

From the state to the citizen to the economy

Nicholas Brown

ANU

Australian higher education has clearly been drawn into a new phase of 'accountability'. An unprecedented coalition of interests - government, business and unions - lours at the 'college walls'. To take just one example: in February 1988 Laurie Carmichael, Assistant Secretary of the ACTU, informed an Academy of Social Sciences symposium on John Dawkins' Green Paper¹ that 'we in industry' demanded a greater social and economic responsiveness from Australia's universities. Coming before an audience of academics, Carmichael wryly observed that while he had not had 'the great honour and opportunity of...higher education', he would not 'denigrate the views [of] the trade union movement...because of that'. And, in addition to this implication that the universities were both antagonistic to the new demands of consensus and condescending to older class interests, Carmichael took his imperative from his participation in the 1987 ACTU-Trade Development Council 'Mission to Europe'. That delegation's report formed a crucial component in the plan for a far-reaching 'reconstruction' of the Australian economy in the quest for international competitiveness.² From this perspective, Carmichael 'plainly' inquired:

*How long is the rest of the community to forgo its living standards in order that there ought to be some protection in certain favoured quarters?*³

This ultimatum was reiterated at the same session, in more moderate yet direct terms, by the representative of the Business Council of Australia, Mel Ward. Insisting on the need to re-assess 'the quality of graduates', Ward emphasised the extent to which Australia's tertiary education system presented employers 'products' with 'the wrong skills, knowledge or attitudes'.⁴

No longer, it seems, can a respectable distance be assumed between the academic and other sections of society. Once it had been held - by the Murray Committee on Australian Universities of 1957, the generative modern example - that the 'national interest' would best be served by academic communities which sought to sustain 'an intellectual and social climate of [their] own'. On that basis, Murray recommended a national policy for the development of higher education which would protect the system from 'large sections of public opinion' which did not comprehend the significance of the universities and were not 'sensitive' to their needs.⁵ Thirty years later, Dawkins argued instead that it was time for 'the people and the companies...whose taxes provide the resources for higher education' to state their 'demands and expectations' of the system.⁶ A distinctiveness once cultivated to serve one conception of 'national interest' had become a malaise hindering the pursuit of another. Dawkins set out to end a 'cozy relationship between universities and successive governments' which had developed around the 'complacent assumptions' of 'liberal education'.⁷ That 'way of life' of 'unchangeable value in [the] work and nature' of the university articulated by Murray⁸ was itself open for restructuring.

With antagonists such as Carmichael or Ward in mind, critics of recent policy have emphasised the extent to which universities are being manipulated as 'instruments' of the state. Such external claims, they argue, offend the basic principle on which the institutions stand: the 'liberal' ideal that the university, by definition, must have the freedom to enquire without direction or restraint, to be critical, to sustain values other than the strictly material, and to uphold an 'essential humanness' unfettered by

utilitarianism.⁹ Hugh Stretton has reminisced in a recent number of this journal on the years following the Murray Report. He recalled an inspired episode in which 'our universities were transformed, and contributed noticeably to transforming our society' through allowing academics greater room to teach, to research, and to comment on social affairs.¹⁰ The 'bullies' in DEET, pursuing power without principle, are cast as the engineers of a departure from better days. Stretton's criticisms, understandably, are immediately appealing to those working in institutions facing coercive policies based on unproven assumptions about scales of efficiency and capacity for relevant teaching and research, and sudden demands for a radical departure from structures established only three to four decades ago - structures which have shaped their own educational and professional lives.

Reflecting on the Murray Report, then, the point seems to be not so much a hostility to the intervention in university development - Murray gave plenty of that - but to the values and careers that are now in jeopardy. Taking this point a little further, Stretton's identification of a 'revolutionary' liberation of the academic pursuit after Murray might also be seen, in its context, as formative: then, at least, structures were devised in which 'liberal' values were recognised to serve a more enlightened sense of 'national interest'. The Murray Committee, after all, was quite explicit in addressing its recommendations to the need to invest larger numbers of students with an awareness of their social responsibilities at a time when 'the power of man' was demonstrated not only in technological change but also in 'moral problems'.¹¹ So Murray outlined a binary system which segregated the applied and the technological from the academic and the ethical - a system which was expanded following the Martin Report in 1964 to suit economic as much as pedagogic needs.¹² So while we can be repelled by the description of university graduates as a kind of uniform 'product', it is worth trying to be as specific as possible when distinguishing Murray's concern to shape graduates as 'citizens' through the experience of 'a unique manner of life' from the 'conceptual, creative and technical skills' emphasised in the 1988 White Paper.¹³

What is at stake in this specificity is the possibility of a constructive response to recent 'external' claims for university accountability. There is another dimension to the current debate which is too easily obscured in the defence of 'liberal' absolutes. Often this dimension relates not so much to the professional claim to academic freedom in research and career but to teaching - to a sense of the 'internal' accountability that the university might seek from its students. As noted above, Murray was clear about the need to constitute a new generation of students with a distinct kind of social responsibility, and we should be careful not to let the familiar abstractions of the liberal ideal distract us from the specific, almost pragmatic strategies he recommended for the making of his student citizenry within a system which has characterised Australian higher education until recently. There seem to be traces of Murray's legacy in Stretton's recommendation that academics might seek to salvage earlier ideals through the creation of 'two classes of students': those taking 'ordinary degrees' and honours students, identified 'at entry or after one year of study', who will be taught 'properly, individually, rigorously, evocatively'.¹⁴ The dilemma of teaching larger numbers of students with fewer resources is one with which we can sympathise, but can we

be sure that terms such as these are themselves of unimpeachable, self-evident and 'transformative' value, and that such a strategy does more than react against new external demands with older unscrutinised internal demands?

There are several ways in which these questions might be addressed. At a general level, for example, it is possible to ask how 'disinterested' was the process by which the liberal curriculum came to be defined as an area of education.¹⁵ My objective here is much more limited and tentative: I want to chart some of the ways in which those working within or commenting on Australian higher education attempted to define the universities' role at that internal, educational level during the period leading to the reforming phase recalled by Stretton. My suggestion is that there was a progression in the assumptions guiding that process from an alignment to the state in the inter-war years to a concept of citizenship in the post-war years. Rather than representing an acknowledgement of academic freedom, the Murray Report can be seen as a late, conclusive stage in that process: a formal recognition and guarantor of shifts already evident in humanities and social sciences curricula and in the conceptions of ties between the sciences and social development. Stretton directs us to remember that the Murray Report was commissioned by a Liberal Prime Minister, R G Menzies.¹⁶ Yet perhaps there is no need for such a reminder: there is no inconsistency between the formation of post-war conservatism and the way in which Murray's model of the university related to concepts of citizenship and patterns of institutional alignment consolidated in the 1950s. It is against this background that we might want to assess new demands to serve economic needs, and from this perspective that we might contribute to more effective defences of our universities than those couched in terms of 'essential humanness'. Without playing into Dawkins' thesis of past complicity between government and the universities, or reducing higher education to the perpetual pawn of political interests, it is useful to indicate an inter-relationship between social change and models of the universities' role. Our responses to recent policies should bear in mind the continuity of this process rather than invoke the kind of abstractions a Carmichael or Ward might anticipate.

Looking back, there have been plenty of reformers and mavericks who have questioned the appropriate functions of universities in Australia. The function of largely state-funded universities in a colonial and then national-developmental context prompted considerations not only of institutional form but of educational purpose. Making the most of these conditions could prompt some academics to a remarkable range of contribution to their communities - although others were oppressed by them.¹⁷ In 1882, for example, Charles Badham, Professor of Classics at the University of Sydney, argued that in the absence of an established culture or more appropriate agency, the university offered the only salvation for Australian democracy from the gullibility and selfishness of the mass. Students, therefore, must be drawn from all classes, and given a 'classical' education which would 'claim their reverence and so habituate them to self-control'.¹⁸ Other proposals approached an equivalent end through very different means, encouraging the founding of Chairs of Engineering in an effort to 'improve' able working class students.¹⁹ By the turn of the century the emergence of the social sciences began to shift these philanthropic approaches to a class-defined population towards more specific forms of professionalism in which students were not only inducted in the civic morality necessary for a new democracy, but defined by a more discrete stratum of managerial or advisory expertise. The alignment of such a 'science of society',²⁰ in the absence of alternative areas of support,²¹ was predominantly towards concepts of state responsibility.

Such an alignment had costs as well as benefits, and both aspects

shaped the universities. As suggested by the case of economists - perhaps the most prominent academic social scientists in the inter-war years (although the same was true of anthropology and perhaps psychology) - an orientation to public policy brought with it a level of disciplinary 'maturity', yet often on an ad hoc basis, dependent on the status of the individual academic-as-adviser. Much less standing was conferred on the universities as centres of research and teaching than similar patterns of consultation developing in Britain or the United States, and what recognition did follow served only to increase a perception of public accountability.²² As R C Mills, Professor of Economics in Sydney, argued in 1940, the 'white light of publicity' had its value for universities: enrolments had increased by 10 per cent annually since 1930, presumably in response to the perceived 'relevance' of the discipline during the economic depression and slow recovery. Mills added, however, that only an equivalent percentage were full-time students, and among them were public servants completing their honours years on hard-won leave entitlements and those training to be teachers.²³ In general, the orientation to government service did not encourage theoretical reflection or research over practical application.²⁴ Yet this orientation did at least provide a focus for reform. In a series of public lectures in 1937, seeking support for the University of Melbourne, the Vice-Chancellor, Raymond Priestley, proposed that 'the boundaries of the state should be the boundaries of the university'. Like Badham, it was not that Priestley had abandoned a concept of the university based on assumptions of privilege and exclusiveness sufficient to ensure 'the full development of the body, character and mind of its undergraduate students'. His argument was instead that an extensive scholarship scheme should bring to the university 'the pick of every generation of the youth of the State, whether they come from well-to-do or basic wage homes'. These students, principal educated in economics and sociology, would become the 'principally natural leaders' of their time. Priestley was particularly concerned that they should move into the Public Service, which he saw more as the culmination of the evolutionary society than a political agency.²⁵

Nothing came of such a suggestion in the aftermath of the depression. Nevertheless, Priestley expressed a series of assumptions, or an intersection of interests, characteristic of much commentary on the universities at that time: a desire to constitute students as a liberal elite premised on the reform of conflict from above. There was no sense of pluralism in this social commentary: instead, there was a belief in an inherent national unity waiting to be brought to expression through the amelioration of class division and social irrationality. Unlike the expansion of the 1950s and 1960s, and similar to present policy initiatives, the motive in these proposals was not one of meeting the demands of demographic expansion and competing social interests, but of directing the universities to serve national progress.²⁶ The discussions of the proposal for a national research university to be based in Canberra were representative of these elements. Official reports in the 1920s defined such an institution as a complement to the scientific programmes of the CSIR, built around a core Department of Economics. Then, responding to the crisis of the 'thirties, the emphasis in proposals for such a university shifted to a battery of disciplines more attuned to the management of domestic and international uncertainty, synthesising, as one supporter suggested, the attributes stemming from 'the long tradition which makes them almost second nature in the intellectual and governing classes of the older countries'.²⁷

A sense of necessarily exclusive 'service' to be instilled in students encouraged these commentators to define an ideal Australian university which would combine a wide-ranging 'liberal' programme with a specific sense of social responsibility. Without suggesting that such commentary expressed a unanimous view of

the inter-war years, it nevertheless incorporated many of the concepts of role that were to be acted upon as Australian society, and in turn its universities, entered a period of massive change. Yet accountability in terms of the service of a discrete grouping to society is perhaps always prone to degenerate into an emphasis on 'character' over expertise or intervention. Such a shift was evident in 1939 when R G Menzies gave his Prime Ministerial endorsement to the prospect of a national university in terms of the statesman's 'retreat of All Souls', Oxford, 'with chapel, dining hall and living quarters complete',²⁸ in contrast to the form of institution directed to 'study and research [on matters]...of national importance to the Commonwealth' favoured by other supporters of the venture.²⁹ In the planning and political realignment of the following years a similar contrast, less explicit though pervasive in its shaping of concepts of role, emerged as a central theme in defining the universities' accountability.

At first these inter-war aspirations found fertile ground following the outbreak of World War Two. Pragmatically, as JJ Dedman, Minister for Post-War Reconstruction, stated, 'the Commonwealth is interested in the universities because they are, and are likely to remain, the only training ground for essential contributions to the war effort'.³⁰ Those with academic expertise were drawn into a wider network of agencies, including the Army Research Unit, the National Morale Committee, the Australian National Research Council (ANRC), and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Yet it was also on the basis of mobilisation, and then of reconstruction and demobilisation, that the assumptions in social analysis of the 'twenties and 'thirties began to change. In these circumstances the population could no longer be conceptualised in the latent terms of class management evident in previous commentary: individual commitment and aptitudes increasingly became the more specific focus for reform. The social sciences were quick to register this change, often relating it to the constitution of a new type of student as the vehicle for that expertise. In A P Elkin's Anthropology Department at the University of Sydney, for example, the Australian Institute of Sociology was established to encourage networks of research on issues of civilian and industrial morale, all referring back to the university as the institution vital to co-ordinated analysis in areas ranging from class conflict to the issues of racism, housing, and family disunity. 'Administration' was identified as the crucial theme in these strategies, and it was 'mainly to the universities that governments have gone to recruit a high type of administrator capable of dealing with just these turbulent masses of fact'. An 'ideal system' was conceived by one Institute member in which academics would work in the public service for several years before taking up their posts. Informing this recommendation was the belief that 'to change the plain man in his condition, we must know him and respect him'. With the common objective of penetrating that shell of privacy, 'the scholar should not despair the techniques of the press and radio and other networks of popular persuasion'.³¹ While such a recommendation built upon elements of Priestley's ideal, the administrator was to be a more diffuse presence than the inter-war civil elite, and was to address a maze of subjectivities rather than the emergent unity of a population.

If the university was identified as the vital agency in dealing with the more individualised population emerging from war, it was also clear that this emphasis would imply a new definition of institutional role. In moving to engineer the world of 'the plain man' - that symbolic figure of reconstruction and perhaps simultaneously of Menzies' 'forgotten people' rhetoric³² - Elkin's Institute associated the university with a specific professionalism geared to the requirements of citizenship rather than to those of service to the state. In the late 1940s and 1950s, as Retraining Schemes and then Commonwealth scholarships began to erode

earlier exclusiveness and to bring to the universities - in theory at least - larger numbers from the classes that had once been the subject of reform, an emphasis on education for citizenship rather than social management assumed even greater significance. A kind of public/private distinction figured in commentary on the universities' social function in the late 1940s. On the one hand, an orientation to co-ordinated public reform; on the other, the production of individualised, responsible citizens from the demobilised mass. In 1946, for example, an ACER booklet argued that the crucial need in post-war Australia was to 'raise the standard of citizenship'. While keen to emphasise that 'aspect' of citizenship relating to 'vocational efficiency', the authors also noted that 'the world today suffers more from social inadequacy than it does from technical inefficiency' - a theme later taken up by Murray. In this context, the university was seen to have a dual role. On the one hand, 'in this more equalitarian age, in which all persons must work, the typical university student must regard his university study as a preparation for an occupation'. On the other, the 'cultural', defined as 'mastery...in the realm of ideas', was also a vital component in guiding the process of personal adjustment - and thus had its own social and even vocational relevance above any vague 'intrinsic value'.³³

For a time it seemed that a number of senior academic figures believed that this duality could be sustained. Priestley's successor at the University of Melbourne, J D G Medley, argued in 1945 that only the 'fusion of technical and humane achievement' could 'save civilisation'. Adapting a frequently discussed strategy of post-war social management, Medley proposed a university system in which students would spend two years between school and university at work in 'ordinary life', attending classes in the evenings and periods of 'hard physical work...rubbing shoulders with a wide variety of their fellow creatures'. Medley even argued the case for part-time study as a way of developing 'mature' citizens. If lingering elements of wartime mobilisation seem too extreme in this scheme of 'balanced citizenship', other reforms were directed more specifically at the curriculum as a way of developing a diverse citizen competence. In 1944 Eric Ashby, Professor of Botany at Sydney, recommended that

A great contribution to our time will be made by the university which sets up a new school of the humanities, and which offers a degree to the student who has thought intelligently about the history of technology, the culture and society of Pacific countries, economic stresses and the political frameworks which bear them.

Yet these attempts to straddle public 'service' and the private 'adjustment', often in terms of indicating links between the applied and the academic, did not fare well in the post-war years. An exclusiveness oriented to the state was difficult to translate into a more accessible education and a more pluralist social analysis. The prospects for reform from above began to seem not only less politically acceptable, but less relevant to the pace of change in so many sectors of society. Thinking of the constitution of the student as the central figure in this process, there were increasing numbers of commentators, aware of the fragility of the 'plain man', who agreed with the Institute of Public Affairs that 'in the world of pressure groups and ideological conflicts, the university...should strive to be an oasis of individualism'.³⁴

A shift in academic alignment from the state to the citizen emerged in the discussion of such issues. Here, as much as any later concession of the 'liberal' ideal, lay the post-war foundations of an emphasis on a university education as a process of instilling private values more than directing public reform. There were many levels at which these re-appraisals translated into academic practice. Very specifically, for example, behind Elkin's Institute, was the influence of the Sydney Department of Psychology, with the highest enrolments among returned soldiers, and with its

established specialisation in the field of vocational guidance and counselling.³⁵ Beyond this influence was a more general opportunity to consolidate the claims to 'professionalism' of the social sciences. Towards the end of the war the ANRC departed from its earlier concentration on funding research in the physical and biological sciences and established a Committee for Research in the Social Sciences (the precursor of the present Australian Academy of the Social Sciences) in recognition of the increasing importance of work in those areas. This Committee hoped to break research from a strictly academic mould, or at least to free the universities from the relative isolation of their British inheritance.³⁶ The recurrent problem, however, was how to define that new alignment: who outside the universities would support it? And how were students to be addressed as a part of this process?

Themes of division on these questions were evident in a Report of the Committee, published in 1951, on *The Teaching of the Social Sciences*. One group of contributors outlined cross-disciplinary undergraduate programmes which would serve a need for managed reform primarily through agencies of the state. Another group emphasised a 'professionalism' in academic training which would only be diluted by co-ordinated programmes. 'Professionals' seemed to possess their talents as individual attributes, almost as an extension of their character and as a testament to the 'scientific' integrity of their education. For the first group, John Passmore observed with approval that the University of Sydney had established a 'special school in the Social Sciences' which insisted on compulsory units in philosophy and history (in the absence of sociology), but left 'considerably more freedom' in the choice of further subjects than was available to other Arts students.³⁷ S J Butlin similarly noted a 'liberalisation' in Economics courses at Sydney. Here was evidence that 'universities are feeling their way to a view of the social sciences as a co-ordinated and integrated field of study'. Graduates of this course would be capable of deploying a range of critical disciplines unavailable to those with strictly 'professional' training.³⁸ In History, too, R M Crawford welcomed closer collaboration among the social sciences in terms of a greater attention to matters of 'scientific method'.³⁹ Familiar with theories and models in analysis, these students were often expected to find work in the public service. Partly this alignment reflected the perception that the private sector lacked sufficient development or initiative to provide appropriate opportunities. Yet it also expressed a distinct conceptual orientation. Julius Stone, Professor of Law at Sydney, hoped that graduates of a Law course modelled on cross-disciplinary lines would become government research officers, particularly in the field of law reform.⁴⁰ As Stone argued in 1952, the social sciences offered the necessary reconciliation between the 'ancient humanities' and the contemporary social changes being wrought by the 'physical sciences': they developed those skills once associated with the 'social function' of "the professions" but which were destined to coalesce more with those of government.⁴¹

In hindsight the optimism of these proposals is most striking. Although increasing numbers of graduates were finding employment in the public service in the post-war years, it was not until 1958 that the Boyer Commission gave close scrutiny to the issue of systematic graduate recruitment. Law reform would wait much longer for formal consideration. In that context, however, what is remarkable is the exclusiveness with which academic initiatives were linked to social reform through public policy - an association which was particularly conspicuous in contrast to the views of the other group of contributors to the Report. The Foreword by K S Cunningham, also Chairman of ACER, suggested a substantial re-appraisal of the agenda first outlined for the Committee in 1945. Then areas of progressive policy had been defined with clear reference to developmental public policy. Yet in 1951 Cunningham emphasised the need to defend common social values, suggesting

a 'fascinating field' in studies of cultural assimilation and the creation of social unity from conflicting influences.⁴² As Cunningham argued elsewhere, such a field was dictated by the need to address distinctively Australian issues in a hitherto derivative curriculum. It is equally worth stressing that this need was comprehended in terms of a threatened loss of 'cultural homogeneity'.⁴³ Both Elkin and W M O'Neil agreed that Psychology must be central to the social sciences: the development of techniques of individual adjustment was more pressing in a time of cultural transition and consolidation than any wider cross-disciplinary survey.⁴⁴ In 1952 Elkin expressed hesitation regarding the inter-related claims of 'what are now fashionably called the social sciences', preferring to describe a more specific academic training in 'an understanding of the mind' and the dynamics of 'the group'. The graduates of such training would 'go into the professions', taking positions in 'education, the church, counselling, staff welfare and management, social service and such like fields of human relations'.⁴⁵

These contrasting emphases - an orientation to the state or to more localised interests in personal adjustment - were more than the reflection of personal political views. They informed academic objectives in teaching. The inter-war graduate was to apply their expertise to the management of society; the post-war graduate was to be invested with distinct qualities of self at a time of social consolidation in which many areas of policy seemed to be premised on the consolidation of private stability and the rejection of public control. This was the framework in which, as Murray was to insist in 1957, the university must serve to advance our 'understanding and appreciation of human values' and the 'problems of human relationships'.⁴⁶ This assistance to students would come not as an integrated part of social change in its technological, political and even cultural forms, but from joining a community with a 'life of its own'. As such, it seemed to become increasingly necessary to sustain the integrity of the university from disciplinary syntheses and 'external' demands which threatened personal professionalism - in defining the province of the humanities as much as law etc - and individual citizenship.⁴⁷

It would be foolish to minimise the reality, or the threat to the universities in the 1950s, of manipulation through the control of funding, of political surveillance, or even of a level of intolerance in Australian government and society. Coping with massive expansions in student numbers, an academic desire to return to a level of exclusiveness is perhaps understandable. Yet the post-war exclusiveness was not defined in the same way as its inter-war counterpart, and it would be simplistic to see these later manoeuvres as an altruistic claim to the inherent values of academic freedom. In 1952, for example, Douglas Copland - one of the most prominent economists of the inter-war years and the first Vice-Chancellor of the ANU - took his invitation to give the ANZAAS Presidential Address as a recognition of the claims of the social sciences, and of the status of the new research university. His lecture, however, made a clear break with earlier assumptions in both of the areas he undertook to represent. With occasional literary asides to the effect that 'the multitude have no habit of self-reliance or original action', Copland suggested that the social sciences had recently come dangerously close to assisting in the consolidation of the 'totalitarian' state, stifling the initiative of the individual. The role of the Research School of Social Sciences at the ANU, he suggested, could well be 'to call a halt, and to allow the community to digest what it has already accepted or had thrust upon it'.⁴⁸ A pure kind of scholarship rather than applied research; a comprehension of the conditions of stability rather than the prospects for further reform: these were the priorities Copland set for an institution which had only recently been conceived to serve other purposes.

Copland's address indicates something of more general post-war re-appraisals. Turning to the subjects of this educational emphasis, it seems that throughout the 1950s and into the 'sixties, a recurrent concern in much writing about universities was a perception that expansion was bringing in students who not only had no prior experience of academic life, but who also, in their rudeness, required to be 'remade'. In 1959, at a seminar organised by the Education Research Section of the University of New South Wales, W H Frederick, Professor of Education at Melbourne, spoke of the need in universities for 'the trappings, the settings, the geography, residential life, all the situations in which assimilation can take place'.⁴⁹ An officer in the UNSW Research Section, G A Gray, stressed the importance of coming to know this new generation of students as individuals: to 'establish his needs; recognise his moods and attitudes, to understand his home, social and economic circumstances'. All of this knowledge was essential to the counsellor if the student was to become 'a successful citizen and professional man': someone possessing 'independence'.⁵⁰ 'The student adolescent', another counsellor suggested, 'has really to make a much greater change in the task that confronts him than the young worker', for he must be taught to establish his own discipline and escape the prejudices of his family.⁵¹ So an AVCC conference on university education recommended the following year that the university must, like industry, rely on incentives for students, and 'pay more attention to motives such as the desire for recognition and acceptance by other human beings'.⁵² In 1964, at an AVCC conference on student residence - another central theme of the Murray Report - 'citizenship' was again a major concern, and the question was posed for every academic: 'Has the miracle happened and the immature first-year student not only acquired at graduation the aura of a "university education", but become an independent mature person'.⁵³ This aspiration was clearly a long way from Medley's concept of balanced citizenship between self, society, work and study: what was sought instead was a metamorphosis which the residential college must foster, so that some of the 'stuff' of 'senior staff' might 'rub off', at least on the 'intellectual elite' who were no longer the basic components of university teaching but a select few...⁵⁴

In such commentary the liberal ideal seems to have mattered more as a strategy of 'assimilation' of character than the pursuit of intellectual freedom. It was a strategy which sat awkwardly with other aspects of these students' experiences of higher education. At that time, for example, two out of every five internal students studying at Australian universities were part-time. What might these phrases and priorities have meant to them?⁵⁵ Systematic attention was only gradually being given to teaching techniques, especially with regard to pass students.⁵⁶ It was not that teaching was never discussed in these forums, but those who emphasised the formation of character were not always those who had much to say about the practicalities of teaching. Nor were they the ones who noted that the problems evident in failure rates had little to do with the backgrounds of students prior to gaining university entrance and perhaps more to do with inflexible attitudes to assessment procedures.⁵⁷ Clearly, much of this commentary fits neatly with that pervasive discourse of the 1950s, dealing with that vital construction site: 'the adolescent' in the process of 'adjustment' to a 'way of life'. Even student magazines adopted the formula that, as an 'adult institution' in which 'the undergraduate is [by definition?] an adolescent', the university must combat 'self-interest' in its students and serve the task of 'social formation'.⁵⁸ This emphasis seemed to be in spite of the fact that a significant increase in enrolments over 23 years of age was under way at that time, albeit from a static social-economic grouping.⁵⁹ Tutorial teaching, especially after the Murray Report, was gradually introduced to remedy these problems, although an AVCC study of 1965 found little close consideration of method in such teaching, especially in so far as pass students were concerned.⁶⁰

Perhaps it is not irrelevant to recall that even Newman's 'liberal' ideal of the university had little in common with his strict practice as tutor, 'as moral and religious guardian of the youths committed to him' at Oriel College.⁶¹

Related to these pre-occupations was the concern to mark a clear distinction between applied or technical education and strictly academic enquiry in 'pure' sciences. As A C D Rivett, Chairman of the CSIR, argued in the late 1940s, not only were the days of a free international exchange in science over, but a new generation of students were entering universities who neither knew nor missed that 'freedom'. Given the pace of scientific change, Rivett recommended that the universities must reduce their teaching commitments, excluding those who 'mean to be artisans'.⁶² The academic hounding of the first University of Technology in Sydney seems to reflect an inflexibility among its critics as much as state control of its constitution - which at least had begun the search for a viable concept of 'general education'. That science must have its 'freedom', and that the universities should not be compromised by applied 'training', was a major theme in commentary in the 1950s and 1960s - one which was often discussed in terms of the need to inspire a 'scientific mood' among the few individuals capable of pure research.⁶³ In 1957 Murray argued that 'the work of applying new knowledge is roughly predictable' (could the same be said of its ethical or industrial consequences?) and did not require the academic recognition due to 'scientific exploration' in which 'the wind bloweth where it listeth'.⁶⁴ This may be true, but was it sufficient to provide the basis for such an exclusive division of function, so different to Ashby's proposal, so opposed to more flexible models developing in Britain, for example, and so much determined by the basically financial considerations which lay behind the Martin Report's consolidation of the binary system in 1964?

'The student has changed already', Lyotard argued in his 'Report on Knowledge'; 'and will certainly change more'. The ends of higher education, he continued, are always 'functional' in some way: the youth destined for a 'liberal elite' is perhaps now becoming more an adult seeking to 'improve the system's performance' not as an uncritical technician, but as someone able to sustain communication, to extend the benefits and services of education, information and ethics.⁶⁵ So the individual citizen might become a participant in an economy defined in its widest sense. Some readers may feel that my few observations on the internal demands of the universities in the 1950s are too sketchy to prove a point, and, in fact, miss the point that the objectives of the 'liberal' education are innately superior to the goals set by governments, by industry, or by community interests. Yet my suggestion is that the 'liberal' tradition of the Australian university system, as it was secured in the 1950s and 1960s, must be seen in its historical context, a few elements of which I have provided here. It developed not primarily as the recognition of inherent academic virtue but as a part of a distinct political realignment in which the universities were distanced from an earlier, if narrow, orientation to social reform, and became instead discrete institutions with a more inherently conservative orientation to the shaping of an individualised citizenry, somehow to be kept distinct from social change. Responses to current policy, however warranted in their rejection of short-term objectives and unproven formulas, could benefit from taking a more critical, historically-informed account of the relationships between the universities and their political context. Hugh Stretton's protest is powerful to the extent to which it alerts us again to the current manipulation of higher education. He is less convincing when meeting present demands for accountability with reflections on the 'revolution' of the post-war decades. The universities were not liberated then so much as given a new function, itself a part of a perceived 'national interest'. We should be careful not to turn that function into some

kind of essential calling, especially when notions of preserving 'two classes of students' from the remnants of that model seem to suggest that we might not be coming much closer to thinking of a more accessible, equitable, responsive higher education system for the future. These three terms might seem naive in current circumstances, but they are perhaps a little more useful in our defence than calls simply to teach 'properly, individually, rigorously, evocatively'.

References

1. *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*, Canberra, 1987.
2. See *Australia Reconstructed: A Report on the ACTU/TDC Mission to Western Europe*, Canberra, 1987.
3. Carmichael, 'The Green Paper and National Needs' in ASSA, *Papers from the Symposium on the Green Paper on Higher Education*, Canberra, 1988, p 61.
4. M K Ward, Address, *Papers from the Symposium*, p 66.
5. K A H Murray (Chairman), *Report of the Committee on Australian Universities* (Murray Report), Canberra, 1957, pp 8-9, 26-27.
6. John Dawkins, Foreword to *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper* (Green Paper), Canberra, 1987, p iii.
7. John Dawkins in Grant Harman and V Lynn Meek (eds), *Australian Higher Education Reconstructed*, Armidale, 1988, p 16.
8. Murray Report, p 7.
9. See for example the responses to the Green Paper by Veronica Brady and Judith Brett in *Australian Society*, February 1988, pp 29-30, 32-33.
10. Hugh Stretton, 'Life after Dawkins: teaching and research with diminishing resources', *Australian Universities' Review*, vol 32, no 2, 1989, p 9.
11. Murray Report, pp 8-9.
12. See Susan Davies, *The Martin Committee and the Binary Policy of Higher Education in Australia*, Melbourne, 1989.
13. *Higher Education: a policy statement*, Canberra, 1988, p 6.
14. Stretton, 'Life after Dawkins', p 9.
15. See Ian Hunter, 'Personality as a vocation: the political rationality of the humanities', *Economy and Society*, vol 19, no 4, 1990, pp 391-430. See also Ian Hunter, Denise Meredyth, Bruce Smith, Geoff Stokes, *Accounting for the Humanities: the language of culture and the logic of government*, Griffith University, 1991.
16. As Allan Martin has demonstrated, Menzies was extensively lobbied to establish the Murray Committee, although he later took full credit for its conception: see Allan Martin, 'R G Menzies and the Murray Committee' in F B Smith and P Crichton (ed), *Ideas for Histories of Universities in Australia*, Canberra (ANU), 1990, pp 94-115.
17. See F B Smith, 'Academics in and out of the Australian Dictionary of Biography' in Smith and Crichton (eds), pp 1-14.
18. Charles Badham, 'University Studies' in *Speeches and Lectures Delivered in Australia*, Sydney, 1890, pp 105-12.
19. See Stephen Murray-Smith, 'Technical Education in Australia: 1788-1914', *Melbourne Studies in Education*, Melbourne, 1967, pp 211, 214, 222, 232; Sol Ence, 'Science, Education and the Economy', *The Australian University*, vol 3, no 1, 1965, p 3.
20. See Francis Anderson, 'Sociology in Australia: A Plea for its Teaching', repr. in *Social Horizons*, 1943, p 20. See also Tim Rowse, *Australian Liberalism and National Character*, Malmesbury, 1978.

21. For some indication of the level of institutional support, see essays by Brian Head, Helen Bourke, Stephen Alomnes and Joan Clarke in Brian Head and James Walter (eds), *Intellectual Movements and Australian Society*, Melbourne, 1988.

22. In 1981 the journal, *History of Political Economy* (vol 13, no 3) published a series of essays providing a useful base for comparison on this point: see W J Barker, 'The United States: Economists in a Pluralist Society', pp 513-47; A W Coats, 'Britain: The Rise of the Specialists', pp 365-404; A Petridis, 'Australia: Economists in a Federal System', pp 405-435. See also Neville Cain, 'Economics Between the Wars', *Australian Cultural History*, no 3, 1984, pp 74-86.

23. Mills, *The University and Business: A Lecture*, Sydney, 1940.

24. If Australian universities seem to have an historically-entrenched weakness in defending themselves from political manipulation, the reason perhaps relates more to the extended scale and limited scope of their public engagement than to the lack of any such activity. Cf. Bernd Huppau. 'The Universities in the Grip of the Electronic Age', *Meanjin*, vol 47, no 1, 1988, p 86.

25. Priestley, *The University in National Life*, Melbourne, 1937, pp 7, 13, 15, 16, 18-20.

26. See W D Borrie, 'Higher Education Demography and the Green Paper' in Harman and Meek (eds), p 72.

27. L F Fitzhardinge, 'The University that Will Be', *Prometheus*, 1934-35, p 11. For more comprehensive statements of this disciplinary orientation, see the Annual Reports of the University Association of Canberra from 1929 to 1939.

28. R G Menzies, *The Place of the University in the Modern Community*, Melbourne, 1939, p 16. The occasion of Menzies' comments was his commencement address for the Canberra University College.

29. See the report of Robert Garran's comments introducing Menzies' address, *Canberra Times*, 27 April 1939.

30. Quoted in P D Tannock, *A Study of the Involvement of the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia in Education*, Ann Arbor, 1969, p 293.

31. Kenneth Henderson, 'The Scholar in Reconstruction', *Social Horizons*, no 1, 1943, pp 82-3. See more generally, Rowse, *Australian Liberalism and National Character*, Malmesbury, 1978, p 166.

32. See for example C E W Bean, *War Aims of a Plain Australian*, Sydney, 1943; Judith Brett, 'Menzies "Forgotten People"', *Meanjin*, vol 43, no 2, 1984, pp 253-265.

33. L W Phillips and K S Cunningham, *Education for Livelihood*, Melbourne, 1946, esp pp 4, 7, 26.

34. 'The Threat to the Individual', *IPA Review*, vol 3, no 6, 1949, p 175.

35. See Elkin, 'The Emergence of Psychology, Anthropology and Education' in Elkin et al, *One Hundred Years of the Faculty of Arts*, Sydney, 1952, pp 31-5.

36. See ANRC, *Social Science Research in Australia*, Sydney, 1945, p 7.

37. Passmore, Preface, ANRC, *The Teaching of the Social Sciences in Australian Universities*, no place of publication given, 1951, p 5. This Report was largely a revision of papers prepared in 1947.

38. Butlin, 'Economics', *Teaching*, p 17.

39. Crawford, 'History', *Teaching*, pp 31-3.

40. Stone, 'Law', *Teaching*, pp 37, 39. See also Passmore, Preface, *Teaching*, p 5.

41. Stone, 'The Relations Between The Faculties', *Union Recorder*, 27 March 1952, pp 23-4.

42. Cunningham, Foreword, *Teaching*, p 1.

43. See the abstract of Cunningham's Presidential Address to Section J, 'The Dilemma of Australian Education', in *Australian Journal of Science*, vol 15, no 1, 1952, p 18.
44. Elkin, 'Anthropology', *Teaching*, p 10; O'Neil, 'Psychology', p 63.
45. Elkin, 'The Emergence of Psychology, Anthropology and Education', pp 21-4.
46. Murray Report, p 9.
47. For a discussion of these issues, although for a rather different perspective, see Don Anderson, 'The Undergraduate Curriculum: Educating Recruits to the Professions' in Anderson (ed), *Mere Technicians?* (Papers from the AVCC Workshop on a Coherent Professional Curriculum), Canberra, 1990, pp 22-40.
48. Copland, 'Authority and Control in a Free Society', *Proceedings of the Twenty-Ninth Meeting of ANZAAS*, Sydney, 1953, pp 1-22.
49. WH Frederick, 'Aims and Methods in University Teaching' in LN Short (ed), *Some Problems of University Education*, UNSW, 1959, p 5.
50. G A Gray, 'The Student and His Needs' in Short (ed), p 52.
51. R R Priestley, 'The Student and His Needs', p 47.
52. AVCC, Conference on University Education (S B Hammond, ed), Melbourne, 1961, p 5.
53. D Langley, 'A Study of the Relationship Between the Form of Student Residence and Student Performance' in AVCC, *Report of Proceedings of the Conference of Australian Universities*, 1964, Melbourne, 1964, p 79.
54. See the contributions of J H Reynolds and H Burton to the 1964 AVCC conference, pp 68, 104.

55. See D S Anderson, 'The Performance of Part-time Students', *Vestes*, vol 6, no 4, 1963, pp 286-95.
56. See for example: T J Mitchell, 'The Tutorial System in the Arts Faculties', *Vestes*, vol 3, no 4, 1960, pp 46-50; AVCC, *Teaching Methods in Australian Universities*, n.p., esp pp 179-88.
57. See for a general survey of findings at that time: C Sanders, 'University Selection: Its Theory, History and Psychology', *Australian Journal of Education*, vol 1, no 3, 1957, pp 145-168.
58. 'University In Search Of Itself', *Hermes*, 16 July 1953, p 20.
59. See D S Anderson and A E Vervoorn, *Access to Privilege: Patterns of Participation in Australian Post-Secondary Education*, Canberra, 1983, ch 3.
60. AVCC, *Teaching Methods in Australian Universities*, Canberra, 1965.
61. Quoted in Will G Moore, *The Tutorial System and its Future*, Oxford, 1968, p 9.
62. A C D Rivett, 'A Question for Our Universities', typescript dated 25 February 1948 in the Basser Library, Australian Academy of Science, Canberra, 82/83, p 6; Rivett, 'Science in Australia', *Australian Journal of Science*, vol 14, no 2, 1954, p 34.
63. G A Currie, 'The Training of the Scientist' in *Science in Australia*, Melbourne, 1951, p 129.
64. Murray Report, p 9.
65. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Manchester, 1984, pp 48-49.

The personality market

Denise Meredyth

Griffith University

In response to the government's White Paper, there have been a number of efforts to defend the humanities, efforts which have mostly been characterised by an insistence on absolute oppositions between culture and utility, or between liberal and vocational education.¹ Few efforts have been made to describe in more concrete terms the actual relation between Arts faculties, employment and training. Where such descriptions have been attempted, they exhibit a certain incoherence, largely due to some longstanding tensions within existing accounts of the vocational outcomes of humanities training.

The conventional formulation claims that humanistic education is socially invaluable, since it alone is able to form social leaders schooled in responsibility and service to humanity.² Associated with this is the long-standing tendency to regret the passing of the traditional link between liberal education and a vocation of public leadership - lost in the long drift of the universities away from the 'community' - and to call for the rediscovery of more general vocational goals for the humanities, whether in forming citizens, or in building 'humanity' within a broad workforce.³ Others, however, have been offended by even these broadly-stated vocational rationales, often regarding the student who is re-made in the vocational arena as only half-made as a scholar. According to such commentators, vocational outcomes bear only an indirect and incidental relation to higher forms of ethical and scholarly formation:

A training in English can make for improved writing of reports in the public servant or for more imaginative advertising copy, just as a training in philosophy can produce better policy analysis in a politician or better handling of complex 'intelligence' material in a spy. Whether these are good things or not will depend on such matters as what is being advertised and who is being spied on for what purpose.⁴

Despite efforts to produce more pragmatic rationales, current apologists for the humanities tend to repeat these circular claims and disclaimers. Aiming both to placate the academy and to impress policy-makers, they stress the coexistence of liberal and vocational elements within humanistic teaching, pointing out that it is quite possible for the ethic of the scholarly pursuit of truth to coexist with vocationally conscious pedagogic goals.⁵ After all, it has been argued, the humanities produce the majority of personnel within the public sector, whether as teachers, public servants or arts administrators.

There is no teaching and learning in higher education that is shorn of practical social purposes... The vast majority of graduates in the humanities and social sciences enter administrative or middle management positions - mainly in the public sector - or specific professions such as teacher, welfare officer or journalist... Training this large segment of the workforce has been the principal role of the humanities and social sciences for decades. If the humanities and social sciences did not have this instrumental role, they would not receive much support. If the production of knowledges (research and scholarship) in the humanities and social sciences did not occur within this particular instrumental context, it would not receive much support⁶

However, this case has been weakened by the inclusion of more global claims to the existence of a unique and traditional link between the humanities and the vocation of public administration. Such claims are immediately undermined by evidence of

reduced government spending on the public sector, and by indications that graduates in Business Studies and Economics are threatening to 'colonise' the public sector.⁷ This encourages resort to grand oppositional rationales, in which current policies within public administration are depicted as undermining a diffuse 'social need' for humanities-trained personnel, or in which the vocational arenas adjacent to the Arts faculty are depicted as riven by an internal tension between liberal values and principles of 'technicism'.⁸

One corrective to such tendencies is an emphasis on the diversity of vocational outcomes from the Arts faculty - a diversity which corresponds to the variegated and piecemeal makeup of humanistic teaching regimes and the variety of attributes formed within them. Although both the public and the private sectors make use of the expertise and ethical abilities developed in the humanities, these connections by no means equate with a traditional and privileged link between the Arts faculty and the vocation of civil service. There are in fact significant disparities between the regimes of humanistic pedagogy and the kinds of norms used in graduate recruitment.

It is not hard to find testimonials to the marketability of 'personality' and to the vocational value of humanistic education. Most surveys of employer expectations of graduate recruits indicate a preference for a range of capacities which include 'personal' skills of written communication, logical thinking, ability to work with others and problem-solving, as well as emphasis on elements of character: decision-making, personal initiative, tenacity, enthusiasm, leadership and the ability to adapt, alongside numeracy, or 'understanding of business and work'.⁹ In elaborate norms provided for the in-service assessment of skill levels and performance, such major industrial employers as BHP define 'interpersonal', 'personal' and 'people management' skills as half of their six-part catalogue of basic skill categories, equally weighted with technical, functional, business administrative and problem-solving facility.¹⁰ The personal capacities listed include 'breadth of vision', 'judgement', 'earning and maintaining trust', 'self-supervision', 'willingness to accept responsibility for one's own actions', and 'evaluating and improving one's own performance'.¹¹

Given that most humanities disciplines incorporate self-formative exercises aimed at cultivating personal attributes of sensitivity or rationality, (as well as the specific capacities for problem-solving, group work and verbal and written rhetorical skills), it is not difficult to argue that Arts graduates are likely to have developed these vocationally desirable capacities. Indeed, this is a long-standing rationale for employing generalist graduates, used by employers in both the private and the public sectors:

a university can take a person of intelligence, teach him those principles, teach him to think and write, broaden his outlook and send him out as a marketable commodity in his discipline, or for that matter, even when his particular subjects have no direct relevance. Employers, the Commonwealth included, will nevertheless recruit from a university when the particular subjects are of marginal value, because intelligence, a broad education and the ability to think independently and communicate effectively are, in themselves, highly marketable.¹²

Although such observations may seem very modest in comparison with more ambitious claims for the cultural mission of the