepared a man to escape the great evils of disobedience to natural laws, but has trained him to appreciate and to seize upon the rewards, which Nature scatters with as free a hand as her penalties.

[A man who] has had a liberal education ... is, as completely as a man can be, in harmony with Nature. He will make the best of her, and she of him. They will get on together rarely: she as his ever beneficent mother; he as her mouthpiece, her conscious self, her minister and interpreter (Huxley, 1925b, 86).

He proceeded to identify the failings of the public school system in this regard, and to attack Oxford and Cambridge for losing sight of the original medieval role as sites “for the prolonged study of special and professional facilities by man of riper age” and for having become “‘boarding schools’ for bigger boys” in which learned men did not figure greatly (Huxley 1925b, 102-3). Huxley compared English Universities, which, he argued, ignored men of the highest intellectual calibre (Mill, Faraday, Lyall, Darwin), with their German counterparts:

Our universities do not encourage such men ... as far as possible university training shuts out of the minds of those among them, who are subjected to it, the prospect that there is anything in the world for which they are specially fitted. Imagine the success of the attempt to still the intellectual hunger of any of the men I have mentioned, by putting before him as the object of existence, the successful mimicry of the measure of a Greek song, or the roll of Ciceronian

prose! Imagine how much success would be likely to attend the attempt to persuade such men that the education which leads to perfection in such elegances is alone to be called culture; while the facts of history, the process of thought, the conditions of moral and social existence, and the laws of physical nature are left to be dealt with as they may by outside barbarians!

It is not thus that the German universities, from being beneath notice a century ago, have become what they are now – the most intensely cultivated and the most productive intellectual corporations the world has ever seen (Huxley, 1925, pp.105-6).

The year before Huxley gave his speech, Henry Sidgwick, (Fellow, Trinity College, Cambridge) in an essay, arguing for the place of English instead of Greek – published in the widely regarded volume on liberal education in schools, *Essays on a Liberal Education* (Farrar, 1868) – pointed out that the debate over classical education and ‘useful knowledge’ had become distorted by the mistaken notion “that ‘training the mind’, the argument put so often for retention of the classics, is a process essentially incompatible with ‘imparting useful knowledge’” (Sidgwick 1868, 88). The vulgarity and ignorance of this form of attack upon the classics, where “the training of the mind” would be left to take care of itself had been, he argued, a contributing factor to their successful defence. For Sidgwick a more fruitful argument would have been that training the mind could more readily be accomplished by the study of modern literature and languages.

These demands for recognition of English literature and language were not new. In 1855 the Civil Service of the East India Company Report included recommendations for competitive examinations for the “most lucrative and prestigious administrative posts in the empire” and ranked English literature and history alongside mathematics with the highest allocation of marks (Baldick 1987,70). The arguments here for inclusion of these subjects were couched in terms of effective governance. There was a growing interest in European “intellectual pursuits” amongst the Indian upper classes and it was seen to be essential that this be harnessed in the interests of the empire. Baldick cites Thomas Babbington Macaulay, who had a strong part in the Report, as telling the House of Commons:

Surely, in such circumstances, from motives of selfish policy, if from no higher motive, we ought to fill the magistracies of our Eastern Empire with men who

may do honour to our country, with men who may represent the best part of the English nation (Baldick 1987, 70-1).

The recognition of the importance of culture as part of the process of maintaining the empire in India is clearly stated here. Not only was it important though to inculcate the elite sections of the Indian population with English literary tradition but clearly the representatives of Empire must be able to carry this civilising influence with them. This recognition of English literary study put further pressure upon Oxbridge to provide it.

As suggested above, all of the material of this ilk has fostered the arguments that the change in liberal education curriculum in the nineteenth century was predominantly brought about by the increasingly strident middle class demands for an education which best suited their needs and political aspirations. Similarly, the reforms of civil service recruitment from the mid 1850s through to the 1870s, which saw the end of appointment by parliamentary patronage and the institution of open and competitive examinations based on the Oxbridge curriculum have frequently been explained as a response to the same demands. In the following section I will put a rather different case; one which is argued by writers who suggest that the examination system associated with civil service reforms were formulated and facilitated by men whose interests were not those of an aspiring middle class but lay very much in the preservation of the political interests of landed aristocrats and the lesser gentry. In other words, although there was clearly a coalition of interest in administrative and educational reform, for these two classes, it was the latter who were the positive actors in achieving reform. What is absolutely certain is that by the end of the century a liberal education in all its forms and locations was embodied in a means which was ends driven.

### Northcote – Trevelyan an Educational Reform

In his discussion of the relationship between the monarchy, parliament and the administration in Britain from the sixteenth century, Mueller notes that:

By the middle of the eighteenth century, parliamentary cabinets managed the majorities in Parliament through the sinecures, pensions, and jobs at the disposal of the Treasury. In the province [sic], wealthy county and borough patrons controlled their clients and electorates by a steady flow of favors coming from the center (Mueller 1984,96).

Indeed this form of patronage was a social security net into which straitened aristocratic families could fall:

We sometimes forget that the public dole is a venerable institution, not an invention of the modern welfare state. What is modern about it is not only that the lower classes have gained access to it but also that they are often stigmatized for making applications (Mueller 1984,96).

In the decades leading up to the electoral reforms of 1832 there were a number of reforms enacted which were intended to separate administration and politics and which did have an impact upon this patronage, but, again as Mueller points out, they were rather more concerned with eliminating the most openly corrupt of these practices and the “proprietary concept of office holding” rather than actually doing away with the practice itself. Mueller rejects arguments that these reforms were directly a response to either the “bureaucratic demand for efficiency and merit”, or middle class demands for participation, but have a stronger footing in the tension between the crown (King George III) and the aristocracy over attribution of patronage (Mueller 1984, 102-6).<sup>10</sup>

Peter Gowan does not view the impact upon patronage, of the extension of the franchise, in the same light as Mueller. Gowan maintains that it was this point at which “patronage as aristocratic dole had largely been replaced by *Parliamentary* patronage, in the service of party politics”. This left the administration vulnerable in situations where “MPs [both government and opposition] from middle sized urban boroughs” could use parliamentary patronage in order to “strengthen party support” (Gowan 1987,20). Mueller, however, contends that the 1832 reforms did nothing to challenge the hold of the landed gentry.

Parliaments elected after 1832 were much like parliaments before. Wealthy business men were still willing to leave politics to landed aristocrats so long as their interests were not neglected. The political oligarchy represented in Parliament was much the same as before though a slight shift toward new wealth packaged in traditional education at Oxford and Cambridge became noticeable (Mueller 1984,107).

Where outsiders (those with limited, or no, connections to the landed aristocracy) were admitted to the Civil Service it was out of a necessity to enlist the assistance of professional men in a period of industrial expansion. Far from being an opportunity for

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<sup>10</sup> See also Gowan (1987, 20).

men from humbler social origins however, these men were drawn from “the professional liberally educated intelligentsia” who originated from “upper and upper-middle class” families and who had acquired the attributes of Gentlemen through access to an Oxbridge education.<sup>11</sup> It is not necessary to establish which of these accounts of the balance of power within Parliament immediately post 1832 is most accurate. The important point is that the reforms opened up access to Parliament and the extent to which immediate real participation occurred by other than the aristocratic class occurred is not the issue. Rather, the very *possibility* of non-aristocratic participation is the relevant point. Whether, or how quickly, does not change the reality that once in place an extended franchise removed absolute control of patronage from the hands of the aristocracy.

It is the Indian civil service campaign of 1853 which Mueller identifies as both the first site in which the “profile of the liberally educated gentleman administrator” so central to all the later reforms, is established, and, where “university reform and administrative reform converge for the first time”; indeed he dubs it the “Dress Rehearsal” (Mueller 1984, 198-99). It was here also, that we get the identification of the reformers’ desire to foster the development of the kind of administrator who was “the broadly, liberally educated generalist rather than the expert – the professional gentleman rather than the professional specialist” (Mueller 1984,199).<sup>12</sup>

In 1853 William Gladstone (Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Aberdeen Whig-Peelite coalition) commissioned the Northcote-Trevelyan Report “On the Organization of the Civil Service”. This short document contained the report of a commission of investigation into the employment conditions of the home civil service (Mueller 1984, 168). The entire report was directed at overcoming the seemingly wasteful and inefficient outrages of the patronage system in which the civil service remained a “haven

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<sup>11</sup> Mueller expands at length, upon this extension of the concept of gentility through the universities, in his chapter on the English historical background to the Civil Service Reforms (1984,118-25).

<sup>12</sup> There is a difference here between the nineteenth century notion of a ‘liberally’ educated generalist and the late twentieth century notion of a general education. In the former, capacity for participation as citizen/leadership is still of the essence, whilst in the latter the central concern is preparation for generalised skills or preparation for subsequent specialisation.

for the “unambitious,” the “indolent,” the “incapable,” and “those whose abilities do not warrant an expectation that they will succeed in the open professions” (Mueller 1984,168). The proposed reforms sought changes in the recruitment practices of the British administrative elite which sounded the demise of appointment by Parliament and, although not overtly stated, entrenched the role of Oxbridge as the source of this elite. Their report proposed a separation of the civil service into “intellectual” and “mechanical” ranks, and entry to the top grades of the civil service would become dependent upon passing open and competitive literary examinations based upon the ‘liberal education’ curriculum of Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

Initially, and not surprisingly, there was a concerted and horror struck opposition to the reforms proposed by Northcote-Trevelyan. According to Mueller, “[b]y far the most urgent fear of the opposition was that the reforms would lower the moral tone and social composition of the service” (Mueller 1984, 211). Furthermore, the notion of a split in the service would place barriers in the careers of men, recruited through patronage and without university education, who had come to expect advancement on the basis of experience as their right. The fears that the reforms would democratise the civil service were counteracted by Gladstone and others on the basis that the reforms would “*strengthen* the hold of the higher classes on the higher civil service.”(Mueller: 1984, p.215). To support his argument Mueller invokes Moses’ (an earlier administrative historian) assessment of Macaulay’s intentions in relation to the reform of the Indian civil service.

**He knew perfectly well that open competition did not involve attracting the ill-bred and ill-balanced middle class into the Indian service. Macaulay meant to open the competition to undergraduates of the great universities, and he expected that in an open competition with a high standard based on the Oxford and Cambridge Honor schools, Oxford and Cambridge would more than hold their own. The scheme was not quite as democratic as it looked. Like the English cabinet and the English aristocracy, the English civil service was to be opened to gentlemen who had inherited breeding and culture, and to those of the middle class who had made themselves gentlemen by acquiring the same breeding and culture (Mueller 1984,203).**

It is interesting to add here that the four decades preceding the eventual introduction of civil service reforms were the most expensive in which to educate a son at Oxbridge.

Clearly candidates for the examinations were unlikely to hail from the feared lower classes.<sup>13</sup>

The Northcote-Trevelyan Report never proceeded into legislation, despite Cabinet approval and publication in 1854, (the Whig-Pelite coalition lost office soon after) however, it seems that there is a strong case for the argument that the ideas expressed in its recommendations were significant in their influence upon the 1870 Order in Council which marked widespread reforms in administration. Like Mueller, Gowan (1987: 4-9) takes issue with the commonly held view of historians (who otherwise hold quite different positions on the explanation of nineteenth century administrative reform), about the impetus to the reforms. He particularly notes that although Fabian historians have generally argued that administrative reform in the nineteenth century was largely a result of “conscious planning by the Benthamites”, whilst Tory historians have seen it as a natural progression and outcome of the “christian conscience of public opinion” it seems that in the case of Northcote-Trevelyan there is an inclination on the behalf of the former to explain it “in the Tory style as the product of individual personalities’ immediate concerns – a ‘blind’ step in the march towards the modern state.”(Gowan 1987,7). Gowan identifies a fairly widespread agreement amongst historians of administration:

... that Northcote Trevelyan was part of the general rise of the bourgeoisie’s influence on government, linked to the steady progress of democratization, the increasing complexity of administration, technological change and so forth (Gowan 1987, 7).

Gowan argues to the contrary. He holds that the architects of the Report (this is wider than the two men who gave it its name)<sup>14</sup> had a definite agenda which was “profoundly concerned with class issues”, and that between 1853 and 1870 these reforms were

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<sup>13</sup> Mueller points out that in comparison to the German Universities, “costs at Oxbridge were exorbitant”. “In the first half of the nineteenth century” students at Cambridge were sons of the following occupational categories: 31 percent from the aristocracy and gentry, 32 per cent from the Anglican clergy, 21 per cent from other professionals and 6 percent from business men. “Clearly the new men of the industrial order had not yet penetrated the universities, nor was there room for artisans ...” (Mueller 1984,123).

<sup>14</sup> Ralph Lingen, Head of Education Department, Benjamin Jowett of Balliol College, Oxford, and Robert Lowe were apparently all close friends and greatly involved in formulating these reforms. See Annan (1955) for an account of the family interconnections of many of these actors.

consistently pursued by a group of men who represented the interests of the gentry with aristocratic associations rather than with new commercial interests: albeit that the reforms were ahead of the awareness of the need for such moves by the collective incumbents of the class itself (Gowan 1987, 18,25).<sup>15</sup> Rather than removing Parliamentary patronage to *enable* the 'new' non-professional, commercially connected urban middle classes access to the administrative elite, Gladstone in particular was intent upon protecting it from such an onslaught (Gowan 1987,20-22). Gladstone wrote to Lord John Russell, a vehement Cabinet opponent to the reforms:

I do not hesitate to say that one of the great recommendations of the change in my eyes would be its tendency to strengthen and multiply the ties between the higher classes and the possession of administrative power... I have a strong impression that the aristocracy of this country are even superior in natural gifts, on the average, to the mass; but it is plain that with their acquired advantages, their *insensible education*, irrespective of book learning, they have an immense superiority. This applies in this degree to all those who may be called gentlemen by birth and training;...(cited in Mueller 1984,215-6).

Gowan disagrees with Mueller over the extent of intention in the actions of the reformers; where Mueller sees their campaign as being to some fair extent impelled by the increased demand of Oxbridge graduates for civil service appointments, Gowan argues that active pressure from the educational institutions for administrative reform "did not precede the Report, but was articulated by and mobilized through it" (Gowan 1987,22). The Reverend Benjamin Jowett (fellow and tutor at Balliol college, Oxford) was clearly an influential figure in shaping and pressing for reform and, whilst Gowan, unlike Mueller, sees him as being far removed from the role of "a shop steward for a half mobilized class", he was obviously disturbed by the problems facing the ancient universities in the face of "the spreading educational challenge initiated by the Benthamites through University College, London" (Gowan 1987,23). This was at a time when Oxbridge had not yet broken the constraints of increasingly out of step Church control. Furthermore, Gowan points out the gradual loss of appeal to the aristocratic-gentry of the traditional professions (church,law army) for which Oxbridge had hitherto prepared its graduates, as well as growing awareness that increased education for the

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<sup>15</sup> Gowan points out here that "... the Report struck a deep chord that was ready to be struck, but had not, so to speak, struck itself. The Report energized its constituency, not vice-versa". He also suggests that these men were "*relatively autonomous and creative actors*" (Gowan 1984,20).



sons of the new middle classes was opening up opportunities within public administration along with their entrenchment in the new professions.

Oxbridge's 'liberal education' and the traditional career opportunities for the younger sons of the landed classes were assuring neither fulfilment nor secure hegemony (Gowan 1987,23).

For Gowan, Gladstone's vehement attachment to the idea of a Coleridgean 'clerisy'<sup>16</sup> was the critical factor in his enduring commitment to the kinds of reforms embodied in Northcote-Trevelyan. It was this commitment to what Gowan has termed 'dynamic conservatism' that fuelled Gladstone's steadfast belief in the importance of ensuring the landed gentry a place in the administration. This was no blind defence of reactionary traditional rule. Rather, Gowan points out, the Coleridgean view was not opposed to capitalism but to "the *spirit* of capitalism being allowed to become the dominant ethic in national life" (Gowan 1987, 25).

There had to be, so to speak, a cultural revolution within the ruling class for it to re-establish its leadership or hegemony and re-unite the nation.... Recourse to the violence of repression would be largely unnecessary within the state led by a clerisy actively seeking popular consent. At the same time, the state would have to build within itself 'potential powers' to enable it to resist disruptive pressures from below. The most important of these powers were the private wealth of the aristocracy and its power and authority within the state (Gowan 1987,26).

The potential for commerce and its associated corrupting tendencies to become the dominant ethic needed to be countered by an aristocracy with the wisdom to attain the fine but essential balance between "the forces of change and the forces of permanence" (Gowan 1987, 26).

Gowan contends that in the 1852 proposals for reform at Oxford, Gladstone identified the possibility for the creation of a clerisy able to act as the necessary administrative counter balance to the forces of commerce. It was this insight which, it seems, inspired him to enlist Northcote and Trevelyan to the task of proposing administrative reforms.

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<sup>16</sup> See Gowan pp. 24-30 for discussion of the influence of Coleridge's idea of a clerisy upon Gladstone and the development of his conviction that this clerisy "could be constructed through the reformed universities ...".

Economic liberalism and laissez-faire could readily coexist with a profoundly conservative hostility to democracy. ... The Coleridgean conception of the clerisy was not simply one of a religious-moral leadership of the nation. It was anti-democratic in principle in that it considered the clerisy elite to be the bearer of a superior political wisdom overriding any mere popular majority. ... this wisdom was not the cleverness of rootless intellectuals good at passing exams: it was the attribute of highly cultured and devout intellectuals rooted in the landed interest, the aristocracy, and its ancient institutions (Gowan 1987,30).

The initial Parliamentary rejection of the Report in 1854 was, apparently, due to the absolute reluctance of “the leaders of the Parliamentary oligarchy [who] could find no cogent reason why they should surrender their near-untrammelled power or share it with such an administrative elite”. However with the passing of the Second Reform Act in 1867 access to Parliament lay within the reach of the propertyless classes. It was obvious to all that it was time to shift “power from the Parliament to the Executive branch of the State”(Gowan 1987,31). Gowan has developed a convincing exposition of the drive to promote “Coleridgean conservatism” in the form of “a dynamic reforming current...”.

Gladstone’s great achievement, at a time when the aristocracy-gentry and their educational institutions feared their demise within the parliamentary apparatus, was to find a way of consolidating the landed interest within the state while presenting this political reorganization in the colours of the urban middle classes, as a purely administrative-efficiency reform based on objective tests and meritocratic criteria (Gowan 1987,33).

The significance of Northcote-Trevelyan in promoting a rationale for the dominance of ‘liberal education’ throughout the Oxbridge and public school system lasted well into the twentieth century, indeed into the period after WWII. In the difficult years between the wars the tax burden and outflow of wealth of the landed gentry had made it difficult for many of these families to afford Oxbridge fees. Furthermore, extension of educational access meant that men from lower social classes were successfully competing in the exams.

The American scholar Moses had predicated [sic] with a chuckle before the First World War that if the right class was not being recruited through the system of written exams then the exam system would be dropped. And this is indeed what happened, on Treasury initiative, during the Second World War. The ingenious argument was that the exam system favoured lower-class boys who worked so hard that they were exhausted by the time they had gained entry to the service! (Gowan 1987,32).

## Conclusion

In the light of the material considered above we can surely argue that throughout its construction in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the notion of liberal education was always related to instrumental ends. In the first place we see that it was consistently debated in terms of the formation of the appropriate characteristics of the liberal individual. For this reason also we can argue that these ends were class related ends in that we must acknowledge that despite the assumption of equivalence within liberalism, it is inherently unequal: the recognition of the need to promote the formation of a liberal individual across all sectors of society furthered the interests of the dominant classes. This is not to say that all contributors to the debate had shared class interests, but that the construction of the term is actually something which comes out of particular class struggles. Even in those contributions to the debate which argued against particular forms of liberal education (that is an over emphasis upon the classics) we can see that the rejection has its foundation in a concern that the means were too divergent from the specific ends. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century there seemed to be a fairly well established notion of liberal education which was very definitely instrumental, in which the means were quite clearly ends driven and this construction of liberal education represented very definite class interests.

The second important factor is that there is a strong case for the argument that the formalisation of liberal education through the establishment of civil service entrance examinations based upon an Oxbridge curriculum came about as a directly political struggle between sections of the dominant classes over participation in the growing state administration. It is precisely because the ends of nineteenth century liberal education were expressed in individual terms that they so easily come to be seen as non-instrumental. What we get is a representation of liberal education as being individualistic and unconnected to class when in reality this appearance of individualism derives from the very nature of liberalism as unequal society. By the late decades of the nineteenth century, the ends of liberal education were instrumental to that class or coalition of classes (landed aristocracy, gentry and new professional classes) which were its subject.

It is only in the post WWII era, when we get the beginnings of mass higher education, that the ends of higher education are not instrumental to the class which is now its subject (a scientifically and technically skilled working class bearing the mantle of new professions). This is not to deny that the development of particular skills are not beneficial to individual members of the working class, but the impetus for extension of mass education to higher education comes from the necessity for production of skilled labour as well as the maintenance of social democratic political imperatives – neither of which are immediate working class interests. Associated with this is a shift from apparently individual ends to mass ends which are instrumental to a different class to the subject of this educational process, and this takes on the form of an abandonment of non-instrumental (individual) ends in favour of instrumental ends. In other words, with the extension of liberal education beyond its nineteenth century terrain of liberal democracy to that of social democracy, a gap between the implicit social ends of liberal education and the particular individual ends of students drawn from other classes opened up. Students drawn from outside the upper classes had to take the old social ends as their individual ends, just as these ends were changing. It is in this context that notions of liberal education as being connected to individual fulfilment can be understood as being instrumental in class terms. Rather than the importance being a shift from individual to collective ends, both traditional liberal and so called instrumental education serve specific class ends.

The really telling point here, however, is that the argument identifying the shift to market driven ends in education in the 1980s and 1990s as the break with non-instrumental education is three to four decades too late in Australia. It was in the 1950s and 1960s that liberal educational ends in higher education declined in importance, at least in relation to the great majority of graduates. The demands for market driven ends it seems, are less representative of a further shift to instrumental ends than of increasing pressure to draw tighter and more absolutely the means of higher education into line with the increasingly specialised ends. As Boris Frankel (1992, 2) points out:

...the 1980s and early 1990s are themselves closely linked, as both a reaction to, and continuation of profound socio-economic and political-cultural shifts dating back to the 1960s.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES

In order to explore the validity of contemporary arguments that the tradition of the Idea of the University in Australia is under attack from the imposition of Dawkinsesque instrumentalism it is useful to consider the history of the establishment of the university in this country. In chapter One we saw that much of the argument focuses upon defending the idea of the university as a place of individualism and academic freedom, in which research, teaching and contemplation should flourish in the interests of pursuing knowledge and ideas for their own sake. Whilst such activity gives rise to directly applicable outcomes, this should not be, the argument contends, the only motivation. Where directly instrumental training occurs, as with the legal and medical professions, these are accepted as traditional elements of a rounded institution. Even when modern requirements for more far reaching professional training within the university is acknowledged the notion of the humanities as a traditional special case is fiercely defended.

Is this a truly accurate representation of the tradition of the university in Australia, or is it an attachment to an idea which only partially represents liberal education as it was constructed in the Universities of England in the nineteenth century? Has the academic body in Australia absorbed, through a process of osmosis, that distorted idea of non-instrumental liberal education as a given for its own context, without taking into account its own history? Are the arguments of Hüppauf and Coady and Miller noted in chapter One correct when they refer to the problem of the absence of a truly defined idea of the university in Australia?

Given the limitations of a work of this nature, it is neither possible nor necessary to attempt to write here detailed histories of all Australian universities in order to arrive at

some sense of what the determining factors were in the formation of the Australian university sector. Rather, it is important to get a sense of the imperatives which led to the establishment of the universities in the nineteenth century and their general patterns of development up to the beginning of WWII. For this purpose I have selected three mainland universities; Sydney, Melbourne and Queensland.<sup>1</sup> The Universities of Adelaide, Tasmania, and Western Australia have important stories to be told and all have been important in the Australian university sector, but the former can be argued to be representative of the general idea of the university which is invoked in the current debates. In his paper on the historical background of Australian universities, J.J. Auchmuty argues that all these universities “were similar in the composition of their faculties and design of their courses”(Auchmuty 1959,15).

Histories of Australian universities are not abundant, often only written or commissioned to mark jubilees or centenaries. However, given that for the most part they have been written by academics who have had the advantage of writing about their own kind and context they are generally thoroughly researched and well documented. Thus, from secondary sources, it has been possible to develop a sense of the intentions of the founders of our universities as well as of those who helped to shape them through the first hundred years of Australian University education.

The details noted here have been selected for their relevance to the general ideas of this thesis and much has had to be left out. Rather than become caught up in the wealth of information about particular chancellors, vice chancellors, professors and others who led the way I have chosen to focus upon general arguments, difficulties, trends and developments. Thus, my concern has been predominantly with motives, interests, patterns of development and sources of funds rather than individuals or specific management structures.

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<sup>1</sup> These Universities are formally known as the University of Sydney, the University of Melbourne and the University of Queensland. However, they are commonly referred to as Sydney University, Melbourne University and Queensland University and these informal titles are preferred within the text of this Chapter.

It is useful to explain some general points about the nature of the university in Australia. Firstly, unlike the ancient universities of Great Britain which were established by royal Charter, the first wave of Australian universities were all established by Parliamentary statute. The establishment of the universities in Australia as statutory bodies is the basis of the position, put, for example, by David Derham, as Vice-Chancellor of Melbourne university in 1975, that once a community gives a university the statutory authority “to manage its own affairs, then the idea of the university ultimately becomes controlling” (Derham 1975, 205). This argument completely dismisses the connection between the universities being established by statute and their place as institutions of the state. In contrast to their British counterparts, the universities in Australia were, from the outset, undisputedly institutions of the state. Whilst as nineteenth and early twentieth century state institutions they were not as solely dependent upon the government for financial support as their younger counterparts of the post WWII era of expansion, they were nevertheless unequivocally the products of the relationship between an initially colonial state and, after 1901, an independent state (see tables A4.1 and A4.2 in appendix). The process of establishment in each colony required the development of an argument, or at least general support, for the need to establish a university. Thus, even where there was initially no real dispute about the need for a university, as in the case of Melbourne, the legislative process of liberal democracy required its articulation, in the parliamentary process. Furthermore, their establishment as state institutions affected the structure of the governing bodies which were for the most part appointed by parliamentary nomination and election by graduates. J.J. Auchmuty rails against the structure of the governing bodies of Australian universities comparing their origins with those of the medieval universities of Europe:

European, including British universities, have had a long and developing tradition of internal self-government, of academic freedom and of special rights and privileges ... The medieval university was established with local and municipal support, ... The Australian university had only one master – the State! The Australian academic could appeal to a European tradition but in the realities of power in the Australian situation there was no counterpoise to the authority of the State, ... (Auchmuty 1963, 149).

Changes in management structures required further legislation, and at times the determination of university senates or councils were the subject of some contestation,

at least until professorial staff were granted representation. This nature of universities as state institutions meant that the relationship with governments was marked by constant claims and demands typical of institutions dependent upon governments for their continuation. This did not mean that they were not also significantly reliant upon private donations for expansion, or even for the maintenance of some courses, but it gave them a clear definition as state institutions. This has also ensured that Australian universities, up until the last decade,<sup>2</sup> have all been established as secular institutions with no call upon any of the churches for funds.<sup>3</sup> The dependence upon government funds has meant from the outset that the universities have needed to appear to be meeting the needs of 'the community', in whatever way 'community' may have been interpreted over time. In other words the history of the university in Australia has certainly been one in which the universities have been subject to public scrutiny. Of course, because of their very nature as state institutions the demands upon them to meet 'community needs' have not been without contradiction and contestation. It does seem as though, however, in their first half century at least, contestation occurred more in the arena of the state legislature (governments) in their dealings with university senates, than within the confines of the university faculties themselves.

The teaching bodies of the universities were, apparently, on the whole committed to maintenance of certain standards and steady but cautious expansion rather than overwhelming struggles over whether or not to expand, and in what directions. It seems they were, for the most part, united in the recognition that they needed to prove constantly to governments the legitimacy of their requests for preservation or increase in existing levels of funding. Perhaps some of the clearest indications of the contradictions came when individual colonial governments having granted funds for establishment of specific courses, imposed conditions upon funding, or, withdrew monies when courses seemed to be poorly enrolled. In general governments were most

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<sup>2</sup> The University of Notre Dame, the second private University to be established in Australia, was opened in Fremantle Western Australia by the Catholic Church in 1992.

<sup>3</sup> See Auchmuty (1959, 15-16) and Portus (1939, 166-169). The role of the denominations in Australian universities has been played out in the establishment of residential colleges attached to the universities.



keen to fund expansion based upon their perceptions of practicality and as G.V. Portus has pointed out:

All these serve the interests of the scientific rather than the cultural side of the University. For governments in Australia regard education as an instrument rather than an experience (Portus 1939, 169).

Certainly, the sense that we can glean from its historians, of the university's first hundred years in Australia, is not one in which there is a strong commitment to university education as an end in itself. In reality we come across fairly consistent statements of the early demise of the idea of education for its own sake. Although the founders of the first two Australian universities were committed to university education as a process of imparting certain intellectual capacities and disciplines free from the complexities of religious preference, but suitable to the governance and civilisation of their communities, their critics severely undermined this representation. The initial emphasis upon the classics definitely made them vulnerable to accusations by their detractors of being sites of privilege, exclusiveness and extravagant waste on the contemplation of "outmoded and useless knowledge" (Auchmuty 1963, 152).<sup>4</sup> What is more, early years of low enrolments contributed to a public perception of the university's irrelevance to the real issues of colonial life. Because the first faculties established were faculties of arts, opinions of the university were necessarily ones which affected the view of the liberal arts. Auchmuty points out that in the case of the first three Australian universities the well being of arts faculties was dependent upon private benefactors who were more committed to "older university ideals" than "State Treasuries representing political and public opinion" (Auchmuty 1963, 154).

It seems as though the early focus of the founders upon an idea of education was soon lost. Half a century before Coady and Miller complain of an absence of the idea of the university Portus notes:

It cannot be said that the Australian community has any very clear idea of what should be the purpose of a university. For the majority it is a place which serves the community by turning out its doctors, lawyers, engineers, dentists, and

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<sup>4</sup> See Turney *et al* (1991), MacMillan (1963) and Blainey (1957) *passim*.

teachers, and by providing advice and assistance for its farmers and pastoralists (Portus 1939, 175).

Even earlier, T. H. Anderson Stuart, Professor of Physiology and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the Sydney University, reported to the Royal Colonial Institute that:

In the vast majority of cases as yet, students in Australia frequent the Universities in order to acquire some professional qualification.... there are few of these students who are in quest of a Degree simply as a mark of culture. They have a definite aim, and take a serious view of life (Anderson Stuart 1891-92, 117-118).

This, he points out, marks the difference between the students of the Australian and Scottish universities and the students of Oxford and Cambridge. Similarly, in his volume of the *Oxford History of Australia*, Stuart Macintyre notes, of the four established universities in 1904:

For all their gothic architecture, their lakes and sylvan settings and their cultivation of Oxbridge conceits, the universities were already vocational, with a marked emphasis on medicine, law, applied sciences and those arts subjects that led to a career in education (Macintyre 1986, 61).

The early dependence upon state funds has raised awareness about constraints upon academic freedom. Both Geoffrey Blainey and David MacMillan note early attempts to deny academics freedom to discuss or teach certain topics and others note a number of instances in which individuals were removed or reprimanded for expressing opinions contrary to the mainstream (Blainey 1957, 197; MacMillan 1963, 55; Auchmuty 1963, 151; Sawyer 1987, 4-5). In his 1939 account of the university in Australia, G.V. Portus noted the issue, but made little of it, by arguing that his experience of a quarter of a century had only witnessed three minor occasions of threatened political interference (Portus 1939, 167). He does acknowledge, however, that dependence on government good will mitigated against appointments of those outside the mainstream.

Outspoken declarations of opinion by members of university staffs sometimes induce nervousness in timid university administrators. 'You musn't quarrel with your bread and butter you know.' And there is a tendency in governing bodies in making new appointments to play safe and to fear unduly what are thought to be radical social opinions. ... by the time a man is well enough known to be elected or nominated he has come to the cautious stage of his career (Portus 1939, 167-8).

In the first century of Australian universities, issues of academic freedom were, it seems, more focussed upon the freedom of what one taught than contemporary concerns with matters of freedom of research interests. This probably had much to do with the low profile of research activity in Australian universities until the inter-war period. Whilst the earliest academic appointments to Australian universities boast an array of fine scholars and teachers, there was no expectation that these men should be active researchers as well. Indeed, the influence of the British academic tradition was most powerful here. Historians of both Sydney and Melbourne Universities note that special funds and emphasis upon research was not prevalent until the pre-WWII era. Portus actually attributes the institution of research, as an integral part of the university's role, to the growth of the professional schools: "...if only for the sake of professional competence, research must be set on foot in universities." Thus learning, not just teaching, becomes a priority to the point where he argues it is "the true end of a university's being" (Portus 1939, 176). Auchmuty points out that prior to WWII there was considerable research expertise in Australian universities (in 1903 Melbourne university had five fellows of the Royal Society as staff members) but the teaching loads were far too great to allow time for research as a significant activity (Auchmuty 1963, 162). Nevertheless, the example cited below of the establishment of anthropological research at Sydney University is evidence that research was funded and undertaken, not however, as disinterested inquiry but with a very specific perception of political imperatives.

## The University of Sydney

*(Sidere mens eadem mutato)*<sup>5</sup>

ESTABLISHED 1850

The first university to be established in Australia was Sydney University. Its champion was a leading politician, William Charles Wentworth, and, its inspiration is a matter of dispute for historians. According to the more orthodox, the initial inspiration was that it should more or less naturally evolve out of the conversion of the troubled secondary school, Sydney College, into a University (Macmillan 1963, 39-40). The most recent

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<sup>5</sup> Gardner (1979) translates this as "the same spirit under different skies".(17)

published history of Sydney University certainly adopts this view (Turney *et al* 1992, 31-8); and it identifies the vested interests in university establishment as being:

on the one hand ... the local preparation of candidates for the mundane professions, and on the other one the development of college institutions for general education, maintaining foundations in divinity (Turney *et al* 1991, 42).

On a different note, Gardner contends that it was inspired by the need to establish conservative institutions as a defence of the interests of the colonial conservatives against the increasing numbers of radicals, trade unionists and the like, who seemed to threaten the equilibrium which served the pastoralists and merchants so well (Gardner 1979, 12-13). Despite this agenda, it was important that the case for a university be put in such a way as to win endorsement by the conservative forces of the legislative council, at the same time as avoiding arousing the well honed suspicions of democratic sympathisers. Gardner says:

Wentworth was the man to walk such a political tightrope, on which he must appear to lean to the left. Somehow he must present his proposed university to Sydney as a 'commoner', colonial and cheap – a world away from Oxford (Gardner 1979, 13-14).

Wakefield's speech in the legislative council in which he first proposed the university referred to the need "to educate people so as to fit them for the high offices of the state" (Gardner 1979, 14). But in Gardner's view this point was intended to be read by the council, not as a statement of the need for mass education but as one of the need to provide a local education specifically directed to the sons of the establishment. It seems that the absence of elitist distinctions in the colonies was viewed as contributing towards a disregard amongst these youths for the responsibilities of "containing democracy". "A university in Sydney could be expected to recall the best of them to the political duties appropriate to their station in society" (Gardner 1979, 15).

Geoffrey Serle identifies yet another imperative in the sense of urgency, in the calls to establish the university, in the comparisons drawn between America with its well established universities and their absence in Australia. The high costs and loss of parental guidance resulting from sending sons extreme distances to university abroad were sighted as contributing to undermining moral standards (Serle 1973, 27).

Interestingly, four decades after Sydney University was established, Anderson Stuart stated that:

The Australian Universities are mainly attended by students belonging to the moderately well-to-do classes. The rich in many instances still send their children to Europe to the older universities (Anderson Stuart 1891-2, 97).

It seems that advocates for university establishment at home to overcome expense of study abroad, may well have been more representative of the groups of professional and business men than the wealthy establishment.<sup>6</sup>

In his opening address at the inauguration on 11 October 1852, the vice-provost, Sir Charles Nicholson, spoke of the university as a

...nursery of the future legislators and rulers of this country, providing the high moral and intellectual cultivation which are alone calculated to save society from the evils wherewith it is threatened (cited in MacMillan 1963, 32).

In spite of Wentworth's attempts to present the university as a democratic institution its establishment was certainly not without its critics, such as Parkes, who readily pointed out its leanings towards exclusiveness and aristocratic preference, and, Sheridan Moore who questioned its program's applicability to "the spirit of this mechanical age" (MacMillan 1963,29,31; Turney *et al* 1991, 64).

The debates were not only concerned with who would attend the university but also with what it would try to emulate, and thus what would be taught. The actual structure of education that was established was modelled along the lines of University College London and the Queens Colleges in Ireland. It was to be an institution granting initially only secular arts degrees (Turney *et al* 1991, 61), thus, apparently falling short of the expectations noted above. However, unlike these models and more like the ancient English universities from which Sydney University's coat of arms was taken, the program of study followed much more closely a classical and mathematical foundation. The senate insisted that the first professors of mathematics and classics be drawn from Oxbridge; the other foundation chair, of experimental philosophy (physics) and

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<sup>6</sup> See Hugh Philp *et al* who state that "from the beginning the university was firmly associated with the middle class, city community of Sydney (Philp *et al* 1964,5).

chemistry, the senate felt would best be appointed from London or Edinburgh (Turney *et al* 1991, 61).<sup>7</sup>

Despite the acrimony, between the representatives of conservative influence (for example Wentworth) and more liberal or even radical forces of the colony (for example Parkes), that its inception and early years are reputed to have been marked by, once established the university was not the breeding ground for new statesmen and privileged professionals in the form of the sons of the conservative establishment that both parties apparently envisaged.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, Sydney University had very few students at all in its first three decades: in its first ten years enrolments averaged only twelve per year. Public and adverse comparisons to Melbourne University forced the Senate to respond in 1865 by extending the “scope of the matriculation examination” to include the alternative of French or German, and by the appointment of “Readers in English, Political Economy and Geology and Mineralogy”.<sup>9</sup> These were not the panacea that was needed however, and it took until the establishment of Schools of Medicine (1883) and Law (1890) and a Department of Engineering (1884) before student numbers really began to grow. The real problem, it seems, was less one of the nature of courses offered and more an issue of too few adequate schools at the secondary level to provide appropriately competent students (MacMillan 1963, 56-7). The major source of students in the first decade was not establishment families but merchant and retailing families. Next came sons of lawyers and pastoralists and then those of government officials. The balance was made up of the sons of clergy and a healthy number of children of builders and skilled artisans. All this, argues MacMillan, is evidence of the changing structure of political influence in the colony as merchant and business interests began to attain ascendancy of the earlier dominance of “pastoralists and landowners” (MacMillan 1963, 58).<sup>10</sup> Similarly Philp *et al* note that almost three times as many “city businessmen” as professionals and pastoralists donated £1,000 or more in the University’s first half century (Philp *et al*

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<sup>7</sup> The appointment of a Professor of Sciences allowed for the compulsory teaching of sciences within each year of the Bachelor of Arts curriculum; a Science Faculty was not established in its own right until the early 1880s (Turney *et al* 1991, 256-61).

<sup>8</sup> See MacMillan (1963).

<sup>9</sup> See Turney *et al* (1991, 271-81) for more detail of these events.

<sup>10</sup> See R.W. Connell and T.H. Irving (1992, 171-8) for an account of this changing structure of dominant class power; also Phelps *et al* (1964, 4-6).

1964, 5). Indeed, it was the bequest of his entire estate (about £250,000) by the wealthy merchant John Henry Challis in 1880 (eventually received in 1890) which proved the decisive factor in the University's ability to grow in the 1880s by pressing for increased government funds in the interim. These funds allowed for the appointment of the "chairs and lectureships in modern literature, law, history, engineering, biology, anatomy, logic and mental philosophy" (Fischer 1975, 19,46; Turney *et al* 1991, 182-3).

Following the Senate's unanimous decision in the preceding April to admit women, the first women enrolled at the University in 1882 (Melbourne had taken this step in 1879) (Auchmuty 1959, 31). Evening lectures were successfully introduced in 1884 extending the Arts curriculum over five years (Turney *et al* 1991, 183-93).

Turney *et al* note that there appears to have been a growing concern within the university throughout the 1890s that maintenance and improvement of its own standards were dependent upon the standards of candidates enrolling within its courses, and, in turn, this was dependent upon the standards of teaching within the schools. This concern led to increasing calls for the establishment of a faculty and Chair in Education, finally approved of in 1901. In 1903 the statutory endowment was increased from £5,000 to £10,000 per annum on condition that "matriculated students of the Government's training colleges would be permitted to attend University lectures for the three years required for graduation in Arts and Sciences without paying fees". This free access was extended through evening classes to ex-college graduates (Turney *et al* 1991, 283-91, 396-406).<sup>11</sup> The chair (occupied by the Principal of the Teachers College) and undergraduate course in education were established in 1910 (Elkin 1952, 29-30). In 1939 Portus complains of the extension of the "clamour that universities should subserve utilitarian ends" to faculties of arts, arguing that education authorities tend to view arts courses in universities only in terms of their capacity as teacher training facilities (Portus 1939, 177). Furthermore, he notes that most of the increased grants were swallowed up by the greater staffing levels necessary to offer evening classes, whilst classes became too large to achieve effective teaching and exchange of ideas (Portus 1939, 169).

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<sup>11</sup> This had been preceded by the admission, between 1890 and 1894, of the best students from the teachers training colleges to lectures in the Arts faculty. See A.P. Elkin (1952, 27-8).

By the beginning of the century there seemed to be a clear recognition of the part of “the University’s vocational and utilitarian role in the preparation of members of the older and emergent professions” (Turney *et al* 1991, 346). There were apparently a wide range of contributing factors to this awareness, from both outside and within the university, and they are summarised by Turney *et al*. The increasing complexity of society contributed to expectations that such a costly institution should be directed toward preparing not just social and political leaders but also graduates able to take the lead in the growing industrial, commercial, and pastoral sectors. It seems that there was also a sense within professional groups that they needed the benefit of having their professions endorsed by qualifications accredited at the level of a university. Furthermore, the development of a technical college was attracting considerable government funds and failure to provide adequate professional training may well have seen a direction of further monies away from the university and towards this sector (Turney *et al* 1991, 346-347).

Forces within the University were also important in recognising the need for increased professional training within their ranks. The development of medicine, law and engineering programs had been well received and it was felt that further benefits could be gained from extending the range of professional training. Turney *et al* also refer to what they describe as the “fundamental redefinition” of the idea of liberal education by this time. Classical and mathematical studies were no longer the litmus test of liberal studies, but rather any curriculum which “fostered thinking” was an appropriate mark of a liberal education.<sup>12</sup> Professional studies could just as feasibly be directed towards the training of thinking as courses in the liberal arts. Thus, they point out, the new concept of liberal education was not only the driving force for an extension of arts subjects within the universities but also for the growth of “professional curricula that embraced a variety of utilitarian subjects”(Turney *et al* 1991, 346). Finally, there was the bottom line of pragmatism, the university was poorly funded by the government and desperately needed to develop courses which appeared to have high levels of popular

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<sup>12</sup> See chapter Three.



demand and which would thus attract funds through both fees and a better perception by the community of meeting its needs and thus gaining further government endowment. A huge windfall in the form of the bequest by pastoralist Sir Samuel McCaughey in 1919 brought the university about £15,000 per annum and set the faculties and Senate the tantalising task of how to spend it. After considerable deliberation and bidding by the faculties the most part was allocated to the creation of new Chairs in English Language, French, Surgery, Dentistry, Electrical Engineering, Physiology and a string of associate professorships, lectureships and tutors across the faculties (Turney *et al* 1991, 437).

As Table 4.1 (p.109) shows, enrolments in the first quarter of this century exhibit the growth in importance of the professions in the total profile of Sydney University. Turney *et al* point out that:

...in 1900 enrolments in the Faculties of Arts and Science were already somewhat overshadowed by enrolments in professional programs (243 or 42% in the former and 340 or 58% in the latter), by 1924 this overshadowing was much more extensive (809 or 32%, in Arts and Sciences, and 1,696 or 68% in professional programs.) The Sydney University had truly become a “professional university”.(Turney *et al* 1991, 347).

A part-time reader in Psychology was appointed in the Faculty of Arts in 1910, a Department established in 1921 and a Professor appointed in 1929. It was through this Department that the Australian Institute of Industrial Psychology was set up at the Chamber of Manufacturers in 1927 (Elkin 1952, 33-4).<sup>13</sup> A.P.Elkin, Professor of Anthropology in the 1930s to 1950s, draws a strong connection between the establishment of his own department in 1925 and Australia’s birth as a colonial power after the granting of New Guinea following WWI. “Anthropology was in the air, at least as a means of understanding native peoples for whose administration, welfare and progress, governing nations were responsible” (Elkin 1952, 35-6).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The appointment of an Associate Professor had been made possible in 1921 as a result of the McCaughey bequest.

<sup>14</sup> This was of course an era in which Australia’s indigenous people were regarded as a dying race and of less significance (Elkin 1952, 36). See also MacIntyre (1986, 317-8), and Serle (1973, 151) who note comments made in the 1940s about the absence of Australian studies within the arts programs. Thus, although the classics were no longer central their dominance in the past had had an enormous impact and the focus upon them had been a mark of neglect, for example, of the threatened culture of indigenous Australians as well as Australian studies in general.

The Anthropology Department was established as a result of direct Commonwealth Government funding which was dependent upon the course being directed towards the training of administrators and senior civil servants from New Guinea and research workers “for work amongst the Aborigines in Australia and in the Australian region of the south-west Pacific” (Elkin 1952,37). The Rockefeller foundation contributed significant funds towards field research in the region up until the beginning of WWII.

**Table 4.1 — UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY FACULTY ENROLMENTS, ACADEMIC STAFF AND NON-ACADEMIC STAFF, 1852 TO 1940**

	Total Enrolments	Full-time Academic Staff			Part-Time Academic Staff	Full-Time Non-Academic Staff
		Professors	Others	Staff		
<b>(a) Faculty of Arts</b>						
1852	38	3	-	3	-	-
c.50		3	-	3	3	-
1860	c.70	4	-	4	2	-
1870	76	4	2	6	3	-
1880	317	4	3	7	2	-
1890	224	5	3	8	-	-
1900	442	6	5	11	6	-
1910	667	6	8	14	9	-
1920	994	10	15	25	16	-
1930	1,006	14	24	38	17	3
1940						
<b>(b) Faculty of Law</b>						
1890	10	1	-	1	4	-
1900	34	1	-	1	3	-
1910	71	1	-	1	6	-
1920	257	1	-	1	10	-
1930	271	2	-	2	11	2
1940	271	2	-	2	16	5
<b>(c) Faculty of Medicine</b>						
1883	6	1	1	2	7	c.2
1890	65	2	2	4	12	c.4
1900	193	2	2	4	17	7
1910	429	3	6	9	21	14
1920	991	4	15	19	31	28
1930	430	9	15	24	34	28
1940	946	9	16	25	111	46

Source: Turney *et al*, 1991, 647.

The 1930s depression saw the University – already under severe financial stress – strike difficult times. In line with broad public sector expenditure and wage cuts, government funding was reduced by twenty-four per cent in 1931 and all staff took wage cuts of ten per cent in 1932 followed by five per cent the next year. This was particularly difficult in a University such as Sydney with its high proportion of expensive professional courses. Melbourne experienced only a twenty per cent cut and was able to weather the period by increasing fees and because of its higher proportion of students in the cheaper teaching faculties such as Arts, Law and Architecture (Turney *et al* 1991, 493). Despite these difficulties it seems that at the beginning of World War II the “professional faculties and departments had not only maintained and consolidated their position but had experienced a real growth and development” and research now had a significant place within the university (Turney *et al* 1991, 544).

## University of Melbourne

*Postera crescam laude*<sup>15</sup>

Established 1853

The Melbourne University opened its classes to sixteen students in 1855 and its historians have drawn a connection with its comparatively undebated inception to the opening of Sydney University; a suggestion which contests popular assumptions that it was simply a case that the colony had come of age. Gardner suggests that the “buoyant character” of the mid century gold rush which affected Melbourne, contributed to a willingness on the part of the people of influence to sign a petition to the Lieutenant Governor in 1852 seeking the establishment of a university (Gardner 1979, 18-19). The passage of the petition from the Lieutenant Governor to, and through, the legislative council was swift and unhindered, and, by early 1853 the proposal for establishment of a university in Melbourne had been accepted. In Gardner’s view none of this was independent of the politics of regionalism. Whilst in the planning era of its university Sydney had been the only real city of substance, the discovery of gold in Victoria enabled Melbourne to stake its claim as a site of cultural significance and thus began the tensions of regional politics between the two centres. Blainey cites the importance of the discovery of gold as well as the establishment of

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<sup>15</sup> Gardner (1979, 22) translates this as, “I shall grow in the praise of generations to come.”

Victoria as a colony in its own right, as facilitating the establishment of Melbourne University.

[T]he new Sydney University... was the immediate inspiration of Melbourne's university... Once New South Wales had taken steps to create a university, Victoria inevitably proposed a similar project (Blainey 1957, 2-3).

Regional rivalries were not of course the only supporting sentiments for establishment of Melbourne University. Blainey notes a wide and not remarkable range of justifications (Blainey 1957, 4-6). There were those who saw the need to promote the skills necessary to support the growing mining and agricultural base, as well as a need for the local training of professional expertise to overcome the expense and inconvenience of sending young men back to England. There was also, in such advocates' view, a need to prepare for "responsible government". There was support from those who regarded the university as the keeper of western civilisation and culture, a notion which embodied the idea that it is the university where men come to understand the love of "knowledge for its own sake" (Blainey 1957,4). There were the concerns of moral guardianship as well, which had been alerted in a climate of rapid population and economic growth.<sup>16</sup> This role of university as a moral force must have appeared less easily assured however, given the establishment of the university within the framework of the secular state which limited the role of the usual moral overseer, the established church. This barrier was, according to Blainey, not so much an opposition to christianity as evidence of the strength of secularism and the internal frictions between the christian churches in Victoria at the time.

The actual subjects offered at the University in its opening years fitted much more the structure of what came to represent liberal education in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the Melbourne University seemed to hold the promise of a far less rigid

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<sup>16</sup> See Serle (1963, 351) who cites the select committee responsible for approving the University bill: ...that the institution of a University for the education of her youth will, under Divine Providence, go far to redeem their adopted country from the social and moral evils with which she is threatened; to improve the character of her people.

R.J.W. Selleck (1994,61) also refers to the crisis of order in Melbourne in the gold rush years immediately preceding 1855.

In the early months of the rushes, thirty-eight of Melbourne's forty metropolitan police resigned, tradesmen, shop-keepers and civil servants fled the city, ships lay idle in Hobson's Bay deserted by their crews, schools and shops were closed, crime increased, women and children were abandoned in Melbourne while men dug frenetically for gold and, if they found it, returned to the city for riotous carousing.

education than contemporary traditional English counterparts, and certainly moved further from the attachment to classics and mathematics than the Sydney University: the four founding chairs were allocated to mathematics, classics, the natural sciences and the newer fields of 'moral sciences' which included history, literature, political economy and logic (Blainey 1957, 9). The first chancellor, Redmond Barry, as a graduate of Trinity College Dublin, embodied the notion of university education as a civilising influence upon gentlemen. Musgrave cites his opening address:

The object of Melbourne University was clearly stated; although the students were to be situated 'in all that is useful as well as speculative', the emphasis was to be placed on the humanities on 'that which is correct, elegant and sublime in the most exalted of intellectual accomplishments' (Musgrave 1992, 16).

Barry sought the appointment of Professors who could contribute to the cultivation and civilisation of young men of the colony and it seems that in the early years the Melbourne University acted for the most part as a kind of finishing school, providing an arts education to young men awaiting entrance to professional courses in other British Universities (Gardner 1979, 24-5). Nevertheless, the first specifically professional university courses in Australia were instituted at the Melbourne University in 1857 when evening classes in law were introduced. These classes were not conducted as part of a Law School and did not lead to a Degree, but a pass in the examinations led to granting of a Certificate which allowed the holder to practise as a barrister or solicitor (Gardner 1979, 25-6; Blainey 1957, 19-20).

There was an attempt in the early 1860s to establish an engineering program but it drew few students and its graduates were neglected by the major employer of such skills at the time – the Victorian Government – whose senior engineer apparently would not brook university trained personnel, loaded up, in his view, with unnecessary mathematical and scientific knowledge (Blainey:23-4,127). It was not until the first decades of the next century that comprehensive engineering programs were fully established.

As with the Sydney University in the early decades the real problem in drawing students, as Blainey points out, was an inadequate supply of schooling to provide the appropriate students until "free and compulsory primary schools" were instituted in the 1870s and underpinned the development of secondary education necessary to feed the university (Blainey 1957, 24). It was this lack of free or even cheap available schooling, rather than

a shortage of scholarships (which were certainly provided), which mitigated against the sons of other than the wealthy residents of Melbourne attending the university in its early years (Blainey 1957, 17). The School of Medicine opened at Melbourne University in 1863,<sup>17</sup> preceding Sydney University by two decades, and Gardner attributes this relative alacrity (as with that of the law school in 1875, fifteen years ahead of Sydney), to the less well established state of the Victorian legal and medical professions.

Its legal and medical men had not had time to entrench themselves as closed corporations, thus leaving gaps in professional education which the university could fill, even if the task strained resources to the utmost. By contrast, the two professions in Sydney had secured acts regulating entry in 1849, and thereafter were only tepidly interested in the university (Gardner 1979, 22).

It seems that despite the adoption of a reasonably wide range of subjects at its inception the Melbourne University was not without its struggles over the role and importance of the classics within an arts degree. The most prolific benefactors in the first half century of the university's life were, according to Blainey, the squatters and, as he explains, these men did not envisage the university as a place of utilitarian ends as much as "a spiritual force which fired the moral and intellectual life of a rising nation..." (Blainey 1957, 53). Although the study of both classical languages was not ousted from their essential status until 1913, their place was by no means uncontested in the first half century of the university's life. This debate was in part seeded by concern that the university did not attract large numbers of students. The attachment to the classics within the arts degree excluded a considerable number of students who had inadequate schooling preparation and, it was suggested, discouraged the parents of prospective students who feared "the classics would give them a distaste for more profitable occupations" (Blainey 1957, 21). The late 1870s witnessed struggles over the structure of university council which, Blainey argues, were the marks of the struggle over the place of the classics in relation to the sciences and modern studies. Despite resistance by the classicists, by 1881 the structure of council had been revised to include three elected staff members; a change which Blainey notes as central to the changes which followed (Blainey 1957, 62).

Certainly there was clearly strong popular support to weaken the hold of the classics and to promote more directly instrumental courses of study. The university determined the

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<sup>17</sup> Blainey (1957) devotes an entire chapter to the struggle for the establishment and the early years of the Melbourne medical school. See also Scott (1936, 113-117).

matriculation standards and thus influenced the curriculum in schools and colleges, at least until the introduction of public service entrance examinations in 1883 and public school leaving examinations in 1905.<sup>18</sup> “The schools, therefore, could not emphasize sciences and modern languages so long as the university clung to the traditional classical concept of a liberal education” (Musgrave 1992, 310). In 1880 the council approved the inclusion of physics, chemistry, physiology and elementary biology as matriculation subjects on the proviso that students only sit for two of the sciences. In 1882 five new chairs were appointed: modern languages and literature, anatomy and pathology, natural philosophy, engineering, and chemistry (Blainey 1957, 99). By the late 1880s the refusal to grant any degree without at least a first year including the classics was negated by the establishment of science and civil engineering which did not include them (Blainey 1957, 107). This emphasis on classics however, was not because the advocates of classical studies necessarily viewed them as simply being worth studying for their own sake. It seems that in the face of criticism – that they were of no practical utility – the occupant of the chair of classics in the mid 1880s, T.G. Tucker, defended his field on the grounds of their instrumental value in honing skills of reasoning and disciplined study necessary in a range of professions. However, even if this were not the case he held that:

...culture was as essential to a satisfying life as the development of industry and the accumulation of wealth. The university which emphasized professional training and neglected a liberal education was concerning itself more with means than ends, and in fact was not a university (Blainey 1957,109).

Nevertheless, it seems that potential arts graduates were discouraged by the lack of career opportunities. Even after further changes in 1913 arts students were still required to study one classical language (Blainey 1957,110,123).

The depression years of the 1890s marked hard times for the university in terms of available funds and although no classes were closed through the period there was no expansion in the number of chairs at the university – although the Conservatorium of Music, was approved in 1894, a move which Blainey cites as “striking proof of how much the utilitarian concept of education dominated the university...” (Blainey 1957, 114). The economic difficulties were exacerbated by the discovery, in 1890, that university funds had been embezzled by

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<sup>18</sup> See P.W. Musgrave (1992 145-92,310) for an account of the introduction of public examinations which extended the curriculum to include commercial and scientific subjects and which provided a school leaving qualification not tied to university entrance.

its accountant over a period of years and the university was significantly in debt: it remained in financial difficulties throughout the decade (Blainey 1957, 118-122). A Royal Commission was established in 1902 to report on the financial position, administration and teaching work of the university, and to recommend the best means of its efficient government (Royal Commission on the Melbourne University 1904, 7).<sup>19</sup> The Commissioners emphasised the importance of the university as an institution combining both “utilitarian and liberal studies” in which “the highest utility may be combined with, and is hardly attainable without, a high culture”. The university it argued was more than an institution involved in training students to obtain degrees but should be enabled to carry out that essential function of a modern university – education, which includes “the application of science to the varied departments of national life and industry” (RCUM 1904, 9). This was perhaps one of the earliest statements in Australia of the role of the university in terms of the national interest and its connection to the requirements of industry, and cannot have been entirely separated from the Commission’s recommendation that the government eliminate the university’s debts and that the statutory endowment should be increased from “£9,000 to £24,000 a year” (Blainey 1957, 125). There were equally strong statements about the role of the university as the “crown of the educational structure” and the necessity for it to “provide and educate” all private school teachers and “assist in training the teachers employed” in state and technical schools (RCUM 1904,9). The government responded in 1904 with a commitment to an endowment of £20,000 for a period of ten years;

...being conditional upon the University providing scientific and laboratory training in mining and agriculture, and taking without fee from time to time eighty students, of whom twenty were in each year to be nominated by the Director of Education for a four years’ course (Scott 1936, 177).

Musgrave points out that this increased dependence upon the state for funds contributed towards a greater degree of public accountability and thus, pressure to comply with growing demands for more utilitarian emphasis in the university curriculum (Musgrave 1992, 310).

The student population doubled in the ten years preceding the first world war and the number of students enrolled as a proportion of total population was two and a half times that of England (as high as Germany, but less than Scotland). Even though the new chairs created at this time were in the newer fields of science, such as veterinary pathology and

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<sup>19</sup> Referred to hereon as RCUM.



agriculture, the largest number of students were enrolled in medicine and the arts (Blainey 1957, 128,132). Blainey explains:

Behind the remarkable growth of the university in the ten years ...[before] the first world war lay the determination that the university should cease to be an exotic institution. So swift was the march of the utilitarians that the standard bearers of the old university fell far behind (Blainey 1957, 135).

This came to be reflected in the changing nature of benefactors who, Blainey reports, increasingly comprised public companies after the first world war (Blainey 1957, 177). In 1941 one benefactor (a draper) bequeathed over half a million pounds to be used for scholarships for students from low-income families – he excluded “the arts, music and education from his bequest” (Blainey 1957, 181). In his early history of the university Ernest Scott notes the predominance of Victorian pastoralists as providers of the greatest benefactions prior to WWI, despite the great wealth generated from gold mining. Scott explains this by pointing out that there were comparatively fewer men who amassed great wealth from mining than from pastoral activity and those few that did make their fortunes “clearly ... were not interested in advanced cultural and professional education to the same extent, or indeed at all” (Scott 1936, 69-70).

With the growing influence of economics as a profession, a school of commerce was established in 1922 with enrolment of three hundred students (Macintyre 1986, 238).<sup>20</sup> Increased government support for agricultural education in the 1920s revived the flagging student numbers in the School of Agriculture (Scott 1936, 203). Between 1918 and 1934 student numbers rose from 1,319 to 3,497, a growth which Scott attributes, in the early stages, to enrolment of returning soldiers as well as the increased provision of high school education (Scott 1936, 200).

It was only in the immediate pre-WWII era that research began to be established at Melbourne University. The first Commonwealth monies were granted for research in 1936 and in 1946 the degree of doctor of philosophy was established. By the mid 1950s research monies began to approximate a quarter of a million pounds. It is this establishment of the academic as duty bound to be also a researcher that Blainey identifies as the era of the

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<sup>20</sup> In 1911-12 approaches to the Premier seeking government support to establish a Chair of Economics or Political Science had floundered because the University would not cede to government conditions that the appointee be an Australianist (Scott 1936,204-6).

beginning of notions of academic freedom. In its early days, despite the secular nature of the university, academics were 'got rid of' for decrying christianity, and even political comment needed to be considered and made at one's "own risk" (Blainey 1957, 197).<sup>21</sup> A further result of the importance of research has been, Blainey argues, increasing specialisation which has "tended to disintegrate the university, undermining the old concept of 'university' as the whole range of learning".<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, on writing his history of the Melbourne University in 1957 Blainey acknowledged the university's emphasis upon technology and professional concerns which, in his view, gave it the power to be sustained rather than becoming a failed "exotic institution" (Blainey 1957, 203).

## University of Queensland

*Scientia ac labore*<sup>23</sup>

Established 1909

The Queensland University was established in 1909 and enrolled its first students in 1911 after forty years of attempts to establish a university. Royal Commissions in 1874 and 1891 had recommended immediate foundation of a university in Queensland and attempts toward establishment were made in the Legislative Assembly in between these years. None of these were able to achieve their hoped for outcomes. It was only after the establishment of a lobby group (the Queensland University Movement) in 1906, which was supported by both Brisbane businessmen and community leaders in rural areas, that the legislature took real notice of the call for a university (Michie 1935, 3).

Malcolm Thomis argues that Queensland's slow progress in comparison to the southern states was a consequence of its economic concentration on cattle, sheep and sugar cane

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<sup>21</sup> Whilst Blainey's point may be correct with reference to issues of freedom to research in Victoria, MacMillan notes a much earlier statement of the right to academic freedom made by the Professor of Classics at Sydney University in the 1850s, John Woolley, in response to protests to Senate by the Church of England hierarchy about his giving voluntary lectures on mental philosophy:

I do not believe the Senate will allow [one of] her Professors to be insulted by the insinuations of untrustworthiness for the very part of his work which gives him a right to the name ... I will not submit to such a restriction of claim and will maintain the right of perfect independence in my fulfilment of the charge entrusted to me (cited in MacMillan 1963, 55).

<sup>22</sup> Two decades earlier Portus expressed the same concerns when he said:

We have lost our way. The will-o'-the-wisp that has misled us is specialization (Portus 1939, 177-8).

<sup>23</sup> Knowledge from Labour.

production which meant a low level of urbanisation. It was not until Brisbane had strong enough manufacturing and service sectors and the associated need for professional skills that the need for intellectual skills became great enough to justify a university. The advocates of university establishment in the late nineteenth century had to counteract the impression that a university would serve only cultural ends and sought to distance their arguments from images of Oxbridge. The university in Queensland was envisaged as free from constraints of tradition. It had to be seen as practical and, except amongst a few adherents to liberal education, it needed to avoid intimations that it would be seriously attached to notions of cultural education (Thomis 1985, 3-11). The success in 1906 was achieved by arguments that a university was essential to the economic well being of the Queensland community and successful outcomes in such pressing matters as, for example, water conservation and agricultural development were dependent upon establishment of a university: "by 1906 ... an informed public opinion of sufficient strength had been created to persuade the government that a university should be established" (Thomis 1985, 18). In a paper solely devoted to the events which contributed, over a period of thirty years, to the establishment of the Queensland University, Harrison Bryan states:

...the movement for the establishment of a University on the grounds of higher education and culture was gradually modified, at any rate for propaganda purposes, to the basic concept of a factory for the professions, with the higher things of life as an incidental and fortunate accompaniment, but one which most obviously fulfilled a secondary role (Bryan, 1952 640).

In Bryan's view it had to be this way in order to convince a "practical and essentially uneducated community" that the university would have some utility and would not be, as they were inclined to fear, "either superfluous or dangerously reactionary" (Bryan, 1952 661). Whether intended or not, however, it seems that the power of the rhetoric and propaganda was so great that, Bryan argues, such expectations of the university were still clearly present in both the university and the community in 1952 (Bryan, 1952 640). The first published history of the Queensland University attests that its establishment was similar to that of the other Australian universities in that it,

...was largely a product of state-consciousness, and, being founded and almost entirely maintained by the Government, it became not a local seat of learning but

definitely a part of the educational and scientific equipment of the whole country (University of Queensland Senate (UQS) 1923, 1).<sup>24</sup>

Other factors, it seems, facilitated the government's decision: a period of extended drought had been broken by five abundant years and 1909 marked the state's Golden Jubilee – an occasion in need of an event of some import to mark its significance (Thomis 1985, 18). The government granted £10,000 per annum for the first seven years and the first faculties established were those of Arts, Science and Engineering with Medicine and Law being established only *pro forma* (UQS 1923, 2). A further £2,500 was granted later in 1911 on the proviso that evening and external studies be properly catered for (UQS 1923, 12). Early appeals to government for the establishment of a chair in tropical and sub-tropical agriculture were unsuccessful as were attempts to establish commerce.

As with other universities in Australia the extent of active research undertaken within the faculties was severely constrained by heavy teaching loads and limited funds. A benefaction from the Walter and Eliza Hall Trustees contributed to the establishment of industrial biological research, pure research in chemistry and a School of Applied Chemistry during the years of WWI (Thomis 1985, 80; UQS 1923, 12-14). Thomis contests the impression, created by the university's early historians, that pure research dominated in the first decade of the university's life. He attributes this misrepresentation to their place as chairs of English and history and suggests that in truth these men knew very well that applied research, particularly in relation to primary industry, was essential to popular support for the university (Thomis 1985, 84).

Any notion that the University of Queensland considered research from the viewpoint of an ivory tower could not be further removed from the situation that actually prevailed during these years (Thomis 1985, 85).

A real mark of difference from the other Australian universities was the dearth of benefactors. The only donations of any significance came from the Walter and Eliza Hall benefaction, noted above, and Queensland University's third share of the bequest by pastoralist and grazier, Sir Samuel McCaughey, in 1919 which amounted to more than £7,500 per annum (Thomis 1985, 89).

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<sup>24</sup> I believe this is the work which Thomis (1985) refers to as H. Alcock and J.J. Stable, *The University of Queensland, 1910-1922*. The copy referred to in this work shows no authorship, only the authority of the University of Queensland Senate.

It was not until 1925 that a Professor of Law was appointed within the Faculty of Arts as a result of a £10,000 bequest, a full Law Faculty was not established until a further bequest of £20,000 in 1936 (Alcock 1935, 10; Thomis 1985, 132). Faculties of Agriculture and Commerce were established in 1926 and Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science were kept waiting until 1935 (Alcock 1935, 11; Thomis 1985, 134). Despite its initial commitment to directly utilitarian courses more than half the student body in 1936 consisted of arts and law students. Over one third of all students were studying externally and another third were evening students (Thomis 1985,126). The depression years brought similar difficulties to Queensland University as it did to the southern universities and staff experienced reductions in numbers and salaries.

### The Universities and the Public Service

From all of this we can see that the history of university establishment in Australia was certainly not devoid of difficulties. However, it is also difficult to maintain an argument that this history was one in which there was a consistent idea of the university as an institution concerned with the transmission and production of knowledge for its own sake. The founders of the earliest Australian universities most certainly expressed lofty ideals of them as sites in which the young men of their communities could acquire the wisdom and intellectual skills necessary to assume effective leadership in this new nation. The reality very quickly became one in which public perceptions and expectations exerted pressures upon the universities to be more than finishing schools for the sons of the establishment. The considerable sums of government funds involved legitimised demands for the broader outcomes of professional training, as well as production of the kinds of scientific skills necessary for an economy based upon primary production. This did not mean that the initial commitment to the classics and newer disciplines of liberal education was abandoned, but, despite the tenacity of founding professors, they have never been the truly dominant force within the Australian university. Thus, whilst enrolments in arts faculties were always substantial they were frequently hard pressed for funds in comparison with the medicine, law and science faculties. When funds did flow they came from private benefactors or were tied to utilitarian commitments to teach teachers or train colonial administrators.

The diminution of the universities prime role as reproducers, through a liberal arts education, of leaders and statesmen did not, however, mean that they were not sites of

privilege or reproduction of the ruling class. Whilst the universities drew their numbers from a broader sphere of the social milieu than perhaps their English counterparts, they were nevertheless unequivocally institutions in which the ruling class was reproduced. The strong early emphasis upon the traditional professions ensured reproduction of an educated elite, and those who graduated as engineers, agricultural scientists and the like were certainly the acme of their professional groupings, who in comparatively small communities had significant influence and connection with other sections of the ruling class, as well as potentially occupying professional positions of considerable influence within the state administration.

The vocational or utilitarian dominance in the first century of Australian universities is not evidence of an egalitarian society, but of the nature of class formation in Australia over the period. The kinds of education reflected within a liberal arts program were advocated by men who themselves were either graduates of such an education in Britain, or had certainly formed their ideas of education under the influence of a British liberal education. Because of this they were understandably convinced of the role of the university as the reproducer of statesmen, community leaders and administrators with all the attributes resulting from liberal education. This attachment to the relevance of liberal education was shared by sections of the rural population who were establishing themselves as a landed elite, and who also envisaged the need for political leaders and administrators properly trained in the ideals and values necessary to govern a new liberal democratic nation. Despite this the Australian universities never really followed in the footsteps of the Oxbridge path in becoming the site of production of a substantial administrative elite. The pressures from increasingly vociferous urban merchant and manufacturing interests demanded the universities be productive of much more readily identifiable ends. J.D.B. Miller points out that:

...no section of Australian commerce or industry accepted the Northcote-Trevelyan assumption about the arts graduate. No matter how brilliant, he was not welcomed by journalism, business, banking, industry or any vocation except teaching. Australian businesses and industries preferred to train their own staffs or recruit them from the more specialized faculties of the university. This was the Australian tradition; it would have been remarkable for the public service, alone among Australian pursuits, to have departed from it (Miller 1959, 168-169).

Another factor in the disjuncture between the rhetoric of training for leadership and the failure of establishment of university based selection to the civil service was, Miller suggests, that the Northcote Trevelyan Report, published in 1854, came:

...after the colonies' internal affairs had been freed from the control of the Colonial Office and so there was no impulse to carry over those reforms to the public service in Australia. The old British system of haphazard patronage continued; ministers made appointments on their personal initiatives and that of members of parliament, and a job in the government service was often a return for political assistance (Miller 1959, 1 64-5).

Even where the universities were the examining body for public service appointments patronage seemed to prevail. For example, in the 1862 Victorian Civil Service Act entrance to the ordinary and professional divisions of the public service was based on qualifying examinations run by the university, comprising four subjects in the matriculation examination; section 23 of the Act however allowed for appointment without examination for 'persons of known ability' and "by 1882 only 1,703 persons had been appointed to the Service under competition, compared with 15,843 under section 23" (Parker 1942, 21).<sup>25</sup>

Over the first two decades of the twentieth century reforms to administrative arrangements and appointments in all the public services removed "public service appointments, promotions, discipline, pay and conditions from political control by ministers to separate central staffing agencies, having statutory powers and generally independent from the government of the day" (Parker, 1993, 177). Nevertheless, the resistance towards university credentialling of a separate path towards senior state administrative positions persisted.<sup>26</sup> In 1933 an amendment to the Public Service Act allowed for ten per cent of appointments to the third division of the service to be drawn from graduates of Australian universities without the need to sit the public service exams. This was in part a compromise between the universities, who were pushing for more graduate recruitment, and the Public Service Association (PSA), which resisted such moves on the grounds that they represented elitism and favouritism and threatened the rights to promotion from the fourth division of existing

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<sup>25</sup> See also Musgrave (1992, 48-9).

<sup>26</sup> Sol Encel points out that in the same vein as New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria :

Entry into the Commonwealth Service, as laid down in the Act ... in 1902, depended on an elementary level of education, with university degrees recognized only as certificates of professional competence required by the engineers, architects, lawyers, chemists and doctors employed as public officials (Encel 1953, 222).

public servants.<sup>27</sup> The PSA's misgivings were it seems unwarranted: by 1939 only fifty-six graduate appointments had been made compared to 854 from outside and 653 promotions from the lower division (Caiden 1965, 244-5). The introduction of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS), in the 1940s (see chapter Five), and the 'free place' scheme for existing public servants, contributed to a rise in the number of graduates in the Commonwealth Public Service post WWII, but, Scarrow points out these were not graduates with general arts degrees but graduates "trained in one of the special fields for which the Service has immediate use" (Scarrow 1957, 132).

Out of the 147 degrees completed [by holders of free places] in 1952, 82 were in economics or commerce; and of the 48 diploma courses completed, 33 were for the diploma of commerce. Only 13 arts degrees were included (and some of these were probably with majors in economics or other "practical subjects"). The degrees sought by veterans under the Reconstruction Training Program have shown a similar pattern towards economics or other job-related subjects (Scarrow 1957, 132-33).

In his presentation of the Commonwealth Public Service Bill 1960, Prime Minister Menzies noted proposals of the Boyer Committee of Inquiry into Public Service Recruitment, to make better use of senior officers by creating "an administrative civil service along the lines of the United Kingdom", but rejected the proposal, arguing that "it would not be suitable in the present circumstances of the Australian civil service" (Caiden 1965, 421). Thus whilst the role of graduates in the Australian public sector had become, and continued to be, increasingly significant, there was no point in the history of higher education, prior to mass higher education in Australia, that the universities ever played the part of creating the administrative elite that its English counterparts, upon which it was supposedly modelled, did.

## Conclusion

The shaping of the Australian university and its focus was no less affected by the outcomes of struggle between sections of the ruling class than its English counterparts (see chapter Three). The nature of this struggle, however, was different. It was not, as in England, a struggle over the access of graduates, who for the most part represented a particular faction of the dominant class, to avenues of political power, but a struggle over how to make the

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<sup>27</sup> See *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Public Service Recruitment* (1959, 6).



very content of university education relevant to the interests of competing sections of the Australian ruling class.

From the outset, the formation of universities in Australia as state institutions has been the factor which has led to similarities in their outcomes. Although private funds in the form of bequests and the like determined the pace of expansion before the mid twentieth century, they did not fundamentally alter the direction which the universities were conditioned to take in their role as educational state institutions. Thus, Derham's argument, which identifies their dependence upon funds from private quarters as independence from the state up until the post WWII era, ignores the extent of the dependence upon state funding for their establishment, continuation and growth (Derham 1975, 206). Table A4.2 (appendix) clearly shows the increase in importance of state funding to universities in Australia between 1901 and 1935. It is tempting to compare the pressures faced by the universities in their early years with the dilemmas facing universities in Australia today. They were constrained by inadequate levels of government funding and needed to provide courses for which there seemed to be a popular demand in order to both earn fees and public approval, thus hopefully gaining further government endorsement and commitment of funds. This is then, not so very unlike the situation in which contemporary Australian universities find themselves. They need to offer courses in predicted areas of high demand which will both attract fees as well as meeting government criteria of effectiveness and efficiency upon which funding is increasingly dependent. That is, however, the limit of it. In truth it is only a superficial and descriptive similarity. History only *appears* to be repeated.

At the turn of this century universities in Australia were relatively new state institutions in a developing liberal democratic society. Whilst their main structures and teaching interests were formed prior to the maturing of the social contract necessary to underwrite social democracy, we can see in hindsight that the struggles to meet popular demands, for extension of training of skills to foster economic and social growth at the time, were early steps in the state's assumption of significant responsibility for the construction of social harmony for the maintenance of the social democratic order. Our present dilemma, however, is brought about by the very dismantling of what the early 1900s immediately preceded. Our struggles to locate market niches and fulfil demands for vocational training and so on are not driven by an expanding industrial economy, but rather we cast around in

a fog of uncertainty trying to create market niches and second guess their evolution in a period of shrinking real employment at the close of the social democratic era.

Our current struggles to draw fee paying students and gain credibility as autonomous and efficient but still dependent institutions mark the real change in the university in the past one hundred years. Our similarity with higher education institutions at the end of the last century is the very stamp of our difference: the former were the trials of an immature and sometimes erratic stretching out prior to the attainment of a never perfect, but in the main productive, liberal democratic institution; the latter mark the struggle to survive into and beyond the transition from social to market democracy. The first period was one in which, although the pressure to expand professional training and the like was called for in open recognition of the need to expand skills and training of individuals, it occurred very much within the rhetoric of reproduction of socially necessary skills and occupations which were essential to the continued growth of the nation and the maintenance of general social well being (that is, reproduction of specific forms of labour power as well as production and reproduction and containment of liberal democratic social order). In the contemporary situation we find different explanations for these similar phenomena. This is a period in which these institutions remain as state institutions, but within a state which no longer needs to hold out the possibility of educational advancement for everybody as the promise of democratic society. Fifty years of mass education and a decade of unprecedentedly high participation rates has seen to that. Record levels of unemployment over the past decade have exposed the fragility of arguments that an economy underwritten by a well educated population is assured continued economic or social well being or immunity to economic crisis. So much of what was forged within twentieth century liberalism in its form of social democracy has been shown unable to fulfil its promise. Thus we see the transition to a period in which politicians and their administrators explain this failure, not as is abundantly apparent, in terms of a fundamentally inequitable economic system, but, as the outcome of an over emphasis upon equality, or rather, upon the wrong form of equality. In this new orthodoxy the creation of level playing fields (so vehemently advocated and constructed post WWII) are inherently wasteful, indeed, they are blamed for having given rise to institutions, such as the universities, in Australia which have come to expect to be treated equally and thus have become monoliths of inefficiency. In line with a real shift of the state in Australia, from social to market democracy, universities are directed to respond to

market forces. They are being instructed to predict student demand, establish the path of future economic growth, and to teach accordingly or suffer the consequences of reduced government support. This occurs at the same time as the state withdraws from the social contract in ways which will reduce demands for a huge range of its traditionally significant graduates – students of the humanities and social sciences. Market democracy will not have a place for those professions previously employed within, and essential to, the social democratic order.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> This down grading of commitment to training for those sectors of public employment essential to a “pluralistic democratic society” are noted by Harman in his response to the ‘Razor Gang’ decisions and Fraser Government guidelines to the TEC (Tertiary Education Commission) in 1981. At this time the drive for efficiency and increased vocational relevance in higher education was identified as an ideological and party political shift of resources from the public to private sector; the wider reality of a transformation of the form of liberalism at an international and economic level was not fully apparent (Harman 1981,38).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF CHANGES IN UNIVERSITY ORGANISATION IN POST WWII AUSTRALIA

The previous chapter presents material which indicates that the establishment and development of universities in Australia proceeded within the parameters of a need for ends driven higher education. Even where the founders held notions of a liberal education as the prime motive they were astute enough to employ the language of instrumentalism and the first half century of Australian universities tells a story of establishment and growth dependent upon the ability to convince governments and benefactors alike of their relevance to the new economy. The similarities between this first era and the most recent events in Australian higher education have been noted, but it has been argued that this is not a matter of an ongoing pattern, but rather the manifestation, in the social institution of education, of quite distinct phases of development. However, these are not phases in which one has followed directly from the other but are separated by almost half a century. This chapter and the following chapter consider developments in Australian higher education in this intervening period. In other words having argued that the Australian universities were established in an era of liberal democracy and that current events mark a new era of market democracy, we must understand what happened to higher education in the era of social democracy in Australia.

#### **Reconstruction and Keynesian Expansion in Higher Education**

At the outbreak of World War II Australian higher education comprised the six universities (one in each capital city), a considerable number of teacher training colleges and an array of technical and other colleges. Until the 1940s the states had, by constitutional requirement, carried responsibility (including financial) for all stages of education. As we have seen in chapter Four this restriction had been a consistent hindrance to university expansions. However, the immediate post war period saw expanded numbers resulting, in part, from Commonwealth funding of veterans' fees and

living allowances<sup>1</sup> – under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS) inaugurated in 1944: student enrolments in Australian universities rose from 15,000 in 1944 to 30,500 in 1947, an average annual rate of increase of twenty-six percent (Karmel 1978, 1 – see Table A5.1, appendix). Added to this was increased demand as a consequence of both general population growth and rising expectations resulting from better educated young people and increases in school retention. By the late 1940s the universities were groaning under the weight of numbers and the State Governments faced the problem of even more inadequate resources to meet the demand for further education (Anderson and Eaton 1982, 9-10).

In response to pressure from the states and universities for some federal response to the crisis, the soon to be defeated Chifley Labor Government announced the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry into University Finance in 1950, under the chairmanship of Professor R.C. Mills (director of Commonwealth Office of Education). In the following year the new conservative Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, introduced the *States Grants (Universities) Act 1951* which allowed for specific grants to be made to the states for the purpose of contributing to the costs of running the universities. This was on a matched grants basis in which the Commonwealth undertook to contribute £1 for every £3 of income from states grants and fees; the commonwealth money was to be used for recurrent costs only (Bessant 1977,92). Prior to this the only significant Commonwealth monies provided to the universities in general (but administered via the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIRO)) was an annual grant of £60,000, established in 1936, as special research funds for the physical and biological sciences. Research funding increased and was extended to the social sciences in 1941. In 1943 the Commonwealth Financial Assistance Scheme had been introduced to help raise participation of qualified, but less wealthy, young people to participate in university

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<sup>1</sup> At its instigation in 1946 this required a Constitutional amendment to enable the Commonwealth Government (headed by Chifley) to assist students. The winding down of the scheme in the early 1950s exacerbated the financial dilemma for the universities.

education.<sup>2</sup> This scheme was subsequently replaced in 1951 by the Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme (Williams 1977,123; Anderson and Eaton 1982,9-10).

By 1951 there were two new universities in Australia, the New South Wales University of Technology (NSWUT) and the Australian National University (ANU). The NSWUT was established in 1949 with the purpose of providing the “benefit of modern scientific development more quickly to commerce and industry”. Most of the NSWUT’s initial students were workers already employed in industry who studied part-time (Murray 1957,26).<sup>3</sup> The ANU, in contrast, was established by the Commonwealth Government in 1946 as an exclusively research and post-graduate institution with a focus upon social sciences and social medicine.<sup>4</sup> Coombs’ account of the contributing factors for the establishment of ANU places great emphasis upon inspiration of a social democratic agenda:

The concept of the National University was an expression of the optimism of the time. ...we believed that the war itself had demonstrated that resources could be effectively directed towards chosen purposes; and we were convinced that the social sciences provided the intellectual framework which would enable those purposes to be wisely chosen and the resources to be creatively directed. The Keynesian foundation for the economic management of the war had been sufficiently effective to justify this conviction (Coombs 1981,199-200).

Although Coombs chooses almost utopian rhetoric, his assertion of the place of Keynesian economic planning reveals the political coordinates of his argument. He goes on to reflect that Medical and Physical Research Sciences were viewed with similar altruism in that they could become the opportunity for science to serve humanitarian ends with as much vigour as it had recently been used in the process of mass destruction (Coombs 1981,200).

The university was therefore to be the most bountiful of the sources which would flow from the intellectual energy which was to power the peaceful revolution,

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<sup>2</sup> In his autobiography, *Trial Balance*, H.C.Coombs (appointed Director-General for Post War Reconstruction in 1943) refers to special bursaries established by the Commonwealth during the war years “to ensure a continued flow of people trained for various essential professions” (1981,194). If this reference is, as it would seem, to the Commonwealth Financial Assistance Scheme, it is clear that assistance did not derive from concerns of equity but from the need to preclude shortages of certain forms of skilled labour.

<sup>3</sup> NSWUT became the University of New South Wales at the recommendation of the Australian Universities Commission in 1958.

<sup>4</sup> Prior to this it had not been possible to study for a PhD at an Australian university.

ushering in the 'century of the common man', which leaders of all political persuasions here and abroad had promised (Coombs 1981,200).

Here, is the expression of the rationale for the establishment of a university in Australia which, for the first time, is not couched in terms of individual rights and duties and their direct connection to the national interest, but as a more subtle concept – a commitment to the social democratic agenda. In other words it seems that the establishment of ANU, albeit at the time a solely research university, marks the transition in Australian thinking about universities. The university is no longer seen as primarily an institution of individual education for the ruling class and its professional cadres, but it becomes an important site for the reproduction of much more. The university becomes essential to the forging of the social democratic contract.<sup>5</sup> The importance of the social sciences and the other disciplines, such as medicine, which are so essential to the development of social democratic policy and the social democratic contract is abundantly clear in the arguments for the establishment of ANU. The extension of ANU's role to undergraduate teaching in 1960 was further realisation that the process of underwriting social democracy depended upon much more than assuring ideological and political support. Hegemony is dependent upon more than simply the production and reproduction of ideas (for the most part in the form of policy here); it is dependent upon more than production and reproduction of practice to ensure the continued acceptance of ideas. It was necessary that the process of production of skilled labour, in this case university graduates, ensured that they embodied the ideological and political agenda. Thus an institution such as ANU, which was established to enhance and promote a social democratic program in Australia, was a key site for the production of the forms of skilled labour essential to that agenda.

Interestingly Coombs notes that the academics who came to work in the various research centres at the ANU did not share the commitment to social reform of its instigators.

Often they showed little desire to be involved in the peaceful revolution or in the achievement of 'the century of common man'. Their interests were either more abstract and universal or, and sometimes also, more immediately personal.

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<sup>5</sup> The inclusion of a research institute of Asian Studies had been, it seems, largely supported by Dr Evatt on the basis of the need for Australia to recognise its place within the region (Coombs 1981,195-200; Murray 1957,26).

They wished rather to withdraw from the demands of society for immediately useable ends and to find the opportunity to explore intellectually exciting theoretical issues or simply to make up for lost time in establishing their status in the international community of scholars (Coombs 1981,212).

It is possible that what Coombs read as lack of academics willing to work for the social good was, rather, a fundamental disagreement with the viability of, or refusal to be incorporated into, his own reformist agenda. Coombs himself expresses this contradiction when, in the next paragraph, he concedes that the pursuit of subjects on the basis of their being intellectually exciting is the foundation of change and rejects subordination of the university “to the immediate purposes of the State and to the establishment which dominates it” (Coombs 1981, 212). It does seem then, that there are, in Australia, some long standing differences between perceptions held by the academy and the state over the role of the university in the pursuit of directly utilitarian ends.

### The Beginnings of Central Control

The establishment of ANU was apparently not envisaged (by those who had conceived of it) in isolated terms. According to Coombs’ autobiography, there was awareness that the individual state universities needed to contribute to the overall agenda, particularly in terms of fostering high quality research, and they were found lacking. The first two Vice-Chancellors of the ANU sought to establish formal interaction between the states universities’ Vice-Chancellors to address the problem of low standards (Coombs 1981,208).

There was certainly some discussion within the academy about the role and place of the university during the 1940s ,1950s and into the 1960s which seems to endorse Coombs’ representation of the university under scrutiny. Indeed, it seems as though the discussion has not stopped, despite the sense that some scholars have today that it has never really been debated (See Coady and others chapter One). In 1944 Eric Ashby wrote a special monograph for the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER),<sup>6</sup> simply entitled *Universities in Australia*. In this brief document Ashby states that his intention

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<sup>6</sup> ACER was founded in 1930 by endowment from the Carnegie corporation. When this funding ceased in 1946 the Commonwealth and State Governments continued its funding.



is to set out the case for the university in response to its poor popular image. What follows is a strong affirmation of the university as a place in which the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake is foremost. Whilst the professions have been a central part of the university, he argues, their inclusion of the world of ideas has been the mark of their integrity. It is along these lines that Ashby uses the document to state his case against the inclusion of 'new subjects', which require teaching only of technique, into the university curriculum.

That is why universities will not introduce lectures in journalism, advertising, typewriting and salesmanship. ... If universities consented to teach these subjects, a real public demand would be satisfied. ... But satisfying public demands is not the university's business: it is not a state subsidised intellectual department store, to satisfy this or that demand for skilled labour (Ashby 1944,14-15).

The need to address the problem of universities and funding dilemmas would not go away, and in December 1956 the Prime Minister (R.G. Menzies) commissioned the Committee on Australian Universities under the Chairmanship of Sir Keith Murray (Chairman of Universities Grants Commission in Great Britain). Coombs tells us that this Committee came about as a result of the combined calls from the vice-chancellors for a study of university requirements and subsequent consultation, between himself as Chancellor of ANU, Sir Leslie Melville the Vice-Chancellor and Menzies, in which they pressed for further commitment of Commonwealth funds to universities. It seems that Menzies, although "sympathetic" was initially reluctant to impinge upon what were constitutionally states' rights. Furthermore, he anticipated strong opposition from Cabinet to the sizeable commitment necessary. If a Committee of Inquiry was to be established, Menzies pointed out that its members must be "'people they will not be game to argue with'" (cited in Coombs 1981,210). This was the reason, Coombs explains, for the choice of the Chairman, Keith Murray (Chairman of the British Universities Grants Commission), and Sir Charles Morris (Vice-Chancellor at the University of Leeds). The three Australian members of the committee were the head of the CSIRO, Deputy General Manager of Broken Hill Proprietary (BHP) (a former Rhodes Scholar), and the ex head of the Western Australian State Treasury who was both a member of the States Grants Commission and the Chancellor of the University of Western Australia. All of these appointments had been carefully chosen and in Coombs' view were evidence of Menzies' support of the university cause. Apparently

Murray and Morris were encouraged to consult informally with Coombs to discuss ideas which were being formed as well as to seek insight into the background to the issues emerging (Coombs 1981,210).

In pursuing its directive to suggest ways of organising universities “in the best interests of the nation” the Committee was requested to pay particular attention to:

1. the role of the university in the Australian community;
2. the extension and co-ordination of university facilities;
3. technological education at university level; and
4. the financial needs of universities and appropriate means of providing for these needs (Murray 1957,5).

The Committee presented its Report to Menzies nine months after its appointment. Its discussion of the first of these areas began with a clear statement expressing the notion of universities as: long standing institutions which society supports financially but endows with autonomy in order to ensure their “right and duty ... to pursue knowledge without fear or favour and to educate in a liberal spirit and with integrity...” (Murray 1957,7). It then moved on to set the scene for further increases in demands upon universities, brought about by an anticipated rapid economic growth and technological advance, by arguing that the notion of participation in university education must be extended from access for those with capacity who *want* a university education, to ensuring that all those with capacity be encouraged to *have* one (Murray 1957,7-8). There was a recognition that there were significant numbers of individuals with the capacity to engage in university studies who were either, not attempting matriculation, or not proceeding to university after matriculating. The need for increased participation at this stage was perceived as a general problem in terms of national priorities rather than as an equity issue in terms of expanding educational opportunity to previously blocked social strata.<sup>7</sup>

This need for expansion came at the same time as there were already huge problems created by the existing pressure of student numbers in the seriously under-resourced universities. Despite this, the Report only supported the establishment of one new

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<sup>7</sup> It was not until the late 1960s that issues relating to quite varied participation rates amongst different socio-economic groups were identified as significant areas for educational research in terms of issues relating to equity and social justice (Anderson and Eaton 1982a, 13).

university (in Victoria) arguing for a consolidation of resources and careful planning in the existing universities. Interestingly in this report, as with policy makers in recent decades, there was concern with regard to efficiency, the focus at this time, however, was on the very high failure rates of students: a survey by the Commonwealth Office of Education at the time found that only fifty-eight per cent of students entering university for the first time in 1951 had either already graduated or were expected to graduate (Murray 1957,51). The report stated:

Such a high failure rate is a national extravagance which can ill be afforded. It gravely reduces the efficiency of the universities by causing many students to take a year or more longer ...swelling the classes and getting in the way of the proper education of other students; it also seriously diminishes the national resources of trained university graduates by causing a loss of at least one year's service in the working lives of a very large number ...(Murray 1957,35).

Over specialisation seemed to be one of the strongest criticisms of universities in Australia in the period leading up to the Murray Report. As early as 1939 Portus complained that the "will-o'-the-wisp that has misled us is specialization" (Portus 1939,178). Whilst recognising the importance and inevitability of increased specialisation and technical knowledge, the Report continually stressed the need to ensure that a liberal education was still central to the university's role.

The technical and specialist requirements are without doubt in themselves no less than a matter of life and death to the nation; but they are not the end of the affair. It is the function of the university to offer not merely a specialist or technical training, but a full and true education, befitting a free man and the citizen of a free country. ... technologists and scientists should ... be fully educated as rounded human beings ... Many of the serious problems in the world to-day are moral problems of human relationships. The need for study of the humanities is therefore greater and not less than in the past (Murray 1957,6).

This was an unequivocal statement that the study of the liberal arts was not merely an indulgence for a minority or a 'nice' adjunct to a scientific education, but that an expansion of education which was to be predicated upon growing demands for technical skill must be underwritten by liberal values in order to preserve the very fabric of social harmony and democracy. Indeed, it calls for not only inclusion of humanities within scientific and technical courses in universities, but a concomitant expansion in their own right in order to produce those workers with the skills necessary to provide and administer the social wage elements of social democratic policy, (for example, social

workers, welfare practitioners, educators, and a growing number of liberal arts graduates in the public service).

It is worth speculating about the extent to which this argument reflects more the preconceptions and prejudices of the leading Committee members, rather than being any real outcome of their findings within Australia. The above statement certainly seems to be more representative of the English university system from which Murray and Morris came, and Menzies upheld, than the reality of scientific and technical university studies in Australia. The latter part of the argument, referring to the greater than ever need for the humanities to solve the moral problems of the day, is an indication of the importance of the social democratic agenda in that it recognises the need to address problems of legitimacy, but it is one in which the expansion of the welfare state is regarded as being underpinned by the humanities or cultural studies rather than the social sciences.

The Report proceeded to endorse the importance of fostering not only a particular intellectual climate within the university, but also a social climate by provision of student common rooms, sporting facilities and so on – much as one would find within British universities of the time. It was argued that the sense of community was important in production of graduates who despite their diversity would be able to live together harmoniously (Murray 1957,9). Much the same argument is presented in the Robbins Report on Higher Education in Great Britain in the early 1960s: the need to promote the sense of community, in the face of the effects of increased division of labour on university life, was apparently of some concern.<sup>8</sup>

In its discussion of the place of research within the university the Report noted a “general weakness of honours and post-graduate research schools”, and expressed particular concern about this in relation to the faculties of arts and sciences (Murray 1957,42). It argued the case for the fostering of research on the grounds of the intrinsic value of pursuit of knowledge for its own sake:

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<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to ponder here on the changing sense of community within the idea of the university. See Wyatt (1977) for a brief discussion of changes in the sense of community from medieval through to Newmanian times to Robbins' ideas of the university and its relationship to the changing understanding of the basis of knowledge.

Advances in knowledge have come because free inquirers have been pursuing their own ideas and insights, devotedly and with great persistence, in pursuit of enlightenment for its own sake. These men have no practical aim or profit in view; they are simply “knowledge-intoxicated” men who love the life of intellectual effort and inquiry for its own sake, and will devote their lives to it if they possibly can (Murray 1957,9-10).

The fruits of such altruism were seen to be twice valuable, in both keeping “the march of human knowledge on the move”, as well as being potentially inspirational to students. Good teaching alone, it argued, was dependent upon research. Furthermore, university research was of vital national interest in terms of defence and the welfare of the nation. The final task of the universities was to be “guardians of intellectual standards, and intellectual integrity” as upholders of truth and justice in the interests of the nation, and indeed the world (Murray 1957,11). Throughout the Report, statements about the appropriate functioning of a university echoed the philosophy established in the initial discussion of the university’s role.

The outcome of the Committee’s findings in general was recommendations for expansion to occur as part of a national policy under the guidance of a permanent Australian University Grants Committee, which would, amongst other tasks, advise on funding on a triennial basis. In essence, as is apparent from the terms of reference given to the Committee, as well as from the choice of chairperson, the purpose of this exercise was to set out a justification for the Commonwealth Government to assume a direct funding and planning role in the expansion of the Australian university system. Assumption of some financial responsibility provided by the 1951 legislation was not enough: Menzies had been convinced by Coombs, and others, that the Commonwealth government needed to have more direct control over the use of these funds; the states wanted Commonwealth financial input, but were unwilling to relinquish control of the universities; and, the universities saw it as unthinkable to sacrifice autonomy for the desperately needed increased resources. Indeed, the Commonwealth Government was not interested in intervention in the minutiae of university teaching or organisation; rather, its concern was to establish – in return for its commitment to funding – some sense of national coordination in university education for both the envisaged period of economic growth and the associated needs of an increasingly welfare state.

... there is the irrefutable need for the development of a national policy for the Australian universities. The demands ... will increase in the future as the needs for educated and highly trained personnel increases in both old and new fields of study ...

If the Commonwealth Government is prepared substantially to increase its contribution, it has the right to be assured that its grants are put to effective use. This increased assistance need not lead to a demand for Commonwealth control in the sense of its direction of university policy; ... (Murray 1957 98-99).

Whilst the Report explicitly referred to development of technical and scientific training and expansion of the humanities in terms of specific relevance to economic growth and employment outcomes, there was, nonetheless, an acceptance of the place of university education in consolidating the values and attitudes of society. There was an unquestioning acceptance of the university as upholder of notions such as democracy, national interest, resolution of moral problems, truth, justice and so on, as central tenets of Australian society. This overlaid the presentation of equality of access as 'a given' within liberal democratic society. The Report's acceptance of both these functions of the university indicates that the tensions between utilitarian and liberal education were not the issue here. Rather, the concern was how to facilitate the expansion of the output of the universities in Australia. Whilst this expansion was recognised as necessarily one of an increase in vocational terms, the expression of the role of the humanities in this, as well as the need for increased research and post-graduate activity, served the image of continued and even extended commitment to traditional ideals of liberal education. Again, this seems to be more a reflection of the assumption by Murray, and probably also Morris, of the primacy of the ideals and values of liberal education within the Australian context. Most certainly Menzies would not have dissuaded them from this; in 1961 Menzies is recorded as stating that:

... there are *basic studies* which are essential for educated people, and the absence of which can make a man of technical skill a social menace ... A scientist who was unaware of literature and history or the principles of social responsibility would be dangerous (cited in Bessant 1977,90).

Doubtless, there was concern about the ability of the states to maintain the place of the university in the process of reproducing the status quo; a process in which the state becomes increasingly responsible for ensuring continued provision of education to facilitate a period of expansion. The initial directive to inquire into the role of the university provided the Committee with the basis upon which it could set up the case for

expansion of the same form under closer Commonwealth scrutiny. Therefore, although the Menzies era is seen as being a period of unadulterated federalism, we see that as early as the late 1950s the Commonwealth needed to establish mechanisms for control over certain critical spheres of regional state activity.

The Murray Report had laid the ground well and legislation followed without much ado. The *States Grants (Universities) Act 1958* provided for grants for capital and recurrent expenditure for 1958, 1959 and 1960 and the *Australian Universities Commission Act of 1959* allowed for the creation of the recommended University Grants Committee as a statutory authority. Susan Davies argues that Menzies established the advisory body as a “statutory authority with formal powers and equal representation of academic and business interests”, rather than as the informal committee of predominantly academics which Murray had recommended, because he wanted “a body that would control the universities and curb their demands” (Davies 1989,28). The Australian Universities Commission (AUC) was established on July 1 1959 with Sir Leslie Martin (Professor at Melbourne University) as its chair, and, according to Davies, “Martin gave every indication that he was willing to perform the role expected of him by Menzies” (Davies 1989,28). However, in the following year Martin and the Commission managed to obtain pledges from State Governments to increase funding to universities, which, due to the matched grants system, led to a concomitant increase in Commonwealth Grants so that the Commission’s proposed levels of university funds rose “from a recommended £55,000,000 in the first triennium [1958-60] to £103,000,000 in the second [1960-63]” (Davies 1989,25-6).

These agreements were not welcomed by Menzies who had, until then, given whole hearted support to the Commission. On receipt of the Commission’s interim report in 1960 Menzies was dismayed at the financial commitments made by the committee, and whilst agreeing to honour them he indicated that further expansion in funding would not be entertained. He held the view that universities must operate more efficiently through adoption of innovations to maximise use of their financial, human and physical resources (Davies 1989,22-32).

## The Extension of Central Control

The upshot of this disjunction of intention, between Martin, as chair of the Commission, and Menzies, was a recommendation in the Commission's first report that an advisory committee be appointed to look into the future provision of tertiary education in Australia. It seems that despite the further costs of conducting such an inquiry, Menzies endorsed it because it could provide the means to fulfil demands for expansion in training and skills outside of the resource thirsty university sector.<sup>9</sup>

In 1961 the Committee, chaired by Sir Leslie Martin, was established as the Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia, with the commission:

... to consider the pattern of tertiary education in relation to the needs and resources of Australia and to make recommendations to the Australian Universities Commission on the future development of tertiary education (Martin 1964).<sup>10</sup>

Davies argues that although these terms of reference resembled those given the British Robbins Committee "the resemblance was superficial." Martin was "far more limited in scope ... and it had no independent status. It was a committee of the [AUC] under ... Martin. Its role was to advise the commission, which meant in practice its chairman who was extremely skilful in managing people and who had very definite views on education" (Davies 1989,38).

Menzies was able to persuade Martin that expansion of tertiary education was not possible within the existing university system without corrupting the intrinsic nature of the university, thus achieving his own aim of avoiding further excessive calls on the budget (Meek 1991,466). It was then – despite Martin's hopes to expand through establishment of university colleges – going to be preferable to develop other facets of

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<sup>9</sup> See Davies for a thorough account of the developments here. Quite clearly Martin failed in Menzies' intention to curb the universities, indeed he achieved the reverse. The Commission's recommendation to appoint an advisory body was, it seems, an outcome of Menzies' imperative that it find alternative means to meet demands for university education. Martin's initial ideas to promote university colleges or American style junior colleges were not acceptable and Menzies pressed for expansion outside the university sector (Davies 1989,22-41).

<sup>10</sup> Again, see Davies (1989) for an account of the way in which Martin was required to frame the terms of reference of the committee as well as the negotiation over the composition of the committee. Clear differences between these are, as she points out, obvious indications of their very "different perceptions of the committee's role."



tertiary education alongside the universities (Davies 1989,30-31).<sup>11</sup> Davies argues that the appointment of the committee:

... was a direct outcome of the dramatic increase in funding for universities, which the Australian Universities Commission won in its first round of negotiations with state and federal governments (Davies 1989,38).

The Report of the Martin Committee was presented in 1964 and at the core of its recommendations was the development of an expanded post-secondary sector of education in the form of technical and other colleges which would cater more directly to vocational and teaching-oriented education at the same time as allowing universities to continue with their role of academic and research oriented education (Meek 1991,466).

As with the Murray Report the expansion was supported on "social and economic grounds." In terms of education as an investment in the individual the Report argued that "[I]t is both realistic and useful to regard education as a form of national investment in human capital"(Martin 1964 Vol.1,4), and in terms of the community, it states that, "[t]he modern state requires a well-educated population capable of making reasoned judgements against a background of change" (Martin 1964 Vol.1,6). The difference here between Murray and Martin is the much more overt expression of the place of education in producing 'human capital' in the latter. Whilst Murray did not ignore this, the Report still employed the rhetoric of, and sincerely held an affiliation to, a sense of education's primacy in terms of individual and social betterment: that implicit within the necessity for expanding the output of graduates with scientific and technical skills was the necessity to include a liberal education and thus extend it to a greater proportion of the population. Within the Martin Report, however, there seemed to be a separation of liberal ideals and reproduction of skills. It was no longer possible to make high minded statements about the place of the humanities in the training of technical and scientific workers. Thus the Martin Report used the rhetoric of, "human values associated with education" being inseparable from promotion of a "free, democratic and cultured society" (Martin 1964,1), but did not proceed with the notion that this is derived from

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<sup>11</sup> See Davies (1989, Ch. 3) for an explanation of Martin's attachment to the University as the stronghold of research and scholarship. Here she discusses Martin's background at the Cavendish Institute at Cambridge and identifies the very strong influence of Rutherford in fostering this idea of the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.

the inclusion of the humanities. Rather, the language shifted into emphasis of education *in itself* carrying this.

Once it was apparent that higher education was in reality, rather than just rhetoric, no longer the preserve of the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and a small elite of professional groupings, but must necessarily be extended to a larger population in order to reproduce the skills essential to economic expansion, the overarching place of certain elements of liberal education became less significant to even those who held it so dear. Liberal university education – as a principle of civilising force, human fulfilment and responsibility – had been relevant to the education of a ruling class in its own interests. Once education was necessarily extended to other classes or sections of classes, it was no longer essential to ensure that the broad range of elements of liberal education were ubiquitous. Such production of a large, skilled, white collar working class did not necessitate attachment in all its subjects to notions of civic duty and responsibility as much as to the work ethic and work discipline. The assumption by the state of the responsibility to produce workers with skills essential to the maintenance of social democracy (for example, social workers, town planners, and the like) removed the necessity to inculcate ideas of civic responsibility at the level of the individual. The general powers of ‘rational argument’ were not so important: these graduates would not be responsible for affairs of state or decisions of national importance, but needed to be expert in certain fields of specific skills. Decision making of real significance, whether at the level of industry or public affairs would not be their terrain. On the one hand the pedagogical practice of this kind of scientific and technical education would continue to foster essential forms of rational thinking and practice. And, on the other hand, the undoubtedly vital reinforcement of liberal concepts of democracy and equality was readily accomplished by increased access to, and participation in, educational opportunity in a time of economic growth and full employment. If an individual experienced apparently democratic and equal access to tertiary education it was not also necessary to formally include this within the structure of a course of study.

Bob Bessant suggests similarities between the British Robbins Report and the Martin Report in terms of their recognition of the need to ensure reproduction of “middle class ideology” (Bessant 1978, 21). However, the passage he cites from Robbins – referring

to the importance of the atmosphere in which students participate to ameliorating the inequalities in their home background – is much more overt than Martin could have been. In the first place the university community in Australia had never acknowledged itself as being an institution catering only to the privileged groups within society, and second, unlike the British university student, the majority of Australian university students did not live in university colleges – participation in residential college life style was not a way of ensuring middle class values in the face of expanded working class participation. It is important to note here – as both Bessant and Davies do – that the major difference between the Robbins and Martin Reports was that Martin recommended establishment of dualism in higher education whereas Robbins in Britain, sought, unsuccessfully, to resist it (Bessant 1978,22, & Davies 1989,134-138). Davies points out that despite the great similarity in the terms of reference of both the Robbins and Martin Committees, the great difference was that in Australia the political decision on the future direction of Australian tertiary education had already been made – expansion was to occur in a far less expensive form than the existing university sector (Davies 1989, 35).<sup>12</sup>

Having said this it is important, however, to recognise that the Martin Report did express misgivings about the decline of liberal education in the universities where expansion of knowledge had caused tension in the capacity to teach both “traditional content and the new discoveries”.

Courses have become crowded with specialties, some of which should be learnt either on the job or during later post-graduate studies. In many of them there is no longer any attempt to provide a liberal education (Martin 1964 Vol.1 ,47).

This apparent contradiction is not so great when we consider that the Martin Report argued that the new technical institutions and colleges should be the sites for reproduction of skills which were not as academically demanding as those taught in universities; the latter it held, would retain their place as institutions fundamentally concerned with research and scholarship which naturally included the responsibility for reproducing the traditional liberal [learned] professions such as law and medicine.

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<sup>12</sup> Robbins opposed dualism, it was Crossland in his April 1965 Woolwich Polytech. speech that signalled binarism in Britain; this came only 18 months after the Robbins Report was released in October 1963.

The objective of the education provided by a technical college is to equip men and women for the practical world of industry and commerce, ... The university course, on the other hand, tends to emphasise the development of knowledge and the importance of research; in so doing it imparts much information which is valuable to the practical man but which is often incidental to the main objective. Both types of education are required by the community, and in increasing amounts, but it is important that students receive the kind of education best suited to their innate abilities and purposes in life (Martin 1964 Vol.1,165).

The Report frankly identified a student population of lower academic capabilities for the technical colleges (Martin 1964 Vol.1,152).

The Report argued that the status of technical colleges could be raised in the public eye by increasing the “scope” of their humanities content; whilst “study of literary masterpieces” would be an important part of this, the real emphasis here should be on “language as a means of communication” to ensure that “students of technology ...learn how to express their thoughts clearly and with an economy of words” (Martin 1964 Vol.1,165).

The establishment of the binary system in Australian tertiary education was seemingly crucial for the extension of training for the new professions (skilled white collar labour power) as well as for providing an avenue for growth of these professions in ways which would be economically viable. The new professions consisted not only of established skills such as those associated with commercial activities (accountancy, public relations and so on) and those relatively new bodies of skill such as we see in the development of the health sciences, (for example, dietitians, dental technicians, speech therapy and the like) but, also in the so called professionalisation of previously less elite occupations such as nursing, and to some extent teaching – although sections of the teaching work force have always adopted the mantle of professionalism.

There was no doubt about the availability of raw material to fuel the expansion that the government and the Committee were endeavouring to optimise: the report identified a “reservoir of ability as yet untapped” which it acknowledged had some grounding in socio-economic and gender differences.

Data on 114,000 children leaving school in 1959-60 showed that 36 per cent. of the sons and 24 per cent. of the daughters of “university professional” fathers

entered full-time university study, and less than 2 per cent. of the sons and less than 1 per cent. of the daughters of “unskilled or semi-skilled” fathers. Other studies have shown that it is not lack of scholastic aptitude which keeps many children of lower status families out of the university (Martin 1964 Vol.1,35).

The concern here, as with Murray, was not so much that these figures represented inequities in opportunity but that they represented “wastage of talent” (Martin 1964 Vol.1,36).

Although the Committee presented its first two volumes of its Report to the Menzies Government in September 1964, it was not publicly released until March in the following year. During this time the recommendations were thoroughly vetted “by the staff of several government departments, by ministers and by cabinet” and legislation was prepared (Davies 1989,121; Hill 1968, 146). Unlike most commentators on the period who attribute much of the government’s response to the Martin Report to Menzies,<sup>13</sup> Davies argues that, by the time of the Report, Menzies no longer sought to oversee the higher education agenda and had handed over policy determination completely to the Minister in Charge of Commonwealth Activities in Education and Research, Senator John Gorton.<sup>14</sup> Apparently Gorton was more convinced of the value of vocational training in technical and teacher’s colleges than of the importance of research in the universities – for Gorton this was not just a matter of economic efficiency but also of relevance to the needs of the community (Davies 1989,128-129). The careful appraisal of the Report’s recommendations led to an initial rejection, on the advice of Terry Jones (first assistant secretary of the education division of the Department of the Prime Minister’s), of the recommendation to expand the AUC to an Australian Tertiary Education Commission (it would give Martin as Chair too much power) and also, paradoxically, a rejection of the recommendation that there be no new universities, other than those already planned in the Report, until 1975. Assumption of Commonwealth responsibility for teacher training was rejected on grounds of not imposing on state

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<sup>13</sup> For example see Bessant (1977).

<sup>14</sup> At this stage education was attached to the Department of the Prime Minister. The first specific commonwealth department responsible for education was created by Harold Holt as the Department of Education and Science in 1966 with John Gorton as Minister.

responsibilities.<sup>15</sup> Recommendations to remove part-time and external studies and to limit the size of universities were also rejected (Davies 1989,127-130).

In October 1965, after considerable internal Cabinet wrangling, the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Advanced Education (CACAE) was appointed by Gorton, to help implement the binary policy of tertiary education, which the Commonwealth took responsibility for funding, and which allowed for “a broad comprehensive system of tertiary education” to enable the establishment of higher education institutions to train students in vocational studies. The government set aside “upwards of thirty-two million dollars annually for the expansion of the technological sector” (Hill 1968,146). These institutions would be less costly to establish and run than universities (Davies 1989, 134-135). The binary system further marked the extension of Commonwealth control over tertiary education with the inclusion of funding to the institutions and colleges under the auspices of the AUC: this meant expansion could be directed to occur within the college rather than the university sector. Lynn Meek argues that in this way “Martin and his Committee’s report differentiated colleges from universities by their function: vocational and teaching-oriented colleges on the one hand, and academic and research-oriented universities on the other” (Meek 1991,466). Davies points out that, to a certain extent, Gorton had been misled by Martin to accept the idea of the universities in Australia as sites of pure research and disinterested inquiry and thus the need for a binary structure of universities and a cheaper technical and vocational sector concerned only with research at an applied level. The truth of this matter was somewhat to the contrary.

The universities in Australia, with the partial exception of the Australian National University, were manifestly not centres of disinterested scholarship and of research. To the contrary, they were criticized as being excessively professional or vocational in character, with a preponderance of students enrolled for pass degrees, and with staff who had to shoulder a heavy teaching load which left little time for original work (Davies 1989, 138).

She relates the establishment of binarism in Australia to the parallel case in Britain:

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<sup>15</sup> Harman and Selby Smith point out that by 1967 teachers colleges were under such strain from expansion of student numbers that the Commonwealth eventually agreed to provide \$24 million in unmatched grants over three years for the construction and equipment of new colleges. This was followed in 1970 by a further \$30 million over three more years (Harman and Selby Smith 1972, xvi-vvii).

The binary policy of higher education in Australia and Britain was flawed from the beginning. It derived from a concept of the university which bore little relation to the institution as existed in these countries and throughout the world (Davies 1989,138).

By the end of 1971 the mechanisms to administer this system were established with the conversion of the CACAE to the Australian Commission on Advanced Education (ACAE).

In the period following the Martin Report new universities were established despite Martin's intention of expansion being centred in the college sector; by the mid-1970s nine new universities had been established which represented an increase in numbers from 36,568 to 158,411 students at nineteen universities (Meek 1991,466).<sup>16</sup> CAE (College of Advanced Education) enrolments grew from 49,000 to 126,000 in 73 colleges between 1968 and 1975 (teachers colleges were incorporated into the CAEs between 1973 and 1975) (Karmel 1980,27). The sources of this growth seem to have been evenly distributed between demographic growth and increased participation rates.

The general pattern of transformation in this period was the establishment of advanced education colleges out of state teachers colleges and existing technical institutions, which had been under the auspices of state education departments. In the wake of these changes were a few "post-secondary residuals and CAE cast-offs" which mainly took responsibility for apprenticeships and adult education and which slowly expanded to cater to the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) field as the CAEs consistently moved to upgrade their offerings from diploma to degree status (Meek 1991,466).

## Conclusion

The expansion of Australian higher education provision in the three decades from 1942 to the early 1970s is a distinct illustration of the way in which the most central social institutions were transformed within the social democratic era. Whilst many commentators refer to the expansion of higher education provision in the late 1980s and early 1990s as the period of transition to mass higher education, the concrete reality is

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<sup>16</sup> Williams points out that differences in state participation rates in tertiary education are explained by planning at the regional rather than national level until the mid to late 1970s (Williams 1977,132).

that mass higher education was generated in the era of expansion and economic growth which followed WWII. Although much of the literature tends to regard the measure of mass higher education as the proportion of young people within a certain age cohort enrolled in higher education institutions,<sup>17</sup> the evidence of post war expansion in Australia indicates the genesis of mass higher education well before such levels were attained. In the quarter century following WWII, Australian higher education was transformed from a system of provision catering to the reproduction of a small number of professional elites, to one which, it was consistently argued, must adopt responsibility for the production and reproduction of a significant proportion of the working class. This transformation quite unequivocally illustrates that its architects had at the core of their imperatives an awareness of the need for mass production of a skilled white collar labour force. The establishment of the binary system of higher education in Australia was the path chosen as the most efficient and economical form facilitating the necessary growth for that mass production (see table A5.2, appendix). It is no coincidence that this period coincides with the application of human capital theories to education policy.<sup>18</sup> This is the era (noted in chapter Three) in which the subjects of higher education are no longer also members of the same class whose interests are the conditioning factor of it.

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<sup>17</sup> Neave (1984,114) identifies this as “commonly held to emerge when around fifteen per cent of the age cohort is in attendance”.

<sup>18</sup> See Marginson (1993, Ch. 2) for a lengthy account of the significance of human capital theory in Australian education policy.



## CHAPTER SIX

### AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION AFTER THE LONG BOOM

The previous chapter set out the developments in Australian higher education in the era of post-war reconstruction. This was of course, also the era of the construction of the social democratic alliance between capital and labour in which expansion of education, health and welfare were regarded as an intrinsic part of the social wage. Expansion of these services in terms of the production of skilled labour in an era of capitalist expansion and policy commitment to full employment were inseparable. Once full employment became established as policy, the state's role in not only ensuring guaranteed access to jobs but also in reproducing appropriate forms of skilled labour was essential. Furthermore, because the people who set about establishing the Keynesian social democratic order believed so ardently in the infallibility of policy to manage the economy they did not allow for establishment of social institutions which could be easily wound back in periods of economic crisis.

#### The Erosion of Social Democracy

The 1972 election victory of the Whitlam Labor Government did not bring radical attempts to reorganise the binary system, but education had been an important election issue. This was a time in which educationalists were arguing that equality of access to schooling had failed in the promotion of social equality and were pressing for changes which, they argued, would achieve equality of outcomes. The Whitlam Government had an election commitment to abolition of tuition fees for higher education as well as the introduction of student assistance, both of which were put quickly into place. As well as this initiative, state controlled teachers colleges were brought under the umbrella of the CAEs and thus became eligible for federal funding. Furthermore, the Federal Government took direct responsibility for higher education funding so that the states were no longer required to contribute to the maintenance of universities: general revenue grants to the states were reduced accordingly. Smart suggests that the recommendations

of consequently huge grants totalling nearly three and a half billion dollars for the 1976-78 triennium were most probably the impetus to the subsequent Fraser Coalition Government's establishment in 1977 of a combined Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) (in place of the AUC and ACAE) with the purpose of co-ordinating and rationalising funding and development (Smart 1977, 37).

The Whitlam Government initiated a range of policy changes to education in the schooling sector under the apparent guidance of the legendary Karmel Committee which articulated an educational philosophy of equality of outcomes. The subsequent report embodied all the radical sociology of education rhetoric of the era, at the core of which was the call for overcoming social and economic disadvantage through direct intervention in the schooling system in the form of resources and revised curricula, and, under the guidance of participation from the school and community levels.<sup>1</sup>

This period of 'educational reform' still holds enormous significance for many practitioners in the teaching community, which tends to remember the period as a 'golden moment' in educational policy. In reality the significant outcomes of Karmel were the establishment of a Schools Commission which, in much the same way as with higher education in the sixties, gave control over funding, and thus direction in terms of expansion and so on, to the Federal Government. The debates over schooling and government policy in Australia have always been complicated by issues of public funding to private schools and Karmel sought to resolve this dilemma by classification of schools in need, regardless of public/private status. In terms of real changes in the direction of education the Karmel Report was more a case of the government recognising the need to make the appropriate statements about democratic education than one of providing the blueprint for education reform.

In 1973 the Whitlam Government established the Commission of Inquiry into Poverty. Many of the initiatives of the Whitlam Government can be explained as the actions of a left wing government, which had been kept out of office for over two decades, grasping the opportunity to pursue its pet concerns and expose the inequities of the rule of its predecessors. Nevertheless, what must not be overlooked is the way in which these

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<sup>1</sup> See Schools Commission Interim Committee (1973).

actions were connected to the effects of the cultural critique and human rights movements of the 1960s. The 1960s and early 1970s witnessed increased US investment in Australia, in both manufacturing and mining ventures, as well as extended cultural linkages and the shared experience of the Vietnam war. Indeed, the counter culture movement and the student body in Australia seemed to share a much more similar agenda to that of the US than the kinds of frustrations occurring amongst similar protesters in Europe.<sup>2</sup> The social issues agenda in Australia was not immune to these influences. In the particular case of education, Australian policy makers seem to have been at least influenced by the educational sociology that had been evolving in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the US<sup>3</sup> and, as noted in the previous chapter, it was in the late 1960s that researchers began to study differential participation rates, of different social groups, as a social justice issue (Anderson & Eaton 1982b, 13). Of course there were similar responses to social justice issues in the UK and Australian policy followed in the wake of both. In 1974 the Whitlam Government further honoured its election promises to promote educational reform and abolished tertiary education fees as well as establishing the means tested Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme (TEAS) to provide living allowances to tertiary education students. Anderson and Eaton note that this was the “only attempt in the history of Australian higher education to directly change the social composition of the student body by government action ...” (Anderson and Eaton 1982b, 92-93).

By 1975 the Whitlam Government was facing huge budgetary difficulties and, assisted by apparently general agreement that demand from school aged tertiary education entrants was levelling out, it was able to reject the Universities Commission’s<sup>4</sup> 1976-78 funding recommendations and instruct the Universities and CAEs to maintain student intakes at no-growth levels. Both these sectors experienced cuts in real terms in relation to *per capita* funding. Anderson and Eaton argue that it was these developments which “marked the end of an era of sustained and rapid expansion of higher education in

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<sup>2</sup> See Barbara Falk (1972), for a discussion of student protest in terms of frustrations within the university.

<sup>3</sup> See chapter Seven for an account of the development of sociology of education in Australia at this time.

<sup>4</sup> In 1974, in line with the Whitlam Government’s policy on naming of statutory bodies, the title of the Australian Universities Commission was changed to the Universities Commission, and the Australian Commission on Advanced Education became the Commission on Advanced Education.

Australia, and the beginning of a period of no growth and decline.”(Anderson & Eaton 1982,93) [See table A6.1, appendix].

It was in the late 1970s that debate about the place of Australian higher education began to emerge. The mid-1970s brought the downfall of the Labor Government as well as further economic downturn. Youth unemployment was increasing at a greater rate than overall unemployment<sup>5</sup> and this phenomenon contributed to attacks from politicians, industry and the media upon both the apparently new educational philosophy in schools, and, the post-secondary education sector. All these groups raised questions about the correspondence between education and the world of work. They sought to explain youth unemployment as a failure of education to fit young people to the expectations of employers by fostering poor attitudes and inappropriate skills. This concern about the outcomes of contemporary schooling and higher education curricula was clearly exacerbated by unprecedented levels of radical political activity by students, teachers and academics in the 1970s.<sup>6</sup>

Prior to the ‘constitutional’ crisis of 1975 the Whitlam Government became the subject of severe criticism for its expansionist expenditure policies and had been impelled to announce a one-year pause in triennial funding to tertiary education. After its electoral victory, the new Fraser Coalition Government reintroduced triennial funding on a rolling basis to maintain “Budget flexibility and [enable] education programs to respond more quickly to changing community needs” (Carrick, Minister for Education, cited in Vicary 1978, 200).

In September 1976 the Fraser Government commissioned a Committee into Education and Training under the chairmanship of Professor B. R. Williams (Vice Chancellor, Sydney University) with the justification that the changes in tertiary education in the preceding decade had led to a system where the Universities, CAEs and TAFE were isolated from each other, although the boundaries between them were indistinct. It was

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<sup>5</sup> See Williams (1979,85).

<sup>6</sup> See Mike Presdee (1979) for a discussion of the criticisms of education in relation to youth unemployment; also, Lachlan Chipman’s 1982 attack on New South Wales teachers’ industrial action for an example of this reaction to the growth of radicalism and the call for restraint as a means of curbing its development.

considered necessary to examine the relationship between education and employment in order to establish why post-secondary education seemed to be failing to fit its graduates for the labour market. Lack of “relevant skills” it was argued, affected the chance to achieve “satisfying lives”. Furthermore, it was suggested, there was a real danger of a shortage of skills in the face of economic recovery. It was also pointed out that the role of education was under question within the community and it was suggested that this had been stimulated by the “growing interest in concepts such as open education, recurrent education and retraining, in the needs of special groups, and in the role of educational qualifications in credentialling or selecting people for jobs”. All of this was put within the context of the necessity for Australia as an advanced industrial economy to commit a large proportion of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to education, but, because of the size of this commitment, to ensure that it was utilised in an effective way which avoided duplication and took into account forward planning (Williams 1979, 1-3) [see table A6.2, appendix].

In 1977 the TEC was established, taking over the combined roles of the Universities Commission and the Commission on Advanced Education and including responsibility for TAFE. At about the same time, triennial funding recommendations were suspended and the government issued guidelines to the TEC on how to prepare its recommendations.

The TEC’s *Report for the 1979 Triennium* put forward the case for a no-growth policy in higher education. This was justified by the Minister for Education on the grounds that there was a need for restraint in public expenditure and a reduction in the budget deficit. Garry O’Byrne and Alan Lindsay point out however, that Peter Karmel, the Chairman of the TEC, had set out reasons for the containment of expansion as early as 1977 (O’Byrne and Lindsay 1978, 11). In a paper presented to the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia (HERDSA) in 1978 Karmel used data (see Table A5.1, appendix) to argue that rapid expansion was the exception rather than the rule, and stressed the point that in more than one third of the years between 1920-1978 there was no growth at all. He identified the “levelling off” of enrolments in universities and colleges in the 1970s as a result of three factors: first, the slowing down of population growth and consequent growth in university attendance age groups; second, the peaking

of school retention rates so that increases in rates of matriculation slowed along with the slowing down of demand for new graduates associated with a less buoyant economy would reduce demand; and, third, political influences resulting from contestation over the increased share of the state's funding to education as well as a generally unfavourable public reaction to the high profile of political activism by some students and staff (Karmel 1977, 1-2). Interestingly, in a later version of this paper, Karmel no longer notes student and staff radicalism as part of the reason for falling off of public support for education even though it was still an important factor in the attacks on high levels of education expenditure and the output of education (Karmel 1980,29).<sup>7</sup>

Just over two years after its first meeting the Williams Committee presented its Report to the Prime Minister in February 1979. In their review of the Williams' Committee's task, constraints and recommendations Alex Clarke and Lynn Edwards state that:

The context for the committee's discussion was one of tight financial restraints; the members had to adopt the premise that both quality and excellence could be maintained, properly related, and improved *without* the expenditure of a great deal of extra Government money (Clarke and Edwards 1980, 521).

In tune with the tenor of TEC recommendations at the time, the central recommendations of the Williams Committee called for rationalisation of the system in order to slow down growth in education expenditure; in 1957 public expenditure on education represented 2.1 per cent of GDP and by 1976 it had risen to 5.8 per cent (Williams 1979, 31).<sup>8</sup> The overall message was that the period of expansion must be slowed to meet realistic educational labour market requirements and that the tertiary system required some efficient housekeeping in order to attain this. John Freeland and Rachel Sharp are more specific about the context of the William's Report, they argue that Williams' significance lies in the crisis of capitalism in Australia at the time and the beginnings of attempts of restructuring of the economy. For Freeland and Sharp the

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<sup>7</sup> See (Chipman 1982). See also, arguments put to the Williams Committee on what was occurring in education – for example, the view that vocational education had become of secondary importance to a curriculum based on a “rather detached and idealistic view of personal development” (Williams 1979, 84).

<sup>8</sup> However, the actual productivity of universities had been increasing since 1968. As Williams points out in the Report – real expenditure on resources per student load increased steadily by about thirty per cent from 1957 to 1968. By 1978 real resources per student “were approximately eight per cent below ... 1968 and a further decline of one to two per cent” was predicted by 1979 (Williams 1979, Vol. 1 182).

Report marks a break with the previous post WWII commonwealth reports on education (Murray, Martin and Karmel) in that it was not central to the “formation and implementation” of government policy, but rather it was primarily a document “legitimizing policy decisions” which had already been made (Freeland and Sharp 1981,59). The Williams Report’s recommendations were detailed and numerous, the only immediate direct response was the government’s promise to allocate one hundred and fifty million dollars, over five years, to the establishment of extensive transition from school to work programs which were to be jointly funded by the states. Many commentators have seen transition programs and other non-academic extensions of schooling as a cynical and low cost means of reducing youth unemployment statistics: a view which today extends to explaining the push in recent years for increased participation rates in higher education.

The extent to which the government needed to act upon the recommendations in order to achieve its ends is worthy of speculation. After the Report was presented to the government, Senator Carrick, Minister for Education, issued a Press Statement which applauded the Report for being the most thorough examination of the relationship between education and the labour market ever to have been produced. He stated that:

... the Williams Report has provided the opportunity and occasion for a national stocktaking of directions and practices in Australian tertiary education and training. Its purpose has been well served by that result alone. The Report and its follow-up also constitute a crystallization of ideas and actions already being developed in various parts of Australia. There is now a need to build on this basis. I am confident that all those involved in the great enterprise of education and training in Australia will take up the challenges of the Williams Report in a forward-looking and constructive way (cited in Freeland and Sharp 1981, 70).

It seems reasonable, therefore, to suggest, as Freeland and Sharp do, that the Report in itself served the purpose of legitimating changes in education policy which were already under way (Freeland and Sharp 1981, 59). There was no urgency to take up specific recommendations, but rather to use them to endorse existing programs and policies, whilst providing general scope for further innovations as the need arose. Educational restructuring and cuts in real expenditure most effected those sectors of the community (for example mature age women, migrants, aborigines) which had only recently benefited from the introduction of social democratic reforms and thus had not yet acquired the mantle of legitimacy bestowed by a tradition of participation: wholesale

restructuring could not be simply imposed when provision was regarded by a significant proportion of the population as part of the social wage. Freeland and Sharp suggest that this was the impetus to the appointment of an apparently independent, but expert, Committee of Inquiry which could give the restructuring authority and legitimacy and would remove policy changes from the problematic of being seen as “direct and unilateral decisions of Cabinet” (Freeland and Sharp 1981,68). In 1981 the Fraser Government took the step of directing thirty CAES to amalgamate or have their federal funding withdrawn, and this was achieved in all but four of these institutions within two years despite a hue and cry from the academic community on the grounds of threats to institutional autonomy (Meek 1991,467).

In contrast to the notions of the 1950s and 1960s, that relatively low participation rates represented wastage of talent, the Williams Committee recommended that the TEC “should not propose target numbers of students that encourage universities to enrol a considerable number of students with very little chance of graduating” (Williams 1979,193) – the thrust of this argument being that there needed to be an improvement in graduation rates which could partly be achieved by directing students with marginal ability to the CAES. Furthermore, the former attachment to the notion “that every young person who desires a university education and has the intellectual capacity to profit from it should have a fair chance of getting it” in the field of their choice needed to be re-appraised (Williams 1979, 191). Williams reiterated statements such as that made by the Technical and Further Education Commission (TAFEC), which argued that manpower(sic) forecasting was still relatively unsophisticated and the education system could not be expected to predict accurately the labour needs of industry but, should endeavour to provide education in line with these needs.

The education system exists to provide opportunities to which individuals may respond. The opportunities provided influence significantly the individual decisions of students and parents. The extent and form of these opportunities should attempt therefore to reflect as far as possible the realities of the employment market. This is consistent with the concept of individual choice and with the concept of seeking to satisfy individual needs throughout life and not merely during the education/pre-employment stage (Williams 1979, Vol.1 704).

This statement is a keen example of the way in which the notion of education as necessary for the fulfilment of the individual has been rationalised in the era of mass



higher education. It is a statement about the need to recognise that individual fulfilment is inextricably tied to employment. Thus, although it was possible in the nineteenth century for various exponents of liberal education to speak of the essence of individual fulfilment as being the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, individual happiness or complete living, conditions in the late twentieth century are somewhat different: education rhetoric has been reformed to incorporate a notion of individual fulfilment which is defined by employment in that fulfilment is dependent upon one's ability to gain employment. In other words, nineteenth century/liberal democratic notions of liberal education were concerned with the idea that individual fulfilment was the path to success in the market place, in the late twentieth century, education is regarded as the path to success, and success in the market place is increasingly defined as the only possible determinant of fulfilment.

Tony Wood, the Vice-Chancellor of Luton University (one of the new universities in England) recently defended his university against unfavourable comparisons with the ancient universities by invoking the same argument used in their own defence a century and a half ago: "Our emphasis is vocational; we are equipping people for life". Wood went on to point out that one "might get a greater intellectual challenge elsewhere, but we are doing something different" (cited in Aspden 1995,24). Indeed, of course they are in as much as the Oxbridge Universities are still of central importance in the education of senior public administrators and politicians in Britain, for which there is still an expectation that they will embody certain elements of traditional liberal education.<sup>9</sup> What Wood is pointing out is that the contemporary university of mass higher education in Britain is responsible for educating a different section of the labour force than the elite institutions. In this way he is able to construct a defence of his institution as truly liberal because it reflects the realities of the labour market.

For Freeland and Sharp, the Williams Report represented "a concerted attack on social democratic educational ideology and practice" (Freeland and Sharp 1981,59). The important point to note here is that this ideological attack did not merely arise – as

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<sup>9</sup> John Major's 1993 Cabinet of 22 members held 16 Oxbridge graduates: 10 from Cambridge and 6 from Oxford. See Martin Jacques' (1993) article which discusses the shift in influence from Oxford to Cambridge under recent Conservative Governments as well as their weakening hold on the establishment .

radical educators and commentators tended to argue at the time – as a result of change in government. Rather the ideological attack came at a time when it was important for the state to wind back its commitment to Keynesian economic policies and the continued expansion of the welfare state. In order to undertake a change of direction of economic policy it was essential that the validity of the ideas underpinning such policy was discredited. Thus, even though the Williams Report acknowledged that the blame for high levels of youth unemployment could not be laid entirely at the door of the progressive educationalists it did state:

The detailed statistics on unemployment do indicate however that there is a serious underlying youth unemployment problem to which changes in schooling could have contributed, or to the solution of which changes in schooling might contribute (Williams 1979, Vol.1 85).

The considerable discussion devoted to the critiques of new educational philosophy and its practitioners was enough to sow the seed of discredit. However, as Freeland and Sharp pointed out:

... although there may be an element of smokescreen activity in the present ideological attacks on schooling and teachers, these attacks should not be seen predominantly as that. They are accompanied by significant financial cutbacks and pressures for a restructuring of the practices of different levels of schooling. These cutbacks and attacks are not vindictive and illogical responses by capital and the state to social democratic gains won during the long boom. Rather, they are an attempt to reallocate the available surplus to capital investment and thus assist the restructuring. By cutting expenditure on the social wage ... the necessary drain on surplus value is reduced – the cost of labour power maintenance and reproduction is reduced – and the rate of exploitation is increased (Freeland and Sharp 1981,65).<sup>10</sup>

Table A6.3 [see appendix] illustrates the extent to which real expenditures on education and other elements in the social wage fell between 1975 and 1981 and Table 6.1 shows that despite reductions in real term expenditures, productivity in higher education increased significantly from 1976 to 1985 and the greatest productivity increases occurred in the CAE sector.

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<sup>10</sup> Freeland and Sharp refer to the work of both Frith (1979) and Jones (1979) in this passage (See Table A6.4, appendix).

**Table 6.1 – VARIATIONS IN STUDENT LOAD, OPERATING GRANTS AND STAFF NUMBERS 1976 TO 1980 AND 1981 TO 1985**

	<b>Student Load (EFTSU)</b>	<b>Operating Grant</b>	<b>Academic Staff (FTE)</b>	<b>General Staff (FTE)</b>
<b>University</b>	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent
1976 to 1980	+4.5	+8.6	+6.4	+3.6
1981 to 1985	+9.4	+3.1	+0.1	-0.6
1976 to 1985	+14.4	+11.9	+6.5	+2.9
<b>Advanced Education</b>				
1976 to 1980	+21.7	+19.2	+14.1	+14.8
1981 to 1985	+14.0	+2.9	-1.7	+0.7
1976 to 1985	+38.7	+22.6	+12.2	+15.6
<b>Higher Education</b>				
1976 to 1980	+12.4	+12.5	+9.8	+7.6
1981 to 1985	+11.6	+2.9	-0.7	-0.1
1976 to 1985	+25.4	+15.8	+9.0	+7.5

Source: CTEC (1986) *Review of efficiency and effectiveness : higher education*, Canberra, AGPS, 37

The attack upon social democratic educational practice was not isolated to Australia; indeed it was a phenomenon common to many advanced capitalist economies as they sought to address the problem of the need to reduce state expenditures. Just as the introduction of progressive, democratic educational reforms took place at different times in different countries so too were the critiques of these reforms. The reforms recommended by Karmel in Australia were formally introduced a decade after the introduction of similar programs in Britain. The irony is that at the time of their development in Australia they were already starting to be disparaged in Britain.<sup>11</sup>

The student unrest in Europe in 1968-69, along with a number of other youth associated 'moral panics' inspired conservatives in Britain to launch attacks upon the egalitarian reforms of the educational system. Between 1968 and 1976, as youth unemployment

<sup>11</sup> See Sinclair-Jones (1983) for a discussion of the introduction of progressive education reforms and the Karmel Report.

rose, considerable attention was focussed upon questions of literacy and numeracy and the failure of compensatory education to raise the achievement levels of working class children. Both the schools and teachers bore the brunt of these criticisms, and in 1975 the Conservative Government established the Bullock Committee to examine the question of literacy and its forms of assessment and control. The report cited progressive teaching methods and inexperienced teachers as the cause of ineffective teaching methods and recommended the national monitoring of standards, thus adding fuel to attacks upon teacher autonomy and calls for greater accountability.<sup>12</sup>

In a speech made in 1976 the British Labour Prime Minister, James Callaghan, called for a re-calculation of educational priorities, particularly with regard to expenditure. Callaghan called for a re-assessment of the huge British education budget in order to establish “the strong case for the so-called core curriculum of basic knowledge”. Furthermore, he drew attention to the need to improve relations between industry and education (cited in Finn *et al* 1978, 144).<sup>13</sup>

In a discussion of education and training in Britain, Robert Lindley examines the development of a number of programs concerned with manpower [*sic*] forecasting and youth unemployment in the late 1970s. Noting the revival of debate over the relationship between education and employment Lindley states:

The strongest criticism has been directed at the way in which the education system has tackled the production of highly qualified technical manpower and, especially, engineers with skills relevant to manufacturing industry. There has been a resurgence of interest in the possibility of tailoring the output of the education system to the nation’s economic needs (Lindley 1981,8).

Here we see the renewal of emphasis upon education being directly related to the nation’s economic well being at the same time as demands that education “make more substantial concessions to economic conditions” by reducing costs. Calls for the tertiary sector to increase its emphasis upon production of highly skilled ‘manpower’ also indicated that the problem of inappropriate graduate output was related to problems

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<sup>12</sup> See Finn *et al* (1978) for a discussion of these developments in both political and ideological terms.

<sup>13</sup> See also Frith (1979) for a discussion of the education debate in Britain at the time and Wexler *et al* (1981) for discussion of developments in the United States.

founded within earlier sectors of the education system (Lindley 1981, 8) [See Table A6.4, appendix].

One could argue that the 1970s in Australia was a decade in which education policy was dominated by ideological concerns. The educational policy promoting equity of outcomes as social justice (embodied in Karmel) at one level came as a response to an ideological critique of the failure of social democratic policy immediately post WWII. The Whitlam Labor Government came to power through the support it gained from the new sections of young educated middle classes. Education was only one issue upon which the Labor Party was able to win this section of the vote, but its policy, whilst apparently radical, was little more than an extension of its conservative predecessors. The Karmel Report was argued in the language of new radical sociology of education, but its outcomes as policy merely extended the existing Federal Government intervention in education funding to include schooling as well as universities. Whilst the introduction of special funds through the disadvantaged schools program was presented as the way to overcome structural disadvantage, the real beneficiaries were not those lower socio-economic groups traditionally poorly represented in school matriculants. The greatest benefits from the Whitlam education reforms (particularly abolition of fees and introduction of TEAS) accrued to those sections of the population who had no difficulty in attaining adequate schooling levels, but who were previously prevented from participating in higher education because of economic constraints. Some sections of the population which were historically less well represented in higher education (for example, part-time students, women, older and country students) did show some increases in participation, but research conducted after fee abolition indicated that structural constraints other than fees also presented significant barriers to the lower socio-economic sectors of society (Anderson *et al* cited in Anderson and Eaton 1982,101). There was a considerable growth in the proportion of mature age students entering universities and colleges in the mid- to late 1970s.<sup>14</sup> The argument embodied in the Karmel Report, which promised both to address the inequitable idiosyncracies of different levels of individual state funding and to commit funds directly to the resolution of unequal outcomes of schooling, was an ideological legitimization of an economic policy with a political imperative.

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<sup>14</sup> See Anderson and Eaton (1982b, 109-111) for a review of research into this phenomenon.

The end of the 1970s was also marked by powerful ideological statements about education. In this case, however, as discussed above, the ideological rhetoric was not used to set in place new policies as much as to legitimise existing practices, which the state introduced in order to address problems arising from the deepening economic crisis. What we had then was a decade which started with economic policies legitimised on ideological grounds in order to sustain political ascendance of a particular government – (the subsequent defeat of the Whitlam Government does not alter this); and, which closed with economic policies, legitimised on ideological grounds but with an economic imperative. The almost complete opposition in the ideological arguments employed in this decade were readily explained as differences between political parties. On the surface it is not hard to see why so many people understood them to be the crystallisation of the essential differences between Labor and Liberal party philosophy. However, the litmus test of difference is in their policy formation and this was much less apparent in opposition. The Whitlam Labor Government extended intervention already initiated by Liberal Governments in the preceding decades, and, before its dismissal in 1975, was signalling the need to wind back its expenditures on higher education. The Fraser Coalition Government introduced a series of policies which sought to dampen the demands for growth in education expenditure and increasing participation rates. The policies of its successor in 1983, the Hawke Labor Government, show, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that education policy in the last two decades in Australia has been driven by economic considerations rather than fundamental differences in political philosophy. The language of legitimation may differ in order to accommodate the appearance of difference, and the fine detail of specific policies may be different, but the actual problems they address are not. Education policy under Labor has been no more concerned with achieving real change in social relations than its Liberal counterpart.

### **Efficiency, Flexibility and the End of the Binary System**

The result of the Fraser Government attacks on education was to slow the growth of tertiary education enrolments between 1978-79 and 1982-83 [see Table A6.5, appendix], but, by the time the Hawke Labor Government came to power in 1983 retention rates in year twelve schooling had begun to rise with an associated increased demand for higher education: year twelve retention rates rose from thirty-six percent in 1982 to fifty-three per cent by 1987 (Meek 1991,466-467).

In 1985 the government requested the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC)<sup>15</sup> to conduct an “enquiry into ways of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the higher education sector” (CTEC 1986,xv). The task set for this Committee was similar to that set Williams in that it called for advice on the productivity of tertiary education. The difference lay in that the context of the request to Williams was the need to contain expansion of numbers, and thus halt the increasingly unpopular expansion of the share of GDP expended on education, particularly those sectors of higher education which were not directly, or immediately, meeting the needs of the labour market. Almost a decade later, however, the context of the request to CTEC was the need to set the ground for higher education institutions to meet an unavoidable demand for increased places without increasing expenditure.<sup>16</sup> As we have seen above, in achieving its task the Williams Report needed to pursue the existing public doubts about the failure of Australian education institutions to equip school leavers and graduates with useful attributes. Williams readily adopted the ideological critiques of progressive education and the ‘new philosophy of education’ which had underpinned the expansion of educational access as a social justice issue. The blame for high youth unemployment was partly cast at the door of the education system for fostering poor work attitude’s, failure to inculcate the ‘work ethic’ and equipping young people with the wrong kind, or too few skills. Although these criticisms were made most particularly in relation to school leavers, they were important in setting the tone for the discussion of universities, in which it was suggested that even if costs per student could not be further reduced the actual numbers of students could be, if it were possible to identify in advance, and thus not enrol, the twenty-eight per cent of students who would not graduate.<sup>17</sup> Thus, not only was Williams essential to the legitimization of policy already under way at the time of its reporting, but, in retrospect, we can see how it was also of central importance to the ideological framework of developments in the following decade. The *Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness* did not need to establish the ‘problematic’ nature of tertiary education and expansion because this had already been achieved by Williams. The need

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<sup>15</sup> The TEC becomes CTEC in 1980.

<sup>16</sup> Despite the terminology of the Review’s title the primary intent was to increase productivity rather than improving efficiency. See Marginson, (1993, Ch. 5) for a discussion of the distinction between efficiency and productivity and the significance of these in education policy formation.

<sup>17</sup> See Williams (1979, Vol 1 182). At the beginning of the period of expansion the problem of ‘wastage’ was also regarded as a problem of poor schooling and teaching, but ironically, was used to justify *increased* expenditures and calls for increased numbers to improve the ethos of tertiary education within the community – see Menzies (1964).

to invoke awareness of efficiency and effectiveness in any strategy for expansion was taken as a given. This is why the Report of the Review could declare in such positive tone the government's achievement of:

substantial savings in levels of expenditure on higher education. Public sector expenditure on higher education declined as a proportion of GDP by 35 per cent from a peak of 1.73 per cent in 1974-75 to 1.13 per cent in 1984-85 [underlined in text](CTEC 1986,32).

The rationalisation of the CAE sector through forced amalgamations, the reduction of funding in real terms and the focus of growth in the CAEs, rather than universities, all contributed to an increase in productivity of higher education so that despite an overall increase of twenty-five per cent in student load from 1976 to 1985, operating grants rose by just under sixteen per cent and staffing levels by only nine per cent. As noted above, the increased productivity was most marked in the CAE sector. [See table 6.1, and Table A6.6, appendix.] Associated with the formal establishment of educational funding as essentially an issue of productivity, the reattachment of education to the labour market had also been established so that the right to education was now unambiguously tied to the need for employment rather than the early 1970s flirtation with human fulfilment and social justice as the priorities of educational provision. Once it became legitimate to define education primarily, and almost exclusively, in terms of employment it then became legitimate to establish a process whereby what was perceived as the 'institutional fat', associated with notions of education for its own sake, could be trimmed. The excess which led to a high cost tertiary education sector needed to go, whether it was in the form of an over abundance of campuses, duplications of courses, inadequate utilisation of available time and space,<sup>18</sup> outmoded teaching ratios, or programmes no longer relevant to market demands for skilled labour. The scene for the next wave of university expansion was one in which social democratic rights could only be accommodated within market democratic constraints. The logic for this shift was couched in terms of national economic survival.

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<sup>18</sup> The significant amounts of capital invested in higher education campuses and equipment were perceived to be under utilised throughout summer breaks; not to mention the potential to increase the productivity of academic labour power by running summer courses. In the latter months of 1995 the Australian Higher Education Institutions Association (AHEIA) flagged the introduction of a third semester as part of its negotiating platform (on wage rises) with the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU).



The *Review of efficiency and effectiveness in higher education* (1986) was a further step in the process of rationalising costs and increasing productivity. Its recommendations were focused upon fine tuning or reducing costs and increasing output without radically restructuring the binary system: the division which the review recommended eliminating was that of distribution of research funds. Research funds, it was argued, should be allocated across both sectors according to performance, established by a series of performance indicators, which would be closely tied to national economic needs to encourage closer ties between the academic researcher and industry.<sup>19</sup> In 1987 John Dawkins (recently appointed Labor Minister for Education) abolished CTEC and replaced it with a National Board for Employment, Education and Training (NBEET), as an advisory body in relation to programme delivery and training, directly under control of the Minister and tied to the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET). Dawkins made no secret of his view that CTEC presented an obstacle to his plans for kicking the higher education sector into a new gear; in a retrospective press interview in 1992 Dawkins stated that:

...the trouble was that CTEC was organised in such a way that it actually was a barrier to significant change. CTEC had a considerable amount of power and whoever was the chairman of CTEC was essentially the minister for higher education.

...if the Government had views about what it wanted to do and wanted to commit huge additional resources to the system, then I thought it needed to have its hands more closely on the action (cited in Trinca 1992,35).

This statement seems to endorse Bruce Williams' speculation that the demise of CTEC could have been not so much a result of its inefficiency but more to do with the views expressed in a policy discussion paper (*Statutory Authorities and Government Business Enterprises*, June 1986) that statutory authorities were an inefficient way of administering. The paper identified government departments, with their advantage of "long established administrative machinery and procedure" and direct responsibility to a Minister, as more efficient (Williams 1988, 2).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See John Hinkson (1987) for a response to the Review as which identifies it as a mark of the new approach to higher education.

<sup>20</sup> Neave (1984 117) refers to the debate about the extent to which by the early 1980s UGC in Britain had become a "*de facto* arm of government rather than *de jure* representative of the universities" and notes the expanding role of the National Advisory Board for Local authority Higher Education established in 1981.

Williams suggests some explanations for this logic being applied to higher education, even though it was not altogether clear that "...universities and colleges should be treated as business enterprises". First, it was apparent, in the case of the School's Commission for example, that Ministers received criticism for poor decisions made by the statutory authorities and none of the accolades for the achievements; and second, the Treasury and Department of Finance were rankled by public demands for increased funding from chief executives of the statutory authorities who, unlike government departments, were able to speak as if distanced from the government from under the umbrella of the statutory authority, in a period when the former were pressing for increased restraint on public expenditures (Williams 1988,7). Whilst this argument explains the assault on statutory authorities such as CTEC to some extent, and certainly provides concrete and specific rationale, there was a larger context. Meek identifies these actions as ideological in that they were less to do with a specific government than with an underlying ideology which informed policy on both sides of the political arena:

...the higher education policies of the Australian Liberal Party differ from those of Labor only in detail, not in overall direction. The underlying ideology is what might be termed as one of 'privatization' and a belief in the hidden hand of the market place as a powerful mechanism for adjusting most social ills (Meek 1991, 470).

The dissolution of CTEC and the assumption of direct responsibility by a Minister marked not only a shift from macro to micro economic policy but a shift of the definition of the relationship between education and the national interest. In the nineteenth century educational expansion could be justified in terms of promotion of democratic participation of a nation's citizens and the general improvement of the quality of those citizens in the struggles of a new nation and economy. The first half of this century saw a focus upon the role of education and national interest which consolidated the importance of schooling for steady but unremarkable manufacturing expansion, as well as growth in primary production. Post WWII the national interest was invoked more strongly as the possibilities of growth were realised throughout the era of the long boom. The arguments for increased rates of university participation and the necessary federal funding intervention were not couched in terms of democratic participation but in the terms of national economic necessity. This was the era in which education, and more higher education in particular, was regarded as essential to the production of adequate quantities of human capital necessary to facilitate Australia's economic growth. Failure

to do this was to overlook the potential of a huge resource of the raw material of human capital. This notion persisted throughout the era of growth until the brief moment in the early nineteen seventies when the idea of national interest becomes the rhetoric of national responsibility to promote enrichment and development of the individual. With the growing realisation of economic crisis from the mid 1970s, the place of education in national interests was initially constructed in terms of it having become a burden in that it was absorbing too great a share of national wealth and failing to make a proportionate contribution.

The late 1970s and early 1980s witnessed a shift in emphasis towards the need for education to become more productive in order to legitimate the high levels of government expenditure that it absorbed. Productivity was increasingly more sharply defined in terms of not just producing *more* for the same costs, that is an issue of quantity, but also improvements in quality. Thus in the interview cited above, Dawkins stresses the difference between 'inefficiencies' and 'value for money' and emphasises the latter as being the driving force of his agenda in taking control of education from CTEC (Trinca 1992,35). The logic of this in relation to national interest is reflected in the increasing significance given by the government to the relationship between education and economic growth. This was patently obvious in the combining of education and employment portfolios, and became, in the late 1980s, the linchpin of government policy for economic restructuring. The shortage of skilled labour at the time was seen as a hindrance to competitive economic expansion, and this was extended into an argument that increased production of particularly highly skilled labour power would increase the productivity and viability of Australian industries in the international market. The degree of international competitiveness of Australian industries became the measure of the national interest.

This increasing identification of the place of education as central to the economic well being of the national economy is why, in Marshall's view, CTEC became unviable as an instrument of government policy. Government agencies such as the Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce (DITAC), the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR), the Department of Science, the Department of Finance (Finance) and the Department of Treasury (Treasury), were all promoting stronger ties

between industry and education as well as regarding the existing structure as being too costly and inefficient. These departments and their senior officers saw CTEC as having influence within their spheres, but as being largely impervious to their agenda. The government guidelines presented to CTEC in the four years preceding its demise all indicate the extent of the government view on the strength of the relationship between education and economic recovery.

Between 1983 and 1986 four sets of guidelines were issued to CTEC. Various, these statements directed CTEC to: provide more places in tertiary institutions, improve access for disadvantaged students, increase the intake into technologically oriented disciplines, ensure that courses promoted the “full educational potential” of students as well as “provide the skill levels in the work force essential to economic development”, forge closer links with industry and the broader social community, and maintain high academic standards. All this was to be achieved, of course, “in the most cost effective manner” (Marshall 1988, 27).

There was, however, not the funding commitment to underwrite such demands: for example, despite the creation of thirty-five thousand new places, there was still unmet demand resulting largely from the growth in school retention rates. Furthermore, the large proportion of places created specifically for school leavers directly mitigated opportunities for mature aged students who disproportionately represent disadvantage. “CTEC, therefore, was confronted with the difficult undertaking of reconciling a variety of disparate objectives with insufficient funds” (Marshall 1988, 27).<sup>21</sup> The creation of NBEET and its advisory Councils with only DEET as the focus of policy formulation and implementation was clearly seen by the government as the way to resolve the conflicts in the education arena. Neil Marshall argues that new agency structures did not dissolve contestation over education, but merely moved them into different arenas such as the Expenditure Review Committee and Cabinet (Marshall 1988,32). What this argument does not encompass, however, is the need expressed by the Minister to break the influence, over educational delivery policy, by senior university administrators who were, for the most part, not in agreement with the government about the importance of the nexus between education and national economic policy.

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<sup>21</sup> The guidelines were the formal policy directives upon which CTEC was required to recommend. At this time the guidelines were based upon initial recommendations formulated by CTEC for the 1985-87 triennium with input from Cabinet. See Marshall (1988, 27); also, TEC (1981) and CTEC (1984).

## The Dawkins Reforms

The spirit of the recommendations of the *Review of efficiency and effectiveness* was carried forward into Dawkin's first major initiative as Minister for Employment, Education and Training – the Green Paper *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*, foreshadowed in Parliament in September and released in December 1987. For the first time in consideration of direction and expansion of higher education a government chose not to appoint a Committee of Inquiry (again bodies traditionally chaired by university administrators) but Dawkins, as Minister, directly set the agenda through a policy discussion paper from within his "own portfolio";<sup>22</sup> which set out the argument for changes in the system of higher education provision in terms of the needs of national economic recovery. Unlike previous federal initiatives the government did not feel the need to legitimate its program for change under the guise of expert opinion on how to direct higher education, but was concerned to achieve a specific outcome despite the predictable resistance of the upper echelons and large sections of the Australian academic hierarchy. The representation in the form of a policy discussion document provided adequate cover to ensure that its intentions were not overwhelmed by immediate enactment of policy. Initially the language of this document appeared to carry much the same messages about commitment to the development of higher education in Australia as reports of the fifties and sixties. Thus in its preamble it states:

An expansion of the higher education system is important for several reasons. A better educated and more highly skilled population will be able to deal more effectively with change. A major function of education is, after all, to increase individuals' capacity to learn, to provide them with a framework with which to analyse problems and to increase their capacity to deal with new information. At the same time education facilitates adaptability, making it easier for individuals to learn skills related to their intended profession and improve their ability to learn while pursuing that profession (Dawkins 1987,1).

Nevertheless, in the following passages the emphasis moved to the need for efficient resource allocation in times of economic downturn. The initial statements were not statements of philosophical commitment to an 'ideal' of education but were 'motherhood statements' which have come to mean all things to all people. Increased individual capacity to learn was no longer about the development of well rounded human beings making informed choices in the interests of democratic and free societies,

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<sup>22</sup> See Dawkins Ministerial Address to Parliament (*Australian* 23 September 1987, 8,13).

but was now about flexibility of skills and adaptability to change in the workplace largely brought about by the vagaries of Australia's faltering place within the international economy.

...it is important that resources are allocated in accordance with best judgements on the likely future requirements of our society and labour market, and that institutions are sensitive to new requirements as they emerge. In this context, changes may be required to the content and structure of courses to provide a greater emphasis on broad and transferable skills as insurance against the uncertainties of the future (Dawkins 1987,2).

This adoption of the rhetoric of flexibility and adaptability echoed that in *Australia Reconstructed* (ACTU/TDC 1987), an ideologically crucial document in the government agenda of micro economic reform, released earlier in 1987 by John Dawkins' portfolio of the time, the Department of Trade.<sup>23</sup> Although this document took the form of a report by a fact finding mission to Sweden and other Western European countries on behalf of the ACTU and the TDC (Trade Development Corporation), it was unequivocally a statement of Labor Government policy with regard to the industrial agenda of economic restructuring in Australia. The authors of *Australia Reconstructed* set out a series of recommendations arguing for increased ties between government, unions and business (variously referred to as tripartism or strategic unionism) in order to foster increased productivity. Much of the Report was devoted to recommendations for improved labour market strategies connected to a re-emphasis upon training, multi-skilling and technical training as a means to increase skills formation and reduce unemployment. The arguments were predicated upon assumptions that an increase in the skills base of the Australian economy was essential to economic recovery. This new emphasis upon active labour market programmes was urged as the necessary replacement for existing ineffective strategies of dealing with high unemployment levels which focussed upon providing income support and job placement services. The Report was riddled with the language of increased flexibility within the workforce and training. Thus in its discussion of labour market and training policies it noted Australia's "*low proportion of the population with degrees and qualifications in science, engineering or technology related disciplines*" [emphasis in the original] and argued that Australia's place as a

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<sup>23</sup> See Herb Thompson's (1988) critique, "Australia Reconstructed: Socialism Deconstructed".

competitive player in world trade was dependent upon improvements in this field.<sup>24</sup> Technical skills however are not static and ongoing training and diversity were of the essence:

*These challenges imply that the education sector has to be more responsive in terms of the type of skills provided, and more flexible in the way courses are delivered. To respond to changing patterns of demand, educational authorities must have relevant information about changing trends in the labour market to plan their courses effectively. Once equipped with the information, there has to be sufficient flexibility to reallocate funds across areas of study and within them (Department of Trade 1987, 119).*

Responsiveness to the needs of industry were cited as the imperative, but the difficulties in establishing and predicting the needs of industry were completely downplayed. This led to a constant invocation of the need to adjust to demands of science and technology which became an argument for responsiveness in the form of training in areas of science and technology as the solution.<sup>25</sup>

In going on to acknowledge the social and cultural gains of expansion the Green Paper made only very general reference to the benefits to the community. Increased output was still expressed within a context of “cost-effective” delivery, which the Paper argued was predicated upon the need for reduction in the number of small institutions, a narrower focussing of research support, the rationalisation of external teaching, and more liberal arrangements for credit transfer. The “rigidities and inefficiencies” associated with inadequate staff performance were also to be overcome by the adoption of flexibility in salary and staffing levels.

Achievement of all of this was to come about as a response to:

...financial and other advantages to those institutions willing to adopt those principles and practices considered to be for the general community good. Institutions may choose not to adopt these principles and practices, but will receive less support from the Government and consequently need more from other sources (Dawkins 1987,3).

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<sup>24</sup> The report cited Australia's low levels of expenditure on education and training in comparison with other OECD countries [See table A6.7, appendix].

<sup>25</sup> See Calmfors and Skedinger (1995) for a discussion of the findings of a study of the effectiveness of Active-labour market policy programmes in Scandinavia. They concluded that “the evidence for large favourable employment effects of active labour-market programmes is weak” (107).

The Green Paper presented the means by which it was proposed to achieve the end of the binary system in higher education. No longer would universities and CAES be automatically granted differential funding. Under the Dawkins plan institutions would be funded according to their research and teaching strengths which would be determined by agreement between the institutions and Commonwealth. Although presented to institutions as an optional path it was made abundantly clear that survival in the long term was contingent upon compliance. The Green paper proposed fewer institutions (amalgamations between universities and CAEs), each with stated educational profiles which would be established out of agreement between institution and government on:

... the level of funding available ...from the Commonwealth to implement chosen academic goals;

the ability of the institution to meet the higher education needs of its community; and

the institution's contribution to national priorities identified by the Commonwealth (Dawkins 1987,29).

The outcome of participation in this process was presented within the paper as reduced government intervention in the institutions' internal affairs. The increased flexibility of larger institutions, it was argued, would enable them to become more responsive to changing community needs because of "stronger management structures and larger, more flexible pools of resources" and thus less in need of government scrutiny. Small institutions, however were unable to reorganise resources in the face of changing demands.

It would not be adequate for institutions to merely develop mission statements but performance indicators needed to be established in order to ascertain institutions' responses to the new initiatives. The vast amounts of money involved in running the larger universities and colleges<sup>26</sup> were used as basis for an argument for increased managerial efficiency. Institutions were also required to review management processes with the possibility of changing structures in order to achieve "strong managerial modes of operation", in other words, to facilitate devolution of power "from governing bodies to chief executive officers and then to other levels", governing bodies acting more in the

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<sup>26</sup> "For example there are 27 institutions with budgets over \$30 million dollars" (Dawkins 1987,50).



realm of policy advisers than corporate decision makers (Dawkins 1987, 50). This argument included demands for accountability to, and participation from, the actors seen as being central in higher education: government, employers, employees, students and the community. The actual decision making process however was to be “streamlined” in order to ensure that problems of “time lag” between conception and execution of new policies was not a hindrance to the newly achieved institutional flexibility.

Research funds would no longer be provided through general allocation to teaching and research recurrent grants, but recurrent grants would be reduced whilst research funds allocated on the advice of the Australian Research Council (ARC) were to be increased. There was also an argument for credit transfers for cross institutional mobility as well as arguments for increased access for disadvantaged groups on equity grounds.

Funding shortfalls were also foreshadowed in the Green Paper’s forecasts for higher education to 2001. The Green Paper used this justification for increased overseas student intakes, which had become full fee paying in the early 1980s, as well as the introduction of a higher education charge for resident students. The gate was also opened for private employers to invest in special programmes for employees as well as for the establishment of private universities which had consistently been anathema to Australian academic debate in the past.<sup>27</sup>

Despite an outraged response from the academic community the Green Paper was followed within seven months by the release of the white paper *Higher Education a policy statement*, which virtually mirrored the contents of the former. Dawkins had sent a clear message to the academic community that their opposition counted for naught. He meant to accomplish what was necessary to achieve the reforms in higher education which he saw as essential to Australian economic recovery.

The ALP commitment to free tertiary education was abandoned from its platform after earnest debate at its 1988 National Conference, laying the way for introduction of fees

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<sup>27</sup> Interestingly the first private university to be established, the Bond University, in Queensland has not been successful. It has recently been purchased by the Queensland University which intends to run it as a private adjunct. The Catholic University of Notre Dame was established in Western Australia in 1992.

under the Higher Education Contribution Scheme in 1989.<sup>28</sup> By late 1992 mergers had reduced the number of tertiary institutions from sixty-five universities and colleges to thirty-five universities. Almost 125,000 new places were created by 1994 (See table A6.8, appendix). Research funding was brought under more direct control by the gradual transfer of the greater part of research monies from recurrent funds to institutions to the ARC. In 1991 Peter Baldwin (Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services) could claim in a policy statement that “direct funding for research has risen from some \$90 million in 1988 to over \$250 million in 1993” (Baldwin 1991,9). Whilst the Labor Government was able to claim increased funding to universities per EFTSU since 1983, these monies were directed away from operating grants into increased research and capital grants [see Figures A6.1-3 in appendix].

Thus, we had the beginnings of management oriented organisations: market oriented organisations, with a commitment to education in terms of reproduction of skills for the market. One of the most interesting changes to university administrative structures over the past decade has been the transformation of the vice chancellor. No longer do we see appointments of vice chancellors with the traditional scholarly credentials and elite university *alma mater*. As vice chancellery positions become available they are being assumed by (almost exclusively) men with credentials which would suit them just as well for running large private sector corporations as universities. Even though the government has no direct control over such appointments, the councils and senates and other sectors of the universities which participate in selection are absolutely aware of the need for ‘movers and shakers’ of a new order if their institutions are to survive the reforms. No more do vice chancellors need to embody traditional liberal educational values or even combine these with a recognition of the values of utilitarian education. The arena has changed, men of letters have been replaced by a new generation of academic actors whose credentials are measured more by their belief in the necessity to achieve goals of efficiency and effectiveness in education than a commitment to the possibilities of the human spirit.<sup>29</sup> In early 1996 The University of Southern Queensland urged “candidates outside the academic sector but with good degrees and a management

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<sup>28</sup> The move to abandon the commitment to free higher education was put by John Dawkins and Simon Crean and was won by fifty-six votes to forty-one (see Marginson 1992).

<sup>29</sup> See Max Charlesworth (1993) who comments upon the new style of vice-chancellor.

track record” to apply for their vice chancellor’s position (Richardson 1996). One of the most recent and publicised examples is the appointment of Professor Alan Gilbert to the position of vice-chancellor at Melbourne University on the retirement of the outspoken opponent to the Dawkins reforms, Professor David Pennington. Regarded as a career academic administrator, Gilbert is recognised for his success as vice chancellor at the University of Tasmania where he oversaw the merger of the University of Tasmania with the Tasmanian Institute of Technology. Although he hails from the humanities and has impressive academic credentials Gilbert is lauded more for his role in policy formation on committees such as the AVCC and HEC than as a scholar. In an article advocating an extension of student fees and privatisation as the solution to the funding dilemmas of Australian universities Gilbert admonishes university administrators, academic unions, students and government bodies for their attachment to public funded solutions to educational provision.

One of the most bizarre recent examples of ostrich advice is a recent call by the NTU to the Federal Government to use its external powers to legislate for a Bill of Rights that would guarantee minimum standards of education for all Australians, including the right to free primary, secondary and tertiary education. That is taking faith in the legislative process to quixotic lengths. *It is rather like legislating to guarantee Australians the right to a minimum standard of living.* [Italics added] (Gilbert 1995, 9).

Gilbert winds up his argument with reference to the international context of higher education:

In contrast to the Australian situation, which is characterised by diffidence about facing up to all the issues, there are countries – notably Britain and the United States – in which higher education policy is being discussed by all the major stake-holders without prejudging possible policy outcomes (Gilbert 1995, 9).

For him the imperative of looking beyond the ideals of democratic access to the more ‘realistic’ criteria of “budget reality” and “international competition and debate” must be grasped, rather than the pre-occupation with how to facilitate democratic educational access.

The final most important ideological employment of a concept about the role of higher education has occurred since 1991. The agenda of ‘Quality in Higher Education’ has been successfully incorporated into the restructuring of higher education by locating the notion of quality within satisfaction of criteria. In 1992 the Higher Education Council

(HEC) argued that because definitions of quality are unavoidably tied to matters of judgement it was not appropriate to seek definitions but:

The general thrust of these and related points has led the Council away from trying to *define* quality per se, and towards *describing* the attributes that graduates should acquire when exposed to quality higher education – in other words, to describe the quality of an outcome. The Council sees the focus on outcome, the *fitness for purpose* as fundamental to understanding how each of the processes within institutions are organised and evaluated in order to ensure the quality of the outcome (HEC 1992, 6).

Again, we see the transformation of outcomes from its 1970s expression by Karmel as a social justice issue into one of measure in terms of success in the marketplace. The Labor Government's adoption of this approach to assessing quality exhibited the candid acknowledgment of education as producer of a commodity labour power, but, most importantly, allowed the finishing touches to be accomplished in forcing university management structures to accommodate the agenda of driving higher education to meet the demands of the market. All universities have undergone a compulsory annual quality review since 1993. The means of compulsion has been the distribution of funds, initially clawed back, on the basis of ranking in the five sectors defined by the quality audit process. The first round of audit results was met with a deafening *brouhaha* as university personnel in those institutions less favourably ranked poured righteous scorn upon the review process. Nevertheless, the practice continued into 1995, but is flagged to be discontinued as its architects claim that it has achieved its purpose. Professor Brian Wilson (Vice-Chancellor of Queensland University) and one of the initiators of the quality assurance scheme has stated that he believes it has been successful to the point that the time consuming and costly exercise of inspection and the allocation of financial incentives are no longer necessary to sustain a momentum. In August 1995 a newspaper interview with Wilson reported him as saying that:

universities are now more focussed on quality. Terms such as "stakeholder" and "customer" no longer meet with "hilarity". Senior positions with the title "quality" have been created. Mechanisms are now in place to maintain the momentum. (Illing, 1995, 22).

In October 1995, it was predicted that funds allocated on the basis of the third Quality Assurance Audit would fall by \$25 million to \$50 million (Chan and Illing 1995). In reality then, the quality audit seems to have been another plank in the process of changing what was perceived as an outdated mindset in university administration and

practice. A successful outcome in the eyes of the new powerbrokers in higher education has been the acceptance of universities in the marketplace.

The final document to reflect the Labor Government's policy on educational restructuring, the Report of the *Higher Education Management Review* (otherwise known by the name of its chairman, the Hoare Report) was released in December 1995. This document set out a series of recommendations to develop "excellence in management and accountability for the resources available to the sector", in so doing, it forecast the need for "universities to deal with change and to manage the difficult task of refining and probably, reformulating their fundamental missions" (Hoare 1995,1). Specific recommendations held no surprises: increased accountability, increased competition for research funds, strategic planning, greater flexibility in the academic workforce and so on. The extent to which this was enacted by the Labor Government was curtailed by their defeat at the polls in March 1996. It is unlikely that the incoming conservative coalition will adopt a fundamentally different approach.

## Conclusion

From the mid 1970s to the mid 1990s issues in Australian higher education policy have been increasingly directed away from the brief flirtation with the questions of social justice which marked the early 1970s. More and more higher education has been forced into a mood of restructuring and to redirect its institutional forms and practice towards the needs of the national economy. This of course is not a new agenda in Federal Government higher education policy, what is new, however, is the relentless demand that higher education confront the responsibility to produce those forms of skilled labour perceived as essential to economic recovery and growth in an era of intensified international competition. Not only has higher education been channelled into strengthening its emphasis upon technical and vocational education, but it has been expanded in terms of provision of student places with reduced real expenditure on the recurrent costs of teaching these students. The change in the mindset about the role of the university across the two decades is, at one level, breathtaking in its extent. However considering all of the elements: the powerful rhetoric employed by the copious committees and reports which have been enlisted to force change; the opportunities opened up for a new breed of ambitious senior academic administrators; the

commensurate destruction of other social democratic institutions, such as collective trade unionism; and, the lack of a perceptive and critical force within the academy itself; – we should be less than astonished.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

The developments examined in the two preceding chapters beg the question of why the response (outlined in Chapter One) to the Dawkins reforms seemed to be dominated by the defence of an ideal of university education rather than a concerted critical attack upon the tenuous assumptions about the connection between scientific/technical education and the potential for economic growth, which underpinned the proposed policies. Why did so few of the most vocal critics fail to call the reforms for what they were – the response by the state to the problem of increasing provision within parameters of economic restraint? The sociologists of education to whom we should presumably have been able to turn, for an analysis of the proposals in the context of Australian political economy and global trends towards increased provision of market oriented higher education, were largely absent. Instead, as we have seen, the debate was dominated by the academy as an open field in which more authority was apparently given to senior university administrators, literary theorists and philosophers than theorists specialising in Australian educational provision.

Thus whilst it is almost an aside to the development of the argument of this dissertation it is nevertheless useful to gain some insights to the contributing factors of this absence. In order to understand the dearth of critical political economic appraisal within the realm of sociology of education we need to understand the comparatively short history of Australian sociology of education. Because sociology as a separate discipline was not established in Australian universities until the 1960s, the sociology of education was predominantly the preserve of teachers colleges and faculties of education. Indeed as sociology departments were only starting to be set up in the established universities at about the same time as new universities were coming into existence there was a shortage of sociologists per se in Australia in the 1960s and into the 1970s (Musgrave 1982, 208). The field of sociology of education then, has continued to be dominated by contributions from the educational sector of higher education.

The absence of sociology as a discrete discipline in Australian universities prior to the 1960s would seem the most likely explanation for the tendency in Australia to rely upon British and American sociology to set the educational agenda. On the one hand we were habitually drawn towards our old colonial connections for leadership in educational matters, as the previous account of the establishment of the Murray Committee illustrates, and, on the other hand, our growing economic ties with the United States fostered cultural linkages which extended into the field of education. Furthermore, recruitment of sociologists into departments of sociology as well as educational schools and teachers colleges frequently drew from the more abundant supply in Britain and America.<sup>1</sup>

The establishment of mass education provision on both sides of the Atlantic in the nineteenth century had not gone unattended by the academic community. There was a plethora of theories and commentaries associated with the expansion of education as a social institution, as a 'profession' and of course in terms of pedagogical practice. The increased demand for teacher training facilities had certainly fostered this attention. The best known contributions to these branches of sociology of education appeared in the United States from the early years of the century, in the case of John Dewey, and throughout the 1950s and 1960s in the case of Talcott Parsons.<sup>2</sup> As with the explanations of impetus to mass education, the body of educational sociology prior to and immediately following WWII was dominated by either structural functionalist explanations of the role of education in reproduction of social stratification, or debates about how best to achieve the extension of democratic rights and participation through the practice of education.

Indeed, the period of educational expansion in both Britain and the United States in the twenty years post WWII was predominantly underscored by a sociology of education which did not see its role as a critical one, but rather, one which encouraged increased state interventions through its explanation of the need for proactive government policies in increasing access to educational provision. This was not a conservative sociology, but

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<sup>1</sup> Jerome Karabel and A.H. Halsey (1976, 536) point out that the sociology of education in Britain was similarly dominated by academics in "institutes and colleges of education" in the 1960s.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Dewey (1966) and Parsons (1959).



one which sought amelioration of social inequity through the improved access to those resources most directly affecting the individual's life chances.

The end of the long boom was a period of increased political and public attention upon educational provision in Australia. The Karmel Report, released in 1973 (see Chapter Six), embodied much of the consensus held by educational sociologists at the time, that structural inequality needed to be addressed by specific interventions. Because of the tendency towards the dependence of Australian sociology of education upon its northern hemisphere mentors, the demands from within, for a change in emphasis in educational provision, came somewhat later than in Britain and the United States, but, nevertheless, was articulated strongly within the Australian context. As we have seen Karmel's was the language of change in emphasis from equality of opportunity as equality of access, to equality of outcomes. No longer was it adequate to recognise the need for ensuring a place for all, but allowance also needed to be made for the different forms of disadvantage which mitigated outcomes. The most obvious form of disadvantage, that of economic disadvantage, was the most easily targeted and the establishment of the Disadvantaged Schools Program was intended to directly address the issue of poor performance related to low socio-economic status. Further criteria acknowledged in the Report as contributing to disadvantage and meriting increased inputs were Aboriginality, migrant status, and geographic isolation (Karmel 1973).

The Karmel Report was initially well received by educational sociologists who tended to see this as a real breakthrough in policy relating to educational provision in Australia. There was some disgruntlement amongst those committed to public education about the contribution to private education, but on the whole the establishment of a Federal Schools Commission was seen as a step in the right direction. In retrospect however, we can argue that Karmel was the essence of a social democratic last gasp: it incorporated all the rhetoric of equality and participation with an apparent commitment to continued expansion and guaranteed levels of expenditure.

Interestingly, as we have seen in Chapter Six, as the Karmel recommendations were being put into place the critiques of its underlying philosophy were gaining momentum, particularly in Britain. Whilst it might be too simplistic to suggest that the body of

radical sociology had been so effective that it unavoidably drew the fire of the establishment, it had nevertheless forced the issue of educational provision into an arena in which it could not fare well under such close scrutiny.

Even as Australian educational policy began to include programs and policies designed to take into account the inequities conditioned by race, socio-economic status and other apparent disadvantage, educational theorists abroad were beginning to recognise the complexity of education as a social institution and to argue that as such it inevitably fulfilled a role in the reproduction of the inequitable social relations of capitalism. With the development of new social movements of the 1960s a number of American sociologists had begun to raise questions about the limitations of education as a social institution to achieve structural change. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s the civil rights movement in the United States, the student movement, the women's movement and a range of other social movements gained momentum. All of these factors contributed to an awareness of the failure of increased educational participation to have facilitated real structural change. In Britain the context was slightly different in that the drive for equality had necessarily focused upon removal of long standing structural educational barriers with the introduction of comprehensive schools. By the late 1960s it was increasingly apparent that this approach was failing to undermine the connection between social class and educational achievements. The earliest attempts to account for the failure of equity of provision to overcome reproduction of social differentiation came from British sociologists working predominantly in "institutes and colleges of education" rather than university departments of sociology. The 'new sociology of education', such as the work of Michael Young, abandoned the established focus, upon the relationship between the structure of education and social structure, in favour of a scrutiny of what is taught, how it is selected and how it is taught. In other words 'the curriculum' and the 'classroom' became the dominant concerns.<sup>3</sup>

The preoccupations of the "new" sociology of education – above all, classroom interaction and the curriculum – correspond quite strikingly to the professional interests of students in institutions primarily devoted to training teachers... It is also doubtless the case that the effort of the "new" sociology of education to illuminate the classroom, is one source of its appeal not only to students in

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<sup>3</sup> See Jerome Karabel and A.H. Halsey (1976, 533-7) for a discussion of these factors. See Sharp (1980, 43-86) for a critical review.

schools of education, but also to those sociologists whose job it is to teach them (Karabel and Halsey, 1976 536).

At the same time as the 'new' sociology of education was flourishing in England, the French structuralist Pierre Bourdieu was producing a substantial body of research which sought to explore the role of education in cultural reproduction, and its connection to, relations of power and social inequality. Although not translated into English until 1977 Bourdieu's work with J. C Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* was enormously influential amongst sociologists interested in questions of education and ideology.

Interestingly, in the United States at this time there was a marked absence of concern with issues of interpretation or ideology and cultural reproduction. American sociologists concerned with the failure of education as a force for equity were far more directed towards a critical approach in which it was argued that macro explanations of education as a social institution in relation to other social institutions needed to be understood in terms of political struggle. Although the work of Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976) has been the subject of significant criticism for its oversights it was an influential work within the sociology of education of its time.<sup>4</sup> The development of their notion of correspondence between the worlds of education and work exposed the limitations of education in capitalist society as a truly democratic force. For Bowles and Gintis the hierarchical social relations of schooling in America replicated those of the workplace and were enormously significant in preparing young people for acceptance of the inequities and hierarchical relations of employment.

There is no clear consensus upon the degree of influence of northern hemisphere sociology of education upon its Australian counterpart. Jan Branson (1980) suggests that the sociology of education in Australia was largely untouched by developments abroad, whilst P.W. Musgrave (1982) refers to the influence of Michael Young's work upon Australian curriculum studies. For the most part however, it undisputedly continued to be the concern of the educationalists on the one hand, who had little interest or grounding in sociological theory and analysis; and sociologists on the other hand, who were not working exclusively in the field of education research. The bulk of sociology

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<sup>4</sup> See Madan Sarup (1978, 172-181) for an example of a critique of their methodology.

of education throughout the 1970s in Australia then, retained its earlier focus upon questions of inequality and access.<sup>5</sup>

## Education and the State

What the bulk of the sociology of education, outlined above, had omitted to take into account was, that whilst education was a social institution, it was – since the introduction of state funded and regulated mass education – also a state institution. It was not until the late 1970s that sociology in general really began to grapple with the question of how to understand the role of the state. The crisis faced by the state in western economies at the time – of meeting demands for continued expectations of full employment and improved standards of living underwritten by state intervention, and, the demands of capital that the state wind back what it was coming to experience as excessive revenue demands – led to a series of attempts to find areas in which government expenditures could be reduced. This dilemma contributed to social theorists identifying the problem of the crisis of the state, in which it became apparent that the post-war Keynesian interventionist policy, which had been dependent upon the appearance of harmony and growth for all, could not be maintained.<sup>6</sup> The cultural critique of the 1960s and early 1970s was further fuelled by radical critiques of the failure of the interventionist state, whilst a small body of marxist political economists and social scientists attempted a rigorous appraisal of the crisis. Although much of the sociology of education remained immune to this debate, the role of education as a major state institution meant that it was necessarily one of the major foci of the scrutiny. This attention could not pass entirely unheeded by the sociology of education and, by the early 1980s the sociology of education came to include work which sought to highlight the inadequacies of the approaches of structural functionalism and the ‘new sociology’ and to propose the necessity for understanding educational policy in terms of broader political and economic structures.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For example, see Abbey and Ashenden (1978), Connell 1974 and Edgar (1975 and 1978).

<sup>6</sup> Ian Gough’s work *The Political Economy of the Welfare State* (1979) is one of the best examples of this argument in relation to Britain.

<sup>7</sup> See Carnoy (1982), Dale *et al* (1981), Dale (1982) Sarup (1982) Sharp (1980) and Shapiro (1982) for early examples. Carnoy and Levin (1985) represents the shift away from political economic explanations to more particularly political discussion of the possibility of democratic reforms. See also Sharp (1985) for a comparative analysis.

## The Sociology of Higher Education

A further development in the sociology of education, was the growing attention directed towards higher education. Whilst universities and colleges had held a significant place within the North American education tradition, British and Australian social scientists had paid higher education little special attention prior to the 1960s. It was really the post WWII beginnings of extension of higher education that initiated a new appraisal of its place within both the social order and the economy. Prior to the 1970s the commentators on higher education in Australia were drawn mostly from within the upper levels of the academic/administrative hierarchy (for example, Auchmuty, Ashby, Elkin and Portus). As noted above there were few sociologists in Australian institutions at the time, let alone sociologists of education who could focus upon it. With the assumption of federal responsibility and the development of the binary system of higher education in the late 1960s Australian sociologists began to directly address higher education as an area of interest.

The legacy of both the sociology of education and the subdued early interest in the provision of higher education has meant that the commentators on higher education in Australia have been predominantly concerned with the politics of higher education policy in terms of the regional/federal state split and the differences in policy between Labor and Liberal Coalition Governments.<sup>8</sup> This emphasis has led to a neglect of other questions such that differences in policy have tended to be seen in terms of fundamental ideological difference between the dominant parties rather than as different strategies to resolve different problems. For example, the Fraser appointed Razor Gang's proposal to reintroduce tertiary fees was seen as an ideological counter to the Whitlam Government's abolition of fees in the early 1970s. There was little analysis of the development of policy in terms of internationalisation of the Australian economy and the deepening international recession. Attacks upon schooling and higher education by the mass media and conservative politicians were seen as ideological attacks against the new educational philosophy advocated by Whitlam's educational representatives such as Karmel, rather than the more realistic identification of them as a strategy to legitimate cuts in government funding. It is precisely because of the paucity of discussion of the

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<sup>8</sup> For example see Birch and Smart (1977).

wider role of higher education, within the context of the state, that it has been possible for the discussion about the developments in Australian higher education over the past fifteen years to become a debate over the extent to which Australian higher education ought to be forced to become ends driven. This debate has occurred as if the restructuring could be arrested if only educational policy makers could be brought to recognise that the intrinsic worth of higher education should rest with means rather than ends.<sup>9</sup>

In their review of research into Australian higher education between 1966 and 1982 Anderson and Eaton (1982b) show that much of the interest from within the academy, about the academy, was focussed upon very similar issues to those which dominated the schooling sector of education. In the first decade under review, equality of opportunity was a significant area of research interest and the social composition of the student population drew a number of studies seeking to explain why there were proportionately so few students from working class backgrounds in higher education. As this data showed categorically that participation rates were affected by socio-economic position the focus narrowed to consider specific minority groups: particularly Aborigines and migrants.

The onset of economic downturn in the early 1970s and a declining number of qualified school leavers – a post baby boom demographic consequence – resulted in policies which were more attentive to managing education in a state of reduced growth than to equitable provision. These policies were relevant to both sociologists interested in schooling and researchers interested in higher education. By the late 1970s the backlash against progressive education and its apparent outcome, ‘student radicalism’ fostered “anti-academic and anti-intellectual sentiments” which readily targeted higher education as a bastion of elitism. Anderson and Eaton cite an article entitled “The Scandal of Our Universities” from *The Bulletin*, (12 March 1977): “ The tertiary education system has

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<sup>9</sup> Some commentators argue that the recent moves to make higher education more responsive to the market and dependent upon the private sector provide the space in which it will be possible to develop a truly non-instrumentalist educational program which is no longer driven by the expansionist tendencies of an interventionist state. Thus there has been a notion that market orientation means increased autonomy and dissolution of control by the state, for example, see Russell Berman (1989). The hard reality is, however, that as with most legitimations of devolution of public functions, the financial core of state control has increased along with its reduction in resourcing, for example, quality audit in Australia.

grown so fat, so fast, that academia has become an enormous island of privilege, populated in considerable measure by drones and parasites” (Anderson and Eaton 1982b, 103).

The response from researchers in the field of higher education at the time was to take the lead from government identification of crisis: a body of work evolved which addressed themes of ‘crisis management’ in relation to demographic concerns, federal state policy, declining demand for teacher education and other matters relating to reduced demand and a changing student body (Anderson and Eaton 1982b, 108-9). This does not of course mean that the critical edge to academic concern was wholly absent, but, in terms of research and published responses to higher education amalgamations and restructuring throughout the 1980s, it seems valid to suggest that the critique was articulated within the halls of the academy instead of finding expression within open academic and particularly sociological forums of debate. Rather than producing a well crafted and rigorous critique of the dismantling of a social democratic higher education sector in favour of a market oriented system, some sections of the academy accepted the new agenda and set about deriving means to ease the passage of restructuring. Many other academics, however, turned inwards and shared their critique only with immediate colleagues. The long standing social democratic emphasis upon educational provision and equality of opportunity throughout all sectors of Australian education made elitist defences of the academy unpopular. In the face of accusations of elitism and parasitism it was difficult to mount a campaign of defence, and, of course, once the Dawkins reforms of 1987 were floated, in which restructuring was hailed as essential to the *expanded provision* necessary for national economic well being, there was really little room to shape a critique from within a social democratic terrain. The Green Paper, (and most subsequent policy developments) gave special attention to “A fair chance for all” in which it stressed the importance of special attention to raising participation of people from financially disadvantaged backgrounds and rural and isolated areas, Aborigines and ethnic minorities as well as to the under representation of women in some undergraduate course selection and post-graduate study overall. Indeed, the justification of the proposed expansion was directly linked to improving opportunities for these sectors of the population. As with the arguments of the Fraser era, for economic restraint, the justification of efficient expansion effectively left no room for a social democratic

critique, of expansion based upon a foundation of market orientation, when currently part of the market is for all intents and purposes apparently denied access.

Only the most unashamed elitists and unflinchingly rigorous marxists could defend the universities from an onslaught presented as the extension of democratic rights. This is what happened – the elite universities were defended by elitists within their own academy and the rest of the academy cast around invoking the defence of the liberal educational ideal or the integrity of the humanities as the acme of human freedom.<sup>10</sup> The voices of sociology of education were hardly heard at all. As we have seen, critical analysis had never become part of the dominant sociological tradition within Australian education. Sociology of education in Australia, whether concerned with schooling or higher education, had consistently accepted the social democratic agenda and was thus vulnerable to any government with the acumen to incorporate the importance of access issues into policy in ways that presented reform as the end of preferential treatment for both certain sections of the higher education sector and, for privileged individuals.

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<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile the most cogent critique came from the industrial representatives of the academic body, shielded from the niceties of academic sensibilities the academic unions were able to identify the structural imperatives and predict the effects upon academic labour of the impact of expansion in numbers without real expansion of expenditure. Simon Marginson has presented the most consistent critical appraisal of the developments in Australian higher education over the past fifteen years. As noted in Chapter One, initially he was commenting in his role as a research officer with FAUSA.



## CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have focussed upon the restructuring of Australian higher education in the period since 1987. Rather than attempting to develop an explanation of the underlying reasons why the restructuring will fail to achieve the intentions of its architects,<sup>1</sup> this review has been most particularly concerned with examining the strident response to the policy reforms proposed by the Hon. John Dawkins in 1987 and subsequently pursued by the Labor governments of Bob Hawke and Paul Keating. For the most part these critics have sought to defend the status quo and have decried the apparently vulgar redirection of higher education towards a 'new instrumentalism'. In assessing the assessors I have been able to explore one of the most tenacious ideas of Australian higher education – that it has been fundamentally rooted in a tradition of liberal education and thus has, prior to Dawkins, never been dominated by instrumental ends. In doing this, I have argued that the bulk of the response from the academy to the Dawkins policy reforms was laid on very loose ground indeed. The basis of this contention is formed along two main avenues. First, I have explored the notion of liberal education upon which so much of the critique is built, and have presented a review in which I argue that it is an idealised notion of liberal education based upon partial understanding of the idea as it was shaped during the nineteenth century; furthermore, advocates of this ideal have attempted to attribute to it a non-instrumentalist imperative which has never been the reality. Second, I have explored the history of Australian higher education and presented a case in which I maintain that the concrete experience of higher education in Australia has consistently been driven by the achievement of specific ends with little room or great weight ever being given to the ideal of 'education for its own sake', which contemporary commentators attribute to it.

This second part of my argument rests upon the material presented in chapters Four to Six where initially I give an account of the first half century of university establishment

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<sup>1</sup> The promotion of a highly skilled Australian workforce necessary to the requirements of the envisaged technically advanced and internationally competitive economy.

in Australia. This material unconditionally indicates that the trend in those early decades was towards the development of a highly professionally and vocationally oriented university sector in which the dreams of liberal education as a pursuit for its own sake gained little respect and virtually no financial support. Throughout the twentieth century there have been few voices raised in support of a university sector which is divorced from the immediate material needs of its student population and modern society in general. Even the most Anglophile of the multitude of government reports and inquiries into Australian education since WWII failed to uphold a sustained commitment to the values of a liberal education separate to the needs of providing the necessary forms of educated labour for the expansion of the national economy. Even those rather faint statements of recognition of some continued role for liberal education made in the Martin Report of the 1960s have faded over time to the extent that there has been no serious mention of the notion of liberal education as such in the most recent decade of government reports and inquiries into higher education provision. Whilst some Australian academics have always had a view of themselves as operating within universities firmly embedded in a liberal humanist, anti-utilitarian tradition, the prevailing reality suggests this has been a somewhat distorted version.

It is the actual exploration of the idea of a 'liberal education' which merits a more lengthy review of the arguments presented within the body of this dissertation. The attempts to defend higher education, from market imperatives, on the grounds that they threaten the integrity of the liberal educational ideal are weak indeed. Such arguments rest upon the representation of a golden era of seemingly non-instrumental liberal education as it was formed at Oxbridge in the nineteenth century. The problem with such a notion, however, is that it is oblivious to significant developments outside of the university which occurred in the same period as the nineteenth century idea of a liberal education was formed. In the first place, the establishment by the 1870s of a liberal education at Oxford and Cambridge was the result of a long period of radical critiques of the prevailing forms of classical education which had dominated the ancient universities since the Renaissance. As we have seen in chapter Three these critiques developed as vehement attacks upon the lack of relevance of classical studies to the careers of young men or the needs of society in the nineteenth century. A second and related factor is that the ancient universities in England underwent administrative and

liberal curriculum reforms (upon which examinations for entrance to the senior administrative sector of the civil service were based) in the same period as changes of immense significance were occurring within the administrative sector of the state.

The liberal education to which the contemporary Australian critics of instrumentalism constantly refer, represents to them the universal and essential nature of education as it should be pursued within liberal society. The logical outcome of this is that current events, which they identify as the end of liberal education in Australia, are a mark of the end of liberal society and the transition to some new form of market oriented instrumentalism. The fact of the matter is, however, that the initial formation of this idea of liberal education coincided with a particular *phase* of the development of liberalism. In other words, rather than this concept of liberal education embodying the essential nature of liberal education (the demise of which looms large) its relevance lies in its nature as an historically constructed and specific concept. It is not that higher education as liberal education is under threat in the face of the end of liberalism, but that liberalism itself has been, and continues to be, *transformed*.

Liberal society has not taken a static form and we can identify certain periods which mark transitions within modern liberal society. Liberalism is distinguished from other forms of political organisation in three quite specific ways. First, it is only within liberalism that the rights of the individual define him/her individually as self-determining and self-possessing. This is the idea that I refer to in chapter Two, in which I cite MacPherson's work on the possessive individual, where the individual is constructed as being in full possession and control of all that he/she embodies both physically and in terms of capacity. Because of this self-ownership the individual has no responsibility in relation to others, other than that encountered in the pursuit of his/her own interests. Here then is the individual in full control of him/herself and thus in full control of the possibility of self-realisation. The second significant factor which marks liberalism as distinct from its precursors is that the growth of liberalism has historical coincidence with the development of the idea of private property. Thus, the individual is defined as the accompaniment of private property and has legal standing in relation to that property; the individual is legally defined as a private person. Indeed in order for there to be such a concept as private property it is necessary to conceive of the individual

as a legal entity. The final point marking the specific nature of liberalism is that the development of private property had a history and impetus of its own such that it was not determined by the development of liberalism.

The key point here is that the nineteenth century transition from classic liberalism to liberal democracy must be understood as a process which was at the same time both continuing and new. This was the period in which rights of citizenship were extended into a new structure and included those sections of the community previously excluded, that is the propertyless working classes. Citizenship was extended regardless of the ownership of private property. This nineteenth century transition from classic liberalism to liberal democracy was a period in which the real tensions inherent in liberalism became apparent. Liberalism, which, on the one hand, demands the formal establishment of all people as *equivalent individuals* in full possession of all that they embody and who are subject to regulation of the market as the logical means to “orderly human relations”, on the other hand, inherently bears the extension of *inequality*. This is because, although market relations are founded on the notion of exchange between individuals of equivalents, the participants do not enter the market place with equivalent possessions: some individuals own no land or capital and only have their capacity to labour to exchange. MacPherson points out that this inequality presented no problems as long as the law of the market was universally accepted.

So long as everyone was subject to the determination of a competitive market, and so long as this apparently equal subordination of individuals to the determination of the market was accepted as rightful, or inevitable, by virtually everybody, there was a sufficient basis for rational obligation of all men to a political authority which could maintain and enforce the only possible orderly human relations, namely market relations (MacPherson: 1962, 272).

Until the mid-nineteenth century this acceptance prevailed, along with the “cohesion of self-interests, among all those ... [with] a voice in choosing the government” (MacPherson: 1962,273). The transition in the form of liberalism to a liberal democratic extension of rights, from men of property, to whom they were initially restricted in the seventeenth century, to the entire population by the early twentieth century, meant that the inherent tensions of liberalism became increasingly apparent: no longer did those in the position to choose the governing body have unequivocally shared interests. Furthermore, the nature of market competition “determines what ...[the individual] will

get for what they have to offer” and competition is such that the return to the individual “registers the net amount of their own powers that has been transferred to others (or whose benefit or product has been transferred to others), or the net amount of others’ that they have transferred to themselves (MacPherson: 1962, 57)”. With the growth of class consciousness of the industrial working class in the nineteenth century, liberal assumptions about the law of the market as the natural order of society began to be challenged and the tension of liberalism, in its form of liberal democracy, became increasingly acute. P.S. Atiyah points out in his work on *The Rise and Fall of Freedom of Contract*:

There is little doubt that ... it was the arrival of democracy which had finally spelled the doom of arguments based on *laissez-faire* and freedom of contract. For freedom of contract in general presupposed a faith in the existing distribution of wealth, and a belief in the virtues of individual effort and competition, both of which were fundamentally rejected by the newly enfranchised majority. They believed, on the contrary, that the existing inequalities of wealth were fundamentally unacceptable and naturally this meant that they saw freedom of contract simply as a means of preserving the existing inequalities (Atiyah 1979, 589).

This period of transformation in liberal society is of particular interest to this work because it is also the era which marks the beginnings of mass education in modern society. Furthermore, this was the period in which the idea of liberal education, as it has become idealised today, was formed. As we have seen in chapter Two there is a strong case for the arguments that connect the establishment of mass primary education in England to the real shift in the form of liberal society, that is, the extension of the franchise. The new middle classes were certainly aware of the need to enlist the support of the masses in their own struggle for a place in political decision making: education of the working class, which fostered notions of civil duty and responsibility, appeared essential to ensuring that once they gained the franchise they would recognise and endorse the middle classes as their legitimate political representatives. Furthermore, there is evidence that the significant involvement of sections of the working class in establishment and control of their own educational means (for example working men’s clubs and collectives) raised the possibility of working class unrest and agitation: such cases presented to the owners of capital the necessity of state controlled provision and content of education. Ironically this is the very scenario which John Stuart Mill warns

must be avoided in his 1859 essay *On Liberty*, where he argues against direct state provision:

A general State education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another: and as the mould in which it casts them is that which pleases the predominant power in the government, whether this be a monarch, a priesthood, an aristocracy, or the majority of the existing generation; in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendency to one over the body (Mill 1972, 161).

The very case Mill identifies becomes necessary in the same historical moment as he issues his caution.

The steps towards establishing mass education were taken in the same period as the struggle over what constituted a liberal education forced it to accommodate a transition in the form of liberalism: the language of the rationale for all levels of mass education has consistently reflected the liberal democratic terrain. Although the essential idea of liberal education as being education of the possessive/liberal individual was unchallenged by the transition to liberal democracy, the ideal liberal individual within liberal democracy was not that of Locke's genial gentleman. By the late nineteenth century the ability to conduct oneself in polite circles was no longer the litmus test of the successful liberal individual. The greater complexity of decision making implicit within the liberal democratic state occurred at the same time as liberal theorists were setting out arguments for the abandonment of classical studies in favour of those fields of study which fostered the development of individuals who embodied powers of leadership and governance. Such powers, they maintained, would only be developed by the pursuit of skills of rational debate and acquisition of fields of knowledge relevant to both the expansion of democracy and the new industrial world. The transition to liberal democracy brought a new set of determinants of the appropriate social leader. The self-regulating and disciplined individual was still at the heart of these requirements, but democracy meant that it was no longer simply a case of being acknowledged by one's social peers as suitably accomplished for a place in the political and administrative machinery. The demands of liberal democracy were such that in order to gain their legitimacy as the decision makers, leaders needed to exhibit the ability to pursue rational discussion and debate towards the achievement of collective social ends. The earlier

era's valuing of the capacity to work well in polite society was no longer valid in a greatly expanded appraising public.

What is more, the transition to liberal democracy in the late nineteenth century necessitated a deepening complexity of the state and marked growth in administrative structures which were significantly taken up with the political administration of the class relation. For example, Atiyah explains the significance of workmen's compensation laws in the late nineteenth century where, following a number of cases brought against employers, "the subject ... largely passed out of the area of private contract into that of the modern administrative processes", worker compensation was catered for under insurance from 1897 (Atiyah 1979, 703-8). In a similar vein the establishment of legislation to provide for limited liability and the joint stock company in 1855 and 1862 represented the setting up of administrative procedures necessary to regulate relations between the owners of capital. This era of the end of *laissez faire* liberalism was the same era as that in which the idea of liberal education as it is seems to be represented in the Oxbridge ideal was formed. This was a liberal education increasingly defined in terms of the necessity to create an elite political administration. The nineteenth century witnessed a consistent barrage of criticism of the role of the classics in the ancient universities. First articulated by the philosophic radicals at the turn of the century the war on the classics continued to be waged by men like Thomas Huxley in the 1820s, and John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer in the 1860s. The rejection of the centrality of the classics was accompanied by the dismissal of the earlier Georgian distaste for debate and contestation; the nineteenth century advocates of liberal education were abundantly aware of the role these skills played in the development of rationality and leadership so essential to such an elite political administration.

Thus, the late nineteenth century construction of the idea of liberal education was not developed in an historical vacuum, as contemporary idealisation of the concept demands, but was contested and debated, and some form of consensus was reached, at the same time as liberal society itself was being radically reformed. The formalisation of liberal education as education of the self-disciplined, self-regulating and rational individual, through the Oxbridge based civil service entrance examinations after 1870, contributed to the sense of it as a non-instrumental education directed towards individual

self-fulfilment, and it is this idea which has cast its shadow forward from the golden age of liberal democracy as an expression of an absolute. In reality, however, it was formed upon the shifting sand of liberalism and the development of capitalism and has no firm foundations.

The transformation of liberalism did not come to a halt with the accomplishment of liberal democracy in the early years of the twentieth century, similarly the content and form of education was not a static process. The tensions of liberal democracy were such that throughout the early decades of the twentieth century there was a tendency towards an increasingly complex administrative structure. At the same time, the intensification of competition between, and concentration of, capitals, demanded an expansion in the number of administrative and technical workers. As liberalism transformed from liberal to social democracy the political administration became less and less adequate to meeting the needs of social administration:<sup>1</sup> the establishment of social democratic institutions such as pensions and unemployment benefits, and the extension of institutions established under liberal democracy, such as education and health provision, required an expanding public administration. Similarly, the administrative requirements of business corporations were changing. Sheldon Wolin notes a changing emphasis in American Business Schools in the period:

The attack on economic rationalism in the name of social solidarity acquires importance because it was so universal ... Unless this is appreciated it is otherwise quite puzzling why, for example a highly influential educational institution, such as the Harvard Business School, has for the past few decades consistently lectured present and future business executives on the urgency of revising the naïve belief that a corporation or a business is to be administered solely by the standards of profit and productivity. The basic tenet of the new business creed is: "The manager is neither managing men nor managing work ... he is administering a social system" (Wolin 1960, 403).

For the most part, until the 1940s in Australia the labour force demands of a growth in state administration and private industry were met by the expansion of educational participation, the growth in schooling retention rates and the establishment of teachers colleges. By the early years of the second world war, however, it became abundantly

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<sup>1</sup> This was the era in which progressives, such as Thorsten Veblen (1921), and a little later James Burnham (1945) speculated upon the capacities of the new technical and administrative elite workers as the potential path towards more efficient and less inequitable society.



clear that there was a shortfall in the production of highly skilled and technical labour and the state took decisive action in encouraging university enrolments in those fields. It was this era in which educational provision in Australia fully began to take the form of the social democratic institution in which it existed by the end of the long boom. As we have seen in chapter Five, university education was a central part of this new project of creating the technical and economic managers so essential to the level of growth necessary for the maintenance of the social democratic consensus. Education had become caught up in the process of providing the recruits for increased administrative requirements of the state, both as economic managers and the expansion of social welfare, and as managers of the corporate sector and the growing scientific and technical expertise in demand in the period of economic growth. Such a process demanded participation from an expanded sector of the community and positive steps were taken in the provision of scholarships to encourage children from socio economic groups previously poorly represented. Whilst the initial arguments for expansion were expressed more as the need to make efficient use of the untapped resources of able young people rather than the social democratic language of equality of opportunity, there was a strong commitment amongst some members of the government and administrative elite that universities were the sites at which the skills and expertise necessary to social democracy would be forged. By the 1960s, and the establishment of a binary higher education system, higher education in Australia had undoubtedly become committed to promotion of the social democratic agenda.<sup>2</sup> As a social democratic institution this increased provision of higher education was held out to those with previously limited access to higher education as the path to social mobility and economic advancement. It is important to note that the expansion of higher education not only involved expansion of participation but also an extension of the areas of studies, so that the idea of professionalism which had previously been restricted to the liberal professions such as medicine and law increasingly incorporated new fields, (for example, physiotherapy, teaching, librarianship, accountancy and so on) all of which adopted the moral and ethical dimensions of professional work. The adoption of the raiments of 'the professional' worker played a powerful role in incorporating the new higher education

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<sup>2</sup> See chapter Five for discussion of the establishment of the ANU as central mark of the social democratic push in Australian higher education.

candidates: those new groups of educated people who originated from the working classes were effectively separated from their traditional class moorings.

In this period the idea of education still embodied the ideal of education for self-fulfilment, but, it had become almost suspended or even fetishised in that it had come to be understood in rather a different sense than its initial form in the nineteenth century. Rather than representing the means to the possibility of self-realisation of a self-directed possessive individual, by the end of the long boom it seemed to have taken an increasingly economic dimension. The essential economic rationality of the extension of education to new groups who accepted it as the means to mobility and increased economic well being is testament to the social democratic identification of education as an economic asset.

The era which culminates in Australian education as the Dawkins era is far from being a national aberration brought about by philistines and single minded instrumentalists with no commitment to liberal education. It is part of a world-wide shift which is both a sharp break with the preceding decades of educational development in the era of social democracy and the continuation of that which was already firmly established – that is liberalism. The break with social democracy occurred in the 1970s at the end of the long boom and was marked by the much tighter economic policies necessary to respond to crisis. In Australia in relation to higher education this became evident from the mid 1970s with the initial attempts to stall the rapid growth in funding, the subsequent attacks upon progressive (social democratic) educational philosophy and the consistent shift towards policies of restructuring, and the rhetoric of efficiency and effectiveness. The end of this social democratic period necessitated a political shift to the right. The alliances established between the trade unions and mainstream left wing parties in social democratic countries were too intricately connected to allow the necessary shifts without such a break. This shift towards the right was frequently seen by its protagonists as a revival of classical liberal values – indeed it took on the classical liberal term of economic rationalism. Such analysis, however, denies the reality that this new era of post social democratic liberalism is not a revival but the state of a very different world of the internationalisation of capital and the necessity for national governments to introduce stringent economic reforms.

An outstanding characteristic of this period was to reduce budget deficits and bring the state sector under tight financial control which meant constraints upon government expenditure particularly in those areas which were perceived to be most heavy. These areas, (for example, education, health and the like) were increasingly viewed in economic terms. The inability of the organised left to resist subsequent attacks as a result of the alliances of social democracy meant that there was an absence of effective resistance. In Australia it can be argued that the absence of resistance was so profound as to take the form of complicity in the attacks. As we have seen from chapter Two the striking of a Prices and Wages Accord with government and business incorporated the bulk of the trade union movement into an agenda of wages restraint and renegotiation of the social wage in ways which not only facilitated a real decline in wages throughout the 1980s, but also legitimated a reformulation of the relationship between education and employment such that educational outcomes were decreasingly defined in terms of educational achievements and increasingly defined as the ability to exchange one's skills in the market place.

The failure to formulate a critique of the erosion of the social democratic alliance was not restricted to the organised left. As we have seen from chapter Seven, the critique that might have been developed within the sociology of education was absent. The one discipline within the academy that should have been able to present a consistent, coherent and popular critique, was, for historical reasons connected to its development, unprepared and readily disarmed in the face of arguments promoting market reforms masquerading as expanded and more equitable provision. In a very recent paper Rob Moore points out the problem of British sociology of education and the quite obvious differences between "critical sociology of education" and "sociology for education".

A proper understanding of how education works and the work it can do is politically urgent. In their different ways, sociologies for education overestimate education's capacity to affect social inequalities by exaggerating its role in reproducing them. ... Where education cannot compensate for society educational reform should not serve as a political substitute for direct social reform (Moore 1966, 159).

This too has been precisely the case in Australia where sociology concerned with education has been institutionally dominated by sociology for education. A critical sociology of education has been limited to a few voices who run the risk, as Moore

points out, of “undermining cherished positions within the field – the progressive teacher, the feminist teacher, the anti-racist teacher” (Moore 1996, 159). This stunted development in educational sociology has carried over from its initial focus of schooling to that of the university. Not only has the invoking of equity arenas into the expansion program disarmed the debate, but through research funds attached to promotion of excellence in teaching as an arm of the quality agenda many academics have been incorporated into it.

For all of these reasons, I argue that critique of the attacks upon education expressed by the advocates of the ideals of liberal education is a moral position only. Unlike the nineteenth century advocates of education for self-realisation, the late twentieth century idealisation does not even offer a functional use. The moral position moves from its suspended fetishised location to one which is identified as elitist and irrational. This is the moment of the juggernaut, to which Keynes refers in *Essays in Persuasion* (1972), where market rationality becomes the defining criterion. Market rationality is the ultimate rationality. This is a position which has never been challenged within liberalism; whilst liberals may adopt moral posturing about it, they have never challenged the property relations upon which it is predicated. This is the basis of why, in the era of market democracy, governments argue that the market demands greater output but that output must be achieved within the parameters of efficiency and effectiveness. Education becomes part of the economy; it operates entirely within market relations and it is this to which we must direct our consternation. The problem we face in the university of the next decades will not be the drive for instrumentalism per se – surely we have imagination enough to perceive the possibility of a form of social relations in which *instrumentalism* means the same thing as *socially useful* – but that the drive is for instrumentalism within the context of market relations.

Table A4.1 – The Sydney University  
The General Account, 1851-1940: Income Trends

Year	NSW Govt grants	Commonwealth Govt Grants	Fee Income	Private Foundation Income	Sundry Income	Total Income
1851	£ 5,000	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 5,000
1853	5,000	-	-	-	-	5,000
1860	5,000	-	217	-	230	5,447
1870	5,000	-	246	-	100	5,346
1880	6,500	-	457	374	100	7,431
1890	18,634) 61%)	-	5,427) 18%)	6,242) 20%)	252) 1%)	30,555) 100%)
1900	12,583) 38%)	-	9,840) 29%)	10,975) 33%)	100	33,498) 100%)
1910	18,800) 34%)	-	18,354) 33.3%)	17,791) 32.2%)	295) 0.5%)	55,240) 100%)
1920	57,874) 44%)	600* 0.5%)	33,324) 25%)	24,512) 18.5%)	15,670) 12%)	131,984) 100%)
1930	70,358) 42%)	2,804) 2%)	49,460) 30%)	40,145) 24%)	3,834) 2%)	166,601) 100%)
1940	102,504) 38%)	5,967) 2%)	100,712) 37%)	57,803) 21%)	6,003) 2%)	272,989) 100%)

\* Commonwealth Government Grants commenced in 1919 with an annual grant for a Chair in Oriental Studies followed by grants from 1926 onwards for a Chair in Anthropology and from 1938 for a Chair in Aeronautical Engineering

Source: Turney *et al* 1991, 655.

Table A 4.2 - Income of Australian Universities  
1901 and 1935

	New South Wales		Victoria		Adelaide		Tasmania		Queensland		West Aust	
	1901	1935	1901	1935	1901	1935	1901	1935	1901	1935	1901	1935
Government Grant	£ 9,800	£ 57,050	£ 15,750	£ 55,550	£ 6,556	£ 55,100	£ 4,000	£ 12,770	£ 25,118	£ 26,549		
Lecture and Exam fees	11,619	74,640*	9,000	96,443	7,238	28,236	748	4,042	22,663	1,3791		
Other Sources	14,347	74,220	4,750	51,560	5,230	28,236	969	2,041	20,153	6,450§		
Total Income	35,766	205,910	29,500	203,553	19,024	111,572	5,717	18,853	67,934	34,378		
Total Expenditure		201,342†		200,573		109,187		18,438	63,713	34,539		

\* Receipts from public examinations not included

† Expenditure upon public examinations not included

‡ Students pay no fees to the University of Western Australia

§ Returns from private foundations for students' bursaries not included.

¶ The university acts only as a trustee in respect of such income.

Source: Portus 1939, 183.

Table A5.1-australian University Enrolments

Year	Number of Enrolments	Period (years)	Percentage Growth pa
1920	7,900		
1928	8,000	8	0
1940	14,700	12	6
1944	15,000	4	0
1947	30,500	3	26
1955	30,300	8	0
1962	63,300	7	10
1972	128,700	10	7
1976	154,000	4	4
1978	161,000	2	2

Source: Karmel ( 1978), 1.

Table A5.2 – Full-time, Part-time and External Students in Universities  
1961 to 1971  
And Colleges of Advanced Education 1968 to 1974

Year	FULL-TIME		PART-TIME		EXTERNAL		TOTAL	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
<b>Universities</b>								
1961	30,811	53.4	27,071	36.5	5,790	10.0	57,672	100.0
1962	34,698	54.8	22,455	35.5	6,164	9.7	63,317	100.0
1963	38,900	56.3	23,783	34.4	6,391	9.3	69,074	100.0
1964	44,327	58.2	25,316	33.2	6,545	8.6	76,188	100.0
1965	49,916	59.9	26,492	31.8	6,912	8.3	83,320	100.0
1966	56,037	61.4	28,083	30.8	7,152	7.8	91,272	100.0
1967	58,325	61.2	29,798	31.2	7,257	7.6	95,380	100.0
1968	62,735	61.8	31,807	31.3	6,995	6.9	101,537	100.0
1969	68,348	62.3	34,297	31.3	7,017	6.4	109,662	100.0
1970	73,645	63.1	35,139	30.1	7,994	6.9	116,778	100.0
1971	79,437	64.2	36,022	29.1	8,317	6.7	123,776	100.0
1972	83,595	65.0	36,808	28.6	8,265	6.4	128,668	100.0
1973	86,116	64.7	38,481	28.9	8,529	6.4	133,126	100.0
1974	93,005	65.1	40,845	28.6	9,009	6.3	142,859	100.0
<b>Colleges of Advanced Education</b>								
1968	11,860	41.5	16,539	57.8	216	0.8	28,615	100.0
1969	12,643	39.5	18,712	58.5	637	2.0	31,992	100.0
1970	15,818	42.0	20,690	54.9	1,184	3.1	37,692	100.0
1971	19,775	44.6	23,192	52.3	1,384	3.1	44,351	100.0
1972	24,684	47.1	25,713	49.1	1,988	3.8	52,385	100.0
1973	29,917	48.6	28,457	46.2	3,203	5.2	61,577	100.0
1973(b)	58,098	61.1	31,705	33.3	5,324	5.6	95,127	100.0
1974(b)	65,116	60.8	35,618	33.2	6,453	6.0	107,187	100.0

Source: CAE (1975), 163.



Table A6.1 Number of Students in Tertiary Institutions, Australia  
Actual 1971 to 1975, Estimated 1976 to 1978

Year	Internal				External		Total	
	Full Time		Part-time		Number	Proportion of total	Number	Increase on Previous Year
	Number	Proportion of Total	Number	Proportion of Total				
<b>Universities</b>								
1971	78,632	64.1	35,719	29.1	8,317	6.8	122,668	
1972	82,833	64.9	36,548	28.6	8,264	6.5	127,645	4.1
1973	85,666	64.6	38,376	29.0	8,515	6.4	132,557	3.8
1974	92,578	65.1	40,714	28.6	9,008	6.3	142,300	7.4
1975	97,624	65.3	42,511	28.5	9,279	6.2	149,414	5.0
1976	101,285	65.2	43,495	28.0	10,645	6.8	155,425	4.0
1977	104,855	65.0	44,520	27.6	11,880	7.4	161,255	3.8
1978	107,750	64.8	45,375	27.3	13,165	7.9	166,290	3.1
<b>Colleges of Advanced Education (a)</b>								
1971	45,600	64.6	23,550	33.4	1,400	2.0	70,550	
1972	53,659	66.0	25,713	31.6	1,988	2.4	81,360	15.3
1973	59,529	61.7	31,705	32.8	5,324	5.5	96,558	18.7
1974	67,280	61.5	35,618	32.6	6,435	5.9	109,351	13.2
1975	78,761	62.6	38,773	30.8	8,316	6.6	125,850	15.1
1976	87,050	60.1	48,600	33.6	9,200	6.3	144,850	15.1
1977	95,300	59.3	54,900	34.2	10,450	6.5	160,650	10.9
1978	102,700	58.9	60,550	34.7	11,150	6.4	174,400	8.6
<b>Other Tertiary Institutions</b>								
1971	124,232	64.3	59,269	30.7	9,717	5.0	193,218	
1972	136,492	65.3	62,261	29.8	10,252	4.9	209,005	8.2
1973	145,195	63.4	70,080	30.6	13,839	6.0	229,115	9.6
1974	159,858	63.6	76,332	30.3	15,461	6.1	251,651	9.8
1975	176,385	64.1	81,284	29.5	17,595	6.4	275,264	9.4
1976	188,335	62.7	92,095	30.7	19,845	6.6	300,275	9.1
1977	200,155	62.1	99,420	30.9	22,330	7.0	321,905	7.2
1978	210,450	61.8	105,925	31.1	24,315	7.1	340,690	5.8

(a) Includes teachers colleges which became colleges of advanced education in 1973. Figures for teachers colleges are partly estimated

Source: Universities Commission 1975, 75.

Table A6.2 – Public Expenditure on Education by Sector  
1961-62 to 1976-77

	1961-62 (\$m)	1967-68 (\$m)	1976-77 (\$m)
Schools	289	509	2,906
Universities	73	149	651
Other Post-Secondary <sup>1</sup>	32	92	783
Other <sup>2</sup>	36	51	392
<b>Total</b>	429	801	4,732
<b>Total as per cent of GDP</b>	2.9	3.3	5.8

- 1 Includes expenditure in the categories 'Vocational' and 'Other Higher' as used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics
- 2 Includes expenditure on general administration, research, migrant education, transportation of students etc

Source: Williams (1979), Vol.1, 34

Table A 6.3 – Selected Commonwealth Budget Outlays 1975-76 and 1980-81

ITEM	1975-76		1980-81		* Amount required in 1980-81 to maintain real value of 1975-76 expenditure	
	(\$m)	Index	(\$m)	Index	(\$m)	Index
<b>Social Wage Items</b>						
Education	1894	100	2867	151.4	3180	167.9
Health	2953	100	3644	123.4	4958	167.9
Housing	562	100	366	65.1	944	167.9
Urban and Regional Development	408	100	105	25.7	685	167.9
Culture and Recreation	253	100	383	151.4	425	167.9
<b>Sub-total</b>	6070	100	7365	121.3	10192	167.9
Social Security and Welfare	5030	100	9890	196.6	8445	167.9
<b>Total Social Wage</b>	11100	100	17255	155.5	18637	167.9
Industry Assistance and Development	350	100	825	235.7	588	167.9
<b>**Total Budget Outlay</b>	21861	100	36073	164.9	36705	167.90

\* Calculated on the basis of C.P.I. increases of 13%, 13.8%, 9.5%, 8.2% and 10.2% for the years 1975-76 to 1979-80 respectively. For example, the 1976-77 Index is the base year index (100) plus 13% of that index (13), which equals 113; the 1977-78 index is the 1976-77 index (113) plus 13.8% of that index (15.59), which equals 128.59; and so on until we arrive at the 1980-81 index of 167.9. From this index the amount required in 1980-81 to maintain the level of 1975-76 expenditure is calculated by simple proportion. It should be remembered that the C.P.I. is not the most accurate means of calculating the amount required in 1980-81 to maintain the 1975-76 levels of expenditure. The C.P.I. regimen, developed to provide an estimate of changes in consumer goods prices, can hardly be representative of changes in the costs of educational provision. However, it does provide a rough and easily recognised guide and a means of comparison.

\*\* This entry is for the total Budget outlay and, as such, is not a summation of the expenditure items selected for this table.

Source: Freeland and Sharp 1981, 66.

Table A6.4 UK Government Expenditure on Education and Labour Market Measures  
1974-1981 (£(m) 1979)

	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81*
<b>Education</b>							
Current expenditure:							
Secondary schools	2,246	2,316	2,373	2,385	2,470	na§	2,548
Further education and teacher training	1,139	1,164	1,102	1,037	1,057	na§	1,081
Universities	768	778	780	664	682	na§	674
Total†	7,972	8,217	8,249	8,079	8,290	8,429	8,079
Capital expenditure:							
Primary, secondary and other schools	648	556	543	430	348	na§	270
Further education and teacher training	119	111	101	82	73	na§	76
Universities	124	147	127	83	84	na§	97
Total†	940	880	799	618	534	510	460
<b>Employment and Training:</b>							
General labour market services	32	36	43	45	60	109	106
Special employment measures	-1	10	130	268	254	210	168
Manpower Services Commission	212	346	426	469	512	557	580
Total†	416	644	855	1,035	1,070	1,121	1,123
Total program expenditure‡	70,274	71,166	68,587	65,622	69,165	71,800	71,051

\* Planned expenditure

† Includes other elements of expenditure not shown separately including unallocated contingency reserve

‡ Data not available

§ Source: Lindley (1981), 7.

Table A6.5 – Student Load in Higher Education, 1975 to 1986

Year	University	Advanced (a) Education	Higher Education
1975	121,200	101,200	222,400
1976	125,500	110,000	235,500
1977	128,500	114,200	242,800
1978	127,900	120,100(b)	248,000
1979	126,600	123,200	249,800
1980	126,700	123,200	249,900
1981	128,600	124,400	253,000
1982	130,400(c)	125,700	256,100
1983	133,100	130,600	263,700
1984	136,300	134,700	271,000
1985	138,600(d)	140,400(d)	279,000
1986 (preliminary)	142,500(e)	146,900(e)	289,400

- (a) Includes advanced education in TAFE institutions other than in the ACT
- (b) Includes Avondale (education courses only) McAuley and Signadou Colleges from 1978
- (c) Includes the Institutes of Advanced Education at Wollongong and James Cook Universities in the university sector from 1982
- (d) Excludes student loan in basic nursing courses funded by State Governments for 1985 and 1986
- (e) Excludes additional intakes funded by Victorian Government in 1986

Source: CTEC (1986), 275.

**Table A6.6 Commonwealth Grants for Higher Education by Sector  
And Category of Grants, 1975 to 1985**  
(estimated December/December quarter 1985 cost levels)

Year	Recurrent \$m	Equipment \$m	Operating \$m	Capital \$m	Total \$m
<b>University</b>					
1975 (a)	1,137	64	1,201	134	1,335
1976	1,185	40	1,224	70	1,294
1977 (b)	1,213	53	1,266	74	1,340
1978	1,232	59	1,292	52	1,343
1979	1,245	58	1,304	38	1,341
1980 (c)	1,246	58	1,304	32	1,337
1981 (d)	1,252	59	1,311	16	1,327
1982 (e)	1,252	63	1,315	19	1,335
1983	1,255	63	1,318	21	1,339
1984	1,264	63	1,327	27	1,353
1985	1,280	64	1,344	30	1,374
<b>Advanced Education</b>	670	33	702	262	965
1975 (f)	729	21	750	179	929
1976	766	29	795	158	953
1977 (g)	782	32	815	123	937
1978 (h)	805	32	838	76	913
1979 (i) (j)	810	28	837	54	891
1980 (k)	804	28	832	38	870
1981	789	30	819	28	847
1982	789	30	819	34	853
1983	797	30	827	34	861
1984	829	32	861	43	904
1985					
<b>Higher Education</b>	1,807	97	1,904	396	<u>2,300</u>
1975	1,914	61	1,974	249	<u>2,223</u>
1976	1,979	82	2,061	232	<u>2,293</u>
1977	2,015	92	2,106	174	<u>2,281</u>
1978	2,051	91	2,141	113	<u>2,254</u>
1979	2,056	86	2,142	86	<u>2,228</u>
1980	2,056	87	2,143	55	<u>2,197</u>
1981	2,041	93	2,134	47	<u>2,181</u>
1982	2,044	93	2,136	56	<u>2,192</u>
1983	2,061	93	2,154	60	<u>2,214</u>
1984	2,109	96	2,205	73	<u>2,278</u>
1985					

Any discrepancies between sums of components and totals are due to rounding.

- (a) Prior to 1977, the recurrent grant for the Australian National university included a provision for equipment purchases. The total equipment grants for 1975 and 1976 include estimates of this provision.

- (b) In 1977, Deakin University was established.
- (c) In 1980, the School of forestry at Creswick was amalgamated with the Melbourne University.
- (d) In 1981, courses were transferred from the Tasmanian college of Advanced Education to the University of Tasmania.
- (e) In 1982, The Wollongong Institute of Education was amalgamated with the University of Wollongong and the Townsville CAE was amalgamated with James Cook University of North Queensland.
- (f) Prior to 1979, separate equipment grants were not provided for advanced education. The amounts shown for 1975 to 1978 are estimates.
- (g) In 1977 and 1978, advanced education courses in TAFE were funded through Commonwealth grants for TAFE. The amounts shown include funds provided
- (h) The Australian Maritime College received grants from 1980.
- (i) Avondale, McAuley and Signadou Colleges received grants from 1979.
- (j) The National Institute of Dramatic Art received grants between 1979 and 1981.
- (k) Financial assistance for the Northern Territory was provided from 1980.

Source: CTEC (1986), 276.

Table A6.7 Education and Training Expenditure in 1980  
(Percentage of GDP)

Country	Source of Funding		Total
	Public	Private*	
Australia	6.0	0.8	6.8
USA	7.2	1.5	8.7
Japan	5.9	1.9	7.8
West Germany	5.2	2.1	7.3

(\* ) Firms and individuals

Source: ACTU/TDC (1987), 123.



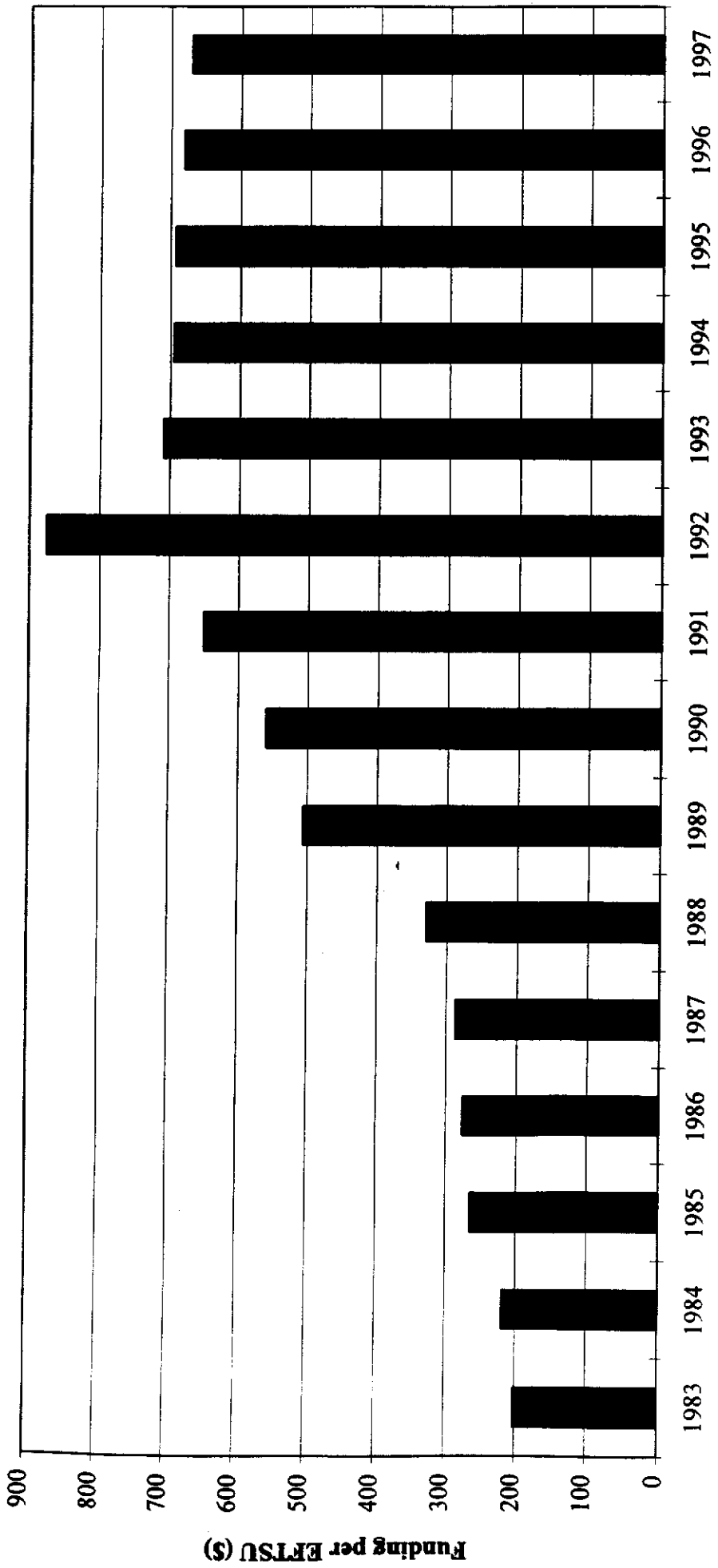
Table A6.8 -Student Load (Eftsu) for All Students by State, 1988 to 1994

	QLD	WA	SA	Tas	NT	ACT	Multi-States(a)	TOTAL
1988	96,780	48,243	31,642	27,188	7,058	1,480	12,196	328,972
1989	103,019	51,235	34,333	28,603	7,464	1,841	12,341	350,137
1990	111,348	60,044	37,486	31,510	8,234	2,077	13,874	383,838
1991	127,819	66,718	40,770	34,278	9,167	2,651	15,765	423,685
1992	123,498	69,758	42,356	34,854	9,665	2,997	16,720	440,540
1993	126,793	71,916	42,789	35,140	9,940	3,025	16,854	449,425
1994	127,131	74,102	43,458	35,666	10,060	3,104	16,607	453,309
% change on 1993	0.4%	3.0%	1.6%	1.5%	1.2%	2.6%	-1.5%	0.9%

(a) In 1991, the Catholic College of Education, Sydney, the Institute of Catholic Education (Victoria), McAuley College (Queensland and Singadou College of Education (ACT) merged to form the Australian Catholic University

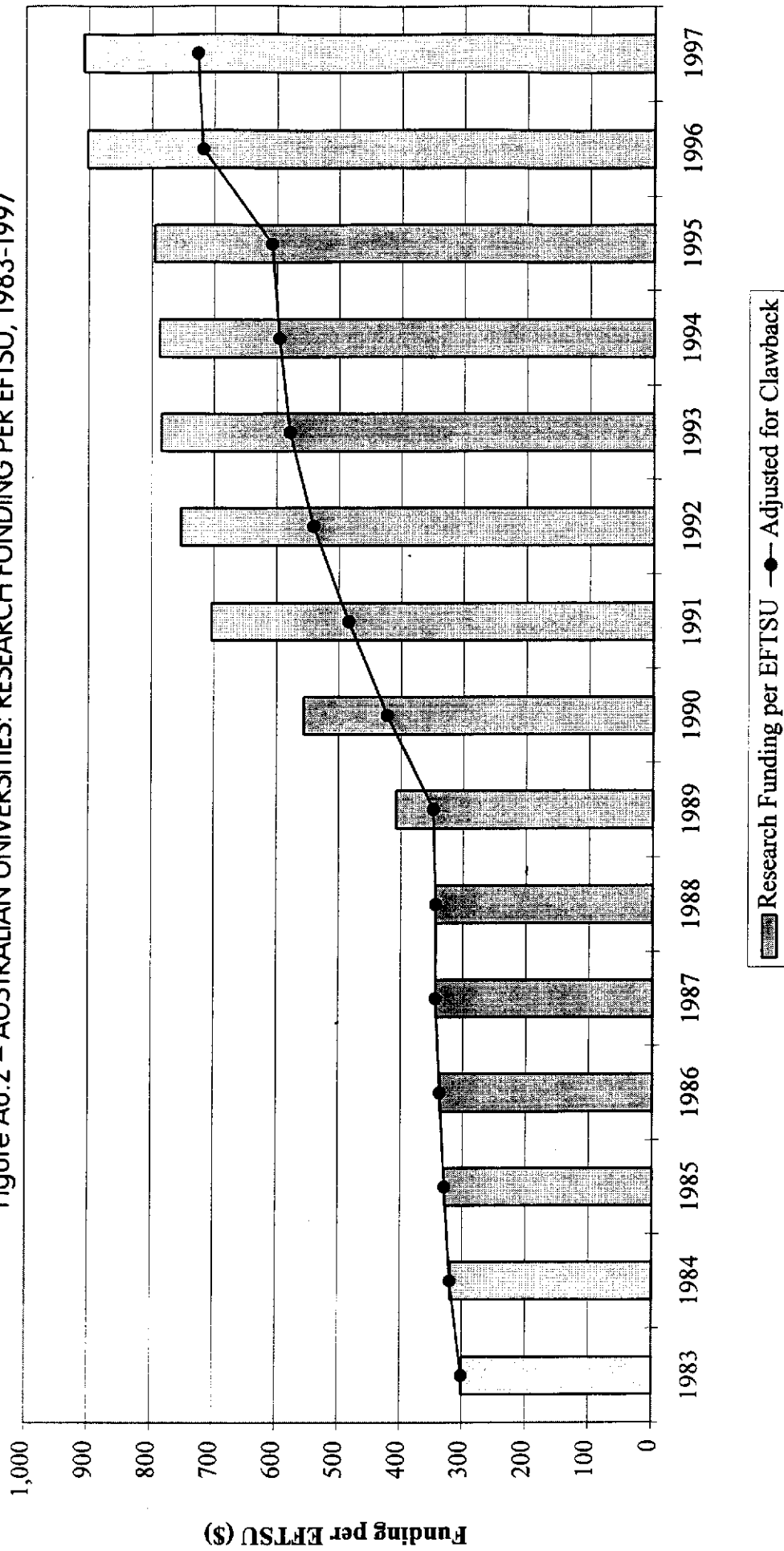
Source: DEET (1994), 47.

Figure A6.1 – AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES: CAPITAL FUNDING PER EFTSU, 1983-1997



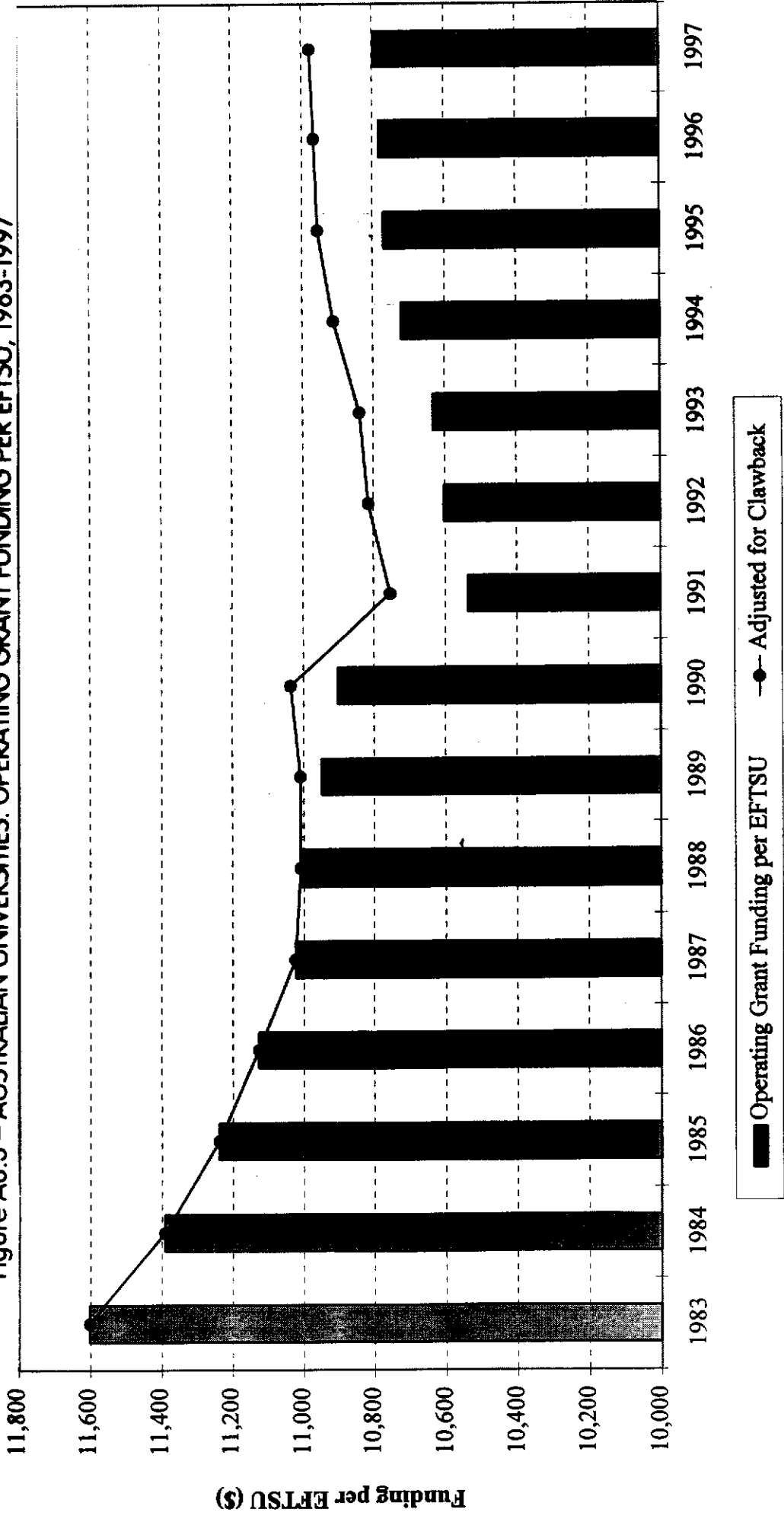
Source: DEET, (1995).

Figure A6.2 – AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES: RESEARCH FUNDING PER EFTSU, 1983-1997



Source: DEET, (1995).

Figure A6.3 – AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES: OPERATING GRANT FUNDING PER EFTSU, 1983-1997



Source: DEET, (1995).

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