THE UNBALANCING OF AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES

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> 'We university teachers have let our values slip and that is why the university is disintegrating around us. It will not come to life again as a true community, with a purpose of its own which it understands and believes in, until we, as individual persons and in our groups, set ourselves to the task of examining the foundations of our beliefs.' Sir Keith Hancock (1954)[1]

The Problem of Australian Academia in the 21st Century

Nearly fifty years after the eminent Australian historian, Sir Keith Hancock, raised the issue Australian Universities are in turmoil. Barely a week passes without news of underfunding, staff and student dissatisfaction or the intrusion of corporate demands into scholarly activity. The pages of papers like the *Australian Higher Education Supplement* teem with the jargon and rhetoric of educational privatisation and depict the bizarre commercialized offshoots of public universities. Student beer-drinking, no longer a diversion from study, becomes a constitutent part of a beer brewing course.[2] TV comedy shows like Peter Berner's *Backburner* exploit academic gyrations for an easy laugh. The Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson 2001 documentary, *Facing the Music*, graphically depicts the total demoralisation of the renowned Sydney University Music Department after persistent financial cuts. La Trobe University's Music Department, with an excellent research record, is abolished.[3] While Australian public opinion firmly rejects the entry of refuge-seeking 'boat people', it requires an influx of full fee-paying foreign students to shore up its ailing tertiary education structure.[4] Pressure is applied to adapt standards. A highly regarded geneticist is sacked at Wollongong opposing 'soft marking.'[5] Modern academia appears locked into an economic rationalist environment disfigured by a succession of corporate disasters. Are such complaints just 'nostalgia for better days' by academics, who, previously 'insulated from the world outside their gates, had missed

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[1]Keith Hancock, *Country and Calling* (London, Faber, 1954), p. 136.

[2]*Australian*, 3 October 2001 (Edith Cowan University).

[3]See Barry Jones, in *Symposium: Newsletter of the Australian Academy of the Humanities*, No. 12, May 1999, p. 6.

[4]Significantly, Professor Stephen Castles of Wollongong, an expert in refugees studies, had his funding for immigration studies slashed earlier in 2001. See *Sydney Moring Herald*, 8 January 2001.

[5]Nicholas Rothwell, 'Turbulent Teacher' (Ted Steele), Australian, 5-6 January 2001.

many opportunities to be agents for change in the wider community'?[6] To find what is amiss, we must go further than to request that economic rationalism be taken away and full government funding restored to academia. If we believe modern academic priorities to be flawed, we must, as Sir Keith Hancock suggested, examine 'the foundations of our beliefs.'

The time is appropriate for such reflection. The fearful destruction of the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001 and the reaction to it has caused extensive rethinking of issues that seemed comfortably closed. Can the market unaided by massive state intervention secure the requirements of the good life?[7] Does the postmodern insistence that there is no real world outside language need a reality check which might allow value systems to creep back?[8] The warning of W.B. Yeats is revived: 'The centre cannot hold/ and blind destruction is loosed upon the World.'[9] The quest for an intellectual 'centre' has exercised many of the greatest thinkers of the species and may well provide one of the best antidotes to a technologically awesome but intellectually barbaric world.

Often the 'Dawkins revolution'[10] of the 1980s is seen as the point of departure for a new and unacceptable Australian university system dominated by Government demands and reduced *per capita* funding. It is impossible to lay down a generally accepted blueprint for the true 'idea of a university' to which all tertiary institutions must conform. A scrutiny of the more recent and distant history of universities provides no 'Golden Age' to which we can return. Carl Becker, the eminent American historian, regarded Socrates' 5th century B.C. Athenian seminar as the ideal university: 'It had no organization. It was limited to essentials. It consisted of one professor and such students as he could beguile, at any time or place, to engage in discussing with him and each other such questions as the meaning of virtue and justice, the nature of the gods, and what is essential to the good life.' But Socrates himself lost his life tenure when current politicians disapproved of his teaching. As Becker said, 'the conflict symbolized by this event is perennial, and the community always holds the cup of hemlock, in one form or another, in reserve for those

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[6]Don McNicol in *Australian*, 28 November 2001.

[7]Robert Peston, 'War on Terror: The Economy', *New Statesman*, 1 October 2001. Quotes corporate giant Warren Buffett to the effect that 'the role of the state is not quite as insignificant as the proponents of globalised free market capitalism would like', especially when insurance is involved.

[8]Luke Slattery, 'Did September 11 mean the end of postmodern relativism?' *Australian*, 24 October 2001.

[9] Elspeth Probyn, 'Fallout from the World Trade Centre and Pentagon disaster', *Australian*, 19 September 2001.

[10]John Dawkins, Australian Education Minister, 1987-1991.

who teach too ardently or conspicuously facts or doctrines that are commonly regarded as a menace to the social order.'[11]

Our knowledge of Socrates is largely derived from Plato. From Plato's Academy for training statesmen in 386 B.C. to higher education in the 21st century, academia has maintained an uneasy relationship with current power politics. In the Middle Ages, the first universities, with the exception of professional schools such as law at Bologna and medicine at Salerno, were handmaidens of the Christian Church. Woe betide those advanced thinkers like 12th century Peter Abélard whose original thought and lifestyle challenged contemporary clerical norms. Castration for Abélard's affair with Héloise, again symbolises the intellectual's weakness against religious or political authority. Even the great Catholic Angelic Doctor, St Thomas Aquinas, was for a time suspected of heresy at the University of Paris. Becker explains the paradox that Medieval universities were 'singularly bound and yet curiously free' by the universal acceptance of Christianity. Scholars, 'by an ingenious use of logic, dialectic, and symbolism' could then reconcile their faith with new knowledge.[12] But tensions remained. According to the American economist, Thorstein Veblen, the 'unmitigated pragmatic aims' of these early universities were undermined by the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, 'as a work of scholarly supererogation by men whose ostensibly sole occupation was the promulgation of some line of salutary information.'[13] This was demonstrated before the Middle Ages by the Roman statesman, Cicero, who, justifying literature as training for his oratory, declared

> Though, even if there were no such great advantage to be reaped from it, and if it were only pleasure that is sought from these studies, still I imagine you would consider it a most reasonable and liberal employment of the mind: for other occupations are not suited to every time, nor to every age or place; but these studies are the food of youth, the delight of old age; the ornament of prosperity, the refuge and comfort of adversity; a delight at home, and no hindrance abroad; they are companions by night, and in travel, and in the country.[14]

By the 18th century, the great English medieval foundations, Oxford and Cambridge, not only maintained discriminatory religious tests but had sunk into sloth and decay, requiring the sharp lash of governmental intervention to restore some vigour. As, the Rev.

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[11]Carl L. Becker, *Freedom and Responsibility in the American Way of Life* (New York, Vintage, 1955), pp. 63-5.
[12]Becker, pp. 66-7.
[13]Thorstein Veblen, *The Higher Learning in America: A Memorandum on the Conduct of Universities by Businessmen* (New York, Hill and Wang, 1957 [1918]).
[14]'The Speech of M.T. Cicero for Aulus Licinius Archias, the Poet', a literal translation, *Select Orations of Cicero* (London, James Brodie, n.d.), p. 10.

H. Griffith, a 19th century critic, pointed out, if education was the pursuit of truth it was anomalous that Oxford imposed religious orthodoxy on new students. Echoing John Milton's *Areopagitica*,[15] Griffith declared, 'Truth, Sir, always does best when most free'.[16] The more eminent John Stuart Mill later developed this free market of ideas.[17]

Higher Education: Cultural of Instrumental?

If there never existed a university system built in heaven, throughout the ages many of humankind's greatest minds have grappled with questions of learning, teaching and their association with the good life. Tension has invariably existed between the 'instrumental,' or 'service station' objective of higher education and the 'cultural' role which emphasises the development of human beings to the fullest extent of their capacity, pursuing learning for its own sake.[18] Experience shows a satisfactory balance between the two is rarely maintained. On such substantive issues the ideological pendulum swings wildly. In economics a socialism seeking state control of life is superseded by ideological privatisation which insists on total freedom from state control. In art and literature rigidity of form and content give way to principled formlessness. Education is particularly liable to such oscillations.[19] An unrealistic insistence on learning for its own sake sometimes prevails; more often education is crudely determined by the immediate needs of a particular economy. Universities need a strong career orientation; the 'mission' of Plato's original Academy was the production of better rulers for the state. On the other hand, thinkers in all ages deny emphatically that training in a particular skill for entry to the job market is the main function of a university. For the Australian academic and essayist, Walter Murdoch, university education cleans the many windows of the mind. 'For practical breadwinning we need to enrol ourselves with the specialists; but we need not be one-eyed specialists.' Murdoch shows the close relationship between the 'service

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[15]'Let her and falsehood grapple; who ever knew truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter.' Milton, Areopagitaca: A Defence of the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, in Henry Morley, ed., *Famous Pamphlets* (London, Routledge, 1886), p. 73.

[16]Liverpool meeting to open Universities to all denominations, quoted in *Launceston Examiner*, 7 September 1854.

[17]See Seamus Miller in Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter*, p. 116.

[18]Sol Encel, 'The Social Role of Higher Education', in E.L. Wheelwright, ed., *Higher Education in Australia* (Sydney? 1965?), pp. 1-32.

[19]'Education seems particularly prone to wholesale changes of pedagogical fashion which brook no recognition of value in a previous practice. The costs of single-mindedness can be severe.' *New Zealand Herald* leader, 15 August 2001.

station' and 'cultural' approach when he claims that the most valuable achievements of humankind were those 'done by specialists who were also educated men.'[20]

Institutions of higher education have peculiar difficulty in balancing organisation and objectives. External authorities may intervene. Human weakness produces timeservers. Originally, churches and religious bodies were reluctant to loose their stranglehold on higher education. In the high Middle Ages, clerics, often the sole literate members of the community, happily monopolised universities. Many universities depended on endowments by wealthy individuals. Groups of privileged scholars co-opted their successors, ensuring a virtual freedom from extraneous intervention. Even today some wealthy institutions, like All Souls College, Oxford, originally established to pray for those fallen at the Battle of Agincourt, 1415,[21] can maintain, without any students, a scholarly aloofness from the demands of the academic market. At the other end of the scale, Scottish Universities have been traditionally dependent on their ability to attract sufficient student fees to provide a living for their professors.[22] Their position was not dissimilar to the early medieval student bands who took the initiative in enticing teachers of note and sacking them if they failed to live up to expectations. Only in the 19th century did the state, representing the community as a whole, become a major player in the finance and control of universities.

The Corruption of 18th Century Oxford and Cambridge

Inevitably he who pays the piper can demand a particular tune and politicians usually require a 'service station' melody.[23] But when endowments enable scholars to work to their own rhythm, the public does not always benefit. Churches naturally emphasise literary, philosophical and theological studies, while the needs of a particular clientele also have a considerable effect. In the 18th century, Oxford and Cambridge (or Oxbridge for short) required ordination and celibacy in many of their fellows. As Halévy

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[20]Walter Murdoch, *Speaking Personally* (Sydney, 1934), pp. 175-7.

[21]*Morning Chronicle*, quoted in *Launceston Examiner*, 2 November 1854.

[22]Robert Bell and Nigel Grant, *A Mythology of British Education: A Thorough Examination of a Choking System* (St Albans, Panther, 1974), p. 94.

[23]This was opposed by the Australian Universities Commission in its Sixth Report (May 1975): 'One of the roles of a university in a free society is to be the conscience and critic of that society; such a role cannot be fulfilled if the university is expected to be an arm of government policy.' Quoted by Peter Karmel, 'Funding Universities', in Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter*, p. 165.

pointed out, 'the vast majority of undergraduates were drawn from the nobility and gentry.' Studies in Latin and Greek allowed such classes, and the clerics and lawyers who served them, 'a sufficient stock of philosophic and historical commonplaces, a few tricks of oratory, and some reminiscences of the classics.'[24] Despite some exceptional alumni, the system provided little intellectual stimulus for the average don, or Oxbridge academic.

The most famous Oxbridge graduates were often an indictment of the system. In the 17th century Isaac Newton achieved most progress on his epoch-making theory of gravitation when Cambridge was closed down by the plague. John Milton at Christ's College, Cambridge, found the emphasis on the Greek and Roman classics irksome. By 1642 he was convinced that both Cambridge and Oxford were sick indeed.[25] The eminent English philosopher, John Locke, 'looked back, in after-life, with little gratitude on the somewhat dry course of studies which the University [Oxford] prescribed to its younger scholars.'[26] Even more significant, the 18th century doyen of modern economic rationalists, Adam Smith, an exhibitioner at Oxford before he obtained a chair at Glasgow, attributed the indolence of the former's professors to the fixed stipends which saved them the trouble of attracting students. He saw these older universities as 'sanctuaries in which exploded systems and obsolete prejudices found shelter and protection.'[27] Smith believed that the Scottish educational system which kept academics dependent on their students, was responsible for the 'superior intelligence and the providential, orderly habits of her people.'[28] Eric Hobsbawm agrees that 'the austere, turbulent, democratic universities of Calvinist Scotland', contrasted with 'intellectually null' Oxbridge.[29] A succession of brilliant Scotsmen enlivened the south. Though Britain's industrial revolution inventors were not generally inspired by universities, James Watt, designer of the crucially important steam engine, 'worked from the standpoint of theoretical, not merely of applied, science' in the laboratory of the University of Glasgow.[30] An advocate of education for practical use, Adam Smith himself was nevertheless aware that the love of system

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[24]Elie Halévy, *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1, *England in 1815* (London, Benn, 1961), p. 550.
[25]Arthur Gray, *Cambridge and its Story* (London, Methuen, 1912, pp. 198-9.
[26]Thomas Fowler, *John Locke* (London, 1880), p.6.
[27]W.J. Day, ed., *The Life and Letters of Edward Gibbon: with his History of the Crusades* (Chandos Classics, London, n.d.), pp. 25-6 and V.H.H. Green, *The Universities* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969), pp. 50 and 89.
[28]Encel, p. 1.
[29]Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe, 1789-1848* (London Abacus, 1999), p. 45.
[30] Halévy, *England in 1815*, p. 542.

building often motivated creative minds.[31]

Perhaps the most powerful indictment of Oxford at the end of the 18th century came from the renowned historian of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon, who spent fourteen months at Magdalen, one of the richest Oxford Colleges, founded by the Bishop of Winchester in the 15th Century. Here, surely, independence from outside control led to learning for its own sake. As Gibbon himself asked, 'is it unreasonable to expect that a body of literary men, devoted to a life of celibacy, exempt from a care of their own subsistence, and amply provided with books, should devote their leisure to the prosecution of study, and that some of the effects of their studies should be manifested to the world.'[32]

Gibbon, though only fourteen, as a wealthy gentleman commoner was privileged to eat at high table and associate with the staff. He soon discovered that these 'monks of Magdalen', unmarried while fellows, wasted their days at chapel, hall, coffee house and common room. 'From the toil of reading, or thinking, or writing, they had absolved their conscience' and 'their conversation stagnated in a round of college business, Tory politics, personal anecdotes, and private scandal: their dull and deep potations excused the brisk intemperance of youth'. As for the University professors, most 'had given up altogether even the pretence of teaching.' Gibbon not surprisingly disliked the collegiate atmosphere of Oxford, which many overseas enthusiasts have attempted to recreate through residential colleges in unpromising sectors of the globe. 'The irksomeness of a cloistered life repeatedly tempted me to wander' and he frequently 'eloped from Oxford'. Far better, he believed, was the Continental (and Scottish) system in which students lived in town and preserved some connection with the real world.

Nor was the famous Oxbridge one-on-one tutorial system any more satisfactory to the future historian. For the first few weeks, Gibbon attended his tutor Dr Waldegrave only to receive 'a dry and literal interpretation' of the text of a play by the Roman dramatist, Terence. When Gibbon ceased to turn up for instruction, the tutor appeared unconscious of his 'absence or neglect'. Only at home for the long vacation did Gibbon's interest in books revive. On his return to Oxford his new tutor 'well remembered that he had a salary to receive, and only forgot that he had a duty to perform.' Gibbon visited this

[31]Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (London, A. Millar, 1759), p. 351.
[32]Day,*The Life and Letters of Edward Gibbon*, p. 26.

worthy only once in eight months. Receiving no religious instruction in what was purportedly an Anglican college, the young man converted to Roman Catholicism and was promptly expelled from Magdalen. Education was lax, but bigotry strong. Gibbon's stint at the College 'proved the fourteen months the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life'. He won no degree from an institution to which 'the obvious methods of public exercises and examinations were totally unknown', and proceeded to more effective study under a tactful tutor at Lausanne. The balance was clearly wrong, erring on the side of unrestricted individualism and excessive emphasis on the unpractical.

Despite his unhappy experience at Magdalen, Gibbon gained a clear understanding of what a university should do. One modern viewpoint sees education as best supplied by the internet, with a reduced need for human teachers. Gibbon confronted a similar argument that, except in the sciences where manual dexterity in the use of costly apparatus was required, oral instruction had been superseded by the availability of good treatises on every subject. He pointed out, however, that 'there still remains a material difference between a book and a professor': it was useful to congregate students at a particular hour; 'the presence, the voice, and the occasional questions of the teacher' were helpful; the idle students would gain something, while the industrious would compare what they had heard with the textbooks. Good teaching, would, for example, replace dry textual criticism of Latin drama by an enlivening comparison with modern theatre. The philosopher Raymond Gaita of King's College, London, and the Australian Catholic University, argues similarly that use of the internet, or even reading in isolation at home, cannot make up for the presence of an exemplary teacher.[33]

While such instruction appears relatively low key, Gibbon's ideal academic effectively combined teaching and research. 'The advice of a skilful professor will adapt a course of reading to every mind and every situation; his authority will discover, admonish, and at last chastise the negligence of his disciples; and his vigilant inquiries will ascertain the steps of their literary progress. Whatever science he professes he may illustrate in a series of discourses, composed in the leisure of his closet, pronounced on public occasions, and finally delivered to the press.' Whether Gibbon meant 'chastise' literally, when fourteen-year-olds like himself attended university, his student ideal was

[33]Quoted in ABC's Background Briefing, 'The Digital University', 27 January 2002.

clearly 'apprenticeship' rather than the 'customer' of some 21st century authorities. The teacher, instead of acting as a simple 'service station' for the students needs, real or imaginary, had an objective to which he (in that male dominated age) attempts to draw his disciples. The affluent Gibbon appears concerned mainly with education as an end in itself, not a means to vocational success. He exhibits his 'voracious appetite' for the history of all parts of the world. Gibbon also speaks of the need for students to find the appropriate teachers, 'according to their taste, their calling, and their diligence'.[34] Ultimately the demands of a future profession had to be balanced against personal taste.

Gibbon experienced Oxford in the 1750s. By the end of the century, reform had begun. The Oxford Examination Statute of 1800, the work of three enlightened heads of colleges, established 'a real examination and not a mere formality.'[35] Public confrontation appeared with paid examiners testing both Greek and Latin texts as well as principles of logic and mathematics. Cambridge had already moved in this direction. However, the perhaps over-critical *Reminiscences* of Henry Gunning at Christ's College, Cambridge, in the penultimate decade of the 18th century dispel notions of Cambridge superiority. Like Gibbon's mentors, Gunning's tutor Parkinson soon absolved him of any need to attend lectures. Indeed, Gunning discovered a more literary atmosphere when the College Fellows were absent. During the term he was preoccupied by shooting, cards and the company on non-reading men. Drunkenness was the 'besetting sin' for undergraduates and dons alike. At St John's, Cambridge, the young William Wordsworth dutifully attended lectures, but found them uninspiring, and resented compulsory attendance at chapel.[36]

Ultimately, an honours system for able students was established at Oxford as at Cambridge. Gone were the days when the candidate chose his own examiners to test rote learning of abbreviated cribs. Such tests, by the ignorant of the ignorant, often ended hilariously. As Bell and Grant cynically observe, until 1800 'the Oxford examination system restricted itself almost entirely to discovering whether candidates were gentlemen'.[37]

1801 saw the birth of John Henry Newman who was to lay down a new university

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[34]For quotations in the preceding section, see Day, *The Life and Letters of Edward Gibbon*, pp. 25-32.
[35]John Sparrow, *Mark Pattison and the Idea of a University* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 69.
[36]Gray, *Cambridge and its Story*, pp. 277-84.
[37]Bell and Grant, *A Mythology of British Education*, p. 93.

ideal. Though often criticised, his arguments provide an essential basis for informed discussion. As Australian philosopher Tony Coady points out, recurrence to Newman is far from an attempt to restore an unchanging idealised past.[38] Newman's world was not dissimilar in some ways to that of the early 21st century. Economic rationalism, then known as political economy, following the publication of Adam Smith's more circumspect *Wealth of Nations* in 1776, was rapidly becoming the prevailing orthodoxy. It was also a period, especially in Britain, of frenetic technological change, punctuated by periodic slumps and depressions.

Newman's father achieved moderate success as a small banker in the boom years of the Napoleonic Wars, but was ruined by the depression after 1815. Newman won a scholarship to King's College, Oxford, being at that time more proficient in mathematics than the classics. He soon obtained a reputation as an exceptional student. But when he took his degree in 1819, overwork caused an embarrassing breakdown shortly before the final examinations and Newman suffered the ignominy of a poor second. His scholarship still had several years to run and he redeemed himself in 1822 in the fellowship examination at the distinguished Oriel College.

Newman to the Rescue

Newman entered Oriel as a priggish, Evangelical Anglican, without any of the social graces expected of the aristocratic Oriel fellows. His father's death as a virtual pauper made him the head of his family and main financial provider for his mother, sisters, and eccentrically incompetent brother Charles. John Henry was forced to embark on a hectic regime of private tutoring to raise the necessary funds. In Oriel he was regarded as a prickly isolate, once suffering the mortification of comment from the Provost on the ungentlemanly use of his fork. However, the influence of other fellows such as Hurrell Froude and the former fellow, Richard Whately, later Anglican archbishop of Dublin, succeeded in socialising Newman and moderating a bitter anti-Catholicism which regarded the pope as Antichrist.[39]

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[38] 'Universities and the ideals of inquiry', in Tony Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter: A conversation about values, means and directions* (St Leonards, NSW, Allen and Unwin, 2000), pp. 2-3. See also Tony Coady and Seamus Miller, 'Australian Higher Education and the relevance of Newman', *Australian Universities Review*, 36 (2), 1993.

[39] *Apologia*, p. 70.

In 1826 Newman became a College Tutor. He rejected the convention, differing from, but no more effective than, Gibbon's Magdalen, that tutors merely harrangued their students in large groups and exacted payment for individual instruction. Though he also took private pupils, Newman and his friends were determined to provide individual tuition for their official charges, and even superintend their morals as the statutes demanded. Such innovations were not appreciated by the College authorities, and Newman lost his tutorship, but not his fellowship, in the early 1830s. It was later alleged by Lord Malmesbury, one of the aristocratic student fellow commoners, whose privileges must have irked the less well-born fellows, that Newman was totally ineffectual. A fellow peer, the radical permanent secretary of the Colonial Office, Frederic Rogers, Lord Blachford, denied Malmesbury's allegations. Another tutor had been ragged, while Newman had always secured respect. Obstreperous students, on the contrary, quailed before Newman's penetrating eye. Here was the order and 'apprenticeship' so lacking in Gibbon's day.

While an Oriel tutor, Newman determined to use the long vacation of 1826 for an extended reading of the Early Christian Fathers. Searching for an Anglican *via media* between Roman Catholicism and extreme Protestant Evangelicalism, Newman, with Hurrell Froude, Henry Pusey, John Keble and others inaugurated the Tractarian, or Oxford Movement. Newman himself ultimately left Oxford and was received into the Roman Catholic Church in 1845, to be ordained a priest in Rome a year later and finally sent back to England to inaugurate the Oratorian Order of St Philip Neri. This task occupied him until his death in 1890, after receiving his cardinal's hat in 1879.

In 1845 the Conservative Government of Sir Robert Peel set up three non-denominational University Colleges in Ireland. These were denounced as 'Godless' by many Irish Catholic bishops. The Young Ireland nationalist leader, William Smith O'Brien, a Trinity, Cambridge, man and later Australia's most celebrated convict, attacked the government patronage in the institutions as 'a powerful agent of corruption.'[40]

The Irish Catholic bishops responded in 1851 by establishing a Catholic University to counter the influence of the 'Godless' Colleges. Archbishop (later Cardinal) Paul Cullen invited Newman to Ireland to lecture against non-denominational universities and to

[40]Richard Davis, *Revolutionary Imperialist: William Smith O'Brien* (Sydney and Dublin, 1998), p. 188.

accept the post of rector of the new Catholic institution. Newman complied with both requests, but the result was not quite what Cullen had intended. Published as *The Idea of a University* in 1852, Newman's lectures became a landmark in the theory of academic education. Although he complied with his brief to justify denominational universities, Newman's lectures, to an audience mixed both by sex and religion, have been best remembered as a passionate plea for the autonomy of liberal education from both utilitarian and theological requirements.

Chagrined by the tone of Newman's discourse, Cullen was no better pleased by the new rector's plans for the Catholic University: Cullen wanted a small classical college, while Newman aimed at an institution catering for science and medicine as well as the humanities. Cullen also looked askance at Newman's appointment of professors associated with the Young Ireland movement which, goaded by the government's failure to relieve the horrendous famine of 1845-49, had attempted a brief revolt against British rule in 1848. In 1858, Newman resigned his rectorship of the Catholic University. He found the need to commute between Dublin and Birmingham across the rough Irish Sea detrimental to his health and a distraction from the problems of his Oratory, while regretting the lack of full co-operation from the Irish bishops. Newman continued to write on University education in the midst of his other activities.

Never receiving a government charter, the Catholic University barely survived. After the establishment in 1879 of the purely examining Royal University, the Catholic University was enabled to act as a teaching college preparing students for the examinations of the former institution. James Joyce graduated in this manner. London University began on a similar model and the idea appealed to some Australian politicians as a cheap form of higher education. In 1908, the Catholic University became the nucleus of the new University College, Dublin, a constituent of the National University of Ireland. Though non-denominational, the National University has always been acceptable to the Irish Catholic episcopacy, while its older rival, Trinity College, Dublin, only received full Catholic endorsement in 1970.

To the general academic world the chief significance of the Catholic University episode was the publication of Newman's *The Idea of a University*. While most of the chapters emphasise religious education in its different manifestations, three – Knowledge

its own end, Knowledge in Relation to Learning, and Knowledge in Relation to Professional skill – are particularly illuminating for all higher education. Many of Newman's conclusions in these chapters coincide with the views of writers such as Bertrand Russell[41] and Virginia Woolf,[42] who would not share the Cardinal's religious principles.

Essentially Newman argued that Knowledge requires no utilitarian justification at all. So opposed to the dominant political and economic thought of the 2000s, the idea is worth unpacking. Newman was influenced by the pagan Greek Aristotle, whose philosophy had been integrated into Christianity by St Thomas Aquinas. Believing that a free citizen must devote himself to 'liberal' pursuits, leaving 'useful' activities to slaves or servants, Aristotle appears to symbolise an aristocratic élitism, irrevelant to the modern world. Newman's insistence that the object of a liberal education is the production of a 'gentleman' increases the appearance of an archaic class-based ideology, for which Oxford has received much criticism. According to one commentator, however, Newman was 'translating into nineteenth-century English' the Greek ideal of the free citizen.[43] His 'gentleman', whatever his views, would avoid giving pain, and show social tolerance. A liberally educated atheist would thus respect the religious susceptibilities of his interlocutors and enable productive discourse.

Accordingly, while a liberal education must not aim at direct practicality, it is nevertheless 'useful' as the basis of community life. If a medical practitioner, asked Newman, is not required to demonstrate the usefulness of curing illness and maintaining a healthy body, why then should the educator be compelled to justify the creation of a healthy mind? Good judgement is always 'useful' in this sense and a well trained intellect is vital in the effective performance of the duties owed by an individual to society. This is the antithesis of a modern view that the recipient of higher education uses it to earn money and should therefore be required to pay for the privilege.

Knowledge to Newman is far from a mere accumulation of facts. It must be

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[41]According to Russell,'specialized knowledge which is required for various kinds of skill has little to do with wisdom . . . The world needs wisdom as it has never needed it before: and if knowledge continues to increase, the world will need wisdom in the future even more than it does now.' *Knowledge and Wisdom*, quoted by Karl L. Wolf, 'A Collection of Scientific Sayings and Quotations (1)', *Earth-Science Review*, 6 (1970), p. 365.

[42]Virginia Woolf's putative women's society of 'Outsiders' would 'practise their profession experimentally, in the interests of research and for love of the work itself, once they had earned enough to live upon.' *The Three Guineas* (London, Hogarth Press, 1938), p. 204.

[43]Michael Tierney, introduction to J.H. Newman, *University Sketches* (Dublin, Browne & Nolan, 1961), p. xviii.

impregnated with reason and adapted to general ideas as opposed to the mere particulars instilled by 'instruction', best relinquished to non-university institutions. The mind must react energetically on ideas. Newman would have agreed with the 20th century philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead, who rejected 'inert ideas', demanding that they be 'utilised, or tested, or thrown into fresh combinations. '[44] Newman likewise saw the mind reacting energetically on ideas. What he called the 'eyes' of the mind must be developed: 'We require intellectual eyes to know withal, as bodily eyes for sight.' Newman used this eye metaphor, borrowed from Keble's elucidation of the Psalms, to depict God's religious guidance.[45]

Newman's distinction between liberal and illiberal pursuits was austere. Watching cricket or hunting, though not intellectual, could be liberal pursuits if they had no object beyond themselves. The study of theology, however, if its purpose was catechetical, was illiberal. Only theology undertaken in pursuit of abstract truth qualified as liberal knowledge. Yet Newman was forced to acknowledge that professional studies like medicine had a place in the University structure. In the 18th century neither Oxford nor Cambridge graduated doctors or lawyers, who obtained their professional qualifications elsewhere after some university background.[46] Newman exhibited a new balanced tolerance of professional training. Medicine and law, aided and corrected by contact with other disciplines, became liberal in a general University context. Even political economy in its dependence on the profit motive, could be corrected by theology which taught that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. This approximates Bertrand Russell's view from an opposing standpoint that 'utilitarian knowledge needs to be fructified by disinterested investigation, which has no motive beyond the desire to understand the world better.'[47] Similarly, the Australian Walter Murdoch, cited an eminent surgeon with no time for anything but his profession: 'By all means let us honour such a man; let us pity him; but do not let us darken counsel by calling him an educated man.'[48]

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[44]A.N. Whitehead, *The Aims of Education and other Essays* (London , Williams & Norgate, 1955 [1932]), p. 2. Whitehead was quoted in Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, *Priorities for Reform in Higher Education* (Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, June 1990), p. ™

[45]J.H. Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (London, Everyman, 1921), p. 43.

[46]Halévy, *England in 1815*, p. 550.

[47]Bertrand Russell, *On Education: Especially in Early Childhood* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1937), p. 243.

[48]Walter Murdoch, *Speaking Personally* (Sydney, 1934), pp. 175-7.

Newman, speaking on behalf of Archbishop Cullen's denominational university, emphasised the need for theology to provide the coping stone for the arch of higher education. He did not, however, insist on theological interest as a *sine qua non* for an educated man. Rather he looked to theology to assist in providing a general balance of disciplines. In the 2000s, when market ideology reigns supreme in many walks of life, not excluding higher education, even an atheist can welcome a theology which at least insists on the consideration of alternative viewpoints. As Newman demonstrated in his lectures, education as an end in itself versus instruction for immediate utility has been regularly debated throughout history. Thus Cato the Elder rejected Greek culture as unproductive for Romans, while Cicero maintained that the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was the prime human need after the wants of Nature had been satisfied. Before Newman's time, W.J. Copelston and Davison of Oriel had defended classical education against the onslaughts of the utilitarian *Edinburgh Reviewers*, who, like Cato, derided its lack of relevance to the modern world. While the debate is cyclical, in the 2000s there is sometimes a lack of recognition that there are two sides to the argument.

The lectures for Cullen postulated free discussion in which all viewpoints receive an airing. Though Newman, earlier in his career was less ready to advocate such freedom, it had become an essential aspect of his philosophy by the time that he addressed his Dublin audience. Earlier he had, for example, been greatly influenced by Archbishop Whately, who according to Newman's own account, taught him to think. Yet Whately, throughout the 19th century Catholic world, became notorious for concocting a set of Scripture readings (with the aid of his Catholic opposite number) for Irish National schools, which, by his own admission, were designed to wean Catholics from their religion.[49] Newman always insisted that a liberal education was no guarantee of personal morality.

So far the relevance of Newman's views to contemporary debate are undeniable. Yet it has been argued that the context of Newman's thought was far removed from the educational issues of the late 20th century in his rejection of research and insistence on collegial rather than lecture-based higher education. On the first point, it is true that Newman suggested specialist research in institutes separated from teaching duties, which distract from original work. Superficially this appears to endorse those governments

[49]E. Jane Whately, *Life and Correspondence of Richard Whately, D.D.*, Vol. 2, (London, 1866), pp. 235-249.

seeking to divorce teaching, leavened by a nebulous 'scholarship', from specialist research. Newman thus appears as a scholar, but not a researcher. This is not, however, the whole story. Newman's own practice is precisely that of a modern teacher/researcher. As mentioned, in 1826, he informs us in his *Apologia*, the timely arrival of the Long Vacation enabled him to begin a massive project for reading the Early Fathers of the Christian Church. Ultimately this study led to the Oxford Movement and conversion, outcomes totally unexpected when he set out to follow the Truth wherever it led. In more immediate academic terms, study of the Early Fathers culminated in a 400 page book on the Arian heresy, an achievement which should certainly have produced promotion in any modern 'publish-or-perish' college of knowledge. Although Newman was not a physical scientist, despite an early predilection for mathematics, as Rector of the Catholic University he irritated Archbishop Cullen by demanding science and medical faculties. Newman' s definition of a University as 'a place where inquiry is pushed forward, and discoveries verified and perfected'[50] is a very fair summary of research objectives in most modern disciplines. Given the relatively primitive organisation of scientific resources in Newman's day, his ideas can scarcely be seen as the endorsement of the notion, beloved by cost cutting politicians, that not all academics need be funded for research.

The second caveat against Newman is on grounds of impracticability. Did he not reject the lecture-based professorial system in favour of collegial institutions? What of his preference for young men collected in colleges without specific instruction over a lecture based system with formal examinations? Ironically, Newman's scepticism of the traditional lecture is in line with modern educational research. Progressive institutions have for many years varied lectures with tutorial instruction. In Scottish universities, where the formal lecture to a large audience was the norm, some professors devoted a lecture, or part of a lecture, to the correction of their students' work.[51] But, as Bertrand Russell, who, with his Cambridge contemporaries, regarded 'lectures as a pure waste of time', pointed out in 1926, 'the real reason for lectures is that they are obvious work, and therefore business men are prepared to pay for them. If university teachers adopted the

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[50]John Henry Cardinal Newman, *The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated* (Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1927), p. 472. It was 'the place to which a thousand schools make contributions; in which the intellect may safely range and speculate, sure to find its equal in some antagonist activity, and its judge in the tribunal of truth. It is a place where inquiry is pushed forward, and discoveries verified and perfected, and rashness rendered innocuous, and error exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge.'

[51]Halévy, *England in 1815*, p. 540. Professor Jardine introduced this practice at Edinburgh.

best methods, business men would think them idle, and insist upon cutting down the staff.'[52] Newman's delight in informality led him to distrust the committee meeting, an essential component of the modern 'Professorial-style' university. At Oxford, moreover, the future cardinal escaped the shadow of the 'God-professor': 'As is the custom of a university, I had lived with my private, nay, with some of my public, pupils, and with junior fellows of my college, without form or distance, on a footing of equality.'[53]

Pattison and Wollstonecraft

The conflict between Professorial and Tutorial teaching was much canvassed in the years after Newman had left Oriel. An important player in the debate, Mark Pattison, came to Oriel as a student in 1832, a year after Newman had been dismissed as a tutor. His memoirs relate how Gibbon's *Autobiography* 'seized upon my interest' and 'supplied the place of a College tutor; he not only found me advice, [check] but secretly inspired me with the enthusiasm to follow it.'[54] Despite Newman and earlier reform the problems of Oriel teaching remained and it began to decline in 1831.[55] But Pattison was also influenced in his religious opinions by Newman who remained in residence until 1845 when he converted to Rome. Pattison did not follow him but rather grew sceptical of religion itself. He pursued a lonely progress of self-instruction, eked out by private tuition, and, like Newman, graduated with only a second in 1836. After a struggle, he was elected to a fellowship at Lincoln College, Oxford, where he became a successful tutor, using new and progressive methods.

Pattison refused to give his students ready-made answers but 'sent them away from his lectures with the feeling of roused enquiry, rather than with that satisfied sense of acquisition which is so conducive to success. But he made us think. He made us desire to know.'[56] Soon Pattison soon won the reverence of his pupils. Nevertheless, despite his enthusiasm, Pattison faced 'the monstrous abuse' by which he was, under the College system compelled to 'teach everything that was taught in the college to all its students.'[57]

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[52]Bertrand Russell, *On Education: especially in Early Childhood* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1937 [1926]), p. 241.
[53]*Apologia*, p. 75.
[54]Mark Pattison, *Memoirs* (Fontwell, Sussex, 1969). pp. 129-30; Sparrow, *Mark Pattison*, p. 74.
[55]Pattison, *Memoirs*, p. 88.
[56]A.J. Church, quoted in Sparrow, *Mark Pattison*, p. 77.
[57]Pattison, *Memoirs*, p. 215.

Pattison was not averse to encouraging his students to think widely of art and literature, but realised that for a teacher to cover too wide a field forced superficiality and deadened interest in research. In vacations he took chosen groups of students on reading parties to encourage them to value the things of the mind. Like Newman, 'he 'thought the living together might enable me to make more impression upon them than mere college relations allowed of.'[58]

There was apparently no suggestion here of homosexual interest or harassment on the part of a compulsorily 'celibate' tutor with exclusively male students. Pattison married when the system permitted such a relationship. His friend George Eliot may have partly modelled the dry-as-dust phoney scholar, Casaubon, on some aspects of Pattison. Unfair in some ways, but Eliot's portrayal of the intellectually lively Dorothea in *Middlemarch* illustrates one of the worst imbalances in the Oxbridge system, its male exclusivity, not corrected until the end of the 19th century. While women might attend the public lectures of Scottish professors, there was no place for them in the Oxford collegiate system. An intellectual culture based on the classics provided little excuse for such sexual exclusivity. Plato in his *Republic* had made it clear that his guardians, provided with superior education to rule the masses, would consist of women as well as men. Accepting that the only difference between men and women lay in generation, Plato insisted that women guardians should bear arms, exercise naked and receive the same education as their male colleagues. Community of wives and children suggested the possibility of co-educational colleges. His only caveat was the belief that, all other things being equal, men would perform better than women.[59] The issue had been carried further by Mary Wollstonecraft in her attack on Rousseau's patriarchal insistence on the subordinate instruction provided for his 'grossly unnatural' Sophia, the 'weak and passive' partner of his ideally educated Émile. Wollstonecraft, like Plato, argued that, apart from physical strength, women were in no way inferior to men and equally capable of benefiting from the highest forms of education: 'if men eat at the tree of knowledge, women will come in for a taste'. Rousseau's suggestions that women's education be practical and eschew 'researches into abstract and speculative truths' were, according to Wollstonecraft, 'wild chimeras.' Indeed, 'the power of generalizing ideas, to any great extent, is not very common amongst

[58]Pattison, *Memoirs*, p. 262.
[59]Plato, *The Republic* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1963, H.D.P. Lee, trans.), pp. 201-221.

men or women.' She went further and insisted that 'till women are more rationally educated, the progress of human virtue and improvement in knowledge must receive continual checks.'[60]

Wollstonecraft had no sympathy with the type of male bonding carried on by dons like Newman and Pattison in Oxford Colleges, considering it often made males, separated from wholesome family influences, into sexual predators (282). Writing in 1791, after Gibbon but before Newman and Pattison, Wollstonecraft was scathing about both schoolmasters and Oxbridge dons: 'there is not, perhaps, in the kingdom, a more dogmatical, or luxurious set of men, than the pedantic tyrants who reside in colleges and preside at public schools.' (278) Instead she demanded co-educational day schools. Like Plato, Wollstonecraft separated the education of the able and the gifted. With a type of 9+ (not the later British 11+) division, she required a mainly instrumental education for boys and girls destined for domestic and mechanical occupations, allowing them to spend a portion of the day with the intellectually oriented. The able or more affluent children would learn 'the dead and living languages, the elements of science, and continue the study of history and politics, on a more extensive scale, which would not exclude polite literature.' Surprisingly, Wollstonecraft justified her argument as likely to lead to earlier marriages, but marriages between the intellectually equal.(287) The right of spirited girls to study classics like their brothers was not infrequently raised in the 19th century. As Veblen pointed out, women were expected to concentrate on domestic accomplishments and dexterity associated with 'a performance of vicarious leisure.' They were debarred from 'knowledge which expresses the unfolding of the learner's own life, the acquisition of which proceeds on the learner's own cognitive interest, without prompting from the canons of propriety, and without reference back to a master'.[61] Instrumentalism is thus demanded for women, but knowledge for its own sake for men. An example is Lucy O'Brien, daughter of the Irish political exile, William Smith O'Brien. Lucy insisted on learning Greek and Latin like her clever elder brother. Her father acquiesced, with the rider that a woman's *duties*' were more important than her accomplishments or knowledge 'usually supposed to belong exclusively to the male sex.' O'Brien, however, wanted his

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[60]Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1975), pp. 107, 101, 124, 144, 126.
[61]Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: an Economic Study of Institutions* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1957 [1899]), pp. 376-7.

daughter to gain proficiency in drawing for the instrumental motive of earning her living by it. Lucy's enthusiasm led to marriage with Edward Gwynn, ultimately Regius Professor of Divinity at the University of Dublin and one of the greatest oriental linguists of his day.[62] Wollstonecraft, if not Veblen, would have approved.

Demonised as a wicked woman for flouting the sexual conventions of her day, Wollstonecraft's views did not appeal to her contemporaries. While university reform was mooted by mid-19th century, women's time had not yet come. In the so-called Great Reform Bill of 1832 they had, on the contrary, been explicitly refused the franchise for the first time. Though differing in some respects from the male educationalists of her day, Wollstonecraft was basically at one with Gibbon, Newman and Pattison in seeing higher education as the pursuit of self-understanding and the ability 'to think for themselves' rather than regurgitate facts. (273 and 280) From a feminine angle, she presented good instrumental reasons, such as social cohesion and the emancipation of both sexes, for apparently disinterested learning. She also raised obliquely the issue of sexual harassment which so concerns higher education in the 21st century, pointing out that while women depend for support on men, rather than their own earning power, the latter should be compelled to maintain the children resulting from 'seduction'. (164) But Wollstonecraft appears in line with some modern post-feminists who assert that strong women now have the capacity to look after themselves.

By 1851, Mark Pattison, whose memoirs mention few women but his sisters, had no thought of feminine education when, in 1851, he narrowly failed to be elected Rector, or Head, of Lincoln College. Although reform was in the air and he was a noted liberal, the position was won by a conservative. Turning inward to his own research, Pattison, played less part in the College life until 1861 when another opportunity came to win the prized Rectorship and the consequent right to marry a lady 27 years his junior.

Reform of Oxbridge and the German example

High noon appeared to have arrived for Oxbridge. There were attacks on the universities for poor teaching, lack of real research, staff laziness and misuse of

[62]See Richard and Marianne Davis, eds., *The Rebel in His Family: Selected Papers of William Smith O'Brien* (Cork University Press, 1998), pp. 74-5.

endowments, Church of England exclusiveness, and inadequate curricula. The need for administrative cohesion, when Colleges dominated and the University had little significance, was also at issue. Could the government act? Prime Minister Lord Melbourne was certain that universities would not reform themselves, but there was considerable heart-burning at the thought of heavy-handed government intervention against independent scholarship. William Gladstone, then an MP for Oxford University, believed that no reform was required. The misgivings paralleled those in Australia at the time of the Dawkins White Paper of 1987.

Reformist pressure was, however, sufficient for the Whig Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, one of the few non-Oxbridge Prime Ministers, a promoter of the new non-sectarian London University and grandfather of the philosopher, Bertrand Russell, to establish commissions of enquiry into both Oxford and Cambridge. A number of resentful academics refused to co-operate, but Pattison submitted a defence of the tutorial system against the professorial practice so notable in Scotland. The commissions duly reported. Reforming acts of parliament, for Oxford in 1854, and Cambridge in 1856, duly passed. According to Russell, they 'required only amendments and reforms in conformity with the spirit of their institutions, and with a view to those more liberal studies which must from time to time be made suitable to the spirit of the age.'[63]

As a result the reforms required were not too exacting. Gladstone, originally opposed to the royal commission, drafted the Oxford act, which 'effected a quiet revolution'. The Oxford Hebdomadal Board, consisting of the heads of the different Colleges, was opened up to election by the resident masters and doctors, thus introducing more 'collegiality' as it was later termed. The heads of colleges, however, had nevertheless been elected in their own institutions. Improved examinations and syllabuses were required and more university-wide professors were appointed, without ending the college tutorials. Elections to College Fellowships now depended on merit and the obligations of Fellows in some Colleges to be ordained clergy were removed. Religious tests were dropped for Bachelor's degrees.[64] Another royal commission twenty years later focussed on the Oxbridge finances and led to the endowment of more chairs and readerships by the

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[63]John Earl Russell, *Recollections and Suggestions, 1813-1873* (London, Longmans, Green, 1875), p. 372. Russell, despite William Gladstone's strong opposition, supported the motion of Mr Heywood.

[64]Philip Magnus, *Gladstone: A Biography* (London, John Murray, 1963), p.117.

richer colleges. Teaching became more efficient.

Mark Pattison was still not satisfied. Earlier in his career he had flourished as an ultra-conscientious teacher, now he emphasised research. This was partly the result of visits to Germany where a professorial system predominated, not unlike that of Scotland. There were no tutors or colleges. Students lived in the town and attended professorial lectures and followed up with their own reading. Sometimes professors organised tutorial meetings with select students, but generally the latter were responsible for themselves. Without the constant interposition of petty exercises, the German student appeared more enthusiastic about learning. The exalted notions of *Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit*, freedom of teaching and learning, backed by *Wissenschaft*, the pursuit of science and knowledge for its own sake[65] arose there as the basis of the 'academic freedom' which is so significant in the defence of academia today. Such privileges had not come without a fight. The German Confederation, dominated by Prince Metternich, the reactionary Austrian Chancellor, had imposed the Carlsbad Decrees of 1819, which censorsed universities and subjected both students and staff to strict government control. The protests of the Grand Duke of Weimar against such supervision, which denied free thought and discussion, leading to truth went unheeded.[66] Though Austrian professors' 'morals and ideas were constantly checked', they and their students played a leading part for Liberalism in the Revolution of 1848.[67] Continental students in the 19th century were more active in politics than their counterparts in England. The Oxford-educated Gladstone considered the purpose of universities to be 'authoritative inculcation of religious truth, and something like a domestic superintendence of the pupils.'[68]

The PhD, as a stimulus to research, originally developed in Germany. There were well-publicised drawbacks such as the duelling cult, ritualised drinking and the emergence of the arrogant 'God professor' surrounded by obsequious satellites. In 1853, William Smith O'Brien, exiled in Van Diemen's Land, considered a German university education for his sons. Aware of the duelling and drinking, he nevertheless liked it 'because even in its very dissipations there prevails that intellectuality – that imagination – perhaps visionary – intellectuality which characterises the German Nation and because the

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[65]Sparrow, *Mark Pattison*, p. 113.
[66]W. Alison Phillips, *Modern Europe, 1815-1899* (London, Rivington's, 1920), p. 73.
[67]Priscilla Robertson, *Revolutions of 1848: A Social History* (Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 201-2.
[68]Quoted in *Launceston Examiner*, 16 June 1853.

wildest excesses are refined if not subdued by appreciation of the teaching of the muses.'[69] Twenty years later, the future British War Minister, Richard Haldane, found at the University of Gottingen that 'despite the exuberances of German student life, many of my fellow-students worked hard and systematically. Some of them were good company, companions who were trying to seek after truth.'[70] Universities in the United States tended to follow the German, rather than the Oxbridge pattern. The American Veblen maintained that the athletics and fraternities of the leisure-class American universities replaced Germany's 'skilled and graded inebriety and a perfunctory duelling.'[71] Sadly, the Nazi regime in the 1930s and '40s brought such exalted ideas of academic freedom to a temporary end. It did, however, produce academics willing to pay the ultimate price for their beliefs, Professor Karl Huber, of the Munich Faculty of Philosophy and Psychology, with two of his students, was beheaded in 1943 for asserting that the indoctrination of the SS and SA was 'the despicable method by which all independent thinking and values have been choked with platitudes. . . . We are concerned for true knowledge and for genuine freedom of the spirit. No threat can intimidate us, not even the closing of our universities.'[72]

Back in Victorian England, while Pattison approved of some of the recent reforms like the abolition of 'closed fellowships' which 'opened the colleges to an amount of talent and energy hitherto unknown in them' and removed the 'inferior men', he discovered that the introduction of a 'moderations' examination in second year, taking pressure off the finals, proved a mixed blessing. 'Little did we foresee that we were only giving another turn to the examination screw, which has been turned several times since, till it has become an instrument of mere torture which has made education impossible and crushed the very desire for learning.'[73] Something similar has occurred in Australian universities since the 1960s with the development of 'continuous assessment' and semester examinations which has vastly increased the amount of graded work, deadening the enthusiasm of teacher and student alike. Back in the 19th century Pattison complained that

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[69]Richard Davis, gen. ed., *'To Solitude Consigned' the Tasmanian Journal of William Smith O'Brien* (Sydney, Crossing Press, 1995), p. 406.
[70]Richard Burdon Haldane, *An Autobiography* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1929), p. 17.
[71]Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, p. 397.
[72]Annedore Leber, *Conscience in Revolt: Sixty-Four Stories of Resistance in Genrmany, 1933-45* (London, Vallentine, Mitchell, 1957), pp. 42-5.
[73]Pattison, *Memoirs*, pp. 302-4.

'our young men are not trained; they are only filled with propositions, of which they have never learned the inductive basis. From showy lectures, from manuals, from attractive periodicals, the youth is put in possession of ready-made opinions on every conceivable subject; a crude mass of matter, which he is taught to regard as real knowledge.'[74]

Pattison, like Newman, was also alive to the time-wasting committee work which accompanied the greater academic self-government after 1854. Twice he stood unsuccessfully for the new Hebdomadal Board, remarking , 'fortunately for me I was left in a minority each time, or I might have wasted years in the idle and thankless pursuit which they call university business.' In the 1850s he only attended college meetings when asked to make up a quorum. Living solely for study at this time he was aware that 'in a university ostensibly endowed for the cultivation of science and letters, such a life is hardly regarded as a creditable one.'[75] He had the 'moral courage' to refuse the university vice-chancellorship in 1878. In the 21st century Australian universities there is also a noticeable tendency for administrative or financial authority, rather than originality of scholarship, to gain the highest recognition.[76]

The career of Mark Pattison is an object lesson in the difficulties of maintaining a balance in academic life. Disillusionment with teaching led to an emphasis on solitary research as the main function of a university. This accompanied a movement from belief in the collegiate tutorial system to a professorial organisation based on lectures. He saw the lecture not as instruction *per se* but as an encouragement to self-development. Ultimately, Pattison found, in John Sparrow's words, 'the only stimulus it [learning] needs is the pleasure that a man feels in the consciousness of the development of his mind.' This enabled man at last 'to live with a life which is above nature.'[77] Like Newman, Pattison had moved far away from any instrumentalist view of education.

Utilitarian Critics

In their own day, Pattison, Newman and those who emphasised personal

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[74]Pattison, *Memoirs*, p. 240.

[75]Pattison, *Memoirs*, pp. 302 and 331; Sparrow, *Mark Pattison*, p. 110.

[76]According to Ian Castles, Vice-President of the Australian Academy of Social Sciences, University administrations 'don't seem to care as much as they used to [about the departure of leading scholars], except for those academics who can earn the university a buck.' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 January 2001.

[77]Sparrow, *Mark Pattison*, pp. 128-9.

development and the pursuit of truth wherever it led faced the dominant philosophy of Utilitarianism, the greatest happiness of the greatest number, often associated with political economy, or economic rationalism as it is called in the 21st century. One of the philosophy's leading progenitors was the philosopher Jeremy Bentham. Like Gibbon and Adam Smith, his hero, Bentham had a bad experience at Oxford from which he graduated at a ridiculously early age. To him the tutors at Queen's College were morose, profligate and insipid.[78] The obvious weaknesses of Oxford and Cambridge in the early 19th century encouraged Bentham and his friends to work towards a different ideal, embodied in University College, Gower Street, which in 1836 became a constituent part of the new University of London, then little more than an examining body. Appropriately, Bentham's clothed skeleton is still paraded on special occasions at University College.

As Utilitarianism by definition emphasises the instrumental aspects of life, education in particular, Bentham appears on first reading the philosopher *par excellence* for the 21st century. Dividing studies into those for 'amusement and curiosity' from those of utility, he placed the fine arts, music, poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, ornamental gardening, in the former category. Like current postmodernists, he rejected any hierarchy of pursuit. 'Prejudice apart, the game of push-pin is of equal value with the arts and sciences of music and poetry.' Indeed, as push-pin is played by more people than relish poetry, it gives more pleasure and is therefore more valuable. Poetry, moreover, has mischievous tendencies, in that it encourages false morals by its lack of true exactitude. Bentham ridiculed writers who set up 'the fantastic idea of bad taste.' Those, like Harold Bloom,[79] who still cling to a literary canon are repudiated. A modern Mills and Boon novel, appealing to more people than a Shakespeare play, may be deemed superior. As for the 19th century veneration for Greek and Latin, Bentham was scathing. The study of dead languages should be replaced with science. They had no conversational value and their literature was available in translation. To provide 'a fund of allusion' to ornament the speeches of a minority was no compensation for the time and money spent on such pursuits. All arts and sciences, learnt from books, such as jurisprudence, history, moral philosophy, logic, metaphysics, grammar and rhetoric, could be left to interested

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[78] *The Works of Jeremy Bentham* (Edinburgh, Tait, 1843), Vol. 10, p. 39.

[79] Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and the School of the Ages* (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1994). For Columbia University New York and its background course, see David Denby, *Great Books: My Adventures with Homer, Rousseau, Woolf, and Other Indestructible Writers of the Western World* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1996).

individuals, 'permitted to pay for their amusements.' The chief advantage of these relatively harmless occupations was occupation for 'an army of idlers' who might otherwise have 'possessed no amusement but in the hazardous and bloody game of war.'[80] Utilitarian education in progress appears in the 'fearful experience'[81] leading to a nervous breakdown of John Stuart Mill, compelled by his father James, a Bentham devotee, to undertake a mind-numbing course of study from the age of three.

A Daniel is come to judgment! A modern Minister of Education, saving money by encouraging tertiary study in areas for which private enterprise is willing to pay, and phasing out the humanities and social sciences which have little appeal to major corporations, might regard Bentham as a model philosopher. But even Bentham presented difficulties. His idea of utility was broad and he refused to draw a hard and fast line between the arts and sciences. Nor would he make an absolute distinction between studies for personal pleasure and those for general utility; he demonstrated that the same undertaking might start as private amusement and end as socially valuable. A remarkable example, he cited, was electricity, not very far advanced when Bentham wrote in 1827. When first discovered, he averred, it 'seemed destined only to amuse certain philosophers by the singularity of its phenomena'. Accordingly, Bentham maintained that the government should reward researchers who investigated 'pure theory' without any immediately apparent utility. 'There are many discoveries which, though at first they might seem useless in themselves, have given birth to thousands of others of the greatest utility.' Often the motive force has been 'the pleasure experienced by those interested in such researches.' This powerful assertion of support for fundamental curiosity-based research relates to many issues of the 21st century. Those currently wishing to restrict funding to applied research of immediate interest to particular industries, would find no favour with Bentham, the founder of Utilitarianism. Bentham, moreover, believed that the state should establish in each area equivalent to an English county professors of medicine, veterinary art, chemistry, natural history, botany and mechanical and experimental philosophy. While the social scientists and humanities scholars could pay for themselves, Bentham believed that the state should provide them with libraries.

Even James Mill's pedagogy was more than cold, calculating pressure. In his

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[80] *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, Vol. 2, pp. 253-8.
[81] Bertrand Russell, *The Wisdom of theWest* (London, Macdonald, 1959), p. 266.

Autobiography, John Stuart Mill, though persuaded to learn Greek at the age of three, showed how his father provided constant encouragement, allowing his son, persistently questioning, to work by his side when engaged in his celebrated *History of India*. Like all good teachers, James Mill rejected rote learning and 'strove to make understanding not only go along with every step of the teaching, but, if possible, precede it.'[82] As rector of St. Andrew's University, an older John Stuart Mill insisted that the aim of university study was to produce 'more effective fighters in the battle between good and evil',[83] a far cry from the simple training of future professionals.

Matthew Arnold and 'sweetness and light' in Cornell's America

If modern governments can derive cold comfort from Bentham, their most plausible intellectual model, the writings of Matthew Arnold if anything appear to overplay education as an end in itself. Son of the renowned Dr Arnold of Rugby, Matthew was elected to a fellowship at Oriel College, Oxford, in 1845, the year that Newman quit his. Like the other Oxonians mentioned, Arnold was very much aware of the limitations of his institution's education. He denied that either Oxford or Cambridge were real universities, rather than glorified high schools. The best judges, in fact, regarded universities as the weak point of the British educational system.[84] Nevertheless, though Oxford 'has many faults' and 'heavily paid for them in defeat, in isolation, in want of hold upon the modern world', she brought her students and staff to perceive that 'beauty and sweetness are essential characters of a complete human perfection.'[85]

Such was the essence of Arnold's celebrated *Culture and Anarchy* of 1859. Borrowing a phrase from Jonathan Swift also used by Newman,[86] he set out to convert the materialistic Victorian middle classes to 'sweetness and light', or beauty activated by a critical intelligence. In context, Swift's phrase from his *The Battle of the Books*, represented the ancient bee producing honey from 'infinite labour and search' while the modern spider spins 'dirt and poison' from inside itself.[87] Arnold's high 'culture' was a direct riposte to

[82]John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography* (Oxford Universty Press, 1971). pp. 8 and 20.
[83]Quoted by Sir Walter Moberly, *The Crisis in the University* (London, SCM Press, 1949), p. 129.
[84]W.F. Connell, *The Educational Thought and Influence of Matthew Arnold* (London, Routledge, 1950), pp. 269-70.
[85]Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (London, Nelson, n.d.[1859]). pp. 109-10.
[86]Sheldon Rothblatt, *The Revolution of the Dons: Cambridge and Society in Victorian England* (London, Faber, 1968), p. 124.
[87]Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works* (Oxford University Press, World Classics, 1990), p. 113.

Bentham. A poet himself, Arnold denied Bentham's contention that poetry encouraged falsehood; rather it represented the essence of truth. 'Science I say will appear incomplete without it.'[88] Arnold was particularly concerned to educate the English middle classes whom he dubbed 'Philistines', a term used by Milton to denounce censors.[89] Bentham's views made him a typical Philistine (118-19). Such people, Arnold maintained, worshipped the cash-nexus in a civilisation which had become far more 'mechanical and external' than those of ancient Greece and Rome. Technology appeared all important; machinery, no longer a useful tool, was accorded a value 'in and for itself.'[90] This encouraged a popular culture where 'a common sort of readers' were demanding 'a common sort of literature'.[91] 'A violent indignation with the past' resulted.[92] The upper classes employed debased literature to indoctrinate the masses 'with a set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party.'[93]

Such arguments not only challenged Bentham's 19th century instrumentalism, but remain germane to the 21st century debate. Though the pace of change has accelerated, the Industrial Revolution of Arnold's day 'is still going on' according to historian Eric Hobsbawm.[94] Computer technology and the internet often appear as ends rather than means; current electronic TV culture is criticised in much the same terms as cheap books for the newly literate classes in the 19th century. In opposition to Bentham and current postmodernists, Arnold believed strongly in a hierarchy of values. Ten-pin bowling was not, to him, as significant as the products of a cultivated mind. It was essential to distinguish between good and better poetry, the best incorporating a 'high seriousness'. In 'The Study of Poetry' Arnold attempted such task. While Bentham 'failed in deriving light from other minds' and exhibited contempt for 'some of the most illustrious of previous thinkers',[95] Arnold revered the past. By seeking 'the best which has been thought and said in the world' it was possible, he thought, to pursue perfection. 'A stream of fresh and

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[88]Matthew Arnold, 'The Study of Poetry', first published as a general introduction to T.H. Ward, ed., The English Poets (London, 1880), reproduced in Charles W. Eliot, ed., *Essays: English and America*n, The Harvard Classics, Vol. 28 (New York, Collier, 1910), p. 66.
[89]Milton, Areopagitica, in Morley's *Famous Pamphlets*, p. 51.
[90]Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, pp. 85-7.
[91]Arnold, 'Poetry', pp. 90-1.
[92]Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, p. 117.
[93]Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, p. 125.
[94]Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution*, p. 44.
[95]J.S. Mill and Bentham, in F.R. Leavis, ed., *Mill on Bentham and Coleridge* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 58.

free thought' could dissolve our 'stock notions and habits'.[96] In other words, Arnold sought an intellectual 'best practice' as opposed to the dominant administrative 'best practice' of the 21st century. His acceptance of classical learning and Bentham's rejection of it are logical given their respective veneration and contempt for classical thinkers. Bentham had no hesitation in pronouncing Plato and Aristotle fools, while Arnold appreciated the study of dead languages in probing the depths of great thinkers.

In some ways, however, Bentham and Arnold worked towards a similar objective. Arnold admitted to 'having been brought up at Oxford in the bad old days, when we were stuffed with Greek and Aristotle, and thought nothing of preparing ourselves by the study of modern languages'.[97] Even Arnold's insistence on disinterested endeavour towards self-understanding as a path to perfection is not so far from Bentham's belief in scientific curiosity leading to practical results. Arnold believed that his enlightened individual, who tried to see things as they really are, would produce naturally good social consequences such as neighbourliness, beneficence and a desire to eliminate human misery. Bentham feared that humanistic studies would only amuse a coterie who enjoyed them, but Arnold endowed them with an instrumental role approximating Utilitarianism. Current postmodernists would, however, smile at Arnold's desire to seek an unattainable ultimate truth.

The United States seemed to Arnold a vigorous developing country saturated in Philistine attitudes. An influence was de Tocqueville's magisterial survey of 1835 and 1840, *Democracy in America*,[98] which complained that 'in few of the civilized nations of our time have the higher sciences made less progress than in the United States; and in few have great artists, distinguished poets, or celebrated writers, been more rare.' Tocqueville rejected a direct link between democracy and anti-intellectualism, accepting American initial concentration on the useful comfortable arts when 'learned and literary Europe' had moved on to 'exploring the common sources of truth'.[99]

Arnold cited Tocqueville's later French compatriot, Ernest Renan, who was more forthright in complaining that, despite the United States' emphasis on popular instruction, its failure to provide for higher learning resulted in intellectual mediocrity, vulgarity of

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[96]Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, pp. 11-12.
[97]Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, pp. 153-4.
[98]For Arnold and Tocqueville, see Connell, *Educational Thought . . .*, pp. 70-71.
[99]Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Richard D. Heffner (New York, Mentor, 1960), pp. 158-9.

manners, superficial spirit and a limited general intelligence. To Arnold, American education lacked 'the harmonious perfection of our whole being, and what we call totality.' Mr. Ezra Cornell's generous endowment of a 'noble monument' in his university was 'calculated to produce miners, or engineers, or architects, not sweetness and light.'[100] The stereotype of Americans, and by extension all colonials, as brash instrumentalists, clever at money-making but pathetically lacking in the higher virtues, was long-lasting. Its obverse was a 'cultural cringe' which believed true values unobtainable outside the 19th century ivied walls of Oxbridge.

But is the picture of colonials as inevitable instrumentalists true? In the mid-20th century the educationalist John Dewey, born in 1859, was regarded by many as America's leading philosopher. His philosophy of 'Pragmatism' or 'Instrumentalism' appeared to epitomise the dynamic materialistic culture, a word which now denotes the 'low culture of the masses', not Matthew Arnold's élitist 'high culture'. Bertrand Russell irritated Dewey by apparently 'connecting the pragmatic theory of knowing with obnoxious aspects of American industrialism.'[101] A closer reading of Dewey absolves him of being an apologist for laissez-faire capitalism, or economic rationalism: 'The idea of a pre-established harmony between the existing so-called capitalistic regime and democracy is as absurd a piece of metaphysical speculation as human history has ever evolved.'[102] Though Dewey saw higher education increasingly as science, his belief in the value of disinterested study took the argument well beyond its 19th century exponents. Love of truth, not 'material serviceability', he considered the motive force behind most scientific innovators. Only a select minority are able to 'hold belief in suspense', 'doubt until evidence is obtained', follow evidence rather than a preferred solution, use ideas as hypotheses to be tested not dogmas to be asserted, and enjoy the pursuit of new problems. As Dewey pointed out, all of these characteristics went 'contrary to some human impulse that is naturally strong.'[103]

Even the somewhat maligned Mr. Ezra Cornell on scrutiny appears somewhat different from Arnold's stereotype. Andrew D. White, a well-to-do New Englander, after

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[100]Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, pp. 30-1 and 38-9.
[101]Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1954), p. 855. For instrumentalism, see p. 848.
[102]John Dewey, *Freedon and Culture* (New York, Capricorn, 1963 [1939]), p. 72.
[103]Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, pp. 145-6.

attending an inefficient college in west New York, went on to Yale. Neither satisfied him. The western college, like 18th century Oxbridge, made little attempt to teach anything, while Yale in 1859, with its 'substitution of gerund-grinding for ancient literature', all but killed an enthusiasm for Cicero's *De Senectute*, 'a beautiful book'.[104] Far from being crude instrumentalist versions of English originals, American universities were currently suffering the same problems, over similar curricula, as Oxford and Cambridge. Nevertheless, White read of Oxbridge's 'quadrangles, halls, libraries, chapels' and found his western college, 'sordid', and even Yale remote from the dream. He built 'air-castles' of inspiring buildings and libraries like the Bodleian. 'The dream became a sort of obsession.' However, in his ideal university, the narrow curriculum of classics and mathematics was broadened to include modern literature, modern history and architecture. Even more important, 'it should be free from all sectarian and party trammels.'[105] As Oxbridge imposed religious tests till 1871, this was an immense improvement on the original, and on Matthew Arnold's discourse, which still hankered after religious establishment. It was also a step towards the foundation of Cornell University, ridiculed in *Culture and Anarchy*.

When he eventually reached Europe, White was duly impressed by the Oxbridge buildings and somewhat uncritical of the combination room and quadrangles, 'which give a sense of scholarly seclusion'. He was perhaps more pleased with the 'French university-lecture system, with its clearness, breadth, wealth of illustration, and its hold upon large audiences of students'. Student life at Berlin reinforced White's determination 'to do something for university education in the United States.'[106] Though White does not explicitly state it, this was a very different conception to the collegiate system of Oxbridge, and one that Mark Pattison himself ultimately preferred.

White's opportunity came when he met Cornell as a fellow member of the New York legislature. With his considerable experience as a professor of history, White agreed to become President of Cornell's new university. Far from being the uncultured Philistine of Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*, Cornell, altruistic and benevolent, had, according to White, the highest ideals of university purpose. Although his specialities were agriculture and

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[104] *Autobiography of Andrew D. White* (London, Macmillan, 1905), Vol. 1, pp. 27 and 289.
[105] *Autobiography of Andrew White*, Vol. 1, p. 288.
[106] *Autobiography*, Vol. 1, pp. 290-1.

science, Cornell insisted that students could study anything that interested them. He sent White to obtain the services of Goldwin Smith, Regius Professor of History at Oxford, one of the most inspiring scholars of his day. Ezra himself 'enjoyed greatly' Goldwin Smith's lectures on history and those on literature from the eminent poet and essayist, James Russell Lowell, also obtained for his new university.[107] Of even greater importance Cornell insisted on academic equality for women when his university opened in 1868, thus anticipating Oxford and Cambridge which did not accord full rights to women until the First World War. According to Veblen, the older universities regarded the admission of women as 'derogatory to the dignity of the learned craft' which had originally been monopolised by clerical males.[108] For a man apparently incapable of perceiving 'sweetness and light', Ezra Cornell's record was impressive, as was the future record of eminent scholars in the humanities and social sciences produced by his university. Sadly, in the 1960s, according to Allan Bloom, Cornell was one of the foremost American universities in presenting, with the aid of the Ford Foundation, a PhD program aimed at 'a firm career choice . . . The Cornell plan for dealing with the problem of liberal education was to suppress the students' longing for liberal education by encouraging their professionalism and their avarice, providing money and all the prestige the university had available to make careerism the centrepiece of the university.'[109]

Thorstein Veblen anticipates Australia in the 21st century

By the 20th century American universities were outstripping their English counterparts, not only in practical achievement, but sometimes in the ideology of disinterested pursuit of truth. Thorstein Veblen, another Yale graduate, who served for a time as a Cornell instructor, lampooned both American capitalism and the university system it engendered. In his first book, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, Veblen distinguished between 'esoteric knowledge', which enjoyed the greatest American prestige, but had no influence on the economy, and 'exoteric learning'[110] which was useful in practice, but

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[107] *Autobiography*, Vol. 1, pp. 315 and 317.
[108] Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, p. 376.
[109] Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How higher education has failed democracy and impoverised the souls of today's students* (London, Penguin, 1988), pp. 339-40.
[110] Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, p. 367.

without academic standing. At this time, Veblen seemed to favour the latter, in what appeared undiluted instrumentalism. He argued like Bentham, against the dead hand of the classics and indeed humanities in general in favour of 'those more matter-of-fact branches which make for civic and industrial efficiency.' He rejected canons of taste as nothing more than the ideas of 'a predatory, leisure class scheme of life'. If classics were mere 'conspicuous consumption', Veblen, rather uneasily, admitted the importance of 'knowledge for its own sake, the exercise of the faculty of comprehension without ulterior purpose', simply for 'the intellectual or cognitive interest'. He solved the problem by insisting that the 'leisure class' could not be trusted to engage in curiosity-based studies.[111]

By 1904, when he published *The Theory of Business Enterprise* Veblen's emphasis had turned to a defence of altruistic study against instrumental pressure. He complained that so-called business principles were permeating the learning process with 'mechanical routine, with mechanical tests of competency in all directions. This lowered the value of the instruction for purposes of intellectual initiative and a reasoned grasp of subject matter.' Institutions 'took on the the complexion of competitive business; which throws the emphasis on those features of school life that will best attract students and donors.' The 'avowed ends' of the institutions were obscured and 'the standards which it is found imperative to live up to are not the highest standards of scholarly work.'[112]

Fourteen years later he expanded these arguments in *The Higher Learning in America*. Veblen repeated the main argument in *The Theory of Business Enterprise*, that 'the intrusion of business principles in the universities goes to weaken and retard the pursuit of learning, and therefore to defeat the ends for which a university is maintained.'[113] Now he demonstrated those ends without equivocation. 'This esoteric knowledge of matter-of-fact has come to be acknowledged as something worth while in its own right, a self-legitimating end of endeavour in itself, apart from any bearing it may have on the glory of God or the good of man.' It was based on 'the idle curiosity' which is 'a native trait of the race.' Veblen saw Adam Smith's view that 'love of system', 'the beauty of order, of art and contrivance' leads to institutions promoting public welfare as the equivalent of the

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[111]Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, pp. 363-400: 'The Higher Learning as an expression of the pecuniary culture.' See especially, pp. 382-3, 390-93 and 396.
[112]Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of Business Enterprise* (New York, Mentor, 1958 [1904]), p. 182.
[113]Veblen, *Higher Learning*, p. 165.

'idle curiosity'so emphasised by others.[114] It may explain his movement from the practicality of *The Theory of the Leisure Class* to the altruistic pursuit of truth in*The Higher Learning in America*. Although Veblen was aware that such ideas had not prevailed in the past, he was confident that recent generations had accepted higher education as an 'end in itself' and it was 'now freely rated as the most humane and meritorious work to be taken care of by any enlightened community or any public-spirited friend of civilization.'[115] Veblen, who knew his Arnold, set out to denounce the 'Philistine'[116] businessmen who, through their domination in the early 1900s of many of the American universities, were trying to force higher education back to the practical or vocational emphasis he had appeared to favour in his first book. Veblen rebuked the pusillanimity and authoritarianism of the university presidents, or 'captains of erudition', who acted as agents for corporate interests, and tried to run their institutions like departmental stores.[117] Also denounced by Veblen were the blacklisting of critics of such policies (185), learning presented as a 'merchantable commodity' (163), 'committees-for-the-sifting-of-sawdust' distracting attention from bureaucratic control (186), universities competing and advertising for student 'customers' (77), staff regarded as 'a body of employés, hired to render certain services and turn out certain scheduled vendible events'(67), and 'mechanical standardization and accountancy that accounts for nothing but its superimposition'. (208) Much of the book reads like a blue-print for the move towards the corporatisation of Australian universities at the end of the 20th century.

Veblen's views were naturally unpopular with American university establishments, which took advantage of his love affairs to terminate appointments. Veblen's insistence that he was the pursued, not the pursuer, even before the enunciation of the subsequent feminist doctrine of harassment through power disparity, did not save him. As late as 1940 it was possible to bar Bertrand Russell from the City College of New York on account of the sexual morality argued in his writings.[118] More importantly, as Veblen's admirer, J.K. Galbraith, points out, 'American university presidents are a nervous breed; I have

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[114]Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p. 351.
[115]J.K. Galbraith, *A Life in Our Times* (London, Corgi, 1983), p. 34 and Veblen, *The Higher Learning in America*, p. 7.
[116]For Arnold reference and use of word 'Philistine' see Veblen, *The Higher Learning in America*, pp. 146, 176 and 195.
[117]Veblen, *Higher Learning*, p. 65.
[118]*The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell*, Vol. 2 (London, Allen and Unwin, 1970), p. 232; Russell pointed out that his conscience forbade him to expound his moral views in the classroom, as they 'have no connection with the subjects which it is my profession to teach, and I think that the classroom should not be used as an opportunity for propaganda on any subject.'

never thought well of them as a class. They praise independence of thought on all occasions of public ceremony, but worry deeply about its consequences in private.'[119]

J.K. Galbraith, one of the leading opponents of economic rationalism, and a sworn opponent of Milton Friedman, the apostle of the market, sometimes appeared to lean towards the 'exoteric' believing that the social sciences should be useful. But his usefulness was not of the kind that would appeal to corporate CEOs or modern governments. With a wide-ranging experience of American and British universities – Princeton, Berkeley, Harvard, Cambridge and the London School of Economics – Galbraith was concered at the student anti-intellectualism of Princeton and to a lesser extent Harvard. He was horrified at the structural class discrimination at Princeton, a quasi reversion to the Oxford fellow commoners of Gibbon's day. The charm of Cambridge in the 1930s, architectural and intellectual, still attracted; the common-room discourse he experienced appears to have born no resemblance to that of Gibbon's Magdalen, Oxford.

The gad-fly influence of Veblen made writing for Galbraith most pleasureable when he thought his work 'might annoy someone of comfortably pretentious position. Then comes the saddening realization that such people rarely read.'[120] Informed by a senior academic that he never gave tenure to economists who had testified 'on behalf of a corporation in an antitrust case, for such behavior meant that the man's views could be had for money', Galbraith agreed with such a decision.[121] In his satirical novel, *A Tenured Professor*, Galbraith tells the story of Montgomery Marvin, a Harvard economist who wished to make a difference to the world, but who, after initial success making money on the stockmarket, was forced to hide behind his tenured academic position.[122] The ever-increasing dependence of Australian universities of the 21st century on the corporate world makes such discussion of particular contemporary importance.

Australian Universities Established: an Instrumentalist Paradise?

Australian higher education began in 1850 with the establishment of the University of Sydney, closely followed by that of Melbourne in 1853, with Adelaide (1874) and Tasmania

[119]J.K. Galbraith, *The Age of Uncertainty* (London, BBC, 1977), pp. 57-61 and *A Life in Our Time*, pp. 40-1.
[120]Galbraith, *A Life in Our Times*, p. 41.
[121]Galbraith, *A Life*, pp. 28-9.
[122]J.K. Galbraith, *A Tenured Professor* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1990).

(1890) appearing after longer intervals. As indicated, this was a period of intense debate on English universities, with Oxford and Cambridge facing commissions of enquiry preceding government intervention. The rival collegiate and professorial systems caused much contention. De Tocqueville's analysis of American higher education weakness had Australian counterparts. William Smith O'Brien, the widely read Cambridge graduate, now expiating his revolutionary flutter in Van Diemen's Land, spoke for many in 1853 when he declared in a newspaper review that despite the palpable advance in general wealth 'we are obliged to confess that no corresponding activity is to be discerned in the cultivation of Tasmanian intellect, or in the accumulation of literary treasure. In fact, intellectual gifts and accomplishments are despised.'[123] To many colonists, universities were expensive luxuries, subsidising the affluent who could afford to send their children overseas. Public finance was required more urgently for primary schools. Some, however, especially in former penal colonies, wished to eradicate 'the hated' stain with civilised amenities like those of England itself.

In New South Wales, W.C. Wentworth (1790-1872) took the lead in promoting both primary and university education. His ideal appeared a perfect blend of the cultural and instrumental, esoteric and exoteric, 'to enlighten the mind, to refine the understanding, to elevate the soul of our fellow men', while at the same time training those who would administer the state. Wentworth insisted on secularity, leaving religious teaching to affiliated colleges. Like Cornell, Sydney University was to be open to all.[124] However, W.J. Gardner has demonstrated that Wentworth's real objective was an institution for training the upper classes to retain their dominance under self-government.[125] There was then little popular demand for a university, apart from a small body of ambitious legislators. Wentworth, who had won a poetry prize at Cambridge, tried to defuse criticism of the new institution, starting with only a handful of students, by citing the modest pretensions of London University, not the overblown glories of Oxbridge. Despite the strictures against colonial Philistines by William Smith O'Brien, published in the same paper a few

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[123]Richard Davis, *Open to Talent:The Centenary History of the University of Tasmania* (Hobart, University of Tasmania, 1990), p. 4 ; O'Brien, *To Solitude Consigned*, pp. 333 (2 June 1853) and 395-6 (review of John West, *History of Tasmania*, *Hobart Town Courier*, 29 January 1853).

[124]Michael Persse, 'Wentworth, William Charles', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (*ADB*), Vol. 2 (Melbourne University Press, 1979 [1967]), p. 588.

[125]W.J. Gardner, *Colonial Cap and Gown: Studies in the Mid-Victorian Universities of Australasia* (Christchurch, University of Canterbury, 1979), pp. 12-18.

days earlier, the *Hobart Town Courier* insisted that Sydney was 'neglecting a more arduous and pressing educational task' by establishing 'a school of high and abstract learning.'[126] The Sydney *People's Advocate* agreed: 'Preserve your gravity unmoved, *if you can*, gentle reader. In this land of beef and mutton, of wool and tallow, great and special care has been taken to initiate the student, and to stimulate his progress in the construction of Greek Iambics and Latin Hexameters!'[127] The idea that university study was a bit of sickly icing on the educational cake died hard. However, the more influential *Sydney Morning Herald*, edited by the eminent historian, the Rev. John West, denied that the University was a class institution. On the contrary, a mechanic on good wages could support a son at Sydney University but not at an overseas institution. Some aspirant legislators took this line, one pointing out that the son of a plasterer had just won university scholarships and looked forward to taking his degree.[128]

It was a similar story in Melbourne. Three years after the opening of Sydney's institution came the turn of the southern gold-enhanced metropolis. At the opening ceremony of the new university an interesting clash occurred between instrumental and cultural ideals. Melbourne University's first Chancellor, Sir Redmond Barry, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, made a strongly practical speech, rejecting the importation of the faulty European academic model and insisting on a university adapted to colonial requirements, which placed science above the classics. It was left to the Lt. Governor, Sir Charles Hotham, to extol classical learning and love of knowledge for its own sake, though he had himself earlier demanded the German model, emphasising science and modern languages, rather than the English, based on dead languages.[129] Gardner sees Barry in the Wentworth mould, 'as crusted an Anglo-Irish Tory as Ireland ever exported to Australia.'[130] Of more importance at the time was Melbourne's strong insistence on secularity, while Sydney in 1854 subsidised local denominational colleges.

Even Van Diemen's Land, still struggling to become self-governing Tasmania, rather than a penal colony, had university pretensions in the late 1840s. When the Anglicans

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[126]*Hobart Town Courier*, 1 February 1853.

[127]*People's Advocate*, Sydney, 17 September 1853.

[128]*Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 February and 12 March (G.R. Nichols) 1856. Sir Daniel Cooper, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and member of the University Senate, also emphasised the democratic nature of the University, 7 March 1856.

[129]Geoffrey Blainey, *A Centenary History of the University of Melbourne* (Melbourne University Press, 1957), pp. 2 and 8.

[130]Gardner, *Colonial Cap and Gown*, p. 21.

attempted a proto-university in Christ's College, with the Rev. H.P. Gell, a student of Dr Thomas Arnold of Rugby, as Warden, the dissenters, not to be outdone initiated the Hobart High School, appointing and then discarding the famous historian J.A. Froude as its head.[131] The *Launceston Examiner* hoped that these institutions would not become 'schools of extravagance and perjury', like Oxford and Cambridge. Instead they should follow the model of Edinburgh University, where the current British Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, had obtained his education[132] and, no doubt, some of the determination to reform Oxbridge. The High School buildings were designed like an Oxbridge college and, in 1893, did indeed become the home of the new University of Tasmania as its original promoters had hoped. Sydney University, far from being a pale colonial instrumental cramming shop, acquired magnificent sandstone buildings, complete with quadrangle and cloisters, self-consciously based on Oxford.[133] The Colleges of Melbourne University were richly endowed. A student of both institutions, Keith Hancock found the gothic architecture of Balliol, Oxford, 'a horrible descent from the gothic of Trinity College, Melbourne.'[134] The embittered Veblen had complained of the 'disjointed grotesqueries of an eclectic and modified Gothic' for new American universities.[135] The splendour, if not the 'Perpendicular English or Florid Gothic',[136] of Sydney and Melbourne's equally impressive sandstone was followed by a number of other Australian universities.'

Despite the rhetorical flourishes and a feeling that some cultural window-dressing was essential to remove the stereotype of intellectual boorishness in the Southern Hemisphere, Sol Encel insists that 'as far as Australia was concerned, the struggle between these two conceptions of higher education was decided very early in the piece – almost, it seems, by default – in favour of the instrumental view.' He cited a later Vice-Chancellor of Newcastle University, J.J. Auchmuty, like Redmond Barry a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, on Australian opinion continuing to regard its universities as 'homes of privilege and teachers of outmoded and useless knowledge.'[137] This message, loud in the 1850s, was

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[131]Froude's *Nemesis of Faith* was seen as too radical.

[132]*Launceston Examiner*, 16 September 1848.

[133]*Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 December 1855: ''being as close as possible to that of Oxford'. . . 'It will, in fact, be at once the largest and the handsomest edifice in the colony.'

[134]Hancock, *Country and Calling*, p. 82.

[135]Veblen, *The Higher Learning*, p. 93.

[136]*Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 July 1859. These were the 'masterly' designs of E.T. Blackett former Col Architect. The facade 'probably not to be equalled - and certainly not to be surpassed - by anything of the kind in any British colony or dependency whatever.'

[137]Encel in Wheelwright, ed., *Higher Education in Australia*, p. 5.

again expressed by a Tasmanian Labor paper in 1897, referring to the struggling new university: 'it would be a pity to shut up the show and sack the beautiful professors who ride bikes so gracefully and give the correct Hinglish haw haw accent to our local society tea-parties.'[138] In his first book, Veblen had seen 'great purity of speech' as typical of the leisure class dominance of universities.[139] Similar popular hostility appears quite general towards Australian universities at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.[140]

Sydney and Melbourne acquired affiliated colleges, often with impressive architecture of their own, and large endowments from local magnates, providing the institutions with some buffer between themselves and the taxpayers. But Tasmania's University was particularly impoverished and reliant on a miserly grant from its reluctant state government. It early experienced in cameo the difficulties of all Australian universities in the 21st century when the expenses of higher education are too vast to be relieved by the generosity of wealthy individuals, prepared to give academics a free hand. Finance, then supplied by the states, must now come from a reluctant federal government or large corporations determined to gain the maximum private advantage.

The University of Tasmania's origin could not have been less prepossessing. Only when demonstrated that a scholarship scheme sending a trickle of Tasmanians abroad for higher education could be converted into a local institution with cut-price lecturers was the state parliament willing to act. Even then the the infant was almost aborted by politicians with second thoughts when student enrolments were initially scant. Similar complaints had been made during the early days of Sydney University.[141] The very inclusion of women students, not destined for important professions, was an argument against the practicality the university. Efforts to appease critics by instituting an ultra-instrumental mining school during the copper boom on the west coast made matters even worse when the new school failed to attract students.[142] On the mainland, universities were also emphasising chairs in agriculture, industry and other practical studies.[143]

Nevertheless, friends of the University of Tasmania, like the dynamic James Backhouse Walker, a lawyer and one of its first Vice-Chancellors, still hankered after an

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[138]*Clipper*, 11 December 1897.
[139]Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, p. 399.
[140]Stuart McIntyre and Simon Marginson, 'The University and its Public', in Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter*, p. 55.
[141]*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1858, comments on three professors to an average of eight students a year.
[142]For the following paragraphs on the University of Tasmania, see Davis, *Open to Talent*, passim.
[143]McIntyre and Marginson, *Why Universities Matter*, p. 56.

Oxbridge model and saturated themselves in Newman's *Idea of a University*. In his public defence of the University, however, Walker was constrained to use instrumental arguments: the expense was minimal; it was not a perk for the rich but a 'leveller of classes'; the curriculum was modern and Latin and Greek only optional subjects; the institution responded to local needs rather than promoting British cultural imperialism; a local university kept other forms of education up to the mark. When the state government was in cost-cutting mode, Walker saw it behaving 'like a little boy with a new hatchet. The more valuable the tree, the more it tempts the destructive axe.' These words anticipated the experience of many Australian universities in the last twenty years.

Tiny Tasmania, the Litmus University, absorbs English ideals

By the First World War the University of Tasmania had definitely survived, but without any fat. During the War, academics, still outnumbered by laymen on most boards and councils, were gradually feeling some *esprit de corps*. Several threw themselves into council elections to give staff a voice voice on higher management. The university council rebuked an eccentric lecturer for criticism of the establishment, arguing that as a 'servant' he had no rights against his employers; the lecturer's colleagues, who included the future Sir Douglas Copland, diplomat and Chancellor of the ANU, protested against an 'infringement of this recognised right'. Political dissent also brought trouble for Professor Arnold Wood of Sydney, the archeologist V. Gordon Childe at the same university, Herbert Heaton in Tasmania, and several others.[144] A doctrine of academic freedom emerged painfully. In America, Veblen emphasised the employee issue in 1918.[145] The Tasmanian protest was relatively successful and council, with some provisos, conceded the right of staff to discuss university affairs, a concession sometimes denied today.

Staff at Tasmania now developed a stronger image of independence. When salaries were cut during the depression of the 1930s they insisted, rather pathetically, that they should reduce their own pay instead of being forced by the government. The establishment, by the first effective academic vice-chancellor in 1935, of a more effective professorial board provided a mechanism for senior staff to have a stronger voice in the

[144]McIntrye and Marginson, *Why Universities Matter*, p. 58.
[145]Veblen, *The Higher Learning in America*, p. 67.

management of the university. Sydney had appointed its first full-time academic vice-chancellor as early as 1924. Collegial power in Tasmania was not lightly conceded by Council or a new and dynamic, but extremely authoritarian Chancellor, Chief Justice Sir John Morris.

After the Second World War, in 1950, UNESCO laid down three defining principles for universities: (i) the right to pursue knowledge for its own sake and to follow truth wherever it led, (ii) tolerance of divergent principles and freedom from political interference, and (iii) promotion through teaching and research of 'the principles of freedom and justice and of human dignity and solidarity.'[146] There was then a rapid expansion of British universities, followed by Commonwealth countries as public money became available for new institutions and additional places in the old. In 1943, a British academic writing under the name 'Bruce Truscott' coined the term 'Redbrick' for the universities which had developed from regional colleges to compete with London University and Oxbridge in the second half of the 19th century.[147] In 1968, Michael Beloff, an Oxford don, christened the wave of new institutions which had developed in that decade 'the Plateglass Universities.'[148] While emphasising the distinctiveness of new universities, especially in funding, closer dependence on the government, and greater responsiveness to public demand, most commentators still insisted on a balance between the instrumental and the cultural. Research was particularly emphasised by Truscott who placed it above teaching as one of the two aims of a university. It must be 'patient and unremitting – including the cultivation of the spirit of research in even the youngest.' He claimed to differ fundamentally from Newman's diffusion of scholarship, when emphasising original discovery, but his ideal was not fundamentally opposed.

> Imagine a group of men, in any age, retiring from the life of the world, forming a society for the pursuit of truth, laying down and voluntarily embracing such discipline as is necessary to that purpose and making provision that whatever they find shall be handed on to others after their deaths. They pool their material resources; build a house; collect books; and plan their corporate

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[146]Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee (Jacinta Collins, Chair), *Universities in crisis : report into the capacity of public universities to meet Australia's higher education needs* (Canberra, The Senate, 2001), 2.16, p. 18.

[147]Bruce Truscot, *Red Brick University* (Harmondsworth, Pelican, 1951 [1943 and 1945]. Owens College (Manchester) 1851, Yorkshire College (Leeds) 1874, University College (Bristol) 1876, Mason College (Birmingham) 1880, University College (Liverpool) 1881, University College (Reading) 1892, and University College (Sheffield) 1897.

[148]Michael Beloff, *The Plateglass Universities* (London, Secker and Warburg, 1968). Sussex, York, East Anglia, Kent, Essex, Warwick and Lancaster.

studies. This, in its simplest form, is the true idea of a university.'[149]

This was heady stuff for new overseas post-war lecturers at the University of Tasmania. Australian universities were developing rapidly with the establishment of the Commonwealth Universities Commission in 1943 and an influx of students on returned servicemen's grants.[150] Roy Chappell, late of the RAF now teaching in the Tasmanian Education Faculty, heavily underlined the above passage in his copy of Truscott. Such ideals were difficult to reconcile with the reality of the University of Tasmania in the 1950s, when the state government was reluctant to spend earmarked funds to move the institution from the cramped 19th century High School to an adequate campus. Except for a small minority of staff, research was almost impossible given the higher priority of producing lawyers, teachers and scientists for local consumption. Apart from the instrumentalist University of Tasmania military optical section in World War II, lay authorities wrote off most of the university's scholarly activity as curiosity-driven fundamental research. Especially in areas such as the humanities and social sciences, it can often appear as a self-indulgent hobby of academics who should devote more energy to teaching.

A few years after Truscott, Sir Walter Moberly's *The Crisis in the Universities* (1949) examined the whole range of British tertiary education in a seminal work, comparable to Newman's *Idea of a University*. Like Newman, Moberly, whose experience ranged from Oxford to Birmingham, Edinburgh and Manchester, where he served as vice-chancellor, argued for Christianity as a vital component of university study. But, again like Newman, Moberly saw higher education as possessing its own validity. Moberly accepted that the 'liberal' concept of university study, represented by Newman and Arnold was based on an aristocratic culture. This had little relevance to the greatly enlarged university populations of the post-war period with their interest in the application of science to society, rather than the Greco-Roman classics. The 'Liberal' ideal was parasitic in that it required leisure and disinterestedness in its students. It was also remote from the reality of production and distribution and snobbish about its aristocratic disdain for manual workers. Moberley agreed with Veblen and others when pointing out the hypocrisy of the Liberal appeal to

[149]Truscott, *Red Brick University*, pp. 69-70. Copy donated to University of Tasmania Library by Roy Chappell.
[150]McIntyre and Marginson, *Why Universities Matter*, p. 61.

the medieval ideal. In the middle ages universities prepared students 'not for lifelong research, but for careers outside the university.' Nevertheless Moberly rejected the slide into total instrumentalism. Both the 'Liberal' and professional training 'policies are one-sided and some combination is needed. Neither the technical expert in blinkers nor the "gentleman amateur," is equal to the demands of the times.' Indeed, 'the uncultured technician is crippled as a practical man in his own calling.' He cited Lord Haldane, a most successful War Minister and administrator who was also 'a foremost exponent of the theory of the liberal university.' To Haldane, inspired by the philosopher René Descartes discovering co-ordinate geometry while apparently loafing in bed, 'you cannot, if you are to have even the best scientific education, separate it from that individual quality of humanism'.[151] In choosing appropriate subjects for university teaching, Moberly argued like Newman that 'the proper criterion is to be found in method of treatment rather than in subject matter. . . . Does it confine itself to imparting "the tricks of the trade" or does it concern itself with fundamental principles?'

Moberly gave a balanced analysis of academic independence. Some general planning was inevitable and the government had a responsibility for seeing that universities addressed 'major social needs'. Government and universities were partners, not master and servant. Writing with the Attlee Labour Government in power, Moberley argued that the major threat to universities came not from government but from 'the pervasive influence of the mass mind'. Universities needed 'the maximum of autonomy and inner flexibility.' The condition of such autonomy was sensitivity to real world developments and power of self reform. As the German philosopher Karl Jaspers put it, 'the university claims freedom of teaching and learning as the condition of the responsible independence of teachers and lecturers.' The only guarantee of a successful balance was an educated public opinion, inside and outside the universities.[152]

One of Australia's leading scholars, historian Sir Keith Hancock, devoted considerable space to Moberly in his autobiography. Like Moberly, Hancock had been a professor at the University of Birmingham and a Fellow of an Oxford College. Soon to

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[151]Viscount Haldane of Cloan, 'Education and democracy' speech at Swansea, 26 November 1921, quoted in *Text Matter: International University Reading Course* (International University Society, London, Walter Black, n.d.), pp. 144 and 146. Although a man of action, Haldane was impressed by Leonardo da Vinci's belief that it was better to know than to be. See also Haldane, *An Autobiography* , pp. 8 and 90-91 (linking science and literature).

[152]Moberly, *The Crisis in the University* , pp. 167-171, 191-2, 238, 239-42.

become Director of the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University, Hancock grappled with similar issues. He agreed that Oxbridge fifty years earlier had been able to offer 'an education that was in harmony with the culture and convictions' of the minority class which was able to see education as an enrichment of life, though they did not value it for its own sake. Now, however, 'the sons and daughters of very different families are coming in their hundreds' to Oxbridge and in their thousands to Redbrick, demanding vocational training, but also 'a clear and worthy view of life.' In practice, he found Birmingham students too willing to apply stern values to practical problems and pleaded not guilty to the charge of evading critical issues. Hancock saw clearly that the task of providing for these competing demands, when academics became increasingly specialised, was no easy one.[153] One solution, was the establishment of schools of research and higher degrees at the Australian National University, over one of which Hancock presided from 1957 to 1965.

Such issues were highlighted in Australia, during a struggle involving the small, underfunded University of Tasmania. A protest movement of staff, complaining of poor working conditions, lay interference in academic decisions, delays in moving to a suitable new campus, and inadequate salaries, confronted the University Council, acting as a front for an unsympathetic State Government. Some of their criticisms of their State Government paymaster, are similar to those directed at the current federal government, now financing the tertiary sector throughout the country.

The Significance of Tasmania's Royal Commission (1955) and Orr

On 28 October 1954 the Hobart *Mercury* published an open letter to the Premier from Professor Sydney Sparkes Orr, who owned a copy of Moberly's *The Crisis in the University*, demanding a 'searching and thorough inquiry into the whole question of University conditions.' The issue, he pointed out, was not merely salaries but the power of a largely lay Council to overrule the Professorial Board on academic issues such as the lowering of matriculation standards. He complained, once again, that the academics were treated as 'servants'. This behaviour conflicted with 'the ideals and conditions existing in other parts

[153]Hancock, *Country and Calling*, pp. 134-9.

of the democratic world', another appeal to intellectual 'best practice' as it was later called. Orr's arguments were instrumental in their demand for funding to provide increased staff. These would produce the leadership required to meet changing conditions, such as post-war immigration and developments in hydro-electric power. But Orr also mentioned 'a general lowering in the appreciation of, and attachment to, spiritual and cultural values'. His ideal Tasmanian University was 'a forum for the dissemination and discussion of those principles and values in which our democratic civilization is cradled and upon the vitality of which its life depends.'

If such rhetoric appears overblown in the 21st century it comes close to views, also expounded in 1955, of the renowned American historian, Carl Becker. Democracy, said Becker, depends on people being able to 'acquire sufficient intelligence and integrity to govern themselves better than anyone can do it for them'. This requires 'sufficient intelligence and integrity to manage their affairs with a minimum of compulsion, by free discussion and reasonable compromises voluntarily entered into and faithfully maintained.' Such high ideals, rarely contemplated today, would necessitate 'freedom of learning and teaching', for, as Becker pointed out, 'it is obvious that the better informed the people are the more likely it is that the ends they desire will be wise and the measures taken to attain them effective.' For this reason, Becker insisted that teaching and research could not be separated. Teaching, removed from critical research, 'tends to become conventional and dogmatic and to leave the student with a body of information learned by rote and housed in a closed and incurious mind'. On the other hand, the pure researcher can 'run into barren antiquarianism, as harmless and diverting, and just about as socially useful, as crossword puzzles or contract bridge.'[154]

Orr's letter had the immediate effect of stimulating the appointment of the 1955 Royal Commission on the University of Tasmania. Its report brought joy to the embattled academics, whose case was presented by a future Chief Justice of Victoria, John Young. The three-man commission, consisting of a retired judge, a scientist and a classical scholar, duly criticised the state government's failure to use available funding to build a new campus and insisted that the Professorial Board be given more responsibility for academic decisions. Salaries should be equated with those of mainland states. The Commission

[154]Becker, *Freedom and Responsibility in the American Way of Life*, pp. 70 & 64.

recommended the phasing out of the current University Council. The report also insisted that 'research is a fundamental part of University life; it differentiates tertiary education from secondary and some forms of Technical College teaching; its support is essential.' Far from being a self-indulgent perk as some lay Councillors claimed, sabbatical leave, especially in a somewhat isolated institution, enabled academics to further their research, bring themselves up to date and provide 'the mental refreshment which will prevent their teaching from becoming stale and uninspired.' The Commissioners even suggested the establishment of a grade of 'readers' who would be occupied mainly with research. Essentially, the Royal Commission sought to bring a balance between the instrumental needs of teaching and curiosity-based scholarship and research.

Tasmanian academics for years afterwards cited the findings of the 1955 Royal Commission as their particular charter. The Commission is important as its whole emphasis is completely out of tune with the attitudes of higher education administrators today. It summed up a hundred years of advance and development of higher education.

The state government and University Council were less impressed and dragged their feet over implementing the report. Although, as one of the commissioners, Classicist A.B. Trendall, subsequently pointed out, they leaned over backwards to be conciliatory, tension mounted immediately afterwards. Ultimately most of the recommendations appeared in some form. In the 1960s, for example, the University was relocated to a bright new, architecturally utilitarian campus at Sandy Bay, Hobart.

Unfortunately, the positive effects and philosophy of the 1955 Commission have been obscured by conflict arising from the summary dismissal of Professor Orr in early 1956; his ten-year campaign for rehabilitation and compensation, ended shortly before his death in 1966. The battle resulted in a boycott of his chair of philosophy by the Australian and international academic community. Meanwhile hard negotiation by the federal staff union and its local branch achieved exceptionally strong tenure provisions from the University of Tasmania. This was deservedly famous as the longest and most fruitful example of academic assertion in Australia's history. It contrasts remarkably with the passive acceptance of the Dawkins revolution in higher education after 1988.

The current authority on Orr, Cassandra Pybus,[155] has created a diversion by treating

[155]Cassandra Pybus, *Seduction and Consent: A Case of Gross Moral Turpitude* (Melbourne, Reed, 1993). To emphasise the sexual, Pybus changed the original title from simply *Gross Moral Turpitude*.

the issue as an early example of sexual harassment. Her success is demonstrated by the lack of significance give to the Orr case by McIntyre and Marginson's otherwise valuable survey of 'The University and its Public'.[156] The pretext for sacking the man who had caused the University Council and state government so much embarrassment, after other charges had failed, was an affair with a student, denied by Orr to the last. The High Court, when it finally dismissed Orr's claim for wrongful dismissal, stated bluntly that the student had initiated the relationship. Orr did not claim the right to have consensual sex with a student; he repudiated any liaison at all and accepted the justice of sacking had such a relationship taken place. Nor did the University Council which sacked Orr contain committed feminists, radical or otherwise, whose arguments had not then been formulated.

Orr's character and veracity are digressions from the essential issues of the academic protest, the Royal Commission and the long negotiation to provide strong tenure arrangements in the wake of the High Court's acceptance of the Tasmanian Supreme Court ruling that Orr was indeed a servant of the Council. The significance of this issue is indicated by the Oxford dons who rejected a speaker's description of them as employees of the University by insisting, 'We *are* the university.'[157] Cassandra Pybus published her diverting history and comprehensive attack on Orr and other academics, shortly after the introduction of the Dawkins revolution which transformed Australian academia. By reinforcing current stereotypes of academics as lazy and debauched the book may have helped to weaken the resolve of some late 20th century scholars to resist, when administrators and politicians determined 'to put a bomb under all that academic stodge.'[158] It was appropriate that Professor Alan Gilbert, doyen of economic rationalist vice-chancellors, launched Pybus's book on Orr and that Pybus publicly applauded Gilbert's erosion of the authority of senior academics at the University of Tasmania.[159]

Murray, Martin and John Anderson

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[156]See McIntyre and Marginson, in *Why Universities Matter*, p. 65. The argument stands only if consensual sexual relations between university staff and students, initiated by the student, are defined as harassment.
[157]Quoted from Sir Zelman Cowen by Raymond Gaita in Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter*, p. 44.
[158]Quoted by Hugh Stretton, 'Life after Dawkins', in *The Australian Universities Review*, Vol. 32, No. 2, p. 11.
[159]*Australian*, 13 November 1991.

While the Orr case was in progress, Prime Minister Robert Menzies 'decided to revolutionise the universities'.[160] After some relatively small payments from the Federal Government, Menzies, in the full knowledge that the result would be 'vastly expensive', appointed a high-powered group under Sir Keith Murray, chair of the British Universities Grants Committee, to investigate Australian higher education. The *Murray Report* of 1957 duly recommended increased federal funding and opened a new era for Australian higher education. Tabling it in the parliament, Menzies accepted the community's heavy financial burden in order that 'the community may be served'. 'We must, on a broad basis, become a more and more educated democracy if we are to raise our spiritual, intellectual, and material living standards.' The words sounded like Orr's appeal to the Tasmanian Premier. In his balanced blend of the instrumental and cultural, Menzies insisted that universities were not for the privileged few but 'something essential to the lives of millions of people who may never enter their doors.'[161] Menzies argued elsewhere for 'untrammelled research' and university autonomy. He saw 'the virtues' of 'the modern doctrine that boys and girls who can pass the qualifying examinations have a right to university training', but feared that costs might eventually impose a limitation. Menzies accepted responsibility for the Colombo Plan. 'We have so great a duty to our neighbours, particularly our Asian neighbours, to assist them in the raising of their own educational, medical, scientific and technological development that we must take our part in finding or training our share of the expert minds that they need.' There was no suggestion here that Asian countries might help to keep the Australian tertiary system in existence by buying its education.

An Australian Universities Commission was established and federal finance to Australian Universities increased from $12,000 in the 1955-7 triennium to $40,000 in 1958-60, and doubled in the next three years. Student numbers rose from 40,000 in the late 1940s to 200,000 by the early 1970s. Murray followed the Tasmanian Royal Commission in denouncing the 'intolerable' conditions then experienced by that university. The report also complained of minimal research funding. On the divide between exoteric and esoteric learning, the Murray Committee like Menzies maintained a balanced course on the need

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[160]Hugh Stretton, 'Life after Dawkins: teaching and research with diminishing resources', in *The Australian Universities Review*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 1989, p. 9. He appointed 'three excellent teachers, researchers and academics' to investigate and 'did what they advised.'

[161]Sir Robert Menzies, *The Measure of the Years* (London, Coronet, 1972), pp. 84-94.

for national development and an education with breadth to produce 'rounded human beings'.[162] As in England after the Oxbridge 19th century reforms, not every Australian academic was satisfied. Professor John Anderson of Sydney, 'certainly the most original philosopher Australia has produced',[163] complained that the projected expansion of Australian universities would cost them their independence. Academics would become schoolteachers providing instruction for the professions. This would force down standards as students were pushed 'through in the minimum time' rather than being presented 'with problems about which they are to think critically.' Anderson was happy to reject 'progressivist and egalitarian dogma and to uphold privilege' for the intellectually able. His opposition to 'planning' and special strategies to reduce failure rates is highly relevant to debate in the 21st century. Anderson raised a vital issue by arguing that certain students, incapable of reaching the appropriate level, were artificially raised by cramming 'to a standard which can only be aped, not attained, by those who have been given "personal assistance", and shown the methods of passing.'[164] The argument reinforces Bertrand Russell's view that the apparent dichotomy between teaching and research arose from 'a wrong conception of teaching, and to the presence of a number of students whose industry and capacity are below the level which ought to be exacted as a condition of residence.' This apparent élitism explained by Russell's insistence that 'abstract knowledge is loved by very few, and yet it is abstract knowledge that makes a civilized community possible.'[165] Instrumental education may contain abstract reasoning but it is more likely to be found in self-directed scholars. Assuming that Anderson's standard was based on genuine curiosity, powers of abstract reasoning and cognitive understanding of the discipline, he pointed unerringly to the divide between instrumental instruction and learning for its own sake. His fears were to be fully realised in the 1990s. Indeed, Anderson's stand was reminiscent of Mark Pattison's concern at the apparently beneficent government reform of Oxbridge a century earlier.

The subsequent 1965 Martin Report dealt with the instrumental/cultural divide by recommending a binary system which led to the creation of a tier of Colleges of Advanced Education. Sir Leslie Martin had a particularly exalted notion of university pursuit of

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[162]McIntyre and Marginson, in Coady, ed.,*Why Universities Matter*, p. 62.
[163]Coady, in Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter*, p. 11.
[164]A.J. Baker, *Anderson's Social Philosophy* (Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1979), pp. 136-7.
[165]Bertrand Russell, *On Education*, p. 242, and *Education and the Social Order* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1967), p. 26.

knowledge for its own sake. As Macintyre and Marginson argue, this was remote from the contemporary reality of Australian universities which were often struggling to make ends meet.[166] Martin endeavoured to ensure that the practical or instrumental subjects were to be taught separately from the theoretical. Though similar to the contemporary British division between universities and polytechnics, the binary system was a failure. The Colleges of Advanced Education, often staffed by PhDs from universities, moved stealthily towards university status, encouraging the research absent from their job descriptions and granting their own degrees.[167] As Veblen said, practical colleges drift naturally towards 'more and more of an academic, non-utilitarian character.'[168]

The Growing Academic Consensus, 1960s

By the 1960s a consensus seemed to have been reached in Britain, Australia and other parts of the world on the aims and functions of universities. A British landmark was the Robbins Report of 1965. This accepted the 'simple faith' that money poured into universities would inevitably quicken national economic development.[169] In Australia there was also a belief in the importance of universities in providing for defence during the Cold War.[170] Lord Lionel Robbins, a conservative economist, naturally emphasised the instrumental significance of academic funding. But Robbins himself considered universities 'not only as centres of training, but also as centres of thought and learning.' While the development of civilisation depended on science and technology 'in a complex society such as ours, the hope of order and freedom in social conditions must rest in considerable measure upon the advancement of systematic knowledge in social studies.' Nor were these studies restricted to public utility. They might also foster activities 'which most of us would regard as good in themselves. To attempt to understand the world, to contemplate and to analyse its values – these are activities which, even if they were never associated with practical advantage, would still lend meaning and dignity to life on this

[166]Macintyre and Marginson, in *Why Universities Matter*, pp. 63-4.
[167]For an interesting account of this development in practice, see Anthony Potts, *College Academics* (Charlestown, NSW, William Michael Press, 1997).
[168]Veblen, *The Higher Learning*, p. 31.
[169]V.H.H. Green, *The Universities*, p. 136.
[170]Macintyre and Marginson, in *Why Universities Matter*, p. 62.

planet.'[171] Cardinal Newman could not have expressed it better. Similarly, in the 1960s writers who had directed major institutions of learning, such as Murray G. Ross (York University, Canada),[172] Sir Sydney Caine (London School of Economics),[173] G.L. Brook (University of Manchester),[174] all exhibited strong feeling on the value of disinterested research and knowledge for its own sake. Brook believed that the essential work of a university could be carried on without degrees and accepted that the slightly archaic 1851 eulogy of A.J. Scott, first principal of Owens, College, Manchester, was 'central to the true conception of a university'. It was subsequently adopted by an Australian Senate report on higher education.[175]

> He who learns from one occupied in learning, drinks of a running stream. He who learns from one who has learned all he is to teach, drinks "the mantle of the stagnant pool."

Those with Australian experience, such as A.P. Rowe (Vice-Chancellor, University of Adelaide)[176] and 'Nugget' Coombs (Chancellor of the Australian National University)[177] were not far behind in their idealism, though aware of practical difficulties in its realisation. While there was some disagreement between these authorities, on issues such as the combining research and teaching, Rowe believing combination impossible in practice, all had something in common with the academic idealists past, such as Gibbon, Newman, Pattison and Arnold.

England: the Consensus falters

The breakdown in this consensus did not come out of the blue. In England the *Robbins Report* led to a huge boom in academia. The number of universities doubled, thirty-two polytechnics were established, the Universities Grants Commission doubled in size, there were 'jobs galore for would-be academics', but, as Menzies had feared in

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[171]Lord Robbins, *The University in the Modern World* (London, Macmillan, 1966), pp. 4-5.

[172]Murray G. Ross, *New Universities in the Modern World* (London, Macmillan, 1966), p. 176: 'The principal effort seems to be to broaden undergraduate programmes with a clear emphasis on liberal education.'

[173]Sir Sydney Caine, *British Universities: Purpose and Prospects* (London, Bodley Head, 1969), pp. 26-9.

[174]G.L. Brook, *The Modern University* (London, Andre Deutsh, 1965), pp.16-20.

[175]Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, *Priorities for Reform in Higher Education* (Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, June 1990), p. 61.

[176]A.P. Rowe, *If the Gown Fits* (Melbourne University Press, 1960), p. 12 for fundamental research.

[177]H.C. Coombs, *Trial Balance: Issues of my working life* (Melbourne, Sun, 1983), p. 212. '. . . it is from the more fundamental studies, from the pursuit simply of the intellectually exciting that come the changes in the paradigms, the intellectual models of the universe, within which all knowledge must fit and which therefore do most to change how men think, believe, and live within that universe.'

Australia, it was 'all ruinously expensive'.[178] The 'love affair' between the government and the universities when money was handed out 'on the assumption that good would follow' began to break down and talk of strict accountability ensued.[179] Student revolt in the 1960s played a part irritating public opinion. As Macintyre and Marginson argue, rebellious students capitalised on the traditional arguments for academic immunity from outside interference, but at the same time struck a blow against knowledge for its own sake by demanding 'relevance' and radical political orientation.[180] The bountiful funding of universities and the introduction of free tuition by the Whitlam Government of 1972-75, was followed, as a partial result of the world oil crisis, by austerity under Malcolm Fraser (1975-83) when academic finances were pegged.

The 1979 election in Britain of Margaret Thatcher, a dedicated and ruthless economic rationalist, and the Hawke-Keating government of 1983, which followed closely in her deregulatory wake, brought about a rethinking of the comfortable welfare state. Corelli Barnett, a Cambridge historian, argued that Britain's poor economic performance was the result of the liberal education associated with Newman in the 19th century. While not all Thatcherites approved, the way was opened for the 1988 Education Act designed to dismantle the 'self-regarding academic producer-monopoly' which appeared pampered with handouts failing to assist Britain's economic growth. Managerial and business principles were introduced; tenure was made difficult to obtain; 'relevancy' demanded for all activity and quality indicators with increased paper-work made *de rigeur*; the divide between polytechnics and universities was abolished; funding became cut-throat; academics struggled for basic survival. Opponents, for example Elie Kedourie of the London School of Economics, pointed out, like Veblen, that universities were not analogous to business.[181] The left-wing *New Statesman* argued, that 'the Tories, in the 1980s, complaining of an excess of theoretical research that offered no national economic benefit, reduced state funding for universities and encouraged them to seek private sponsorship for "relevant" projects.' As a result, in matters like health, the public cannot trust academic scientists, funded now by pharamceutical companies.[182] Other

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[178]Shirley Robin Letwin, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism* (London, Fontana, 1992), p. 264.
[179]Maurice Kogan, *The Politics of Educational Change* (London, Fontana, 1978), pp. 99-100.
[180]Macintyre and Marginson, in *Why Universities Matter*, p. 65.
[181]Letwin, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism*, pp. 264-276.
[182]*New Statesman*, 18 February 2002.

governments were using the same arguments.

In New Zealand, as early as 1969, the pugnacious finance minister and subsequently prime minister, Bob Muldoon, asserted that New Zealand universities were failing to meet his country's 'practical needs'. Scholarship should be played down in favour of vocational studies. Muldoon was challenged by Professor Neville Phillips, Vice-Chancellor of Canterbury University, who insisted that such a formula would produce intellectual illiterates in an unenlightened society. Phillips clung to a middle course 'not because it is easier to compromise but because it is right.' Muldoon was forced to backtrack.[183] Ironically, it was after the Muldoon Government's final defeat in 1984, that both Labour and National administrations successfully implemented his higher education suggestions.

Downhill with Dawkins

Australian academia had due warning of changes to come with belt tightening under Fraser. The Universities Grants Committee was replaced by CTEC (Commonwealth Tertiary Education Council) which now united Universities and Colleges of Advanced Education under one authority. Academics who disliked the new emphasis could at least reflect that there was still an attenuated buffer between the Government and the Universities. Worse was to follow. The Hawke-Keating Labor Government jettisoned financial controls and opened the country to economic rationalism. As a member, Science Minister Barry Jones, pointed out, 'there was an extraordinary degree of convergence, with both parties deeply committed to market force economics.'[184] The *Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education* probed the Australian academic system. If its promoters hoped to discover the same sort of corruption as had appeared in Oxbridge before the government reforms of the 1850s, they were disappointed. Academics were in general found to be hard working and conscientious. As Hugh Stretton summed it up, 'they found that the universities were running fairly efficiently with their costs cut to the bone.[185] There was no structural dereliction of duty. Indeed, apart from a small handful of unambitious seat warmers, content to remain routine teachers, the average tenured

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[183]Obituary of Neville Phillips, *New Zealand Herald*, 14-15 July 2001.
[184]Barry Jones, 'Redefining Socialism, in Duncan Kerr, ed., *Reinventing Socialism* (Leichhardt, Pluto Press, 1992), p. 18.
[185]Hugh Stretton, 'Life after Dawkins, in *The Australian Universities Review*, Vol. 32, No. 9, p. 9.

Australian academic faced a constant round of applications for research grants, promotion and leave, requiring regular written demonstrations of research prowess.

In April 1987 the Minister for Education, Senator Susan Ryan, toured the country's campuses to promote the raising of finance by attracting full fee-paying students from Asian countries. Ryan, 'an unreconstructed Whitlamite' according to bone-dry Finance Minister Peter Walsh, had fought a long battle in cabinet to maintain university funding. She successfully blocked a cabinet attempt in 1985 to reintroduce tertiary fees by appealing 'to the rabble of the Caucus Education Committee'.[186] To the academic community in 1987, however, her new advocacy appeared ominous. The Federated Australian University Staff Associations (FAUSA)[187] president, John Fox, complained of the 'commodification' of education.[188] Ryan's battle against fees was lost when the Hawke-Keating Government's decision to abandon in 1989 the Whitlam Government's free tertiary education policy in favour of delayed fee payments, the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS).

The reintroduction of fees, long resisted by Susan Ryan, marked an important ideological change. The policy followed a suggestion of Milton Friedman, doyen of the Chicago School of economists, whose writings greatly influenced President Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Free education implied public benefit from educating all citizens to their full capacity. This had seemed obvious to a range of opinion from Menzies to Moberly. But Milton and Rose Friedman denied that such public benefit existed and that fees or loans should pay for the ultimate financial advantages individuals derived from their higher education.[189] The Wran Committee which recommended the imposition of delayed fees demonstrated its ideological confusion by asserting initially that a better-educated population was in the national interest and then claiming that students themselves were the chief beneficiaries from increased salary potential. The philosopher Max Charlesworth, complained that 'this is rather like arguing that an increase in our army is absolutely essential for Australia's defence, but that the Government is not willing

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[186]Peter Walsh, *Confessions of a Failed Finance Minister* (Sydney, Random House, 1995), pp. 102 and 140-1. Supporters of fees argued that there had been no change in the class composition of university students since their abolition. Walsh also argued that Whitlam had only introduced the no fees policy to head off the leadership challenge of the left-wing Jim Cairns. Bill Hayden, however, *An Autobiography* (Sydney, Harper Collins, 1996), p. 226, claims that, apart from himself, free university education was 'a thoroughly popular commitment with most ministers.'

[187]Now National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU).

[188]Personal diary, 24 April 1987.

[189]Milton Friedman and Rose Friedman, *Free to Choose: A Personal Statement* (Harmonsdworth, Penguin, 1980), pp. 211-224.

to fund any increase, so that the new soldiers should supply their own guns and pay a "training tax" and the army should hire itself out for profit.'[190] In a few years such statements would approximate government policy, rather than parody. Back in 1859 the *Sydney Morning Herald*, edited by the enlightened John West, insisted that 'Nothing could be more unjust than to look at an institution like Sydney University merely in the light of an outlay for the education of those who at present belong to it.' There were 'collateral benefits available to many who never entered such an institution.[191] In 1996 the architect of the HECS scheme suggested that élite athletes similarly pay back the cost of their training at the Australian Institute of Sport,[192] but this idea has evoked no enthusiasm, despite the extremely high salaries now available to sportspeople. Ironically, while the Friedmans quoted Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' leading to private and public benefit, Karl Marx demonstrated that Smith favoured education of the people by the state.[193]

Susan Ryan, too solicitous of university interests, was replaced as Education Minister later in 1987 by the more ruthless economic rationalist John Dawkins in a new mega-department which jettisoned the celebrated public intellectual and Science Minister, Barry Jones. Jones recorded an outbreak of Philistinism from both opposition and government, which he admitted should have led to his resignation. Research projects in the Humanities were ridiculed and the the government slashed 1 million dollars from the Australian Research Grants Committee (ARGC). There was little response from academia. According to Jones, 'Treasury and Finance learnt a lesson from the fiasco – that the research community could be hit without any risk that it would fight back, and that they had relatively little community (or media) support.'[194] Such a realisation may have empowered Dawkins, who early showed his disdain for academics by rebuffing the President of FAUSA. The AGM of that institution was, however, unperturbed when the president informed it of the likelihood of unpalatable changes in the system.[195]

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[190]Graham Maddox, *The Hawke Government and Labor Tradition* (Ringwood, Victoria, Penguin, 1989), pp. 79-81.

[191]*Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 July 1859. Some of these were the general raising of educational standards and an example for schools.

[192]*Australian*, 26 June 1996.

[193]See Robert Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York, W.W. Norton, 1972), p. 287. Marx himself appears ambiguous on the issue. In the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, he and Engels call for free education of all children in public schools (Tucker, p. 252); in *Capital*, Vol. 1, he pays this tribute to Adam Smith; in *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, however, he insists that church and state be excluded from education and that the people should educate the state, rather than v.v. (Tucker, p. 397).

[194]Interview in *Symposium: Newsletter of the Australian Academy of the Humanities*, No. 12, May 1999, p. 6.

[195]See personal diary, 26 August 1987, comments on meeting: 'Nero fiddled . . .'

The extent of the change was soon apparent in Dawkins' *Higher Education: a Policy Discussion Paper* .[196] 'Discussion' was perhaps a misnomer as the *Green Paper* insisted that the Government had already made up its mind and was prepared only to accept suggestions on detail. The influence of Milton Friedman, strange in a Labor Government, was perceptible. The *Green Paper's* tone was purely instrumental throughout, without the customary lip service to cultural or curiosity based learning. Instead, the *Green Paper* was saturated with demands for 'flexibility', soon found to be a synonym for reduction of staff and expenses.

After stating baldly that the Australian higher education system had traditionally provided 'both a "liberal" education and the educational preparation required for entry to the well-established professions' (1) Dawkins ignored the former and demanded that the latter be broadened. Statistics demonstrated that graduates had better employment prospects than non-graduates. The *Green Paper* aimed specifically at increasing the ratio of students taking science and practical subjects. Back in the 1850s Newman had insisted on science, then an innovative proposal, at the Irish Catholic University, but Dawkins gave little encouragement to the Humanities or Social Sciences. Women, comprising a large proportion of Arts students, were to be guided towards more utilitarian pursuits. This harked back to the 19th century Tasmanian politicians opposed to the new state university because too many students were unpractical women.

Instead of recognising the general benefits of broadening the mind and honing the intellect for life in a democratic society, Dawkins aggressively demanded that Australia adapt to international technological progress by significantly increasing its graduates. John Anderson's worst fears now bore fruit. An obvious precedent was Lord John Russell's demand in the 1830s that Oxbridge be brought in touch with the world of rapidly multiplying innovations. Russell, a firm supporter of the economic rationalism of his own day, did not propose public expenditure to oil his reform package. Similarly, Dawkins' *Green Paper* insisted that the payment for the additional graduates would not necessarily be met by the Federal Government. Universities must therefore become more entrepreneurial and find other income from full fee-paying students and collaboration with industry. Academics should be made more efficient and productive. A top-down

[196]J.S. Dawkins, *Higher Education: a Policy Discussion Paper* (Canberra, Australian Government Printing Service, December 1987) [*Green Paper*].

managerial system would replace time-wasting committees, with trained administrators substituted for elected officials, such as deans. Academic freedom was applauded in theory, but in practice tenure was to be limited by compulsory redundancy where courses were no longer required. Emphasis was placed on retirement schemes to persuade staff to depart. Teaching was accorded priority over research. While the existence of basic research was recognised, concern was expressed over the country's poor rate of conversion to practical results. Dawkins promised minimal intervention in individual universities, but demonstrated that those who refused to join the Unified National System of Universities and CAEs, providing mission statements and performance indicators, would be penalised financially. Indeed, a competitive research 'clawback' was foreshadowed, forcing universities to compete for a proportion of their funds initially deducted by the government.

As Barry Jones, who remained unhappily in the Government at this time, summed up Dawkins: 'Universities and research institutes were put on notice that they had to produce tangible economic benefits for the national economy and seek more collaboration with industry. This narrow instrumentalist view created some problems since Australian industry showed little interest in medium to long term research and had no track record of achievement in developing new products.'[197]

The Pace of Change Accelerates

Australian academia was shocked. Surely these things could not be done? There must be a mistake. There was no mistake. The *Green Paper* became a *White Paper* [198] with little essential change. To critics fearing that the proposed changes might 'distort the system's traditional functions of intellectual inquiry and scholarship', jeopardise 'the arts, humanities and social sciences' and tailor courses to narrow vocational or 'instrumentalist' objectives, Dawkins was unrepentant. He reaffirmed his policy, admitting that 'the maintenance of valuable traditions' had received little attention in the *Green Paper*. The *White Paper*, however, did little to allay anxiety on this score, apart from a ritual

[197]Jones, 'Reinventing Socialism', Kerr, ed., *Reinventing Socialism*, pp. 21-2.
[198]J.S. Dawkins, *Higher Education: a Policy Statement* (Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, July 1988) [*White Paper*].

declaration that 'a high quality of life' required 'a culture of intellectual inquiry' based on arts, humanities and sciences of western, eastern and Aboriginal traditions. By a trickling down process they might share development. (8) Like Moberly and others, Dawkins emphasised the change from a higher education enjoyed by a privileged minority to one generally available. He fell far short of insisting on education as a good in itself, regardless of direct economic benefit. Only in his paen to 'excellence' and his requirement that higher education was a major source in society's understanding of its 'own political processes' did he suggest a broader role for learning.[199] The *White Paper's* organisational changes were generally in line with those of the *Green Paper*. There was an offer to provide a legislative guarantee of 'academic freedom', though this idea had evoked little interest. (107) Dawkins withdrew for the immediate future the *Green Paper's* very unpopular 'flexible hierarchies' which would have forced regular re-competition for posts higher than senior lecturer. He justified this change by citing the Arbitration Commission settlement of 21 June 1988 between Government and academic unions. This eliminated stronger tenure provisions, like those of Tasmania, and permitted staff redundancy,™ in return for a 5% salary increase.[200] On research, Dawkins recurred to the debate initiated by Cardinal Newman, distinguishing between 'original research', to be restricted to a minority of academics, and general scholarship, easily combined with extensive teaching. (92) After the White Paper, the CTEC buffer between Government and universities was abolished. DEET (Department of Education Employment and Training), its very name a monument to instrumentalism, dealt with academia directly. The apparatus of managerialism was duly established. Professorial or Academic Boards, criticised as unwieldy and inefficient by Dawkins, were phased out by many institutions. A number of amalgamations of universities and CAEs, to reach the minimum number of 8,000 students as demanded by the *White Paper*, took place.

Thus Milton Friedman's instrumental conception of higher education prevailed in Australia. Following Dawkins, the quest for full fee-paying students from Asia and the re-introduction of fees for local students effectively implanted economic rationalism on the university system. University administrators, short of funds, began to seek flexibility by reducing the proportion of income paid in staff salaries. Academic 'downsizing',

[199]Dawkins, *White Paper*, pp. 5-10.
[200]Dawkins, *White Paper*, pp. 111-12.

inseparable from the current shibboleth of 'micro-economic reform', became inevitable. Meanwhile, Thatcher's assault on English academia removed the 'cultural cringe' motivation for maintaining a university system dedicated to learning for its own sake. Australians could not be accused of colonial Philistinism when the English were Philistines too. The Vice-Chancellor of Melbourne University, Alan Gilbert, demonstrated this new freedom when he demanded that Australia follow the world's leading institutions, rather than relying on the homogeneity of Australian higher education. 'But if you look at higher education around the world, there is a huge surge of innovation and development in the idea of what it means to be a university.'[201]

An unavailing attempt to restore some balance to the debate took the form of a report by a Senate Committee chaired by Tasmanian Labor Senator Terry Aulich, a former Tasmanian Minister for Education and a published poet.[202] The *Aulich Report* complained that Dawkins had over-emphasised structure and control of higher education, missing the 'crucial' issue of quality. The changes Dawkins advocated sprang 'from managerial considerations rather than from an educational rationale.' (19) While Aulich accepted that the system should be 'instrumental' in meeting the country's needs, and stressed the importance of teaching, many of his comments approximated 'cultural' preoccupations. He quoted Dr Don Anderson's view that recent reports failed to address education 'for its own sake, or for for the sake of a more informed citizenship, or individual fulfilment'. (17) *Aulich's Report* regretted the emphasis on languages taught for effective communication, rather than their literary significance. (44) It also reverted to the old Newman issue by questioning the division between 'scholarship' and original research. (61-2) The great difficulties in 'establishing a successful agenda for national priorities in research' were emphasised. Professor John Passmore, citing, like Bentham, initial criticism of the self-indulgence of electricity researchers, was quoted on the serendipidous results of interest-driven research, thus invoking another long-term discourse. Fears were also expressed for basic research, given second place to applied research by Dawkins. (135-139)

Even more germane was the *Aulich Report's* explicit critique of managerialism. Authorities like Professor Peter Karmel repeated the old principle that Universities cannot

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[201] *Australian*, 9-10 February 2002.

[202] Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, *Priorities for Reform in Higher Education* (Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, June 1990).

be run like business enterprises. The *Report* cited a number of submissions questioning the need for small management groups in the administration of universities. (151-2) Concern was expressed over 'the growing mass of paperwork' imposed on academics by the new system, though a DEET bureaucrat pronounced this but a temporary phenomenon. (130-2) The ANU and Karmel, its former Vice-Chancellor, dared criticise the much vaunted performance indicators as unlikely to anticipate multiple goals. (132-3)

Although the Aulich Committee contained a number of ALP senators, as well as its chairman, Dawkins' response could not have been more dismissive. In an onslaught which the *Sydney Morning Herald* dubbed 'extraordinary', the Education Minister ridiculed the Report as 'a totally useless contribution' to the education debate which showed that some senators 'obviously have too much time on their hands.' He launched into an *ad hominem* attack on Aulich, who for his part was astonished that the Minister refused to 'properly debate' so important an issue. Dawkins was backed by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee.[203] The Education Minister's attitude underlined the Government's determination to proceed on its course, regardless of informed criticism. As the changes gathered further momentum a number of concerns raised in the *Aulich Report* were borne out in practice. Dawkins, for example, had promised that professional managers would enable academics to concentrate on their real jobs of teaching and research. Despite the bureaucratic promises, academic staff were still blitzed by demands for returns of every shape and hue. As in Thatcher's Britain, time was consumed in 'answering endless, mindless, meaningless questionnaires, with no idea of who will evaluate the answers or how.'[204] These often appeared to have little purpose but to discipline staff to the requirements of economic rationalism. Early retirement schemes were snapped up by some of the most dynamic staff, despairing of research or effective teaching opportunities under the new dispensation.

Despite some criticisms of the widespread changes, Australian academics, in marked contrast to their counterparts in the Orr period, made little effective resistance. Staff Associations throughout the Commonwealth accepted their 5% salary increase in exchange for attenuated tenure, wiping out, *inter alia*, the detailed dismissal provisions

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[203] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 June 1990.

[204] Professor Peter Pulzer in *London Review of Books*, 22 June 1989, quoted by Hugh Stretton, 'Life after Dawkins' in *The Australian Universities Review*, Vol. 32, No. 2, p. 13.

negotiated in Tasmania in the wake of the Orr case. Distinguished scholars learnt to grovel before the Orwellian 'duck-speak'[205] of quality control, best practice, mission statements, strategic plans, re-engineering, and above all constant downsizing. In *1984* George Orwell had postulated a dictatorship in which the removal or debasement of words such as 'liberty' had destroyed the concept in the popular mind. The philosopher Raymond Gaita similarly complained of 'the continual erosion of the means to articulate a serious conception of learning for its own sake. . . The managerial Newspeak that now pervades universities is both a cause and an expression of the fact that the language that might reveal that value has gone dead on us.'[206] The almighty dollar dominated all disciplines; corporations provided, or were hoped to provide, funding, and laid down who would do what research, rarely wasting money on curiosity-driven basic investigations. Few academics in line for research grants wanted to rock the boat. Humanities and Social Sciences fared as badly as the Dawkins' *Green Paper* had hinted.[207]

The reasons for the weak academic reaction are not difficult to find. historian John Molony talks of treason within the universities themselves. 'The litany of our supine compliance in the face of manifest tyranny is endless.'[208] Gaita found that, under threat, the defence of the traditional university was pathetically 'lame',[209] scholars neglecting Hancock's advice to analyse their beliefs. Academics were better paid and housed than in the 1950s, having more to lose than their earlier counterparts. Some, as Molony suggests, went into denial and tried to continue their usual work as if nothing had happened. Others, unwilling to see the structural change happening around them, attributed to an authoritarian Vice-Chancellor or Executive Dean all problems, believing them easily set right by a series of forthright Faculty motions. Moreover, the Government had cleverly dropped the much-feared 'flexible hierarchies'. With such a horror removed many senior scholars sighed with relief at less threatening changes. While some suffered badly from the revolution, glittering prizes opened up for others. Vice-Chancellors had an opportunity to become true 'Captains of Erudition' and obtain a long sought authority

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[205]See George Orwell, *1984*, for duckspeakers who quacked government slogans. Some university 'quality committees' found themselves with embarrassing acronyms, such as QUACA.

[206]Gaita in Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter*, p. 29.

[207]Report on the community benefit of Australian Universities by Davis Johnson and Roger Wilkins of Melbourne University Institute of Applied Economics and Social Research finds that only social science, arts and the humanities failed to provide a financial benefit to the government. See Dorothy Illing summary, *Australian*, 9 January 2002.

[208]Molony in Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter*, p. 82.

[209]Gaita in Background Biefing, 27 January 2002.

over their staff. Initially many Vice-Chancellors were prepared to overlook the inconvenience of reduced *per capita* funding. Soon the new system created its own vested interests. The intense competition for full fee-paying students created a major overseas broking company and offshore campuses in foreign countries;[210] Melbourne University established a private profit-making establishment alongside the public institution. Students became 'customers', always right by definition, not 'apprentices' expected to live up to the standards of their mentors.[211] According to Alison Elliott, appeal mechanisms, easily manipulated by devious students, intimidated academics into over-generous marking to avoid endless grievance procedures.[212] Modern Australian academics began to slip into the culture of the Waldegraves and Parkinsons of 18th century Oxbridge, who happily played down the importance of their own classes and connived at effortless degrees.

Postmodernists, whose influence was spreading in most disciplines, discouraged a belief in any hard and fast value systems, thus depriving academics of a base from which to resist.[213] If there was no such thing as great literature and if history was merely fiction why should government waste taxpayers money on such disciplines? Cassandra Pybus, after demolishing Orr, did a similar hatchet job on James McAuley, the celebrated Australian poet, academic and conservative literary critic, portraying him as obsessed with sex.[214] The feminist argument, used by Pybus, that consensual sexual relations are still harassment if there is a power discrepancy between the partners, may well derive from Michael Foucault, the patron saint of postmodernism, who made much of the arguement that all sexual relationships are power based.[215]

Some academics consoled themselves with the hope of respite after so much rapid change. The Government, however, was determined to allow no comfort zone. As

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[210]IDP Education Australia, a broking company owned by 37 universities, has become big business with 500 staff in 58 recruiting students from 33 countries. Overseas students now 13% of all students, providing between 1996 and 2000 70% of all new university enrolment. See *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 January 2001.

[211]See Professor Alan Gilbert and Professor John Passmore (opposed) on the issue, *Australian*, 2 October 1996 and 15 January 1997.

[212]Alison Elliott, 'If at first you don't succeed, make an offer.' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 January 2001.

[213]See Seamus Miller, Academic Autonomy', in Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter*, p. 114. 'For example, many postmodernists are contemptuous of academic values such as truth, reason, knowledge and individual academic autonomy.'

[214]Casandra Pybus, *The Devil and James McAuley* (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1999).

[215]Michael Foucault, *Discipline or Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1977), p.™; *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1978), p. 103: sexuality appears 'as an especially dense transfer point for relations of power: between men and women, young people and old people, parents and offspring, teachers and students, priests and laity, an administration and a population.'

student numbers rose to over 600,000, government funding of universities fell from 91% in 1981 to 55% at the end of the century.[216] A significant decision was taken in 1996 when the Keating Government, of which Dawkins was now Treasurer, refused to pay the academic salary increases awarded by an independent tribunal. University staff, compelled to engage in enterprise or workplace bargaining, now secured increments only at the cost of other items in their university's budget. Salary increases for some meant downsizing for others. Labor lost the 1996 election to John Howard's Liberal-National Coalition. The new Government, far from reversing its predecessor's decision, announced, as part of a cost slashing budget, a cut of $1.8 billion over four years, about 5%, from tertiary education.[217] These reductions were, according to polls, rejected by 80% of the population.[218] But Education Minister Amanda Vanstone ignored the advice of the Higher Education Council that universities had already suffered very severe reductions under Labor.[219] The Government philosophy appeared to be cuts followed by privatisation.[220]

Although Vanstone was herself downsized from the cabinet, her replacement David Kemp, a former professor of Political Science, maintained the pressure on universities. Unlike Dawkins, who made some effort to justify change as academically beneficent, more recent governments were even less apologetic in their unashamed instrumentalism. While the 1955 Royal Commission on the University of Tasmania criticised the State Government for converting to more profitable uses funds earmarked for the University, it is now argued that 'the issue is not whether higher education yields a positive return, but how this return compares with other uses of money.'[221] The introduction of a GST in 2000 provided no relief of academic penury. The Howard Government, however, appointed its own high-powered commission on higher education.

The Roderick West Commission, which reported in 1998, raised some hopes. Its chair was a classical scholar who early hinted at a less instrumental approach. He raised an issue familiar to Plato and Aristotle, and refined by Newman, when he complained that universities had taken practicality too far by introducing vocational courses such as

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[216]Molony in Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter*, p. 77.
[217]*Australian* and *Sydney Moorning Herald*, 10 August 1996.
[218]*Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 June 1996.
[219]*Australian*, 19 June 1996.
[220]J. Nicholls, in *Australian*, 21 May 1996.
[221]David Johnson and Roger Wilkins, report on Universities' benefit to community, quoted in Australian, 9 January 2002. The report cites lower welfare dependence and crime as positive advantages of universities. The most beneficial areas to government are business administration, law and economics.

tourism and hospitality. Even Diplomas in Education were suspect. Universities, said West, should concentrate on 'creative thinking' and 'inspirational teaching'.[222] But West soon accepted the facts of economic rationalist life in a system catering for 670,000 university students as opposed to 32,000 in the early 1950s, when Orr was appointed to his Tasmanian chair.

West's introduction to the *Report* , released in April 1998, opened finely with quotes from Plato, Horace, Vitruvius and traditional Aboriginal wisdom. The *Report* itself bravely asserted that whatever the instruction, higher education must 'nurture and refine minds, and create independent learners.' (43) West's introduction killed the Newmanesque dichotomy between original research and scholarship by refusing to distinguish between empirical investigation, interpretation, translation and the performing arts. Unfortunately, West balked at the vital question of finance, lamely concluding that the government would need to decide what money was available. (5-11) The *Report* itself suggested finance through a student voucher system. (113-18) This was initially rejected by the Education Minister David Kemp,[223] while the Prime Minister clamped down on a later plan for a total deregulation of university fees which Kemp seemed to favour.[224] Similarly, West's introduction applauded tenure, but insisted that more accountability was needed to reward ability and punish incompetence. Adherence to economic rationalism was indicated by the *Report's* rubric, 'We must increase access to the market, while ensuring minimum standards.' (23) The Government was happy to implement the Report's suggestion that public money should be paid for the first time to private universities.[225]

The *West Report* , if nothing else, indicated the current level of Australian debate on higher education. The *Report* did not quite approve Professor Richard Johnson's dismissal of 'fruitless hours' spent analysing the nature of a university which he summarily defined as 'an association of highly qualified people who prepare others for professional careers, who assess their students and certify their competence.' (45) West's committee preferred somewhat wordily to 'open the mind, to strengthen and discipline the cognitive powers and sensibilities of the mind, to refine the mind, and to create efficient and effective independent learners and knowledge builders.' It sought support from Aristotle's view

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[222]See *Australian* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 January 1997.
[223]*Australian*, 18 April 1998.
[224]*Age*, 15 October 1999.
[225]*Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 November 1998.

that proper studies are those 'used for life, or those which make for goodness or those which advance the bounds of knowledge.' (46) Despite the West committee's obvious desire to maintain a worthy balance, it was clearly overawed by government financial priorities. Totally instrumental and Philistine opinions like those of Professor Johnson appeared in the ascendant.[226] The reception was generally critical, failing, as Professor John Molony pointed out, to produce anything 'deemed to be either useful or acceptable'.[227] Barry Jones found it lacked vision.[228]

The problems of academia were not lessened after West. In July 1998 the Board of the Melbourne University in equivocal circumstances rejected a book of essays, accepted by the Publications Committee, criticising current developments in higher education, including the establishment earlier in the year of Melbourne University Private Limited, which operated 'on a fully commercial basis'. A chapter compared the mission statement of this new institution adversely with Sir Redmond Barry's aspirations for the civic University of Melbourne in 1855.[229] Justifying rejection, Professor Barry Sheehan insisted that there was no conflict of interest between his roles as chair of the Melbourne University Press and CEO of Melbourne University Private, while the supremo of both public and private institutions, Professor Alan Gilbert, insisted that the University must resist outside attacks on a justifiable decision.[230] Although an argument for non-publication was the failure of the collection to give a voice to their opponents, Professor Peter Karmel's contribution, suggesting payment of universities through scholarships was not far from the much criticised views of the West Report.[231] Finally published in 2000 by Allen and Unwin as *Why Universities Matter* the volume not only probed post-Dawkins academic malaise but highlighted a number of current examples of denial of free speech in academia, such as its own rejection by the MUP.

At Monash University Emeritus Professor John Legge was threatened with the removal of his office for speaking at a public meeting attacking financial cuts. A public outcry led to the restoration of his facilities. A subsequent Senate's report cited the case as

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[226]As Professor Raimond Gaita says in Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter*, p. 26, 'Even Vice-Chancellors now say, sometimes with astonishing vehemence, that reflection on the concept of a university will yield only elitist nostalgia.'
[227]John Molony, in Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter*, p. 72.
[228]*Age*, 2 June 1999.
[229]Bruce Langtry in Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter*, pp. 85-6.
[230]Macintyre and Marginson and Fraser in Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter*, pp. 50 and 246.
[231]Peter Karmel, 'Funding Universities', in Coady, ed., pp. 159-85.

an example of the denial of academic freedom.[232] The Victoria University of Technology suspended Professor Allen Patience's email for criticising the University's rental of a corporate box at Victoria's Docklands Stadium. A Liberal MP pressured the Vice-Chancellor of the University of New South Wales when a law lecturer, Cathy Sherry, spoke out on native title.[233] Not to be outdone in authoritarianism, the Federal Minister of Education, Dr David Kemp, threatened to withhold $259 million to fund a 2% salary increase unless universities adopted a tough raft of workplace reforms.[234]

In the build up to the general election of 2001, Labor appointed a think-tank of 22, under the chairmanship of the redoubtable Barry Jones, to produce its *Knowledge Nation* education policy. The report appeared in July 2001. Despite a generally well-argued demand for greater spending, the report, accompanied by a complex diagram showing *Knowledge Nation's* interconnection with all other areas of national significance, was ridiculed and lampooned in many newspapers and seized on with glee by the Government. Jones's use of the word 'cadastre', dating back to William the Conqueror's Doomsday Survey of 1087, was another gift for Philistine scoffers. Michelle Grattan more moderately declared the report a 'wish list' which 'eschews numbers'. But the *Australian* dubbed Jones's diagram 'spaghetti and meatballs'. To veteran columnist Alan Ramsay, arguing that Jones had made Opposition leader Kim Beazley's policy 'a national joke', claimed it might be the second biggest mistake of the election year, the first being 'Labor's equally incomprehensible decision to allow Jones's report ever to see the light of day unedited.' Ramsay went on to condemn Jones's 'intellectual élitism and rank political naivety.' The *Sydney Morning Herald's* Canberra bureau found the diagram a bird's nest, which evoked memories of Prime Minister Paul Keating's brutal put down of Jones, 'his mind is like a bird's nest – full of twigs and s—.'[235]

So vicious a reaction, even from 'quality' journalists, demonstrates how deeply Philistine attitudes had lingered in the Australian consciousness, since the 1850s. Significantly, Jones was labelled 'esoteric',[236] Veblen's term for interest-based learning. Jones's diagram, possibly based on a very effective device adopted by Conor Cruise

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[232]Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education Referral Committee, *Universities in Crisis* (Canberra, Senate, 2001)
[233]Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter*, pp. 244 and 246-7 (Morag Fraser).
[234]*Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 November 1999.
[235]*Australian* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 July 2001 and *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 July 2001.
[236]*Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 July 2001.

O'Brien, Ireland's leading public intellectual, to depict the left- and right-wing influences on Charles Stewart Parnell in the 19th century, appeared difficult to comprehend. Demonstrating *Knowledge Nation's* universal connections, Jones's scheme, already complicated by excessive intersecting lines, could have shown even more linkages. Universities, for example, were attached directly to schools, medicine and health and trade and commerce, but not to government, the CSIRO, 'Third Age' lifelong learning, TAFE or communications. But such minor awkwardnesses cannot explain the outcry that followed unless it is assumed that powerful forces had a particular need to denigrate one of the few popular public figures capable of making a well-advertised stand against economic rationalism in higher education. Jones could not be sacked, have his email cut off, or be thrown out of his office, hence the necessity for strategic ridicule.

Kim Beazley's final *Knowledge Nation* policy condemned the Howard Government for a 'massive $3 billion' cut from higher education, for allowing business development in research and development to fall by 26 pc of GDP and for a Government reduction of 12 pc in science and innovation. Though Labor promised to invest $1 billion over the next five years in improving the quality of teaching and learning in universities, and some other measures to reduce the brain drain, these fell far short of restoring the cuts made by John Howard and the Labor administrations which had preceded him. Pride of place was given to a scheme for internet teaching, the University of Australia Online.[237] While 'some face-to-face teaching component' was suggested, the scheme hardly met Edward Gibbon's 18th century insistence on the value of a living authority. The *Sydney Morning Herald* had followed him in 1855 by declaring that

> The fundamental idea of a university is the association of students in one place for mutual assistance in the cultivation of the liberal sciences. The scholars of old knew well the axiom that union is strength; that solitary study, however, intense and prolonged, cannot conquer the citadel of science; they knew knew, too, that help which the student requires is one which books alone are incompetent to supply; that little fruit would be produced by the most laborious reading, unless the spirit is stimulated and encouraged, the intellect refined and sharpened by the collision and antagonism of other minds. [238]

Furthermore, as American historian Theodore Rosak, who coined the term 'counter-

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[237]Kim Beazley, *Plan for the Knowledge Nation* (Barton ACT, ALP, 2001), pp. 4-5, 15-17.
[238]*Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 February 1855.

culture', showed, digital instruction is best suited for transmission information rather than the interplay of ideas,[239] in other words instrumental instruction not self-directed learning. The Howard Government duly used Barry Jones's much abused diagram as an election advert in its successful campaign. Given the current rejection of tax increases to improve community services by the major parties, though not by public opinion polls, it is unlikely that government funding of universities will return to its original level in the next two decades.

A Cultural Reversal?

To the uninitiated the issue appears merely the acceptance of change in the modern world. Older academics, accustomed to a more privileged system, it seemed, longed for a return to the lost comfort zone. In the mid-19th century, some Oxbridge dons resisted changes, most of which now seem inevitable. The issue was not, however, the ease and convenience of academics but some basic principles of democracy and its effective maintenance. Two great systemic abuses, obvious to those who have never set foot inside a university campus, are the direct and inevitable result of economic rationalism and the loss of positive academic values. The first is the 'soft marking' of fee-paying students whose finance is vital to shoring up the academic system. The flexibility, touted by Dawkins, has become, not 'flexible hierarchies', but 'flexible assessment'. The postmodernist challenge to the existence of conventional standards confuses the issue. The proliferating scandals when academics are pressured to pass profitable but undeserving students arise, not because of evil individuals, but because of the relative reduction of government funding. More are inevitable. The absurdities of Oxbridge in the 18th century, when gentlemen acquired degrees for oral answers to two or three trivial questions, raise a smile today. But we are acquiescing in a similar descent into mercenary dishonesty. The Curtin University full fee-paying student, allowed to graduate after being twice caught cheating, symbolises the current malaise.[240] In January 2001 the *Sydney Morning Herald* declared

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[239]Quoted in Background Briefing, 27 January 2002.

[240]*Australian*, 2 May 2001. Curtin University. The episode led to a staff takeover of the Department.

> 'Academics Australia wide, including heads of department, professors, deputy deans and senior lecturers, contacted the *Herald* about falling university standards and exam marks being amended in the following subjects: Anatomy, physiology, management, Asian studies, microbiology, mathematics, engineering, health sciences, law, physics, banking, finance, marketing, cultural studies, history, humanities, accounting, education, languages, biology, environmental studies, human movement.'[241]

Its editorial criticised the financial cuts leading to 'the "dumbing down" of standards to meet the commercial needs of universities' and the brain drain of academics leaving Australia for overseas to seek opportunities for pure research. The argument was enlivened by the *Herald's* cartoon of a degree ceremony with the Chancellor's cash-box zinging for each new graduate.[242] Australian universities' increased dependence on fee-paying students is highlighted when ten institutions recorded 'negative operating margins'.[243]

The response to the *Sydney Morning Herald* revelations was ominous. The Vice-Chancellors' Committee rejected an inquiry, insisting that it was a matter for individual institutions and directing critics to keep their views for university forums. Peter Reith, then acting as Education Minister, asserted that the allegations had not stood up to scrutiny and referred the issue to the projected Australian Universities Quality Agency. No protection was offered to academic whistleblowers.[244] A few weeks later the University of Wollongong evoked memories of the Orr case by summarily dismissing Associate Professor Ted Steele for publicly protesting against soft marking. As with Orr, the case went to the courts, but, unlike Orr, Steele, backed by the NTEU, initially secured a judgment in his favour.[245] Whether or not Steele was correct in his allegations has as little relevance as the truth of the accusations against Orr. The issue in both cases was the justice and legality of university procedures and the right of academics to speak freely on the policies of their institutions. The crack-down on dissent was not wholly successful. By the end of 2001, even government senators were supporting the Opposition's demand, following a Senate Committee Report, for a Higher Education Ombudsman to investigate

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[241] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 January 2001.

[242] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 and 10 January 2001.

[243] *Australian*, 9 January 2002. Commonwealth Government payments are expected to fall from 69% in 1996 to 61% in 2004. Central Queensland University, criticised for its declining standards in its private international campus, now recruits 34% of its students overseas.

[244] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 January 2001.

[245] See Brian Martin in *Illawarra Mercury*, 5 October 2001; Nicholas Rothwell, 'Turbulent Teacher' (Ted Steele), *Australian*, 5-6 January 2001; Professor Gerard Sutton, Vice-Chancellor Wollongong University in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 January 2001, argued that Steele's complaints were not supported by Departmental records.

soft marking and falling standards.[246]

The second obvious abuse is the undermining of objective research by dependence on corporate interests for financing academic investigation.[247] It is unrealistic to expect organisations which exist to make profits to forego private advantages accruing from subsidised research. As Bertrand Russell said of plutocrats in the 1930s, 'it is they, much more than the insurgent democracy, who are the real enemies of pure learning.'[248] The days of altruistic benefactors like Ezra Cornell seem to be over, despite Milton Friedman's assertion that the market can maintain even classical learning through the desire of wealthy entrepreneurs to immortalise themselves in academic monuments such as chairs. Friedman's belief that corporations will provide finance without strings was refuted by Dawkins' *Green Paper* of 1987. Similarly, Friedman's view that privately funded students will work hard to take advantage of money spent is negated when they claim degrees for cash down, not personal effort.[249] Nearly a century ago Thorstein Veblen laid down the consequences of corporate control over higher education so precisely that further analysis is virtually redundant. Investigation becomes applied research under commercial secrecy provisions preventing the free circulation of results. There are already examples of qualified researchers being warned off areas dominated by corporate interests. Even where corporations are not directly involved, as in research funding through the ARC or NHMRC, the market-based competition of institutions for grants inhibits 'research that is auto-driven by desires to know and to make.'[250] Such factors inhibit studies based on curiosity, which even the rationalist luminaries such as Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham recognised as important and which often ultimately achieved the greatest practical results. Similarly, Professor John Anderson's apparently far-fetched predictions on low standards resulting from a federal stranglehold finance are being endorsed today. Like Northern Ireland at the height of her recent 'Troubles', we confront the politics of the last [academic] atrocity.

In September 2001 a Senate committee, chaired by Jacinta Collins, brought these

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[246]*Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 September 2001.
[247]See T. Coady on big business in scientific research, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 February and 18 December 2000.
[248]Russell, *On Education*, p. 237.
[249]Friedmans, *Free to Choose*, p. 214.
[250]Simon Marginson, 'Research as a Managed Economy', in Coady, ed., *Why Universities Matter*', p. 191. Marginson points out that real innovation cannot be programmed.

issues into sharp focus in its comprehensive report, *Universities in Crisis*.[251] Unfortunately, the committee dissolved into its political components. The three ALP Senators[252] produced a majority report, critical of the Government, rejected *in toto* by their two Liberal colleagues,[253] thus absolving the Government from serious consideration of the Report. On the other hand, the lone Democrat, Senator Stott Despoja, while agreeing with many of the majority report conclusions, produced her own more radical statement.

Nevertheless, the Collins Report, correlates a great number of submissions containing a detailed examination of post-Dawkins higher education, and casting a cold eye on the establishment of the 'enterprise' or 'entrepreneurial university'.[254] It demanded increased Government funding. Universities, were 'too valuable and too important to be left to the vagaries of the market.'[255] It demonstrated that a divide had opened up 'between the two cultures: professional administrators and re-oriented academics running the enterprise university, and more traditional academics trying to retain an element of collegial management in determining university policy.'[256] The *Report* criticised globalised and privatised institutions such as Melbourne University Private Limited and Universitas 21 Global, a virtual university established in conjunction with Rupert Murdoch's News Ltd., Microsoft and Thomson Corporation.[257] It argued that these were conceived in secrecy and appeared to divert public funding to private ends while placing local public students at a potential disadvantage over feepayers. The committee was sure that the establishment of MUPL 'has resulted in the transfer of large sums from the public university to a speculative venture with grave implications for the public university.'[258] Melbourne Vice-Chancellor, Alan Gilbert, portrayed as fully committed ideologically to the enterprise university, claimed it was the only answer to the certainty that future Australian Governments were unlikely to restore full funding.[259] The *Collins Report*, however, argued that comparable OECD countries, such as the USA, Canada and the UK, were now

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[251]Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee (Jacinta Collins, Chair), *Universities in crisis : report into the capacity of public universities to meet Australia's higher education needs* (Canberra, The Senate, 2001). Subsequently, *Collins Report*.
[252]Jacinta Collins, Trish Crossin, Kim Carr.
[253]John Tierney and George Brandis.
[254]*Collins Report*, 4,.4, p. 100.
[255]*Collins Report*, 2.42, p. 27.
[256]*Collins Report*, 9.26, p. 301.
[257]*Collins Report*, 7.26-39, pp. 241-46.
[258]*Collins Report*, 7.33, p. 244.
[259]*Collins Report*, 7.26, p.241.

reinvesting in higher education; one Irish University, the little-known University of Limerick offered the same number of new senior research scholarships as the whole of the Australian Commonwealth.[260] The Democrats' minority report, justifying its principle of 'free, publicly provided education' cited 'the outstanding success of Ireland' which reintroduced free education in the 1980s.[261] This contention suggested that the old attitude of keeping up with the Mother Country in higher education to avoid the tag of colonial philistinism might be reintroduced, in the post-Thatcher era.

Some of the scandals which had been well-aired in the previous months were discussed. There were two cases of plagiarism[262] and the Steele soft-marking allegations were aired.[263] The committee did not necessarily accept his complaints but agreed that his summary dismissal was inappropriate. The Democrats' minority report was not prepared to concede that the influx of foreign students per se was responsible for such problems and a general lowering of standards. It looked more to 'an internalisation of a defective academic culture.[264] Nor did it agree that the amalgamation of universities and CAEs was responsible for the marked shift to vocationalism and applied research. 'Marketisation', which saw students as consumers seeking private benefit, was the real culprit.[265]

Thus on lowering standards and soft-marking the Collins Report presented a great deal of evidence, clearly related to the essential issue of economic rationalism. Both the Collins Report and the Democrats Supplementary Report took strong lines on learning for its own sake, basic research (quoting Education Minister D.A. Kemp)[266] and the need for the integration of teaching and research.

Agreeing with the committee chair, the Democrats insisted that 'it is vital the fundamental democratic functions of universities are defended: As 'critic and conscience' underpinned by academic freedom, education committed to independent critical intellectual inquiry, sustained scholarship and the nurturing of original creative endeavour.'[267] The official report demanded a better balance between basic and applied

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[260]*Collins Report*, 2.51 and 9.82, pp. 30 and 316.
[261]*Collins Report*, Democrats Supplementary Report, 9.3, p. 390.
[262]Fraser at Sydney (*Collins Report*, 412-13, p. 133-4) and Curtin University (*Collins Report*, 4.114-15, p. 134).
[263]Collins Report, 4.118-121, p. 135.
[264]*Collins Report*, Democrats Supplementary Report, 11.1-2, and 4.4, pp. 393 and 384.
[265]*Collins Report*, Democrats Supplementary Report, 8.6-7, p. 389.
[266]*Collins Report*, 6.7, p. 183.
[267]*Collins Report*, Democrats Supplementary Report, 3.1, p. 383.

research, complaining that the Government only paid lip-service to the former.[268] It was concerned that industry was still not funding universities to the extent of countries such as the USA.[269] Nevertheless, there was evidence that commercial sponsorship of research could inhibit the research of others and interfere with the principles of scholarly publicity.[270] The Democrats were also worried, especially as an ARC spokesperson, Professor Vicky Sara, appeared to play down the distinction between the two forms of research.[271] They pointed out that business was reluctant to fund research of 'breadth and creativity'.[272] On the links between teaching and research, the *Collins Report* noted the strong view of academics that they should be combined,[273] while the Democrats insisted that teaching and research were both part of the academic core.[274]

By contrast, the Government Senators asked 'what crisis?'[275] They saw no conflict in universities relying both on public and private capital.[276] The Liberal Report, like Reith, claimed that there was no hard evidence of abuses such as soft marking, a problem blown out of proportion for ideological reasons.[277] The losses of Melbourne University Private did not constitute a crisis.[278] It even denied that there had been an effective cut in Government funding in 1996.[279] In its turn, the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee complained that the Liberal Senators had misused its figures in claiming that there was no financial problem. In the *Australian*, Gavin Moodie heard the 'noise of ideological axes being ground' and dismissed the Report as 'petty point-scoring' in a 'fog of conceptual confusion'. Professor Alan Gilbert strongly disagreed with the criticism of his entrepreneurial university, but the debate did not probe very deeply.[280]

In such circumstances, there was little hope that the Howard Ministry would take seriously a considerable number of well-argued critical submissions . The *Collins Report*

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[268]*Collins Report*, 6.123, p. 218.
[269]*Collins Report*, 9.84, p. 316.
[270]See NTEU submission, quoted in *Collins Report*, 2.17, p. 19,which complained of universities entering into contracts with external parties that explicitly or implicitly restrict the rights of academics to undertake teaching and research without interference and seeking to place unreasonable restrictions on staff's behaviour and speech.'
[271]*Collins Report*, 6.122, p. 218 and Democrats Supplementary Report, 6.3-5, p. 386.
[272]*Democrats Report*, 5.5.
[273]*Collins Report*, 9.65, pp. 312-13.
[274]*Collins Report*, Democrats Supplementary Report, 5.3, p. 385.
[275]*Collins Report*, Liberals Supplementary Report, 1.71, p. 380.
[276]*Collins Report*, Liberals Supplementary Report, 1.72, p. 380.
[277]*Collins Report*, Liberals Supplementary Report, 1.45-6, p. 372.
[278]*Collins Report*, Liberals Supplementary Report, 1.9, p. 363.
[279]*Collins Report*, Liberals Supplementary Report, 1.13, p. 364.
[280]*Australian*, 3 October 2001.

emerging in September 2001 came at a particularly bad moment to initiate a reasoned examination of Australian higher education. The issue hardly figured in the Australian Federal election campaign, dominated by fears of terrorism and refugees. As demonstrated above, the Government higher education propaganda retreated behind ridicule of Barry Jones' grid.

After the return of the Coalition Government, the new Federal Education Minister, Dr Brendan Nelson, true to the suggestion of the *Collins Report*, paid the usual lip-service to knowledge for its own sake, asserting that cultural education 'is no less important than building an economic future'.[281] He soon showed, however, that the Government had no intention of increasing the level of funding to universities, the only way to ensure non-instrumentalist learning. On the contrary, Nelson established a new investigation to achieve further academic cost cutting, returning to the tired old expedient of criticising academic costs.[282] His position paper, insisting that universities had 'a fair way to go' in becoming efficient, was criticised as 'unbalanced' by the NTEU.[283] Nelson also mooted a return to the binary divide, which Dawkins ended, by establishing teaching only universities.[284] Whatever the argument, university funding is pared away, thus destroying any chance of balanced development.

While Dr Nelson was demonstrating Government inflexibility on higher education, a furore threw a number of issues raised by Collins into sharp relief. The saga of David Antony Robinson neatly encapsulates the current overbalancing of Australian higher education. Robinson, graduating originally from the University of Wales, had a distinguished career as a medical sociologist in England, specialising in alcohol, drug and gambling addiction, with numerous prestigious appointments.

In 1992 Robinson became Vice-Chancellor of the University of South Australia. Five years later he moved to what was then Australia's largest university, Monash, with 42,000 students,including 6,500 from overseas, and an annual budget of $576 million. In the next five years Robinson proved himself the very model of a modern economic rationalist Vice-Chancellor. By 2002 Monash under Robinson had increased student numbers to 47,000

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[281]Quoted in *Australian*, 5 December 2001.
[282]*Mercury*, 6 April 2002, 'The solutions to Australia's higher education cannot and will not only be found in relying on increased public funding.'
[283]*Australian Higher Education Supplement*, 1 May 2002.
[284]*Age*, 18 July 2002.

and nearly doubled the overseas contingent to 12,000. The financial turnover rose to $710 million. Robinson opened campuses in Malaysia, South Africa, Prato, Italy, and London.

There was, in fact, a downside to such development. Without criticising overseas expansion in principle, the *Collins Report*, expressed cautious misgivings over the lack of balance in Robinson's external push, which might prove dangerous to the interests of local students.[285] Meanwhile, staff (4677 to 4724) numbers rose by less than 1% as opposed to a student increase of over 10%.[286] Even before his formal appointment began, Robinson 'restructured the entire Monash leadership'.[287] Many academics were by no means happy: 'years of budget-cutting and reshaping left him with a reputation as a ruthless administrator.'[288] The Department of Classics and Archeology was wiped out. The Dean of Arts, Marian Quartly, complained that she had been ordered to downsize 55 staff. The Vice-Chancellor 'never adopted the notion that the arts faculty could be of value.' In personal relations, said the Arts' Dean, Robinson 'can be very charming but if he doesn't like someone he gets an icy look and cuts them to shreds. His eyes narrow and his jaw juts out; you know its coming.' It was little better with the Science Dean, Don Davies, who resigned after a row about retrenchment in his faculty. As demonstrated above, Robinson deprived Emeritus Professor, John Legge, of his office for speaking against cuts at a public meeting. According to a representative of the Academic union, the NTEU, Robinson had established a 'climate of fear' in the institution, words reminiscent of the University of Tasmania during the Orr case.[289] Academics reportedly found it difficult to gain access to their CEO. Staff complained that staff-student ratios had doubled as a result of channelling funds to off-shore operations.[290] Meanwhile Monash dropped from 5th to 8th place in acquisition of grants; staff claimed that, despite their increasing teaching loads, Robinson berated them on their inability to win such research prizes.[291] According to one staff member, Dr Paul Rodan, Robinson was 'obsessed with planning', relying in its presentation on 'marketing clichés' which 'largely alienated the academic community.' Another academic glued the Vice-Chancellor's strategic plan to the floor of his office to

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[285]*Collins Report*, 2.9-10, p. 16. Robinson's Towards the global university II: Redefining Excellence in the Third Millenium, April 2000 (http://www.monash.edu.au/staff/global.html) was quoted.
[286]*Age*, 20 July 2002.
[287]Dorothy Illing, *Australian*, 17 July 2002.
[288]*Australian*, 17 July 2002.
[289]*Age*, 13 July 2002.
[290]Rosemary Mardling, School of Mathematical Studies, *Age*, 16 July 2002.
[291]See Mardling, *Age*, 16 July 2002.

force visitors to trample on it. In direct opposition to Robinson's economic ideology, staff formed the Association for the Public University.[292]

While some academics were furious with their Vice-Chancellor, others believed that he was doing an excellent job.[293] The Council, headed by Jeremy Ellis, former CEO of BHP Minerals, had full confidence in Robinson who fulfilled his contract, duly renewed, to the letter. In July 2002 Robinson was scheduled to open a new Monash centre at King's College, London. The publicity apparently stimulated former colleagues at the University of York, who had not apparently realised that Robinson had become a Vice-Chancellor, to contact Phil Baty's regular whistleblowers column in the*Times Higher Education Supplement* . The correspondents, a pair of disgruntled former colleagues from the University of Hull,[294] drew attention to two very public examples of plagiarism by Robinson in 1981 and 1983. In Robinson's book for the World Health Organisation, *Drug Use and Misuse: Cultural Perspectives* (Beckenham, Croom Helm, 1983), Croom Helm inserted the following embarrassing erratum:

> After this book was printed the publisher learned that David Robinson. . . had used material from another author. At least 20 sentences of the chapter were taken verbatim, without references and without quotation marks. . . Dr Robinson unreservedly apologised for this serious violation of scholarly standards.

A second Robinson book, *Alcoholism in Perspective* (1979) had been exposed by the *British Journal of Addiction* (1960s) for plagiarising a paper by David Mandelbaum, 'Alcohol and Culture', in *Beliefs, Behaviours and Alcoholic Beverages, a Cross-Cultural Study* (1960s).[295] Four pages of Robinson's book relied 'with minor alterations', inadequately referenced, on his predecessor.[296] Before publication, Baty sounded out Robinson and the Chancellor of Monash. Robinson replied, that 'these matters were dealt with and resolved more than 20 years ago. They were public at the time of their resolution and were discussed in an open and frank way between my then employer and myself. Following my immediate and unresolved apology, no further action was taken by the publishers, the

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[292]*Age*, 13 July 2002.
[293]For example, Geoff Rose, Director of Institute of Transport Studies, Monash University, *Age*, 18 July 2002.
[294]*Age*, 17 July 2002.
[295]*Times Higher Education Supplement* (*THES*), 21 June 2002.
[296]*THES*, 5 July 2002.

authors or by my employers.' On appointment to the Vice-Chancellorship of the University of South Australia, Robinson discussed the matter with the Chancellor. 'I do not believe they affected my ability to lead the university. I was subsequently appointed vice-chancellor of Monash University largely on the basis of my performance at the University of South Australia.'[297]

Jerry Lewis, the Monash Chancellor, however, declared that Robinson 'enjoys my full support'. On 24 June the Monash Council unanimously voted confidence in Robinson. A student representative on Council later revealed that Robinson assured Council that these were the only examples of plagiarism in his career.[298] The Vice-Chancellor duly flew to London on 10 July to open the new Monash Centre.

But the crisis was not over. Many people, including Carolyn Allport, President of the NTEU, a spokesperson for the English Campaign for Academic Freedom, an anonymous English professorial colleague of Robinson's, Monash students, and the Association for the Public University, were dissatisfied. According to the Campaign for Academic Freedom and Academic Standards, 'The whole academic project depends on honesty. How else can the public trust the results of research? It is disturbing that someone capable of forgetting that should end up in charge of a university.'[299] To make matters worse, the *Times Higher Education Supplement* discovered another plagiarism case at Monash when in 1987 philosopher Susan Uniacke complained that Helen Kuhse had used her work without proper acknowledgement in a Monash PhD and an Oxford University Press book based upon it. As in Robinson's case the Oxford University Press made a special announcement and eleven extra footnotes were attached to the book. However, the Monash special investigator, a friend of Kuhse, found little amiss and Kuhse was subsequently promoted to Associate Professor. According to the *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 'concerns were also raised this week that Monash has an apparent record of leniency towards scholarly lapses by its senior staff.'[300]

On 5 July, the day this article appeared in England, Monash staff produced a third example of Robinson's plagiarism. Professor John Bigelow, reportedly angered by the Council's vote of confidence in Robinson, checked other works in the Library. By chance

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[297]*THES*, 21 June 2002.
[298]Manisha Blencowe, student representative, in *Age*, 19 July 2002.
[299]*THES*, 21 June 2002.
[300]*THES*, 5 July 2002.

he found that Robinson's 1976 *From Drinking to Alcoholism: A Sociological Commentary* (London, Wiley, 1976), had borrowed heavily from the book next to it on the shelf, Julian Roebuck and Raymond Kessler, The *Etiology of Alcoholism* (1972). Dr William Webster, Vice-President of the Campaign for Academic Freedom and Academic Standards, publicised the issue. The next morning's *Age*,[301] followed by the *Australian* a week later,[302] published paragraphs from the two works in parallel columns. In an email to the Chancellor, Robinson excused himself as 'sloppy' but 'unintentional' under pressure 'to publish more and to publish more quickly.' The *Age* was not convinced. In a strong editorial it declared plagiarism 'a profoundly serious matter. It is not only deceitful, it is a kind of theft, because it amounts to the appropriation of someone else's effort, expertise and knowledge. If academics could plagiarise with impunity, the whole system of university education would be undermined.' As Andrew Alexandra, Research Fellow of the University of Melbourne Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics, argued, after three such lapses it begins to look as if you don't care.[303] Gibbon's 'monks of Magdalen' were similarly insouciant. It is not improbable that the conversation of Monash's managerial hierarchy 'stagnated in a round of college business'.

As he had already departed for England to open the new Monash centre in London, Robinson was forced to take the next plane home on 10 July. With rumours of a fourth example of plagiarism in the offing, even the supportive Jerry Ellis could not hold out. Robinson quit on 11 July.[304] There was, according to an *Age* reporter, 'quiet rejoicing' in the Monash corridors, which were soon 'ringing with laughter' as academics recounted the misdeeds of their former CEO.[305] As a letter in the *Age* demonstrated, the defunct Department of Classics and Archeology handbook had declared: 'Plagiarism is completely unacceptable. Even professors get sacked for it.'[306] Although some embittered staff considered that Robinson deserved no severance package,[307] Council presented an unrevealed sum, believed to have been between $1 and $2 million.[308]

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[301]*Age*, 6 July 2002. The *Australian*, 6-7 July 2002, cited Webster as anticipating a new, 'particularly serious', accusation of plagiarism.
[302]*Australian*, 13-14 July 2002.
[303]*Age*, 9 July 2002.
[304]*Age*, 12 July 2002.
[305]*Age*, 13 July 2002 (Micha Ketchell).
[306]Michael Power in *Age*, 16 July 2002.
[307]See David Suter, *Age*, 19 July 2002™.
[308]*Age*, 17 July 2002.

What was all the fuss about? Robinson still had supporters. The Cambridge University Ethicist, Colin Honey, argued that Robinson's forced resignation was 'cruelly expedient' as he ought to have been given time to defend himself. Geoff Rose, Director of the Institute of Transport Studies, Monash, came out in his favour.[309] Jerry Ellis properly demonstrated that Robinson had fulfilled to the letter his contract with Monash University. Let the academic who has never made a research mistake throw the first stone. The CEO of a large modern university requires managerial expertise, not scholarly pedantry. How could a couple of early peccadillos to be set against the magnificent growth of an institution under Robinson's guidance? The final complaint, which ended Robinson's career, dealt with an even earlier publication than those originally revealed by the *Times Higher Educational Supplement*. It is difficult not to feel a certain sympathy for the classical tragedy of Robinson's downfall.

The episode will doubtless be soon forgotten as the unfortunate aberration of a single vice-chancellor who tempted Providence. Yet Robinson and Monash appear to highlight the huge cultural divide which separates the aspirations of a John Henry Newman from the higher education policies of successive Australian Federal Governments. Plagiarism itself, duly considered by the *Collins Report* of September 2001, illustrates starkly the worst perversion of modern education. Shortly after Robinson's resignation a survey of 1000 students at four Australian universities showed that 81% pleaded guilty to plagiarism.[310] ™Plagiarism is certainly wrong because it steals another's ideas and may give its perpetrator a dishonest advantage in a competitive world. But the problem goes to the very heart of the learning process and the essence of higher education. As demonstrated above, Newman argued that knowledge must be impregnated with reason and adapted to general ideas as opposed to the mere particulars instilled by 'instruction'. A.N. Whitehead rejected 'inert ideas' which needed to be 'utilised, or tested, or thrown into fresh combinations. ' Newman also spoke of the 'eye of the mind' which must be encouraged to discriminate. All this is rejected by the plagiarist, content to accept the work of another as it stands. Information appears an end in itself. If necessary, it can be learned by rote or downloaded from the internet. With the unbalancing of Australian universities, the distinction between 'knowledge impregnated with reason' and facts mechanically

[309] *Age*, 18 July 2002.
[310] *Mercury*, 2 August 2002. Study by Helen Marsden at University of Canberra.

gathered disappears.

Robinson's justification that pressure to publish and publish again led to his careless lack of detailed acknowledgement raises another important related issue. His own staff objected to his insistence on publication to gain the lucrative research quantum gained by the institution, despite their ever-increasing workloads. Publication, either to secure promotion to a managerial position, or to regain institutional finance denied by the Government, has a purely instrumentalist objective, far removed from the ideal of study for its own sake. The academic whose lifetime ambition is to profess his or her subject is replaced in public esteem by the manager who uses publication as a step on the ladder to power and influence.

The very success of Monash, with its multiple campuses proliferating under Robinson's guidance, again underlines the cultural change in higher education. His achievement in nearly doubling the institution's full-fee-paying overseas students raises again the problem of standards, so much debated in 2001. The *Collins Report* devoted much space to questioning whether the full-blown 'enterprise university' was in the true interests of the higher education of Australian students. The reaction of many Monash staff demonstrated that they did not believe it to be so. Where 'soft marking' is related to the attraction or maintenance of full-fee-payers, it is difficult to believe that a vice-chancellor with Robinson's record would uphold 'standards' at the expense of institutional finance.

The episode finally demonstrates the extent of cultural change in Australian higher education. The Monash Chancellor and Council were reluctant to move against Robinson despite the *Times Higher Education Supplement's* demonstration of two very public and exceptionally embarrassing incidents in the past. Similarly, the Chancellor of the University of South Australia was apparently happy at Robinson's appointment as Vice-Chancellor, though informed of the plagiarism. Robinson himself saw no connection between his work as a Vice-Chancellor and his scholarly weaknesses. Several senior Monash academics came out publicly on Robinson's behalf. There was clearly a strong belief that management skills could be divorced from scholarly interests and the corollary that they could be transferred from one type of institution to another. This was then the type of 'managerialism' that the *Collins Report* saw as destroying the proper balance of

Australian universities.

What can be done?

In the face of so powerful a cultural reversal, we must rid our minds of the popular assumption that we have nothing to learn from the past. Physical, biological and technical science have progressed amazingly since the days of Plato and Aristotle, but the same can hardly be said for our ability to construct a humane society. Many of the arguments in the higher education of the early 21st century are not original responses to a brave new world but rehashes of ideologies which have been around for centuries, if not millenia. Sydney Orr, demanding in the 1950s a 'forum for the dissemination and discussion of those principles and values in which our democratic civilization is cradled', spoke the same language as the Grand Duke of Weimar in the 19th century and John Milton in the 17th, to go no further back. Lord John Russell and W.E. Gladstone in mid-19th century Britain secured legislation to restore universities to their original objectives and prevent abuses such as oligarchical domination. On the other hand John Dawkins in the late 20th century presided over laws to increase the top-down management of universities and pave the way for soft qualifications. As the *Aulich Report* demonstrated, Dawkins showed little interest in the *'quality* of the education which students achieve', as opposed to the structure and control of the system.[311]

General economic rationalism is an ideology which grew to prominence in the early 19th century, faded for a number of generations, to be revived in the late 20th century. Its higher education subset has succeeded in working on popular attitudes, reinforcing some malignant stereotypes. During the Orr controversy, a student paper, as a *reductio ad absurdum*,, declared that Professor Orr appeared to have as much security of tenure as 'a gut-runner in an abattoir'. Today's opinion has been trained to see nothing amiss in both professor and gut-runner's subjection to immediate down-sizing, often through alleged redundancy. Professor Ted Steele's summary dismissal has attracted much less attention than that of Orr. Why, some may ask, should an academic worker today, serviced by his or her own union, demand privileges not shared by the humble gut-runner, who, if their

[311] *Aulich Report*, p. 1 . *Report's* italics.

company is bought and closed down by an overseas conglomerate, may be left without wages and entitlements? A university's claim to exemption from economic rationalism, while the general system remains intact, is unsupportable. Karl Marx, believing state education to represent the interest of the ruling class, is of little help in laying down an academic ideal dependent on public finance. But one does not need to be a Marxist to see that university ideals can make little progress when both the major political parties adhere to economic rationalism and implicitly to Friedman's belief that state education itself is wrong.

What then is the role of the thoughtful academic in the immediate future? Economic power will not change overnight, but those concerned with academic values can revert, as Sir Keith Hancock demanded, to fundamentals to discover a 'best principle' if not a 'best practice' for higher education. Although they disagree on a wide variety of issues, there is nevertheless a dynamic convergence in the views of diverse authorities like Newman, Bentham, Veblen, Bertrand Russell, Moberley, Galbraith and their Australian counterparts, Hancock, Murdoch, Menzies, Coombs and numerous others. Such eminent thinkers agree that university education must somehow provide interest-driven learning, free from external demands, to be truly effective. Sometimes politicians appear more aware of these values than current academics. Thus Lynne Kosky, Victoria's Post Compulsory Education Minister, can rebuke Melbourne University Private for focussing on corporate demands instead of 'pure and free-thinking research' and argue 'if all research in universities is client driven, that limits the free-thinking process incredibly because it confines the research before it even gets started'.[312] Most eminent thinkers emphasise the balance between this freedom and the practical necessities of life. In Australia, as in other countries, that balance appears to have been lost in the 21st century. If the destruction of press freedom by a government is clearly a threat to democracy; so too is the emasculation of universities by external demands which prevent them acting as a source of independent opinion. As the *New Statesman* points out in England, 'suspicion now permeates academia.' A 'cure' for dyslexia comes from a professor well remunerated for sitting on the board of the company that makes it. In the United States the failed energy giant Enron provided millions of dollars to Harvard departments whose research supported

[312] *Australian*, 9-10 February 2002.

'deregulation of energy markets.'[313]

How can the reasonable balance in higher education between the instrumental requirements of the community and the need for self-motivated scholarship be regained in the cultural climate of the 21st century? Only a persistent and informed demand for its reinstatement can hope to succeed. Shortly after the Dawkins changes, historian Hugh Stretton advised: 'Though we must live under that government we should not resign ourselves to it. We should continue to criticise its principles, and its behaviour, as often as it deserves it.'[314] Thorstein Veblen was confident that, inside or outside the system and regardless of the dictates of all-powerful managers, individuals will always defeat instrumentalism through the urgings of personal enthusism. The 17th century philosopher, Pierre Bayle, who lost his own chair at Rotterdam through disputes with Protestant ministers, talked of the 'invisible college' of real scholars when the existing universities were 'servile instruments of state policy'.[315] Such an 'invisible college' may again be necessary to realise Bertrand Russell's ideal of scholarly motivation: 'All great art and all great science springs from the passionate desire to embody what was at first an unsubstantial phantom, a beckoning beauty luring men away from safety and ease to a glorious torment.'[316]

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[313]*New Statesman*, 18 February 2002.
[314]Stretton, 'Life after Dawkins', in *The Australian Universities Review*, Vol. 32, No 2, p. 13.
[315]Becker, *Freedom and Responsibility in the American Way of Life*, p. 68.
[316]Russell, *On Education*, p. 244.